

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release

RENOVATIONS MARK 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SCULPTURE GARDEN AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

June 7, 1989.....The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden at The Museum of Modern Art reopens today after renovations designed to enhance its appearance and operation. Made possible through the generosity of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd, David Rockefeller, and Laurance S. Rockefeller, the project was undertaken this spring on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the first Museum Garden in 1939.

The project renews one of New York's most exquisite outdoor spaces, well known for its pleasing combination of fountains and reflecting pools, trees, and sculpture. The Sculpture Garden has a central sunken garden and terraces on either side. Another terrace, adjacent to the Members Dining Room on the second floor, overlooks the garden. The renovation included redesigning and reconstructing the Garden's two ornamental pools and the stair landing at the entrance into the Garden from the Museum's Garden Hall, and reconstructing the wall along its Fifty-fourth Street boundary.

The firm of John Burgee Architects supervised the renovation project. Philip Johnson, architect and founding director of the Museum's Department of Architecture and Design, served as design consultant. Robert Zion of Zion & Breen Associates was consulting landscape architect. The project was directed for the Museum by James S. Snyder, deputy director for planning and program support.

Current technology was employed to enhance the appearance and operation of the pools; a false floor of polished black granite conceals the piping for new

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fountain and pool lighting systems. The modification to the stair landing realizes a plan suggested by Mr. Johnson to enhance the view of the Garden from within the Museum. The new wall is a structurally improved restoration of the one that had stood since 1964.

A continuing installation of sculpture from the Museum's collection is on view. Works newly installed include Max Ernst's The King Playing with the Queen, William Tucker's Gymnast II, and a monumental piece by Ronald Bladen. They join such well-known works as Auguste Rodin's Monument to Balzac, Henri Matisse's The Backs, Pablo Picasso's She-Goat, David Smith's Cubi X, and Claes Oldenburg's Geometric Mouse (complete list of works attached).

Groves of birch, linden, and weeping beech are planted in beds in several areas; Boston and English ivy and Virginia creeper, used throughout as underplanting, lend unity. Plane trees, andromeda, leucothoe, and a variety of seasonal plantings (majestic blue pansies for early summer) contribute to the overall harmony of art and nature.

The Garden opened in 1939 as part of the Museum's first permanent site at 11 West 53 Street. In 1953 it was redesigned by Philip Johnson and named the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, in honor of the late Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., one of the Museum's founders. The overall design character established in 1953 was retained during a renovation of the Garden which was part of the Museum's 1964 expansion. Mr. Zion collaborated with Mr. Johnson on that project, and they have both continued as advisors since that time.

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For further information or photographic materials, contact the Department of Information, 212/708-9750.

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LIST OF SCULPTURE ON VIEW IN GARDEN

Ronald Bladen	<u>Untitled</u>
Scott Burton	<u>Pair of Rock Chairs</u>
Alexander Calder	<u>Black Widow</u>
Max Ernst	<u>The King Playing with the Queen</u>
Bryan Hunt	<u>Big Twist</u>
Gaston Lachaise	<u>Standing Woman</u>
Jacques Lipchitz	<u>Figure</u>
Aristide Maillol	<u>The River</u>
Henri Matisse	<u>The Backs (I, II, III, and IV)</u>
Henry Moore	<u>Animal Form</u>
Henry Moore	<u>Large Torso: Arch</u>
Elie Nadelman	<u>Man in the Open Air</u>
Claes Oldenburg	<u>Geometric Mouse, Scale A</u>
Pablo Picasso	<u>She-Goat</u>
Auguste Rodin	<u>Monument to Balzac</u>
David Smith	<u>Cubi X</u>
Tony Smith	<u>Free Ride</u>
William Tucker	<u>Gymnast II</u>
Polygnatos Vagis	<u>The Snake</u>