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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	JBH	I.5.36

MAY 11 1970

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY KILLINGS
MAY 1970 - JBH & MOMA RESPONSE

To Mr. John B. Hightower

From Frieda Pearle, Library Secretary

Date May 8, 1970

Re

Dear Mr. Hightower:

I am sorry that I was unable to attend your reception in the Museum garden Tuesday evening, although I have had the pleasure of meeting you very briefly beforhand.

I would like you to know that I was very much impressed with your statement of May 5th protesting the unhappy incident at Kent University. I sent the notice to my daughter Judy at Stonybrook University, and she was so moved by it that she posted it on the bulletin board of the university.

I am writing this to prove to you how important it is, at this crucial time, to reach the young people in our universities. It is only when more of us make a concerted effort to bridge the gap that exists between people, particularly our young, that we can "nurture freedom - so essential and fragile a part of the arts", in order to "dispel the inhumanity that seems so intensely to pervade our society".

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MAY 11 1970

The Museum of Modern Art

To Mr. John B. Hightower

From Frieda Pearle, Library Secretary

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MAY 7 1970

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN
128 EAST 19TH STREET
NEW YORK CITY 3

May 27, 1970

Mr. Lincoln Kirstein
128 East 19th Street
New York, New York 10003

Dear Lincoln:

I cannot possibly tell you how much it meant to me to have your letter after the statement I made about the Kent State students. I felt curiously compelled to do it and simultaneously uneasy. Your letter helped considerably to take the edge off of the uneasiness. Thank you very much for your thoughtfulness in saying what you did in the way that you did.

Best regards,

John B. Hightower
Director

JBH:ehn

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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MAY 7 1970

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN
128 EAST 19TH STREET
NEW YORK CITY 3

May 6. 1970

Dear John:

I want to tell you how moved and grateful I was by your masterly statement posted on the Museum's front window. Not only was it the essence of a compassionate man but it was the skillful sentences of a states man. I think we are lucky in having you around where you are, when you are.

With admiration and affection

Lincoln Kirstein

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Great Lakes Colleges Association

ARTS PROGRAM IN NEW YORK
396 BROADWAY, ROOM 605, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10013
(212) 226-0418

May 6, 1970

Mr. John Hightower, Director
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York, New York 10019

Dear Mr. Hightower:

Your telegram to President Nixon and your action of opening the Museum free of charge on Tuesday, May 5th was noted by the students in our Program.

In a week of such distressing and demoralizing news, both your actions have great meaning. I hope the immediate future will find other responses as necessary and honorable as your own.

Thank you,

Richard Wengenroth

Richard Wengenroth
Director

RW:jj

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STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER
GOVERNOR

May 27, 1970

Mr. Richard Wengenroth
Director
Great Lakes Colleges Association
396 Broadway
Room 605
New York City, New York

Dear Mr. Wengenroth:

Thank you very much for your extremely thoughtful letter concerning the statement I made the day after the Kent State University deaths. It was good of you to write. Your letter meant a great deal to me.

Sincerely,

John B. Hightower
Director

JBH/es

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MAY 18 1970 1970

STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER
GOVERNOR

May 15, 1970

Dear John:

Congratulations on your statement of May fifth! I like it very much.

I am getting the most enthusiastic reports of what you are doing at the MOMA -- the staff reaction is terrific. I am delighted.

With warm regard,

Sincerely,

Mr. John B. Hightower
Director
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York, New York 10019

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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MAY 18 1970

30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10020

Room 5600

CIrcle 7-3700

May 13, 1970

Dear John:

Thank you for sending me a copy of the memorandum on the Museum's action in protest of the killing of four students at Kent State University. Your action in opening the Museum free to the public on Tuesday, May 5, was a sensitive, appropriate response to the concern of the community on this subject.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

David Rockefeller

Mr. John B. Hightower
Director
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York, New York 10019

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To- John Hightower, Richard Oldenberg, Marna Thoma

From- Bookstore staff

Date- May 7, 1970

Re- Stike, May 9, 1970

In all consideration of the museums efforts to protest the expanded war, we find it necessary, with personal obligations to be present in Washington D.C. on saturday, May 9. We would like to make our reasons for this action known, in hope it will help the movement towards a just peace.

