

The Museum of Modern Art,
730 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

*Publicity
release*

February 17, 1930
(For immediate release)

The Museum of Modern Art during the last two weeks of its exhibition of Painting in Paris, closing Sunday, March 3rd, will be forced to charge admission, at least in the afternoons. The Trustees have come to this decision with the greatest reluctance, for the Museum was opened with every intention of making it an institution open to the public free of charge. But an unprecedented situation has arisen because of the entirely unexpected crowds which have filled the Museum galleries, making it impossible in the afternoons to see the paintings and so congesting the elevator system in the Heckscher building that crowds gather in the corridors both on the ground floor and on the twelfth floor where the galleries of the Museum are situated.

Innumerable complaints from visitors, some of them humorous, some of them seriously resentful, have been received. They have come intending to look at pictures and have instead been trampled, with no better compensation than a view of other visitors' necks. Even critics, who ordinarily have plenty of opportunities to view the exhibitions in comfort, have complained. Murdock Pemberton of The New Yorker calls the Museum exhibition "a mob scene . . . you fought your way into the place and elbowed your way through the rooms". Mr. McBride of the Sun "sympathizes with those who only see Miss Wiborg's 'Picasso' over the heads of hundreds of others". Mr. Louis E. Sterne, President of the Atlantic City Art Gallery, left a pathetic note at the entrance, - "Hearty congratulations on your very refreshing show. I wish though I had learned to play football. I will have to come again early some morning".

More urgent still are the complaints which the patient management of the Heckscher building has received from other tenants who are unable to leave their offices or return to them without considerable delay during lunch hour and the afternoon because the elevators are so crowded that they are forced to pass by many floors without stopping on their way up and down to and from the Museum. Every possible adjustment has been made but the 1500 visitors a day have made it impossible to arrive at any solution of the problem except that of attempting to distribute the crowds so that they will not be concentrated in the afternoons.

As a last resort the Museum has been forced to charge an admission fee of fifty cents from 12 to 6 o'clock, and to open the galleries free of charge in the evening from 8 to 10 on every day of the week, Saturday and Sunday excepted. The galleries will remain open during the morning from 10 to 12, all day Saturday, and Sunday afternoon admission free. The money accruing from the admission charge will be turned back into the Museum funds for upkeep and purchase of pictures.

Charging admission in the afternoons is of course a temporary solution of an urgent problem but is a vivid illustration of the need for adequate permanent headquarters for the Museum, for it is evident that the present attendance is the result of no merely casual excitement. The Museum has now been running four months and the attendance during the last four weeks has been considerably higher than during the first four weeks.