

2 / 6
FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY
October 19, 1954
4:30 p.m.

P R O G R A M

OF THE OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, OCTOBER 19, 1954

Introductions:

WILLIAM A. M. BURDEN

President of the Museum of Modern Art

Mr. Burden has been President of the Museum since June, 1953, and a Trustee of the Museum since 1943. He is the senior partner in the New York firm of William A. M. Burden and Company.

Message:

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

A recorded message.

Greetings:

THE HONORABLE ROBERT F. WAGNER

Mayor of the City of New York

Speakers:

PAUL J. SACHS

Professor of Fine Arts, Emeritus, Harvard University

Professor Sachs is an eminent art authority and a scholar of international reputation. Formerly Director of the Fogg Museum in Cambridge, he was an important advisor to the founders of the Museum and has been a Trustee of the Museum since 1929

AUGUST HECKSCHER

Chief Editorial Writer, New York Herald Tribune

Mr. Heckscher, writer and journalist, is a member of the Museum's Junior Council, a group of young friends of the Museum who have initiated and operate such new programs as the Museum's Art Lending Service.

DAG HAMMARSKJOLD

Secretary-General of the United Nations

COPIES OF ALL SPEECHES ARE AVAILABLE

Preview: 5 to 11 p.m.

PAINTINGS FROM THE MUSEUM COLLECTION

The entire Museum will be devoted to the most comprehensive selection ever shown; forty new acquisitions; American Prints.

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY
October 19, 1954

After 4:30 p.m.

No. 89

EISENHOWER MESSAGE OPENS MUSEUM OF MODERN ART'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM

President Eisenhower called freedom of the artist to create works of art and of people to see them one of the pillars of liberty in our land in a special message recorded for ceremonies celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Museum of Modern Art in New York on Tuesday, October 19. Thousands of Museum members, artists and guests attended the ceremonies which were held in the Museum's outdoor Sculpture Garden. Guest speakers included national and international figures: United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold, Robert F. Wagner, Mayor of New York City, Professor Paul J. Sachs, art scholar, and August Heckscher, Chief Editorial Writer, New York Herald Tribune. William A. M. Burden, President of the Museum, presided and announced that each of the Museum Departments would present a major anniversary exhibition or activity during the coming year. A preview of the opening exhibition, PAINTINGS FROM THE MUSEUM COLLECTION, followed the program of speeches.

Dag Hammarskjold, in the main address of the afternoon, said that the courage and perseverance of modern artists in their unprejudiced search for the basic elements of experience are a lesson for those working to create a better world through the medium of international politics. Mayor Wagner, in extending greetings on behalf of the City of New York, spoke of the Museum's contributions to New York civic life and said that like the City, the Museum was national and international in its interests and concerns and constantly alert for new challenges and ideas.

Professor Sachs, a trustee of the Museum and an important advisor to the Museum founders, said that the Museum has changed the climate of public opinion from one of hostility toward modern art to one that is open-minded and receptive and that the new attitude of curiosity about modern art reflected in books, periodicals, the daily press and universities is primarily due to the Museum.

As a member of the Junior Council, a group of young friends of the Museum, Mr. Heckscher, writer and newspaper man, spoke about the connection between the Museum and the contemporary world, pointing out that the work of the Museum is related to the central struggle of our age, freedom against tyranny.

Mr. Burden, President of the Museum, paid tribute to modern artists, "the life-blood of all our endeavors" and to the founders, trustees and members who "as a

more

community "bound together by shared aesthetic experience and a common cause" have been responsible for the Museum's success. He praised the leadership of the Museum's Director, Rene d'Harnoncourt, and announced that during the coming year under his direction the able and devoted staff would present a series of major anniversary exhibitions, film festivals and publications.

Following the program of tributes and speeches, Museum members previewed the opening 25th Anniversary Exhibition, PAINTINGS FROM THE MUSEUM COLLECTION, the most comprehensive showing the Museum has ever presented of the pictures it has acquired during its first 25 years. The exhibition, installed in all three gallery floors by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of Collections, will be open to the public for three months beginning October 20. (Separate release and photographs available)

For this gala preview and quarter-century celebration, music was played during the evening and refreshments served in Museum restaurants in the Garden and in the Penthouse.

President Eisenhower's message, which was recorded and played over the Public Address system at the ceremonies, compared art in a free land with art under a dictatorship. The full text ran as follows:

On this, the quarter-century mark of the Museum of Modern Art, I am very happy to send my warm greetings to all its associates and friends.

To me, in this anniversary, there is a reminder to all of us of an important principle that we should ever keep in mind. This principle is that freedom of the arts is a basic freedom, one of the pillars of liberty in our land. For our Republic to stay free, those among us with the rare gift of artistry must be able freely to use their talent. Likewise, our people must have unimpaired opportunity to see, to understand, to profit from our artists' work. As long as artists are at liberty to feel with high personal intensity, as long as our artists are free to create with sincerity and conviction, there will be healthy controversy and progress in art. Only thus can there be opportunity for a genius to conceive and to produce a masterpiece for all mankind.

But, my friends, how different it is in tyranny. When artists are made the slaves and the tools of the state; when artists become chief propagandists of a cause, progress is arrested and creation and genius are destroyed.

Let us therefore on this meaningful anniversary of a great museum of art in America make a new resolve. Let us resolve that this precious freedom of the arts, these precious freedoms of America, will, day by day, year by year, become ever stronger, ever brighter in our land.

