

# Subway art

Author

Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)

Date

1938

Publisher

The Museum of Modern Art

Exhibition URL

[www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2964?  
high\\_contrast=true](http://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2964?high_contrast=true)

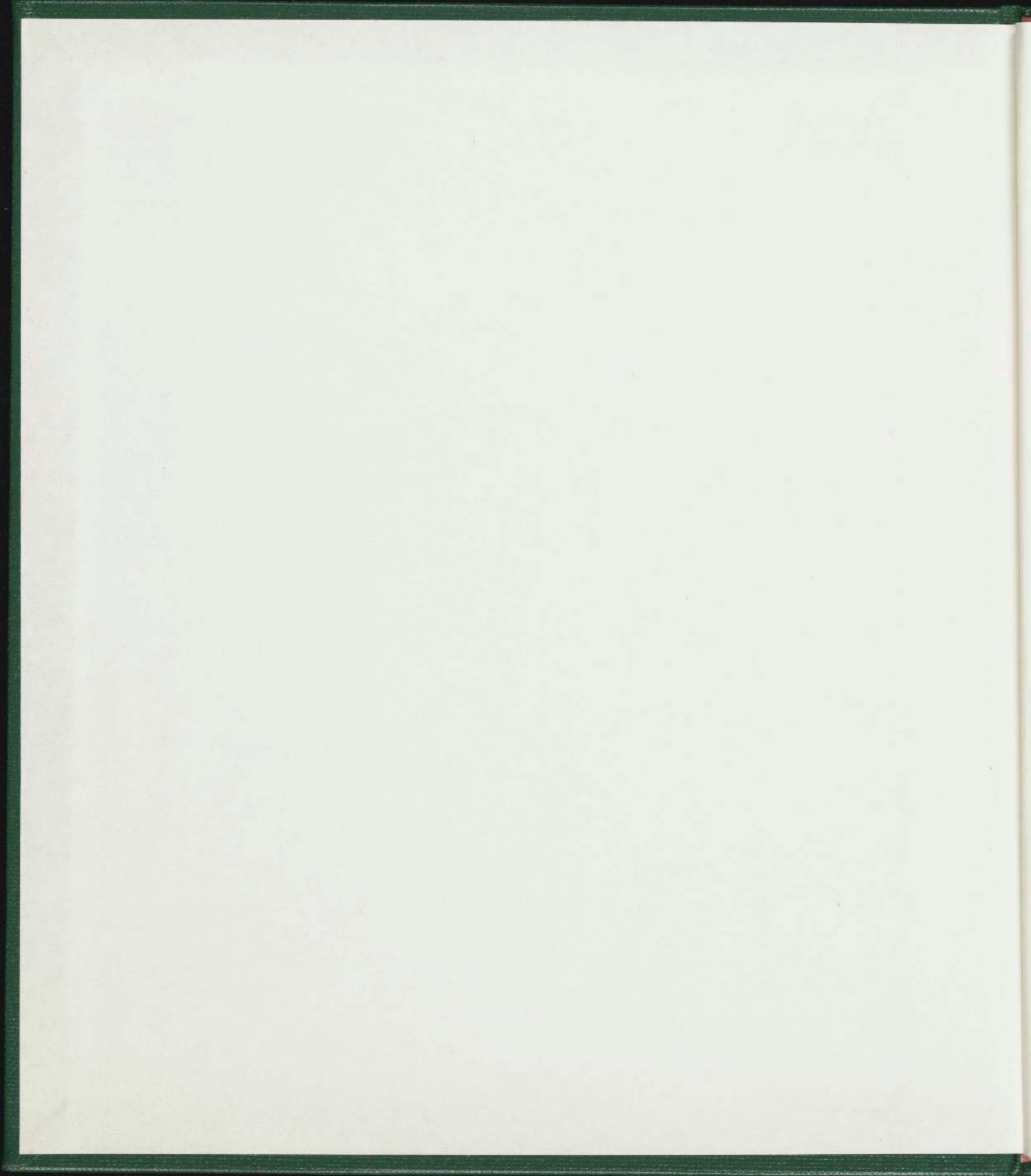
The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition history—from our founding in 1929 to the present—is available online. It includes exhibition catalogues, primary documents, installation views, and an index of participating artists.

