

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 245-3200 Cable: Modernart

No. 46A

May 27, 1968

A SHORT CHRONOLOGY OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 1929-1968

Space

1929

Founded by Miss Lillie P. Bliss, Mrs. Cornelius Sullivan, and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.) to help people enjoy, understand, and use the visual arts of our time.

Summer Heckscher Building, 730 Fifth Ave., 6 rooms rented for galleries and offices.

Program

1929

Nov. 7

Opening exhibition, Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, van Gogh. Attendance - 47,000 first month. Catalogue launched Museum's publication program.

First work acquired, bronze torso by Aristide Maillol.

Print collection begun with 8 works given by Paul J. Sachs.

1930

Jan.

First painting acquired, House by the Railroad (1925), by Edward Hopper, gift of anonymous donor.

1931

May

Memorial Exhibition: The Collection of the late Lillie P. Bliss; conditionally bequeathed in 1931, the collection was formally accessioned in 1934 at the time of permanent charter by New York State Board of Regents. The basis of the Museum collection of painting and sculpture.

1932

May

Moved to town house at 11 West 53 St., part of present site.

1932

Feb.

Modern Architecture: International Exhibition, opening presentation of Department of Architecture; first exhibition other than painting and sculpture; first to be circulated.

Reference Library founded with 2,000 books.

May

Murals by American Painters and Photographers; first showing of work by photographers.

(more)

- 1933
April Department of Circulating Exhibitions established.
- Objects 1900 and Today. First design show of furniture and decorative arts.
- Nov. First one-man photography show: Walker Evans: Photographs of 19th Century Houses.
- 1934 Machine Art exhibition initiated design collection.
- 1935 Film Library given working space by William S. Paley in CBS Building on Madison Ave.
- 1935 June The Film Library (now called Department of Film) organized "to trace, catalogue, assemble, exhibit, and circulate a library of film programs so that the motion picture may be studied and enjoyed as any other one of the arts is studied and enjoyed;" first international film archive.
- 1936
May Acquisition of 4 buildings on West 53 St.
- 1937
June Temporary quarters in Time-Life Building, Rockefeller Center, 14 West 49 St., while new building constructed.
- Oct. Gift by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., of site of present sculpture garden.
- 1938 Three Centuries of Art in the United States; first Museum exhibition sent abroad.
- 1939
May 10 Opening of new building, 11 West 53 St. Philip L. Goodwin and Edward D. Stone, architects. Dedication by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- 1939 Beginning of regularly scheduled Auditorium film showings.

By 1940, 1,600,000 people had viewed 125 special exhibitions at the Museum, and Membership totaled more than 4,000.

(more)

1940

Department of Photography established with a basic collection and reference library - the first curatorial department devoted exclusively to photography in any museum.

1941

War activities through June 1945: film contracts with CIAA, Army, Navy, Air Force; special exhibitions, special traveling exhibitions, poster competitions, Armed Services Program, canteens and servicemen's parties, Veteran's Art Center, etc.

1945

War Veteran's Art Center established in rented quarters on Fifth Ave., between 53 and 54 St. Became People's Art Center offering courses for children and adults in 1948; moved to 21 West 53 St. in 1951; as The Art Center moved in 1964 to Garden Wing with entrance at 4 West 54 St.

1949

Summer Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room opened.

1949

March

Junior Council founded, now numbering about 60 young men and women who operate the Art Lending Service, sponsor exhibitions and special presentations related to the Museum program.

In the second decade, from 1940 to 1950, 4,000,000 people attended more than 350 special exhibitions at the Museum, and membership rose to more than 8,500.

1951

Summer Grace Rainey Rogers Annex opened, 21 West 53 St. Philip C. Johnson, architect. Two floors equipped for Art Center classes.

1951

Oct.

Art Lending Service established.

1952

Jan.

Long-range International Program of circulating exhibitions initiated by five-year grant from Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

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1953
Spring Abby Aldrich Rockefeller
Sculpture Garden opened,
designed by Philip C. Johnson.
Dedication by Trygve Lie,
First Secretary General of
the U.N.

Purchase of privately-owned
United States Pavilion at
Venice Biennale, Italy.

Acquisition of 27 West 53 St.

1954
Oct. Whitney Museum building opened
at 20 West 54 St. (Acquired by
Museum of Modern Art in 1963.)

Garden Restaurant adjacent to
outdoor Sculpture Garden opened.
Philip C. Johnson, architect.

1955
First annual summer art classes
for children and adults held in
rented space at Amagansett, on
eastern Long Island.

1956
Acquisition of Theater Guild
building, 23 West 53 St.
Used for offices.

1957
July International Council assumed
sponsorship of the Museum's
program of exhibitions abroad.

1958
Apr. Museum closed following fire.
15-30

June 2- Museum closed for renovation.
Oct. 5

1959
Nov. 30th Anniversary Drive launched,
with goal of \$25,000,000 for
endowment, building, and program
expansion.

During the third decade, 1950 to 1960, almost 5,000,000 visitors saw 250 special
exhibitions at the Museum, and annual attendance mounted to more than 600,000.
Membership rose to almost 25,000, and the collections grew from 2,600 items in 1929
to almost 12,000.

(more)

1960
March Announcement of gift by
 Mrs. E. Parmalee Prentice
 of two town houses at 5 - 7
 West 53 St.

1960
Dec. Institute of Modern Art formed
 to assume responsibility for the
 People's Art Center and other
 educational services.

1961
Summer Former barge purchased and
 converted into Summer Art Center
 for vacation art classes at
 Amagansett.

In addition to above exhibition and office
space, storage facilities continue to be
rented in various warehouses in New York.

1963
June Announcement of acquisition of
 Whitney Museum building at 20
 West 54 St. Now part of The
 Lillie P. Bliss International
 Study Center.

1963-64
Dec. 2- Museum closed for construction
May 24 and remodeling.

1963-64
Dec. 17- 153 paintings from the Museum
Mar. 1 collection loaned to The National
 Gallery in Washington, D.C.
 while Museum was closed.

1964
May 25 Opening of enlarged Sculpture
 Garden and two new wings;
 Edward Steichen Galleries and
 Photography Study Center; Paul
 J. Sachs Galleries for Drawings
 and Prints; and Philip L. Goodwin
 Galleries for Architecture and
 Design. Philip C. Johnson,
 architect. Dedication by Mrs.
 Lyndon B. Johnson.

1965
Jan. Opening of enlarged Abby Aldrich
 Rockefeller Print Room.

1968
May 27 Dedication of North Wing, The
 Lillie P. Bliss International
 Study Center.

Between 1960 and 1968 some 5,500,000 people have viewed more than 185 special exhibi-
tions at the Museum, with annual attendance now at 1,000,000. The collections
include some 18,500 works and 3,500 films, and membership has grown to 38,000.

Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public
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