In paying tribute to the Museum of Modern Art, Secretary-General Hammarskjold said that "It is a museum for 'modern art' -- that is, for you and for me, a museum for the art which reflects the inner problems of our generation and is created in the hope of meeting some of its basic needs." Pointing out that the courage necessary for an unprejudiced search for the basic elements of experience, and the perseverance necessary to master those elements are qualities common to modern art and modern science, Mr. Hammarskjold said that the need for courage in searching is the basic difference between modern art and the art of the past, while perseverance is the main quality modern art shares with the art of the past.

more

218

"In modern international politics -- aiming towards that world of order which now more than ever seems to be the only alternative to disruption and disaster -- we have to approach our task in the spirit which animates the modern artist. We have to tackle our problems without the armor of inherited convictions or set formulas, but only with our bare hands and all the honesty we can muster. And we have to do so with an unbreakable will to master the inert matter of patterns created by history and sociological conditions," he concluded. (Complete text of Mr. Hammarskjöld's remarks is available)

Mayor Wagner said that the Museum on West 53 Street with its own two buildings and garden had become the hub of one of New York's newest and most outstanding cultural centers. He pointed out the Museum's contribution to New York's civic life through special exhibitions and said that "like the city which is its home, our Museum of Modern Art is constantly on the alert for the new challenge, the new idea, the new concept that may improve on the old. It is busy, it is frequently crowded...but always true to its own standard of quality, not afraid of controversy, not afraid of growing." (Complete text of Mayor Wagner's greeting is available)

William A. M. Burden, President of the Museum, after paying tribute to some of the trustees with whom he has been associated -- Lillie P. Bliss, the late Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Mrs. Simon Guggenheim, and the Museum presidents, A. Conger Goodyear, Stephen Clark, John Hay Whitney and Nelson Rockefeller -- said: "What we are today is perhaps best shown by the program of exhibitions with which we are celebrating this twenty-fifth anniversary. That program is the creation of our able staff and in telling you about the program I pay special tribute to them. These devoted men and women are the very essence of the Museum. They do all the real work. The magic of their selections and presentations has drawn five million people through these doors in the last 10 years."

After describing the opening Anniversary Year Exhibition, PAINTINGS FROM THE MUSEUM COLLECTION, and pointing out that Alfred Barr's single-minded devotion prevented the basic structure of the collection from being neglected in the whirlwind of day to day activity, Mr. Burden continued by outlining the program for the coming year under the leadership of Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director. Already on view is a selection of American prints from the Collection, assembled by William S. Lieberman who will present a similar exhibition of European prints next month, Mr. Burden said. Under the direction of Monroe Wheeler, the Department of Publications will add 12 books to its long list of titles, including a major anniversary publication, MASTERS OF MODERN ART. Andrew Ritchie, Director of the Department of Painting and

more

sculpture, will present an important exhibition called THE NEW DECADE: 22 EUROPEAN PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS. Edward Steichen is now assembling the FAMILY OF MAN photography show, one of the most ambitious ever held. Philip C. Johnson's Department of Architecture will present a review of architecture from Latin America, Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., will present a special Anniversary Good Design show and is also now in India selecting fabrics and jewelry for an exhibition to be held at the Museum in the spring.

The Film Library, Mr. Burden said, headed by Richard Griffith, has already started its series of film festivals for the anniversary year and Victor D'Amico, Director of Education, is now preparing an exhibition on creative teaching methods to be shown this spring.

"Our Anniversary activities will not be confined to this building or to New York -- our Department of Circulating Exhibitions, headed by Porter McCray has prepared over 60 exhibitions for circulation in the United States and will, as part of its International Program, present many others in Europe, Asia and Latin America.

"Much of the ground work for all these activities is now being prepared in our Library which under Bernard Karpel's direction has become the center of study and research of the Museum.

"All this vast program is under the supervision of the Director of the Museum, Rene d'Harnoncourt. His is the talent that sets it in motion and makes it go," he concluded. (Complete text of Mr. Burden's remarks available)

Professor Sachs, in summarizing the history of the Museum, said that while modern literature and modern music were readily available in 1929 when the Museum was founded, the country was antagonistic to modern art and the public had only limited access to American and European art of contemporary vitality. He praised the three "remarkable women", Miss Lillie P. Bliss, the late Mrs. John D. Rockefeller Jr. and Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan for their vision, courage and faith and related how they enlisted the aid of A. Conger Goodyear who not only enlisted the support of the other founders of the Museum, Mrs. W. Murray Crane and Mr. Frank Crowninshield, but served as president of the Museum during the first 10 years. Without General Goodyear and Stephen C. Clark, trustee and the president during the difficult war years, Mr. Sachs said the Museum could not have survived or prospered.

He also praised the contributions of the Museum's first director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., and the talented men and women who joined him in the early years, including Philip C. Johnson, who organized the Museum's first series of exhibitions of

more

224

exhibitions of architecture and design, Holger Cahill, who initiated the Museum's series of exotic and primitive arts, and Dorothy C. Miller, first assistant to the director and now the distinguished Curator of the Museum's Collections. The contributions of former department heads and associates praised by Professor Sachs included those in the field of painting and sculpture made by the distinguished art critics James Thrall Soby and James Johnson Sweeney, in architecture and design by John MacAndrews and Elizabeth Mock, and in photography and motion pictures by Beaumont Newhall, John Abbott and Iris Barry.

Among the trustees mentioned by Mr. Sachs for their generosity and wisdom were Mrs. Simon Guggenheim, Duncan Phillips, Sam Lewisohn, Edward Warburg, Philip Goodwin, Nelson Rockefeller, John Hay Whitney, Mrs. David Levy and Henry Allen Moe.

"Trustees and staff have as a team kept alive the spirit that animated the founders -- while still moving forward," Mr. Sachs said. "They have made the Museum a telling instrument in the field of general education They have circulated traveling exhibitions and sound publications in a steady stream for the delight and instruction of a vast following.... Their influence and example have liberalized the policies of every one of our leading museums, even the most complacent. (Complete text of Professor Sachs' speech available.)

