

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

Fall 1956

No. 95

## BACKGROUND MATERIAL ON THE ART LENDING SERVICE

The Art Lending Service was established in 1951 by the Museum's Junior Council. Working in cooperation with approximately 60 New York art galleries, the Lending Service collection includes about 400 paintings, sculptures, watercolors, drawings and prints by more than 200 artists; these are available for rent to members of the Museum for two- or three-month periods at fees ranging from \$5 to \$67, and for sale at prices ranging from \$25 to \$950. The rental fee is deductible from the purchase price.

The works of art, which vary greatly in style and media, are selected from cooperating New York galleries by a committee of the Junior Council and approved by a Museum staff committee. Although the selection is constantly changing, as paintings go out on loan or are sold, a typical group available at one time might include abstract paintings by Mark Tobey and James Brooks, a mobile by Alexander Calder, a watercolor by John Marin, a color woodcut by Frascioni, a collage by Joan Miro, and a magic realist painting by Carroll Cloar. Paintings by relatively unknown artists as well as by world famous artists are included.

The Lending Service has its own gallery and office space on the sixth floor of the Museum annex, at 21 West 53 Street. Some of the works of art are displayed on the shelves around the walls and others are kept in storage tills where borrowers can browse. Council members and staff are on hand Monday through Saturday, twelve to 5:30, to show the collection and assist borrowers.

More than 900 people have taken advantage of this service since it was inaugurated. Housewives, secretaries, television executives, writers, teachers, editors, doctors, businessmen and women, designers, musicians, brokers and art directors are among the borrowers, many of whom have purchased the work of art they rented after living with it for two or three months.

The record of the Art Lending Service's first five years shows a steady growth in all directions. At the beginning 33 galleries and 126 artists cooperated in the program. Now about 60 galleries participate and the total number of artists whose work has been represented has more than doubled. The number of works of art in the Lending Service has also increased. During the first season there were usually about 300 works available; during last year, about 400 were available at any given time. The number of borrowers and number of works borrowed has also increased. For example, during the first year there were 345 rentals to 175 people and 45 sales (about 13 per cent of the rentals). Last year there were 542 rentals to 307 people and 131 sales

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(more than 24 per cent).

An important measure of the success of the Art Lending Service is this increase in sales, as the purpose of the service is to encourage the wider purchase of contemporary art. Through the rental plan, the special satisfaction that comes from living with art and the opportunity to test a special purchase are readily available. The percentage of sales has risen steadily since the Lending Service was inaugurated and the total value of works sold has more than doubled; \$8,675 the first year to \$22,365 the fifth year. The total value of works of art sold during the first five years is more than \$72,000.

The average selling price of works of art purchased has remained at about \$185 each year. Most of the rentals are in the \$5 for two months category (purchase price from \$25 to \$125) with the \$10 (\$126-200) and \$15 (\$201-300) running close seconds.

The Lending Service has also increased the geographical area that it serves. At first restricted to New York City and suburbs, the Service then expanded to cover the eastern seaboard, and now serves the entire country. The only requirement for the borrowers is that they be Museum members. Borrowers pick up and return the works of art they rent. Special arrangements can be made for non-resident borrowers who are unable to transport works themselves. The Art Lending Service also offers its facilities to colleges, schools and hospitals, with the stipulation that one member of the board be a Museum member. Two years ago the Lending Service expanded in still another direction by making the works of art in its collection available to business concerns. All works of art in the Art Lending Service are insured. The schedule of rental fees, based on the price range, is as follows:

<u>Price Range</u>	<u>2 Months Rental Fee</u>	<u>3 Months Rental Fee</u>
\$25 -125	\$ 5.00	\$ 7.00
126-200	10.00	15.00
201-300	15.00	22.00
301-400	20.00	30.00
401-500	25.00	37.00
501-625	30.00	45.00
626-750	35.00	52.00
751-825	40.00	60.00
826-950	45.00	67.00

The Art Lending Service was organized and is run by the Museum's Junior Council which, under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Donald B. Straus, sponsors many special events including exhibitions, film showings, and evening symposia and discussion groups. Mrs. Armand F. Bartos is Chairman of the Art Lending Service, Mrs. Alfred R. Stern, Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Richard A. R. Pinkham, Secretary, Harmon H. Goldstone, Treasurer, Mrs. Carroll L. Cartwright, Volunteer Scheduling, Arthur M. Bullowa, Exhibition Chairman.

For further information contact Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. Circle 5-8900.