

Pub. release *Goodyear*
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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART.

I.

When a new tendency has passed through its period of incubation and begins to break out on the body artistic, its early manifestations are treated tolerantly, if at all, as a mild case of chicken pox. But as the infection spreads, suspicion raises the diagnosis successively to measles, scarlet fever, small pox and leprosy. To his last breath good Doctor Subtle persists in his pharmacy of oburgation for what the layman has come to recognize as no disease but a change of complexion.

The Museum of Modern Art was established as a laboratory to determine if the period of recognition had been reached. It was founded by a group of people enjoying a catholicity of taste in painting and sculpture, and more especially interested in the so-called "Modern School." Stated baldly, their purpose was to test public interest in the School and thereby determine if there was a demand sufficiently widespread and enthusiastic to justify the establishment of a public museum with a permanent collection and temporary exhibitions confined to the Modern School and the origins of that school. Modern Art is confessedly a rather vague term. It may, however, be taken generally to include the work of artists outside of the academic tradition who show originality in their work and depend upon the lessons of the past only for progress towards new ideas.

Since the Armory Show of 1913, promoted chiefly by Arthur B. Davies, there had been in New York only one public exhibition of the work of the painters who have followed Cézanne, and his great contemporaries, or of the sculptors who succeeded Rodin. To a limited clientele, an increasing number of dealers had played the showman for the recent great and near great, but the numbers who thronged the Armory eighteen years ago were shy of the portals of Fifty-seventh Street, however wide the doors might swing. Furthermore, many of the great treasures of private and public collections were not available for dealers' exhibition, and no comprehensive presenta-

tion was possible lacking these master pieces.

Beginning with Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, and van Gogh in November, 1929, and continuing to this year, there have been fifteen exhibitions in the temporary galleries of the Museum at 730 Fifth Avenue. In the first year the attendance was 203,408. The total for the fifteen shows was 315,636.

The question as to public interest has been answered, nor was there any hesitation in the response. The first show, bringing together what has been called the finest collections of the works of the fathers of the Modern School ever shown, in one month had over 47,000 visitors; in the last week over 13,000 and on the last day over 5,000. In four weeks nearly 50,000 people came to the third show called "Painting in Paris" which included Picasso, Matisse, Derain, Braque and many of the lesser lights of the French School.

The answer has been emphatic beyond the dreams of the most enthusiastic believers. In the 4,000 square feet of the new Museum's galleries -- the space included in an area of 80 ft. by 50 ft. -- over a period of two years almost one-eighth as many people entered as visited the Metropolitan Museum in the same time.

II.

For the coming season four important exhibitions are planned. Of these, two at least will be sent on to other museums in this country and probably abroad. One will be a display of modern architecture which will include models and plans of ten of the leading American and European architects who are developing a modern style. There will be shown not only single buildings but city planning schemes and housing projects. The new possibilities of such materials as glass and aluminium will be illustrated. The enthusiastic support of the architects included in the exhibition and especially of the dozen museums which have contributed to its cost are assurances of success.

The second traveling exhibition will consist of the paintings of the Mexican artist, Diego Rivera, including murals painted especially for the Museum.

A third presentation will comprise paintings, sculpture, drawings and prints by Matisse, whose exhibitions during the past year in Berlin, Paris, and Basle were the outstanding events of the season in Europe.

What may be the most interesting exhibition of the year might be called "Modern Art, Past and Present." As planned, it will place side by side the work of today and of the distant past - Egyptian, Persian, Greek, Aztec, Chinese, ^{Medieval, Renaissance} European - whatever may definitely illustrate relationship, throw light on sources and contribute to the understanding of Modern Art.

III.

As often is the case in laboratories, our experiment brought in its train other answers, other possibilities, other problems. The purposes of the Museum -- its future plans and projects began to take more definite shape. From the first there has been some question as to these purposes. Many persons are unhappy without a detailed map. The Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art have felt it better for their future to have only a general direction fixed in their minds, leaving to later developments the formation of a more definite and detailed scheme.

From the experience of the last two years, it is now possible to say something, at least tentatively of the future.

Given the necessary financial support, the Museum of Modern Art will proceed with a program to be here outlined which is, nevertheless, subject to change in many details.

The experimental period will come to an end with the present season. To justify its continued existence, the Museum must have an endowment and quarters more permanent and better suited to its uses than it has at present. The location should be readily accessible to the casual visitor. The choice between a building of its own and semi-permanent quarters in a larger building will depend in part on available sites, and in part upon financial considerations. Immediately a space about twice the size of that now occupied will be sufficient with provision for future expansion. The Museum should always remain comparatively small in size.