Mr. August Heckscher, Chief Editorial Writer, New York Herald Tribune, said that the Museum for 25 years "has sought to make clear that modern art is not peripheral and aloof, but is related to the machine, to science, to industry, to urbanism -- to all that distinguishes the modern community."

Another connection between the Museum and the contemporary world, he continued, is that its work is related to the central struggle of the age - the struggle of freedom against tyranny. "We know that where tyranny takes over, whether under Facism or Communism, modern art is destroyed and exiled," he said, pointing out that modern art is individualistic, experimental, eclectic, all qualities which the totalitarian state cannot abide. "Our generation has seen the external world lose its absolute physical significance," Mr. Heckscher said, citing physics and psychology. "More than anyone, the artist has experienced a progressive meaninglessness in the universe...." But Mr. Heckscher continued, the modern artist "had the dignity to affirm that what is, is; he has possessed what Paul Tillich calls 'the courage to be.' To chaos he has given a form and a shape, so that it is not quite chaos anymore; and his art, that began as a Revelation ends as a prophecy." (Complete text of Mr. Heckscher's speech available)

more

In a brochure published by the Museum for the Anniversary Day celebration, Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum, points out that the original aims of the Museum as stated in the charter -- the encouragement and development of the study of modern arts and the application of such arts to manufacture and practical life -- have remained unchanged since its inception. However, his statement continues, the growth of the institution and the changes in the world in which it functions have called for an increase and widening of its activities and for modifications of its methods.

"During its first twenty-five years," he says, "the Museum has striven to fulfill the aims proposed by its founders; it has grown in the process into an institution of broad scope and varied activities. It now looks forward to a future in which it hopes to continue and increase its public services in a spirit of dedication to its original purposes, carried forward with awareness of the needs of a changing world."

Copies of all speeches and of the special Anniversary brochure are available upon request from

Mrs. Elizabeth Shaw
Publicity Director
Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 Street
New York City, N. Y.

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY
October 19, 1954
4:30 p.m.

ADDRESS BY WILLIAM A. M. BURDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

AT THE OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, OCTOBER 19, 1954

Fellow Trustees and Members, Distinguished Guests:

We are happy indeed that you are here to join in celebrating the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Museum of Modern Art. This is a moment which touches the heart as well as the mind. We like to think of our Museum as a community bound together by a shared aesthetic experience and a common cause.

You - artists, scholars and friends of art - who have served this cause, with talent, knowledge, and material and moral support, are the members of this community. To you this celebration is rightfully dedicated.

In our community the artist is, by necessity, the leader whose genius we follow. The vigor and excellence of his work is the life blood of all our endeavors. If we take pride in our achievements, it is pride in transmitting his message.

The Museum of Modern Art was founded twenty-five years ago by a small group of collectors who wanted others to share their enjoyment of the art of our time.

Professor Sachs, who was their trusted advisor, will tell you more about these wise founders and the able former staff members who worked under Alfred Barr, the first Director.

Our roster of Trustees has always been a distinguished one. Unfortunately it is impossible even to mention here all those who have made important contributions to the Museum's development. I must, reluctantly, limit myself to a few great figures with whom I have been privileged to work.

Lillie P. Bliss, whose distinguished pictures were the cornerstone of the magnificent collection we see here today.

Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the memory of whose inspirational leadership lives throughout this building - and especially in the beautiful garden around us - the gift of outstanding sons in honor of a great mother.

Next, Mrs. Simon Guggenheim to whose great generosity and sense of quality we owe so many of the superb masterworks that make this the greatest collection of modern art in the world.

more...

And then - the list of our outstanding presidents.

Conger Goodyear, who captained the ship with vigor, humor and common sense for the first ten crucial years; Stephen Clark, the wise and sensitive, who kept us afloat in wartime and on whom we lean continuously; John Hay Whitney, past President, now our able and devoted Chairman, who does so much for the Museum in such a quiet and modest way.

Then, a very special place for Nelson Rockefeller, whose energy, imagination and drive have been the very heart of the Museum during his seven years as President and long before. He is serving his country in Washington and we all regret that he cannot be here today to join in the celebration of what is so largely his own achievement.

Now let us look at our own institution more closely.

What we are today is perhaps best shown by the program of exhibitions with which we are celebrating this twenty-fifth Anniversary. That program which covers the entire year is the creation of our able staff and in telling you about it I pay special tribute to them. These devoted men and women who generate ideas and give them reality, are the very essence of the Museum. They do all the real work. The magic of their selection and presentation has drawn five million people through these doors in the last ten years.

Our opening show which you will see this afternoon is a report on our Collection of Paintings; a report which clearly outlines the solid foundation which has been built up in the past generation.

The three main gallery floors have been given up to this exhibition. Yet the 400 works of art hung there are only one-third of our entire holdings.

Not every picture shown here claims to be a masterpiece; it could not and should not be in a collection of this scope. But by any fair standard, we feel we are showing a really comprehensive review of the pictorial art of our time.

I would remind you that the collection has been assembled during years when we were producing an unending stream of current exhibitions on the trends in painting, sculpture, industrial design, photography and the motion picture.

Had it not been for Alfred Barr's single-minded devotion, it would have been easy to neglect the basic structure of the collection in the whirlwind of daily activity. We owe an unrepayable debt to that dedicated and courageous scholar, who is generally recognized as one of the world's greatest authorities on modern art.

Likewise, we are deeply in debt to the Trustees' Committees who have exercised the final judgment on acquisitions. They have faced the difficult task of
more...

allocating very limited purchase funds. They have shown a keen eye for established masterpieces combined with an open-minded acceptance of new and controversial pictures which may prove the masterpieces of tomorrow.