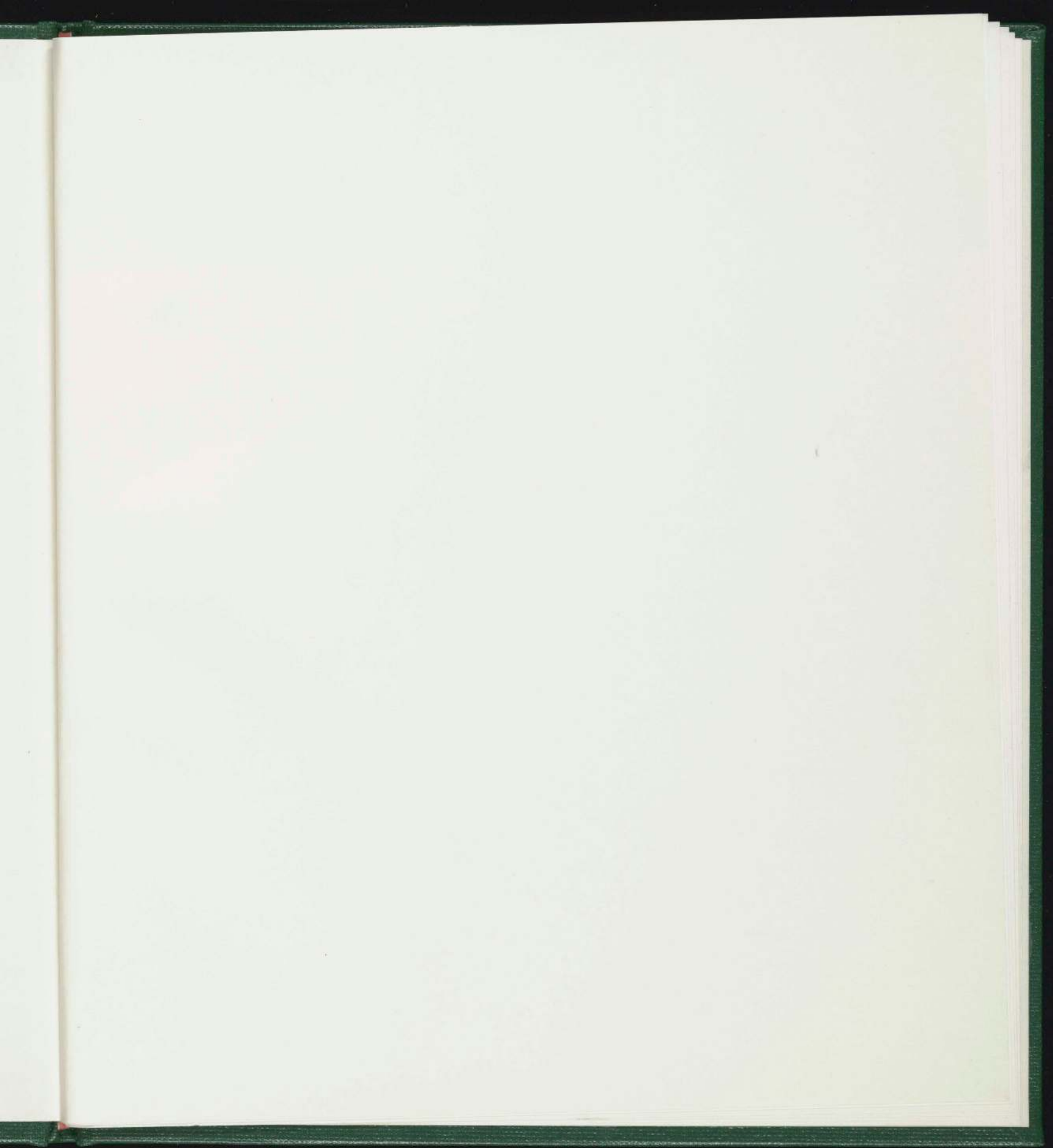
SUBWAY ART

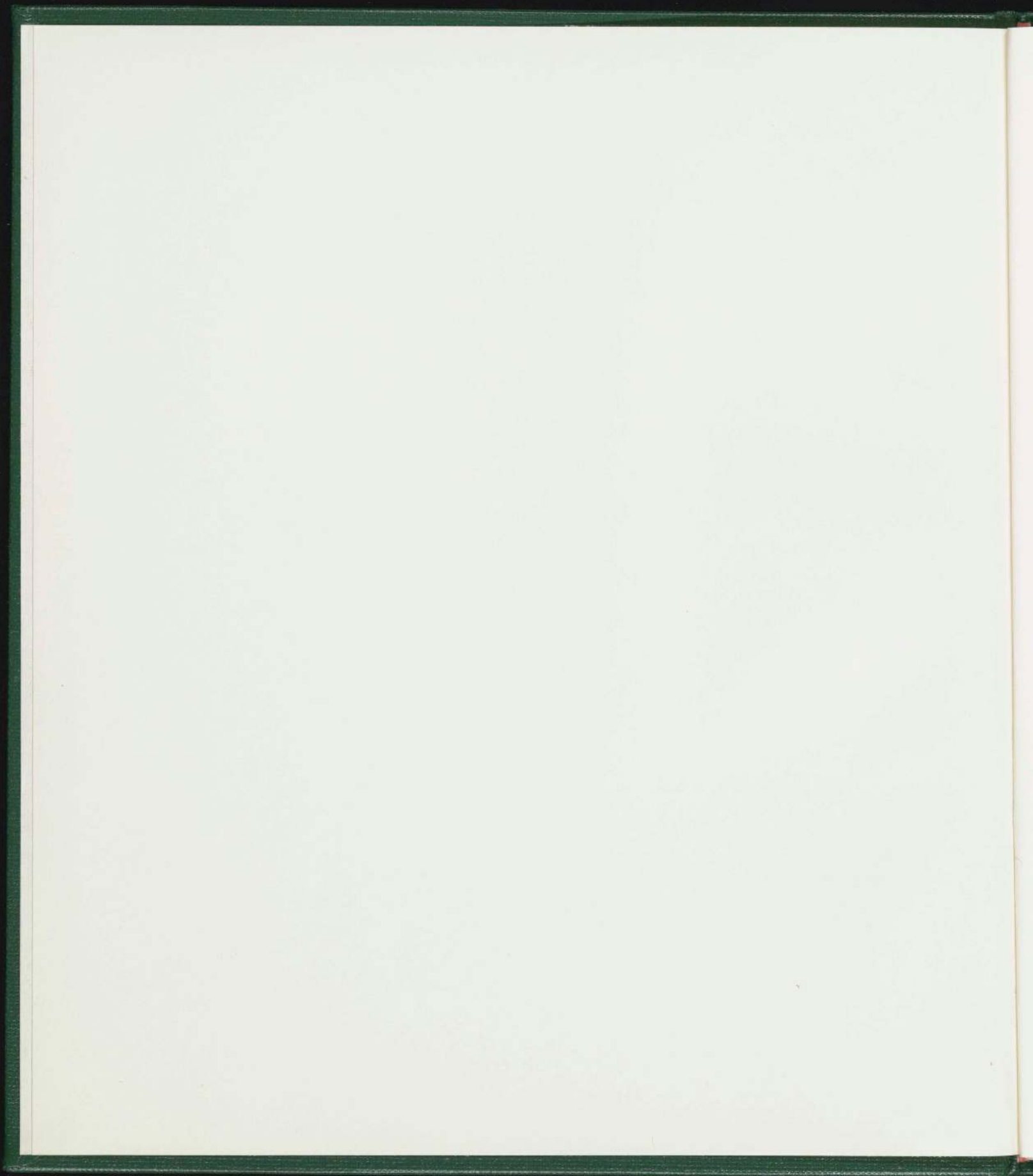
∞

1938

MoMA  
72  
c.2













THE HISTORY OF THE MODERN ART. 1841. 1842. 1843.



MOMA 72

c. 2

THE 72<sup>ND</sup> SEUM OF MODERN ART FEBRUARY 1938

SUBWAY ART





**SUBWAY** The Public Use of Art Committee of the United American Artists and the New  
**ART** York Federal Art Project, recognizing the existence of 436 potential underground art galleries, have for two years been engaged on a program of Subway Art. This exhibition represents the results of experimental work in various media.

The motive for introducing murals and sculpture into subway stations is an obvious one: the wish to combat an atmosphere which is always lugubrious and occasionally sinister. There is also the impulse to take advantage of an exceptional situation: to confront the citizen with works of art in places where he has nothing to do except look at his watch or at the walls.

The opportunities afforded by this predicament have long been recognized commercially. Manufacturers of breakfast-foods, hair-tonics and other springboards to the better life have for years covered the walls of subway stations with vivid posters advertising their wares. Since there is nothing else to stare at, the people waiting in subway stations stare at these advertisements. Young voyagers, presumably less hurried than their elders and more inclined to quarrel with the existing order, frequently add a mustache here, a black eye there, thus proving their disrespect for the esthetic effects offered them.

