

# The Museum of Modern Art

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## RENE D'HARNONCOURT (1901-1968)

René d'Harnoncourt joined the staff of The Museum of Modern Art in 1944 and served as Director from 1949 until his retirement in 1968. His association with the Museum began even earlier, in 1941, when he was guest director of the exhibition Indian Art of the United States. Subsequently he directed many exhibitions at the Museum reflecting his widespread interests and expertise, especially in installation techniques. Among those shows devoted to special themes illuminating relationships between the arts were Art of the South Seas (1946), Timeless Aspects of Modern Art (1948), Modern Art in Your Life (with Robert Goldwater, 1949), and Ancient Art of the Andes (1954). Others were devoted to work by famous sculptors: Henry Moore (1947), Elie Nadelman (1948), Gabo and Pevsner (1948), Jacques Lipchitz (1954), Jean Arp (1958); and his last show The Sculpture of Picasso (1967).

Under Mr. d'Harnoncourt's guidance, the Museum was able to expand its galleries and extend its program. An annex at 21 W. 53 St. was added to the Museum in 1951. The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden was opened in 1953 and in the following year the adjacent Garden Restaurant. In 1964 the Sculpture Garden was enlarged and two new wings were added to provide more space for temporary shows as well as for the Museum collections of photography, drawings and prints, and architecture and design. In 1968 the Lillie P. Bliss International Study Center (housed, in part, in the former Whitney Museum Building) was dedicated.

A major extension of the Museum's program under Mr. d'Harnoncourt was the founding of the International Council of the Museum, an organization of art patrons and community leaders from all over the world who sponsor the international exchange of exhibitions and other cultural activities that constitute the Museum's International Program.

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A member of the National Council on the Arts from its founding in 1965, Mr. d'Harnoncourt was a member of the board of the Center for Inter-American Relations and vice president of the Museum of Primitive Art. He also was associated with the U. S. Commission for UNESCO from 1946.

He received honorary degrees from Dartmouth College (1955), Columbia University (1958) and the University of New Mexico (1964) and was decorated by the French, German and Peruvian governments.

Born in Austria in 1901, Mr. d'Harnoncourt moved to Mexico in 1925 where he lived until 1931. There he worked as a poster artist, illustrated children's books and in an art gallery. He became a citizen of the United States in 1939.

In this country in the early 30s, Mr. d'Harnoncourt directed a network radio program called "Art in America" and taught at Sarah Lawrence College. In 1937 he was named General Manager of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board of the U. S. Department of Interior and served in that position until 1944. During this time he also served in the Office of Inter-American Affairs.

In 1944 he joined the staff of the Museum. He became Director of Curatorial Departments in 1947 and two years later was named Director of the Museum.

Mr. d'Harnoncourt died in 1968. His widow, the former Sarah Carr of Chicago, lives in New York City. Their daughter Anne d'Harnoncourt is Curator of Twentieth Century Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

May 13, 1975

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