Together with the paintings from the Museum's Collection we are showing a selection of American Prints to be followed next month by a similar survey of European graphic art. Both these exhibitions were assembled from the Museum's Print Collection by its Curator, William S. Lieberman.

Publications to supplement major exhibitions have become an increasingly important aspect of our program. Under the direction of Monroe Wheeler, The Department of Publications - will add 12 books this year to its long list of titles. One million copies of our books and pamphlets have been distributed to the public in the last ten years. Our major Anniversary Publication will be 'Masters of Modern Art' edited by Alfred Barr.

Andrew Ritchie, Director of our Department of Painting and Sculpture, has just returned from abroad where he selected works of art for an important exhibition to be called "The New Decade - 22 European Painters and Sculptors". *

Edward Steichen, Dean of American Photographers, and Director of our Photography Department, is now working on the organization of the "Family of Man" one of the most ambitious and probably one of the most significant photography exhibitions ever held.

Philip C. Johnson, Chairman of our Architecture Committee, announces for next spring an exhibition on Modern Buildings from Latin America where modern architecture has been more widely accepted than anywhere else in the world.

The Director of our Good Design program, Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., plans to show the 100 finest objects selected from all the exhibitions in that series. At this moment he is in India assembling a collection of ancient and modern fabrics and jewelry to be shown here later in the year.

Our Film Library, headed by Richard Griffith, has prepared Four Film Cycles for this Anniversary Year. The first, dealing with films about films is being shown now to be followed later by Italian Films and Masterworks from our Collection

Victor d'Amico, head of the Museum's Department of Education is working on an exhibition illustrating the creative approach to art teaching that was so successfully developed in our People's Art Center.

Our Anniversary activities will not be confined to this building or to New York -- our Department of Circulating Exhibitions, headed by Porter McCray, has prepared over 60 exhibitions for distribution in the United States and will,

* Simultaneous with this show the Whitney Museum will be exhibiting a review of contemporary American work. more...

as part of its International Program, present many others in Europe, Asia and Latin America.

Much of the ground work for all these activities is now being prepared in our Library which under Bernard Karpel's direction has become the center of study and research of the Museum

All this vast program is under the supervision of the Director of the Museum, Rene d'Harnoncourt. His is the talent that sets it in motion and makes it go.

Rene, that genial giant, brings to the complicated task of Director creative imagination, tact, humor and all-around ability that are rare indeed. We who have worked with him through the years not only admire him as a great figure in the Museum world but love him as a sincere and delightful human being.

In closing this brief address as President, I wish to thank, from the bottom of my heart, the Officers, Trustees, Staff and Members who have made the not inconsiderable responsibilities of this office, such happy and pleasant ones.

Eisenhower 227

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY
October 19, 1954
at 4:30 p.m.

ADDRESS BY DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

AT THE OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, OCTOBER 19, 1954

On this, the quarter-century mark of the Museum of Modern Art, I am very happy to send my warm greetings to all its associates and friends.

To me, in this anniversary, there is a reminder to all of us of an important principle that we should ever keep in mind. This principle is that freedom of the arts is a basic freedom, one of the pillars of liberty in our land. For our Republic to stay free, those among us with the rare gift of artistry must be able freely to use their talent. Likewise, our people must have unimpaired opportunity to see, to understand, to profit from our artists' work. As long as artists are at liberty to feel with high personal intensity, as long as our artists are free to create with sincerity and conviction, there will be healthy controversy and progress in art. Only thus can there be opportunity for a genius to conceive and to produce a masterpiece for all mankind.

But, my friends, how different it is in **tyranny**. When artists are made the slaves and the tools of the state; when **artists** become chief propagandists of a cause, progress is arrested and creation and genius are destroyed.

Let us therefore on this meaningful anniversary of a great museum of art in America make a new resolve. Let us resolve that this precious freedom of the arts, these precious freedoms of America, will, day by day, **year** by year, become ever stronger, ever brighter in our land.

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY
October 19, 1954
at 4:30 p.m.

ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE ROBERT F. WAGNER, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

AT THE OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, OCTOBER 19, 1954

Mr. Burden, Mr. Whitney, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Other people here today will speak to you about the Museum of Modern Art's unique and important contribution to the nation and to the world we live in. As Mayor of the City of New York and as a New Yorker, I would like to say a few words about the Museum of Modern Art as a New York institution, a New York institution we are happy to congratulate on its 25th Anniversary.

Like many new enterprises, when the Museum of Modern Art was founded in 1929, it had a small staff, a handful of loyal supporters and a few rented rooms. During the past quarter of a century it has grown and prospered as creative ideas in a responsive climate do thrive if carefully tended. In 1939 the main building designed in modern style was opened to the public and it has since become a familiar landmark in our city. Four years ago a glass and steel wing was added and last year this sculpture garden where we are meeting today was completed and dedicated to Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, one of the Museum's founders. In a few days a sister institution, the Whitney Museum, will open next door and in the summer of 1955, the Donnell Free Circulating Library and Reading Room, a branch of the New York Public Library, will open across the street. Thus the Museum of Modern Art, which began its career so modestly in a few rented rooms, has become the hub of one of New York's newest and most outstanding cultural centers.

It is sometimes said that New York does not represent the true heart of America. Yet there is no other community that draws so much on the resources of all forty-eight states. And in this respect the Museum of Modern Art is a typical New York institution, for it too draws on all the states -- for the paintings, sculpture, and prints it exhibits, for the films, photographs, and architectural designs it shows. And just as New York City is a cosmopolitan center drawing on the whole world, so does the Museum concern itself with all the art of our time from all the world. Like Rome, Paris and London, New York City has produced a powerful and stimulating intellectual climate which attracts people and ideas from everywhere to make one creative community.

more

The Museum of Modern Art is one of the most important focal points of our creative community in New York City. It is a typical New York institution in another way. Always concerned with the practical application of the arts of our time to our daily life, the Museum has made particular contributions to our civic life in special exhibitions. City planning, housing, bridges, even the signs in our streets and the automobiles which pass them have been the subject of shows at the Museum. Other exhibitions are prepared by the Museum each year and sent on tour through our public schools, thus making a direct contribution to New York City's school system.