In the new quarters there will be space in which to continue temporary exhibitions, rooms for a permanent collection, a library, a small auditorium and the necessary executive offices.

The hold of temporary exhibitions will continue to be a major activity of the Museum. Many of them will be so arranged as to permit their being sent to other public institutions throughout the country. With its record and experience of the past two seasons, the Museum will be able to organize these shows in a way that will permit a more orderly and consecutive presentation of schools and tendencies than has been possible in the hurry of its beginnings. Furthermore, the field will be broadened to include architecture, drawings, prints, photographs, ceramics, textiles, etc. There can be no close definitions of these possible developments. The essential thing is that the Museum shall hold its house open to ideas.

The permanent collection will not be unchangeable. It will have somewhat the same permanence that a river has. With certain exceptions, no gift will be accepted under conditions that will not permit of its retirement by sale or otherwise as the trustees may think advisable. Even assuming one hundred per cent

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omniscience in original approval, as time goes on some works once necessary will no longer be desirable. When a creative artist has not yet attained recognition from other museums, it should be the province of this institution to give him a full representation in its collection. There are various reasons for this, - encouragement for the artist, - opportunity for the public to become familiar with his works - the possibility of securing such work at a fraction of its ultimate market value. But as time goes on and the great historic repositories of art seek the masterpieces of established reputation, they are often unobtainable except at prohibitive cost. The Museum of Modern Art should be a feeder primarily to the Metropolitan Museum, but also to museums generally throughout the country. There would always be retained for its own collection a reasonable representation of the great men but where yesterday we might have wanted twenty Cézannes, tomorrow five would suffice. A few years ago not one museum in the country could boast a Maitell in its collection, and with a few exceptions, this is still true of Picasso and Epstein, or Lehmbruck and van Gogh. It is equally true that many American artists of the first rank are not properly represented in public collections. Given a Modern Museum twenty years ago and there would be many of the major works of these men in its galleries today or through it distributed over the country.

It is not intended that this shall be a self-sufficient or local institution. Its influence should be country-wide. The dealers of New York have performed a courageous service in introducing the work of unknown men to Metropolitan attention - but they have not been able to penetrate the interior except in a few of the larger cities. Gauguin is still anathema in many places. For the hinter-land a more authoritative and disinterested sponsorship is necessary, and in this direction the Museum of Modern Art will find perhaps its most fruitful field.

To keep abreast of the times, to remain truly modern, we must admit, however, reluctantly, that a changing personnel in the governing board and in the officers

is necessary. There is a comfort and a kudos in museum management that makes change difficult except that it be a settled policy. A static condition may be averted by limiting the term of office, by fixing an age limit, by requiring the election of a certain number of younger persons, by limiting the number of trustees to be re-elected. The intention is fixed, - the method is still to be determined.

The library will ultimately be made a major feature of the Museum's activities. There will be as complete as possible a collection of photographs and lantern slides. Lectures in colleges and clubs will be arranged as well as in the Museum itself. As time goes on the field of publication will be widened - the radio will be used.

The emphasis in all activities must be on quality. By constant weeding out, by replacement of the inferior by the superior, the permanent collection can be kept within the limits of a small museum. It is not possible to digest many pictures at one time. To many the Mauritshuis gives more pleasure than the Louvre. If a considerable proportion of the collections of most museums should disappear, it would not be a calamity. Most great works of art gain power by isolation. No museum can attain this ideal but by limiting its collection and a changing presentation over-crowding can be largely avoided.

It is probable that the Museum of Modern Art will make many mistakes - but it is hoped that they will be chiefly of commission. It is not fatal to buy a Bouguereau. The real sin is overlooking a Seurat. One can retire a J. H. Spähler but it is practically impossible today to acquire a great Winslow Homer. We welcome thoughtful criticism and fear only silence. Recently a letter of inquiry sent to museum and college officials has called forth many interesting and illuminating suggestions. We seek others from all who are interested in what we are doing and intend.

The real foundation of a permanent collection has been established by the splendid bequest of Miss Bliss whose intelligent enthusiasm, devotion, knowledge and taste have played so large a part in the establishment of the Museum and the conduct of its activities. She gave as generously of herself as she has given of her collection, and in making this last gift she has done a lasting service in the challenge put by that gift's conditions. To receive her pictures, the Museum must go beyond experiment. It must become in fact what it is in name - a Museum - with an adequate endowment of sufficient funds to ensure its development into the institution of which Miss Bliss had long dreamed and for which she had eagerly planned.

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Mr Goddard's draft in "Barrers" file