

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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REMARKS BY WILLIAM A. M. BURDEN AT THE CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS
OPENING OF GERMAN ART OF THE 20TH CENTURY
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK

September 30, 1957

On behalf of the Museum's Trustees, I am very glad to be able to welcome so many friends on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition, "German Art of the 20th Century." This evening, I think, has a double significance.

The exhibition of more than 170 paintings, sculptures and prints selected by Andrew Carnduff Ritchie, fulfills the first aim of all our exhibitions-- a high standard of quality in each individual work of art. And for this we are grateful to the dozens of American and German private and public collectors who have generously lent some of the finest works in their collections. We are particularly grateful to the St. Louis Museum which is collaborating with us in presenting this exhibition to the American public.

It is most heartening, I feel, to be able to show works by the pioneer German modern artists along with a selection of work being done today in Germany, where the traditions of free creative opportunity are once again restored. In a sense this exhibition is a testament to the courage of artists and of the men and women everywhere who help foster the creative spirit and who recognize that it grows only in freedom.

In the coming weeks various special activities will be announced in connection with the exhibition. Notable among these is a week of openings of new German films which will inaugurate the largest retrospective of German films ever held in this country.

We are fortunate in having with us this evening several people whose contributions to the exhibition deserve special mention. The three scholars who contributed sections to the catalog -- each on his own speciality -- are here.

Dr. Werner Haftmann, a leading authority on modern German art, wrote the section on German painting and we are delighted that he and Dr. Alfred Hentzen, Director of the Hamburg Museum and author of the section on sculpture, have been able to come from Germany to join us tonight. They have come here with Dr. Kurt Martin, Director of the Bavarian State Collection in Munich, who was also extremely helpful to the director of the exhibition and editor of the catalog, Andrew Ritchie. William S. Lieberman, the Museum's Curator of Prints, wrote the chapter on German graphic art and has installed the print section of the exhibition in the Auditorium Gallery. I hope you all have an opportunity to see that really astonishing array, much of it, I am proud to say, from the Museum's own collection.

The preparation of a large exhibition and major publication involves many months of negotiations. Under the leadership of Andrew Ritchie we began planning and working for this exhibition in 1955. During all the intervening time the Federal Republic of Germany has extended invaluable help in many directions. While leaving the Museum a completely free hand in the selection of the works of art, the German Government has officially sponsored the exhibition, has granted funds to cover the costs of shipping and insuring German loans and has contributed to the cost of publishing the catalog.

Our relations have been most cordial and we feel the ability and cooperation of our German colleagues as well as the contents of this exhibition illustrate dramatically the strong cultural upsurge which characterizes the new Germany, a Germany which in Chancellor Adenauer's great victory, has exhibited its determination to join with the west in standing firm against the forces of evil.

Before introducing two distinguished representatives of the German Government, Minister Albrecht von Kessel and Cultural Counselor Dr. Bruno E. Werner, I want to thank their government on behalf of the Museum, and if I may, on behalf of the thousands of Americans who will have an opportunity to see and enjoy these works of art.