And like the city which is its home, our Museum of Modern Art is constantly on the alert for the new challenge, the new idea, the new concept that may improve on the old. It is busy, it is frequently crowded -- as a favorite visiting place for New Yorkers and out-of-towners -- but above all it is always true to its own standards of quality, not afraid of controversy, not afraid of growing.

The Museum of Modern Art has added much to the cultural importance of New York City in its first 25 years. We can all expect this record to be maintained and can, I think, look forward to new ideas and new services as the Museum enters its second quarter-century.

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

Sachs 230
FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY,
October 19, 1954
4:30 p.m.

ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR PAUL J. SACHS

Professor of Fine Arts, Emeritus, Harvard University

AT THE OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, OCT. 19, 1954

President Burden, Mr. Whitney, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As an old retired museum man who has, from the day of its birth, watched the miraculous development of the Museum of Modern Art and who rejoices that it continues to be an educational institution - I am delighted to speak briefly of the crying need for its creation; of its early days.

No other museum has done pioneer work of comparable importance in the span of a quarter-century or acquired - due to its own buying policy - as representative a group of significant modern works.

Twenty-five years ago we were all, as a matter of course, reading modern literature; we were listening to modern music; but in spite of the excitement engendered by the Armory Show of 1913, our country was, on the whole, antagonistic to modern art.

That was not unnatural, for only in the shops of art dealers - usually helpful but often special pleaders - did the public have limited access to American and European art of contemporary vitality. It was a deplorable situation. To correct it seemed a pressing need, especially before the days of Joseph Brummer and Curt Valentin.

In 1929 three remarkable women of vision were convinced that modern art might be better understood and enjoyed, only if properly presented on a disinterested museum platform, there to be kept broadly international in its approach to the visual arts. The three women, with courage and faith, were the pioneering, perceptive Miss Lillie P. Bliss, who in 1931 gave to the new Museum its firm foundation, by bequeathing her great collection, on condition that an endowment large enough to guarantee its proper housing and display be raised; the late Mrs. John D. Rockefeller Jr., patron of modern art and inspirer of all who were ever associated with her; and Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan, a collector who radiated a contagious enthusiasm.

The first move that these three women made was to seek the cooperation of a practical man - a militant believer in modern art. Their choice - a wise one - fell on A. Conger Goodyear, known for his inspiring leadership as President of the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo. Fortunately Mr. Goodyear accepted the challenging

more.....

invitation. He helped the three ladies to enlist the support of the other founders: Mrs. W. Murray Crane and Mr. Frank Crowninshield, both open-minded in backing good causes. It was my privilege to be associated with them.

May I remind this company that without A. Conger Goodyear and Stephen C. Clark, two of our oldest and most active Trustees, this great institution could not have survived or prospered.

General Goodyear, for the first decade of our history, was our President. We are deeply grateful that because of his superb sense of responsibility and un-failing courage, he guided us through the difficult depression, giving time without stint and constant constructive thought to our manifold problems.

And Mr. Stephen Clark, more than any other single Trustee, gave his time and thought to keeping this Museum going during the difficult war years when the younger men were away. I wish there were time to dwell on the long roster of Trustees who have done so much for the Museum in its first quarter century -- such generous Trustees as Mrs. Simon Guggenheim, always selfless in her giving; also Duncan Phillips, Sam Lewisohn, Edward Warburg, Philip Goodwin, architect of this functional building; Nelson Rockefeller, John Hay Whitney, Mrs. David Levy, and Henry Allen Moe.

The initial meeting of the Board was called in rented rooms in the Heckscher Building - our home for two years. There we met -- officially -- Alfred H. Barr, Jr., our first Director -- a scholar-connoisseur at 27 -- and his able associate Jere Abbott.

As teacher at Wellesley College, Barr had given proof of his intimate knowledge of modern art which, happily, was rooted in the art of the past. It had been his good fortune to enjoy the benefits of a rigorous Princeton training, as the gifted disciple of three of her greatest scholar-teachers: Allan Marquand, Frank Jewett Mather, and Charles Rufus Morey - supplemented by graduate study at Harvard. Thus he was well trained and ready to stage exhibitions of distinction - the backbone of the Museum's educational program.

During the first years, Alfred Barr was joined by a number of talented men and women such as Philip Johnson, who organized the Museum's first exhibitions of Architecture and Design, Holger Cahill who initiated the Museum's series of exhibitions of exotic and primitive arts, and Dorothy Miller who served as the first Assistant to the Director and is now the distinguished Curator of the Museum's Collections.

Mr. Burden has told you about the staff members who are now carrying on the Museum's work under the leadership of our present Director, Rene d'Harnoncourt, and

it seems appropriate for me to mention some of the former department heads who have made such valuable contributions to the Museum's progress and success. These include: in the field of painting and sculpture, the distinguished art critics James Thrall Soby and James Johnson Sweeney; in architecture and design, John MacAndrews and Elizabeth Mock; and in photography and the motion pictures, John Beaumont Newhall, John Abbott and Iris Barry.

Trustees and staff have as a team kept alive the spirit that animated the founders - while moving forward. They have continued to take chances. They have avoided the dangers that dog the footsteps of the complacent. They have made the Museum a telling instrument in the field of general education. They have given proof of their capacity to select the best of a type. They have circulated traveling exhibitions and sound publications in a steady stream, for the delight and instruction of a vast following.

