FROM THE ARCHIVES:

LÉGER
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The Museum of Modern Art Archives was established in 1987 by resolution of the Board of Trustees as an independent Museum program to preserve and make accessible the Museum's historical records to Museum staff, outside scholars, and researchers. Additionally, the Museum Archives is the custodian of primary source material and other historical documentation related to the history of twentieth-century art. Documents in this exhibition, on view February 26 through May 12, 1998, were selected by the Museum Archives staff from the holdings of the Museum Archives for display in conjunction with the current exhibition Fernand Léger.

1. Lecture; photograph


2. Photograph
At the time of the 1935 Léger retrospective, the Museum was located in a five-story townhouse at 11 West 53 Street, leased to the Museum from May 1932 until June 1937 by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The mobile by Alexander Calder, served to announce a later exhibition in 1936, Cubism and Abstract Art in which five works by Léger were included.


3. Newsclipping
An article based on an interview with Léger, New York Herald Tribune, October 5, 1935.


4. Typescript notes
Summary in English of Léger’s lecture on The New Realism, delivered at MoMA on October 4, 1935.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, X.38. Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (1902-1981) was the founding Director of the Museum until 1943 when he was named Advisory Director. In 1944, Barr was appointed Director of Research in Painting and Sculpture. From 1947 until his retirement in 1967, Barr was the Director of Museum Collections.
5. **Invitation**

The Museum of Modern Art Film Library sponsored a program on October 18, 1935, which included a screening of *Ballet mécanique* and a lecture by Léger in French on *Painting and Advance Guard Films*.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alan R. Blackburn, Jr. Papers, Scrapbook #1. Blackburn held several positions from 1932 through 1934: Assistant Treasurer, Executive Secretary and Executive Director.

6. **Photographs**

Film stills from Léger's *Ballet mécanique*, screened at MoMA on October 18, 1935. This film is being screened in The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater I Lobby in conjunction with the current Fernand Léger exhibition.


7. **Financial ledger**

$300.00 was provided by A. Conger Goodyear for the Museum’s 1936 purchase of Léger’s *Breakfast*.


8. **Guestbook**

Léger visited the Museum on the occasion of his 1935 retrospective and signed the Museum Guestbook. His signature is the second from the bottom on the left-hand side of the left page. From this Guestbook, on an earlier page, we learn that Léger’s first visit to the Museum was in 1931 when he viewed *Henri Matisse*, November 2, 1931 - December 6, 1931, the first exhibition that The Museum of Modern Art devoted to a foreign artist.


9. **Attendance ledger**

9,374 people visited the Museum during the 1935 Léger retrospective.

10. **ALS Fernand Léger – Léonce Rosenberg, August 23, 1918**

Léger expresses excitement about his acrobats and writes about “un projet de cirque énorme [a plan for a huge circus]… vera-t-il le jour? [will it ever see the light of day]?”

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Léonce Rosenberg Papers. Rosenberg (1879-1947) was Léger's most important dealer in the 1910s and 1920s.

11. **TLS Katherine S. Dreier - Frederick P. Keppel, February 8, 1929**

Katherine S. Dreier, President of the Société Anonyme, appealed to Frederick P. Keppel of the Carnegie Corporation in 1929 for assistance in the Société Anonyme’s efforts to exhibit and advocate modern art; Léger is one of the artists mentioned.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Katherine S. Dreier Papers, I.

12. **Exhibition catalogue**

Five works by Léger were included in the Museum’s exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art*, March 2, 1936 to April 19, 1936; lenders of works by Léger included Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Léonce Rosenberg and the Société Anonyme.


13. **TLS Alfred H. Barr, Jr. – Fernand Léger, November 9, 1942 and June 9, 1942**

Barr and Léger correspond about the title of the artist’s painting *Three Women*, originally called *Le Grand Déjeuner*. From this letter we learn that Barr was partially responsible for giving the work a new title.


14. **TLS Fernand Léger – Curt Valentin, n.d.**

Correspondence from Léger to the dealer, Curt Valentin, requesting information on a future exhibition:

“My dear friend,

Finding myself in the midst of various exhibition proposals for the next trimester, I would be grateful to you, if at all possible, to confirm the dates, and an approximate number of drawings, gouaches and paintings, for the exhibition in London for which you have engaged me.

Amigo and have a nice vacation
/S/ Léger”.

15. **Itinerary, press release, exhibition brochure**
Under the auspices of the Museum’s Circulating Exhibitions Department Léger’s *Le Cirque*, an exhibition of a book of lithographs, traveled to 23 venues around the country from 1951 to 1955. Léger expressed interest in the depiction of a circus and acrobats thirty years earlier in his letter to his dealer, Léonce Rosenberg. *Le Cirque* is currently on view in The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater I Lobby in conjunction with Fernand Léger.


16. **Congressional House Record, August 16, 1949; July 20, 1956**
During the late 1940s and 1950s George A. Dondero, a Republican Congressman from Michigan, attacked modern art as being part of a communist conspiracy to corrupt American moral standards. In the *Congressional House Record* Léger and The Museum of Modern Art are mentioned. An excerpt from one of the Records:

“Léger and Duchamp are now in the United States to aid in the destruction of our standards and traditions. The former has been a contributor to the Communist cause in America; the latter is now fancied by the neurotics as a surrealist.” Congressional House Record, August 16, 1949.


17. **Announcements, price lists, and press releases**
Materials from select Léger exhibitions held at the Buchholz Gallery, 1942 and 1951.


18. **Exhibition announcements and study photographs**
Documentation from the research files of James Thrall Soby.


19. **Lecture**
Audio recording of lecture delivered by James Johnson Sweeney at the Museum on November 18, 1953 at the time of the Museum’s exhibition Léger, October 20, 1953 to January 3, 1954. Recording can be heard through DADABASE. Please contact Museum Archives staff for appointment.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Sound Recordings of Museum-Related Events, Subgroup A: #53.8. James Johnson Sweeney (1900-1986) was Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture from January 1945 to September 1946.