A program for Subway Art poses specific technical and esthetic problems. Much of the work of the United American Artists has centered on research into and experiments with suitable media. As a result of their efforts, carried out under the direction of Ralph Mayer, three processes have been developed capable of producing murals impervious to the vibration, temperature and dirt of the subways. These involve the use of glazed tiles, enamel fired on sheet iron, and silicon ester paint applied to concrete or plaster. Sculpture has been made in colored concrete, hammered sheet copper, other metals and stone.

The variety of styles, ranging from journalistic realism to complete abstraction, and the endless possibilities of subject are problems which concern the public as well as the artist.

The Museum presents this exhibition primarily because of the importance of the idea and the results of the technical experiments so far achieved. From the point of view of artistic quality or appropriateness of style and subject matter, the artists themselves feel that the project is at present in a formative stage.

- CATALOG** ABELMAN, Ida: 1 study for porcelain enamel mural 2 detail, *porcelain enamel*  
**OF THE** 3 two experimental panels, *porcelain enamel*.  
**EXHIBITION** AMBELLAN, Harold: 4 model for sheet iron and concrete illuminated sculpture.
- ANDERLET, Arthur J.: 5 experimental tiles for tile mural.
- AVERY, Frances: 6 color study for porcelain enamel mural 7 detail, *porcelain enamel*.
- BETHKE, Gustav: 8 color study for silicon ester mural 9 detail, *silicon ester*.
- BOTTO, Otto: 10 detail for mural.
- CHANEY, Ruth: 11 color study for porcelain enamel mural 12 detail, *porcelain enamel*.
- COSTA, Francis: 13 color study for tile mural 14 detail, *tile*.
- CRONBACH, Robert: 15 study for concrete sculpture.
- DANIELS, Jacob Paul: 16 pencil study for aluminum statue for niche over stairway 17 detail, *plaster*.
- FERBER, Herbert: 18 experimental panel, *porcelain enamel*.
- FRISCIA, Albert: 19 color study for mural 20 detail, *silicon ester*.
- GREENE, Balcomb: 21 color study for mural.
- GUTIERREZ, José and MEISELS, Isabella: 22 color study for fresco mural in station near Museum of Natural History 23 detail, *fresco*.
- HAAG, Hyman: 24 color study for porcelain enamel, tile or mosaic mural 25 detail for tile or mosaic 26 detail, *porcelain enamel*.
- HARARI, H.: 27 color study for tile or porcelain enamel mural 28 detail, *tile*.
- HARRITON, Abraham: 29 detail for mural, *porcelain enamel*.
- HEBALD, Milton: 30 model for concrete relief for subway entrance.



- CATALOG** KAHN, Getel: 31 experimental panel, *porcelain enamel*.
- OF THE** KARP, Ben: 32 detail for relief, *hammered copper* (courtesy of the Federal Art Project).
- EXHIBITION** KENT, Florence: 33 study for scrafito mural.
- KESLER, Clara: 34 experimental panel, *porcelain enamel*.
- KONZAL, Joseph: 35 study for tile or porcelain enamel mural 36 photograph of wall layout.
- MAHL, Claire: 37 two studies for porcelain enamel mural 38 detail, *oil*.
- MITCHELL, Bruce: 39 color study for porcelain enamel mural 40 detail, *porcelain enamel*.
- MORLEY, Eugene: 41 study for porcelain enamel mural 42 detail, *porcelain enamel*.
- OLDS, Elizabeth: 43 study for porcelain enamel mural 44 detail, *porcelain enamel*.
- RATZKER, Max: 45 color study for concrete frieze 46 detail, *plaster* 47 detail (head), *concrete*.
- RINGOLA, Joseph: 48 color study for tile mural.
- SCHNEIDER, Arthur and SOTTOSANTI, Angelo: 49 study for silicon ester mural, *silicon ester on concrete*.
- WELLER, Paul: 50 color study for porcelain enamel mural 51 detail, *porcelain enamel*.
- 52 Model of a subway station showing murals and sculpture in place. Built and lent by the New York WPA Federal Art Project.