What more natural, then, that these men and women should have helped people to see and to discriminate. They have taught us all that modern art, like the art of the past, may be realistic or abstract, traditional or experimental, conservative or radical. Their influence and example have liberalized the policies of every one of our leading museums - even the most complacent.

Through courageous, audacious and crusading leadership, the Museum has changed the climate of public opinion from one of hostility twenty-five years ago, to one that is today open-minded and receptive to all aspects of modern art. No longer is the new dismissed with contempt and ridicule. Instead, there is in the art world of America an attitude of curiosity, reflected in books and periodicals, in the daily press -- yes, even in the universities.

For so happy a change this institution is primarily responsible. Only by ever pioneering boldly and by taking risks will the Museum continue to escape the dangers that go with timidity.

That in barest outline is our history. That is our destiny.

May we, at our 50th Anniversary, stand before the world as youthful and forward-looking as today, respected and ready to embark on further service to the nation.

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

233
FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY,
October 19, 1954
4:30 p.m.

ADDRESS BY AUGUST HECKSCHER

Chief Editorial Writer, New York Herald Tribune

AT THE OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, OCTOBER 19, 1954

Mr. Burden, Distinguished Guests, Friends of the Museum:

We look back today over 25 years. We look forward - not to 25 years, not to 50, but to as long a time as free men and women shall cherish the arts in a free land.

We stand upon the solid ground of history. But we have to carry us across this future only the frail wings of philosophy.

As one who would interpret with you this philosophy, I come with the meagerest credentials. As a newspaperman, it is my business most days of the week to find in passing events some shadow of the thing that endures. And it is my task today - at this milestone of the institution which has been built by the efforts, the imagination and the generosity of so many - to find words that may express what is the essence of modern art - what makes it central and significant to our time.

* * *

I begin with a personal confession. I never come to this place without feeling myself surrounded by a kind of reason and peace. It may be a very wild and whirling kind of reason; it may be a dynamic and even dizzy kind of peace. Yet there is something here which meets the contemporary mood and answers the hunger of the modern man. I am sure I am not alone in feeling this.

The artist must feel it, and all lovers of art. The youngest child must feel it, dragged unwillingly into a strange world of color and space. And all the wide-skirted, ballet-slippered young ladies - they must surely feel it, converging as from nowhere upon a natural home. These know that in some deep way they have touched springs here which can give life to an ultimate awareness; which hint at what this mid-century world could be, if all its tendencies were fulfilled and its inmost truths made luminous and visible.

What is modern art? Is it simply art that happens to have been created under today's sun? Is it something that falls into one of a dozen schools - the Impressionists, the Cubists, the Surrealists, and the rest? Insofar as it is merely these things, modern art is perpetually becoming out of date; or, what is worse, becoming a fad and not even possessing the dignity of the old-fashioned. But insofar as it represents a genuine vision of the world, it cannot fade in this way. It will remain at least as modern as the classic Greek art, as new as the art of the

more.....

Renaissance. Social orders may disintegrate, systems of religion and philosophy may cease to be meaningful, but the visionary and creative moments of every age have a lasting validity.

* * *

This museum gives to its visitors a sense of being one with the modern world for a first, very simple reason. The spirit of art around us here has escaped from these walls, has penetrated the work-a-day world, and made its home in the least expected places. It is in the streets and shops, in the buildings of the city, in the plainest implements of household use.

Partly this is because the real world has exerted so tremendous an influence on the ideal concepts of form. The modern flying machine is what it must be, and the artist perceives that it is, too, what at his best he would have wanted it to be - the essence of a thing, stripped of all sentiment and preconception. But in no small measure there is this affinity between what we feel in this museum and what we find outside because the museum has for twenty-five years deliberately and imaginatively sought to instruct and elevate the taste of a wide public. It has sought to make clear that modern art is not peripheral and aloof, but is related to the machine, to science, to industry, to all that distinguishes the modern community.

The omnipresence and popularity of modern art bring their own dangers. We have watched the mobile, for example, become a hobby, a part of the great do-it-yourself saga, and then become an ad-man's vehicle for selling soap. We have seen people who think it hopelessly naive to put the painting of a real apple on the wall think it very sophisticated to build a real wall as if it were a Mondrian painting. That is to say we have seen modern art used incongruously, exploited, and vulgarized. This is the inevitable danger. Yet for the next twenty-five years, and for much more than that, this museum will go on proudly taking the risk - getting the world outside to resemble a little more closely what the artists have recognized as the ideal.

* * *

There is a second way in which the Museum gives a sense of being in harmony with the contemporary world. Its work is related to the central struggle of the age - the struggle of freedom against tyranny. We know that where tyranny takes over, whether under Fascism or Communism, modern art is destroyed and exiled. Why should this be? Modern art by its nature is a revelation. At its most characteristic it can never be propaganda, whether propaganda for a bad or a good cause.

It is individualistic, experimental, eclectic - all qualities which the totalitarian state cannot abide. It establishes a plurality of worlds. Have you thought that modern art is unique in recognizing and affirming the validity of many approaches? Alone of the great schools it sanctions a diversity of styles. In

more.....

other epochs there are departures from the accepted norm, there are eccentrics among the artists and heresies among their ideas. But under the sheltering roof of this museum there is a genuine hospitality. It is a hospitality based not upon the fact that curators have been unable to make up their minds, but on the much deeper and more important fact that they believe excellence, truth and beauty to be many-sided.

