

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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## THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART APPOINTS RENE D'HARNONCOURT

### DIRECTOR OF NEW DEPARTMENT

John E. Abbott, Executive Vice-President of the Museum of Modern Art, announced today the establishment of a Department of Manual Industry with René d'Harnoncourt as its Director. The function of the department will be to study the potential contribution of manual industry to the modern world and to assist in its development. Its activities will not be confined to the United States but will include all the American Republics and Canada.

The new department will not only be concerned with matters of design and craftsmanship in hand-made articles, but will also deal with the problems which affect the free function of the craftsman's skill and talent in the post-war world. It will parallel the Museum's Department of Industrial Design, established in 1940 to cover the field of mass-produced objects.

Stephen C. Clark, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, made the following statement regarding the establishment of the Museum's new Department of Manual Industry:

"As a vital factor in the building of the post-war world, a new interest in manual industry is becoming apparent in the United States and elsewhere. This interest is not a form of sentimental antiquarianism but is based on the recognition that manual methods can be an important means of enriching and supplementing mechanical mass-production, which has reached its height in our war industries.

"In no way are manual and mechanical industry antagonistic; each has its function and individual field of design. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, mass production has assumed such importance and magnitude in modern life that the manual crafts have become more and more neglected. One purpose of the new department will be to show how the variety possible in manual industry can supply the consumer with a wider choice than is possible when the range is confined only to quantity production. Manual industry permits direct expression of design concepts and provides a most sensitive medium of response to the demands of individual and group tastes. Because of this it offers an ideal method of basic experimentation, thus making its contribution of cheapness and efficiency to mass production."

Mr. d'Harnoncourt, Director of the new department is a noted authority on the art of the American Indian and Mexican arts and crafts. He directed the large exhibition of Mexican arts shown at the Metropolitan Museum in 1932 and the Exhibition of Indian Art of the United States shown at the Museum of Modern Art in 1941.

In addition to his directorship of the Museum's new department,

Mr. Hart has been appointed Vice-President in charge of foreign relations. The Museum's extensive program of international exhibitions has been in operation for several years, will continue administered by Monroe Wheeler, Director of Exhibitions, and Peter, Director of Circulating Exhibitions. Mr. Hart will conduct relations with cultural organizations in the various Republics and will cooperate with the various departments of the Museum that have extended some of their activities into it.

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Harnoncourt, now an American citizen, was born in 1901 in Vienna. He was educated there. In 1925 he went to Mexico. For some years he was engaged in the arts and crafts business in Mexico, was a lecturer at the Mexican Ministry of Education, and a faculty member of the National Institute for Cultural Relations. In 1930-32 he directed an exhibition of Mexican art under the auspices of the American Federation of Arts. In 1933-34 he was director of the radio program Art in America broadcast by the American Federation of Arts, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and the Art Institute of Chicago.

In 1934 to 1937 he was instructor in art history at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, and in 1936 was a faculty member of the National Institute for Social Research in New York. In 1936 he became assistant general manager of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C., and in 1937 was made general manager of the Board. In 1939 he organized the exhibition of Indian Art at the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco. In 1940 he organized the exhibition of Indian art at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

He became acting director of the Art Section of the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs and was also a member of the Advisory Committee on Art of the Department of State.

Harnoncourt is a member of the Joint Committee on Latin American Affairs, of the National Research Council, the American Council on Learned Societies, and the Social Science Research Council.

Harnoncourt is author of many articles on art and on Indian arts and crafts. He illustrated The Painted Pig by Elizabeth Lawrence, published in 1930, and is author of several books.