*All research into new material was accomplished under the direction of Ralph Mayer and with the aid and full cooperation of Porcelain Metals, Inc., and the Matawan Tile Company.*

This preservation photocopy was made  
at BookLab, Inc. in compliance with copyright law.  
The paper meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO  
Z39.48-1992 (Permanence of Paper)



Austin 1998



1870

1871

1872

1873

1874

1875

1876

1877

1878

1879

1880

1881

1882

1883

1884

1885

1886

1887

1888

1889

1890

1891

1892

1893

1894

1895

1896

1897

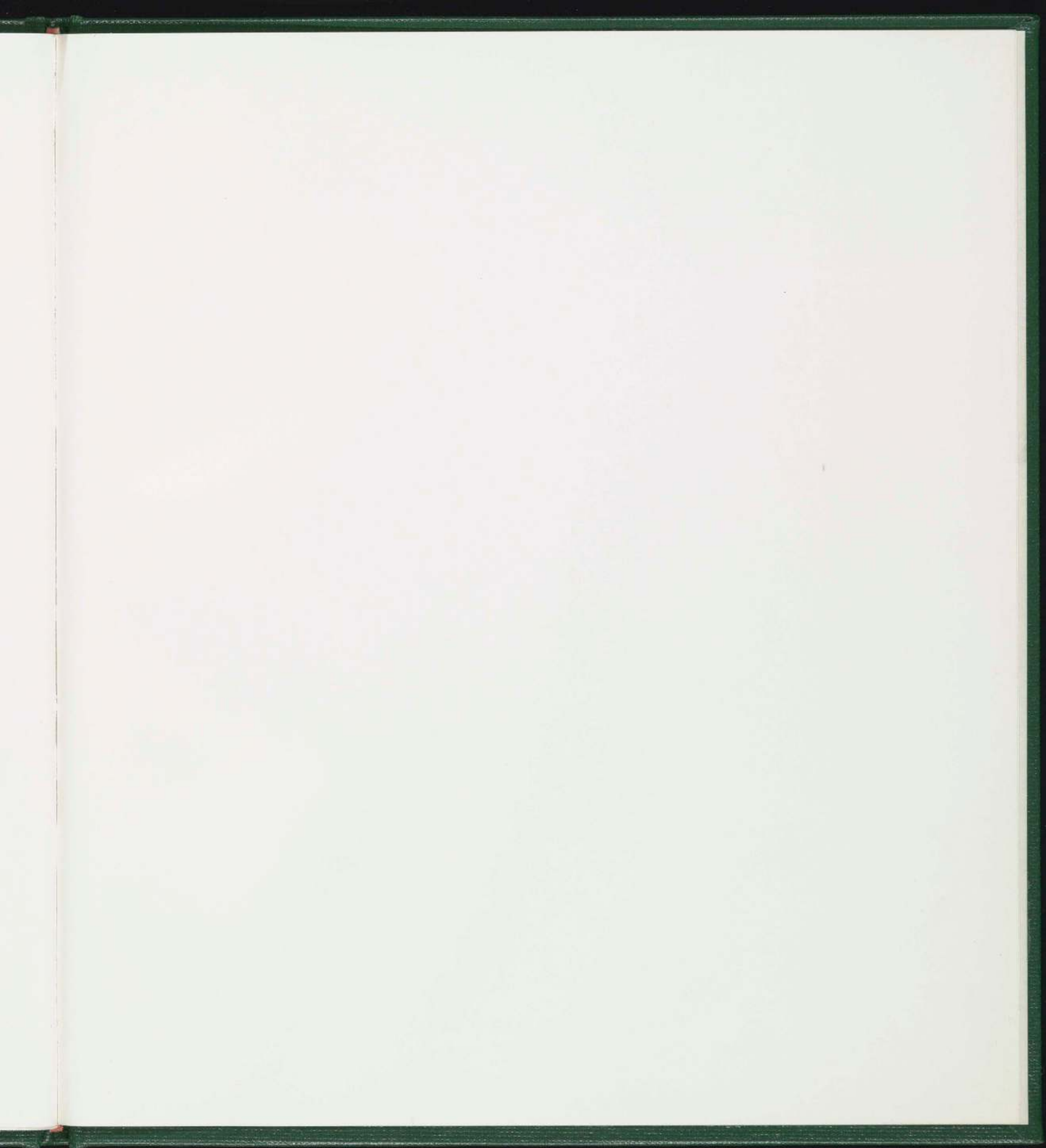
1898

1899

1900

1901

1902















The Museum of Modern Art



300190547