This many-sidedness is a fundamental belief, also, of a free society. I would go further. The constant drive of the modern artist to separate and distinguish, to break up the surface into forms of light, to show the elements that compose the whole, is in line with what is best in modern political thinking. The great community, which once appeared monolithic, congealed under a "cake of custom," now reveals itself in all its multifarious interests. Power is diffused; decision-making is shared and decentralized; public opinion is the sum of what many separate publics think on a particular matter. Seeing the community this way - analagous to the way today's artists see the once-solid object - we find around us the material for creating a free and varied common life.

* * *

My argument, you will see, is that modern art is harmonious with the genius of the modern world. The pure perceptions of the artist can influence the more practical arts, such as architecture and industrial design, because this harmony exists. And as today's thought extends itself in various fields to the frontiers of knowledge and feeling, this harmony is the more vividly sensed.

I have spoken of political philosophy. But is not the same thing true of advanced science, advanced mathematics, advanced psychology? No one of us will have experienced directly a full comprehension of these developments. Yet to the extent that we have perceived dimly what goes on in the mind of a thermo-nuclear physicist, or of a psychologist breaking through the barriers of consciousness, we feel at one do we not? - with the mood of the modern artist. We stand with him at the thin transparent edge of our civilization, and the light falling about us is the clear, harsh light that pervades contemporary art.

* * *

Is it not true, above all, that modern art is in key with the modern man's religion? If I at all understand what the theologians are saying who address themselves to today's world, it is that there is an actuality and a directness in the religious experience very different from the vague Pantheism which once seemed so refined and up-to-date. "A spirit and a Vision," said Blake - and I quote a man who

more.....

could claim to both a modern artist and a prophet of modernity - "A spirit and a vision are not, as the philosopher supposes, a cloudy vapour, or a Nothing. They are organized and minutely articulated beyond all that mortal and perishing nature can produce."

The cloudy vapour has gone out of theology; as there has gone out of art the idea that something mysterious must be mistily defined. The vision "organized and minutely articulated" is what the preponderance of canvases in this museum reveal - and it is what the great modern theologians - from Kierkegaard to Karl Barth - have seen in their highest spiritual moments.

The idea of nature as an encompassing element in which all the world swims as fishes swim in the sea, the idea of God as a featureless generality transfusing this nature - this pleased the nineteenth century and colored its art. The twentieth century mood bathes the world in a fiercer sunlight. It gets man somewhat outside the imprisonment of nature. It makes God (and the scientists increasingly assert His existence) a being and an essence: not a Nothing, not a shadowy presence manifesting itself in cows and trees and babies and other such.

The artist, insofar as he is a creator, can without blasphemy take on something of the character of the Creator himself. He can be more objective, harsher, more factual than his predecessors. He can see forms, not vapors merely. A realist, he knows that reality is of all things the most mystical. A visionary, he knows that the vision, when it is truly seen, is opaque and solid.

We say of much modern art that it is abstract. In relation to the literal object, in relation to the nineteenth century view of nature, I suppose that it is abstract. But in relation to the ultimate reality, it may be said to be the very opposite of abstract. It is surprisingly concrete and it is - to return to Blake's phrase - as organized and minutely articulated as mortal and perishing nature can produce.

* * *

The generations before us saw dissolved the idea of a settled cosmic order, in which men played their parts as in some great drama. They saw the external world lose its absolute moral significance.

Our generation has seen the external world lose its absolute physical significance. Matter has melted away under the impact of physics. Objective mental concepts have melted under the impact of Freudian psychology. Yet man - man the artist, man the affirmer - remains. Sometimes it seems that he alone remains - he and the essence of things with which he is blindingly face to face.

More than anyone, the artist has experienced a progressive meaninglessness in the universe. He has seen the loss of authority by the religious dogmas that once
more.....

told him what to paint, and actually how to paint. He has suffered the burden of things not making sense, and the even greater burden of things (in the old literal way) not even being things. He, more than anyone, has shared in what some have called the anxiety, and some the despair, of the age. Is he for that reason less the artist - or less the man?

He has had the dignity to affirm that what is, is; he has possessed what Paul Tillich calls "the courage to be." To chaos he has given a form and a shape, so that it is not quite chaos any more; and his art, that began as a Revelation, ends - as all great art must - as a Prophecy.

* * *

And so, Ladies and Gentlemen, without further ado, I give you the muse of Modern Art. She sits at ease among her sisters; for like them she draws her being from the deep essence of things; she sets forth a vision of the truth, with such vigor and pathos that under her spell men feel as if they had looked on truth for the first time - or as if they were about to look on it for the last time. Yet she is younger than her sisters; she affects plain colors; she shows little respect for settled ways; she scorns not the world. Those are her wooers who come seeking the immediacy of fact, the unshaded experience, the shattered fragment that contains the whole. She is a wicked deceiver; the most ardent wooer she will, if she please, leave empty-handed, with only a few wires and strings, a few crude forms a child might have made, to show for the encounter. But giving herself, she gives the agony and the brightness at the times' core.

Here there has been built a place where modern art can be at home. For twenty-five years the Trustees and Staff have pioneered in excellence; and decades hence, when twenty-five years have come to seem a brief part of the Museum's total span, that excellence - and that vitality - must still be the hallmark of the Museum's work.

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

240
FOR RE LEASE:
Tuesday, Oct. 19, 1954
4:30 p. m.

ADDRESS BY DAG HAMMARSKJOLD

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

ON OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1954, AT 4:00 P.M.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It may seem strange that on this occasion -- at the celebration of the 25th anniversary of a great New York institution -- the Secretary-General of the United Nations should take an active part. However, I feel greatly honored to do so in view of the significance of the Museum of Modern Art and of its aims. The United Nations Secretariat and its Secretary-General owe special thanks to this institution for its generosity, and for a stimulating relationship which I hope will grow with time. On a personal level, I would like to add that I am flattered to be recognized in this connection as a fellow citizen of New York.

