

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

No. 98

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 1969

TWENTIETH-CENTURY ART FROM THE NELSON ALDRICH ROCKEFELLER COLLECTION, recently published by The Museum of Modern Art, accompanies the first large public showing of one of the most important private collections in this country on view at the Museum through September 1.

Governor Rockefeller's understanding of the art of our time and his wide range of interest from masters of modern art to very recent experimental work is documented in this volume, which includes a foreword by Monroe Wheeler, a preface by the Governor, and an essay on the collection by William S. Lieberman.

In a sensitive portrayal of Nelson Rockefeller as an art connoisseur, Mr. Wheeler comments: "His interest in the visual arts is not just a taste; it is an appetite and a nourishment." Governor Rockefeller describes his enjoyment of art as "... a matter of love. One loves art, and wants to do something about it. Collecting and lending and bequeathing and, come to think of it, building museums to house one's bequests, are the things to be done."

One hundred and thirty-seven illustrations (18 in color) include paintings, sculptures, and drawings by such artists as Picasso, Braque, Boccioni, Matisse, Maillol, Modigliani, Arp, Klee, Miró, Giacometti, Kiesler, Calder, Moore, Lachaise, Nadelman, Lipchitz, Rothko, de Kooning, Motherwell, Nevelson, Noguchi, David Smith, Jasper Johns, and Frank Stella.

Analyzing the significance of art in his life, Governor Rockefeller says:

...Looking closely at art is a good game, sharpening one's wits and warming one's heart. It is the greatest recreation ever devised by the ingenious mind of man. It gives us relief from the pressures, frustrations, and compromises of everyday life. And without intellectual pretension or propaganda, I believe that it helps us to understand historic changes, fevers and ferments in the body politic, beneficial or otherwise--although spelling these things out in detail is apt to distort the artist's purpose. In its nature, art is visionary; even if we fail to understand the artist's complex mentality, out of which so many disparate forms arise, the ambience of his free imagination stimulates in our minds dream-worlds and utopias of our own.

In his text, Mr. Lieberman provides a context for this unique collection in the history of modern art and an insight into the personal taste of the collector. Governor Rockefeller

(more)

"is primarily concerned with the formal elements of an object: its shape, its color, the resolution of its composition. Because he is not particularly attracted by subject matter there are few paintings in his collection that are descriptive or that invite literary associations." His preference for simplicity and special interest in sculpture are evident throughout his collection.

Long associated with The Museum of Modern Art, of which his mother was a founder in 1929, Governor Rockefeller was elected a Trustee in 1932 and has served as President and Chairman of the Board. In forming his collection, he has received valuable assistance from Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the first Director of the Museum, and Dorothy C. Miller, former Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture, who directed the current exhibition.

Both Mr. Lieberman, recently appointed Director of the Museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture, and Mr. Wheeler, Counselor to the Museum's Board of Trustees and former Director of Exhibitions and Publications, have written numerous books published by the Museum. Mr. Lieberman selected the modern prints and illustrated books included in the exhibition.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY ART FROM THE NELSON ROCKEFELLER COLLECTION

Foreword by Monroe Wheeler; preface by Nelson A. Rockefeller, commentary by William S. Lieberman; complete exhibition catalogue.

140 pages; 137 illustrations (18 in color)

Hardbound \$7.50

Paper \$3.95

DISTRIBUTION OF HARDBOUND EDITION:

United States and Canada: New York Graphic Society Ltd.

United Kingdom: Trans Atlantic Book Service, Ltd.

International: Feffer and Simons, Inc.

\*\*\*\*\*

Review copies, photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director and Joan Wiggins, Associate, Press Services, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 956-7501, 7297