The art collected here is not modern in the sense that it has the vain ambition of expressing the latest of the shifting fashions of a mass civilization which long ago lost its anchorage in a firm scale of values, inspired by a generally accepted faith. Nor is it modern in the sense of the comic strips or similar attempts to use the techniques of art to cater for broad emotional needs through a cheap representation of a sentimentalized reality. It is a museum for 'modern art' -- that is, for you and for me, a museum for the art which reflects the inner problems of our generation and is created in the hope of meeting some of its basic needs.

Although modern art, in the sense in which I have used the word, is as peculiar to our time as the big factory, the jet plane, the atom reactor or the sky-scraper, it is not an art just of today. Indeed, the origins of its special problems and its attempts at solutions date back to the time in the past century when developments, leading to the technical achievements in which we now pride ourselves, first started their sky-rocketing course.

Achievements in which we pride ourselves ... ? We regard what has happened in the scientific and technological spheres as progress -- and, of course, it is progress. But is it justified to consider also the art which is contemporaneous with and, indeed, partly inspired by that development, as representing a step forward? Andre Malraux has said that modern times have not produced a single work of art comparable to the highest achievements of Occidental art in the past. Is he not right?

I also remember his brilliant, but cruel phrase about the 19th century -- that this century, which was obsessed by the cathedral, did not leave behind it more than one: more...

the museum in which it collected all its paintings. Does not this paradox reveal something essential? If we demand of art that it should be the expression of a mature and balanced mastery of the relationship of man and his civilization to life, then modern art, to be sure, does not reach levels that were already achieved in a distant past in our Western civilization. No -- then it is not progress.

However that may be, there are two qualities which are shared in common by modern art and the scientific sphere: one is the courage of an unprejudiced search for the basic elements of experience. The other one is perseverance in the fight for mastery of those elements.

The need for the courage of search establishes a decisive difference between modern art and the art of the past, living in and expressing a world of faith. Agnostic search, based on a re-evaluation of all values, is a quality of modern art that is an essential expression of the spiritual situation of our generation. But this quality, in itself, must prevent modern art from achieving the kind of perfection which we meet in the Cathedral of Chartres or in the paintings of Giotto.

The second quality -- perseverance in the fight for mastery -- is on the contrary the main great quality that modern art shares with the art of the past. I have already quoted Malraux. Let me quote him again: 'The victory of an artist over his servitude joins the victory of art itself over the fate of man'. The romantic conviction expressed in these words is what makes Piero della Francesca and Rembrandt, Cézanne and Braque, members of one great fraternity. In that conviction, and in the fight it inspires, the artists who aimed at a transfiguration of reality meet the artists who now strive for an explanation and recreation of reality.

In its search for the basic elements of the world surrounding us and in its fight for mastery of those elements, modern art has revealed to us also where lies the real victory of the great artists of the past. Without making us eclectics, it has helped us to understand -- as far as that is possible without sharing the atmosphere of faith in which they were born -- what has been achieved in the harmony of the best works of the past. Modern art has forged keys to a perfection which it has not itself reached. Shouldering courageously the problems of modern man, reflecting his situation in a world of conflicts born out of his own achievements, it has, thus, earned the recompense of being permitted also to illuminate the greatness of man in the high artistic achievements of the past.

Art gives more to life than it takes from it. True art does not depend on the reality about which it tells. Its message lies in the new reality which it creates by the way in which it reflects experience. In our minds, we, all of us, sometimes chisel beauty

more...

out of the stone of matter. If we had the courage and perseverance to push these experiences of a few moments to their extreme point, we would share in the effort of the modern artist to isolate beauty from the impurity of life, even if it has to be at the cost of dissolving the very forms of life. Why then, seeing modern art, should we feel estranged when we do not at the first glance recognize the familiar aspects of our every day world?

Modern art teaches us to see by forcing us to use our senses, our intellect and our sensibility to follow it on its road of exploration. It makes us seers -- seers like Ezra Pound when, in the first of his Pisan Cantos, he senses "the enormous tragedy of the dream in the peasant's bent shoulders." Seers -- and explorers -- these we must be if we are to prevail.

It may seem to you to be far-fetched if -- in the light of what I have just said -- I draw attention to activities in which my colleagues and I are engaged. All the same I will do so, because this parallel means a lot to me. For that reason I may perhaps count on the interest which we are willing to grant most of the time to all honestly held convictions.

In modern international politics -- aiming towards that world of order which now more than ever seems to be the only alternative to disruption and disaster -- we have to approach our task in the spirit which animates the modern artist. We have to tackle our problems without the armour of inherited convictions or set formulas, but only with our bare hands and all the honesty we can muster. And we have to do so with an unbreakable will to master the inert matter of patterns created by history and sociological conditions.

Even in the political sphere we are likely to look to the creations of the past with a nostalgia. But we know that those creations can never be brought back to life, that ours is the duty to find new forms, starting often from nothing. And we know that these forms will not be found without the courage of that deep sincerity which is shown in the search of the great artists of our age, or without the firmness and perseverance which they have demonstrated in their relentless efforts to reach mastery.

One of the great composers of our age has said that the artist must start out, again and again, from two colors or three notes or the right angle. That is a clue to the spirit of the masters of modern art. On that basis they have, in their best moments, rivaled nature and mastered matter. They have a lesson to teach us who work in other spheres of life with problems created by the developments which have set the stage for our life of today.

243

These reflections have touched on questions inside a field where, frankly, I feel too much of an outsider to have a right to speak to you. However, I hope that my words may tell you something about how the beauty and significance of what this museum stands for is reflected in the mind of one whose tasks in our common effort to build a better world lie in a sphere seemingly very far from that of the great artists here represented -- a sphere in which achievements, alas, are still mostly very close to "two colors, three notes and the right angle."