We realize that a days pay will be held from us, but we do think the cause is worth ALL our efforts.

We thank you and hope for your support in this grave matter.

Philip Lolaslio Charles A Amato

David P. Quinn (in sympathy)

George Lovatt

J. Turner

Ron Conace

Sandy Fuson

L. Buxton (in sympathy)

Michael Deshler (in sympathy)

Joseph S. Mazzuchi (in sympathy).

Ry Cuttler (in sympathy)

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The Museum of Modern Art

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

Department of Film

6 May 70

Dear Mr. Hightower:

I had thought I might see you in the halls yesterday to tell you but since I did not I wanted to write this note to tell you how excellent I thought your action and how fine I thought your stand yesterday regarding the Kent slayings. I am sure than I am echoing the sentiment of the entire Museum. I know that I am voicing that of the Film Department.

Thank you,

Donald Richie

Donald Richie

Visiting Curator of Film

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	JBH	I. 5. 36

The Museum of Modern Art

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

Department of Film

May 6, 1970

Dear Mr. Hightower:

We would simply like to commend you on the action you took yesterday in regard to the Kent slayings and to let you know that you have our support.

Sincerely,

Regina Cornell
Susan Bertram
Mary Yurshak
Geraldine Cunningham
Angela Mazzanobles
Lorraine Rowan
Patricia Clark
Margareta Akermark
Madeline Moritz
Blue Klumlaius
Charles Chandler
Irma Gloria
Richard Weinstein
Willard Van Dyke
Melinda Ward

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK

Dear John:
your statement makes
me proud to be a part
of this institution today.

Willard

5 May 1970

To Mr. Hig

From J. Deli

Date 4/5/70

Re

Dear Joh

Just rea
I'm deli
It perso
the Muse
so impo[illegible] that silence would be akind of complicity.

What the Museum has needed is to re-connect again with life.
My admiration and good wishes are with you for what promises
to be a refreshingly controversial tenure.

Jim

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The Museum of Modern Art

To Mr. Hightower

From J. Delihas

Date 4/5/70

Re

Dear John:

Just read your statement on the Kent incident. All I can say is I'm delighted the institution has reacquired a pair of balls. It personally matters to me very much, and I know to others, that the Museum, through you, will speak out on events and issues so important that silence would be akind of complicity.

What the Museum has needed is to re-connect again with life. My admiration and good wishes are with you for what promises to be a refreshingly controversial tenure.

Jim

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The Museum of Modern Art

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

Office of the Director

May 5, 1970

WE PROTEST THE KILLING OF FOUR STUDENTS AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY IN OHIO AND THE WOUNDING OF OTHERS. WE PROTEST SENSELESS REACTION TO DISSENT FROM THOSE FOR WHOM ORDER IS A HIGHER PRIORITY THAN FREE DISCUSSION AND OPEN DEMONSTRATION.

WE ALSO OPPOSE THE CLOSING OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WHICH IN SOME WAY NURTURE FREEDOM - SO ESSENTIAL AND FRAGILE A PART OF THE ARTS - AND WHICH PROVIDE ALL OF US WITH A FORM OF INTENSELY HUMAN COMMUNICATION. WERE IT TO BE OTHERWISE, THE ARTS COULD BE USED BY OTHERS LESS WELL-INTENTIONED TO COMPOUND RATHER THAN DISSPELL THE INHUMANITY THAT SEEMS SO INTENSELY TO PERVADE OUR SOCIETY. CONSEQUENTLY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART WILL BE OPEN FREE TO THE PUBLIC TODAY.

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The Museum of Modern Art

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

May 5, 1970

John B. Hightower, Director of The Museum of Modern Art issued the following statement today:

WE PROTEST THE KILLING OF FOUR STUDENTS AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY IN OHIO AND THE WOUNDING OF OTHERS. WE PROTEST SENSELESS REACTION TO DISSENT FROM THOSE FOR WHOM ORDER IS A HIGHER PRIORITY THAN FREE DISCUSSION AND OPEN DEMONSTRATION.

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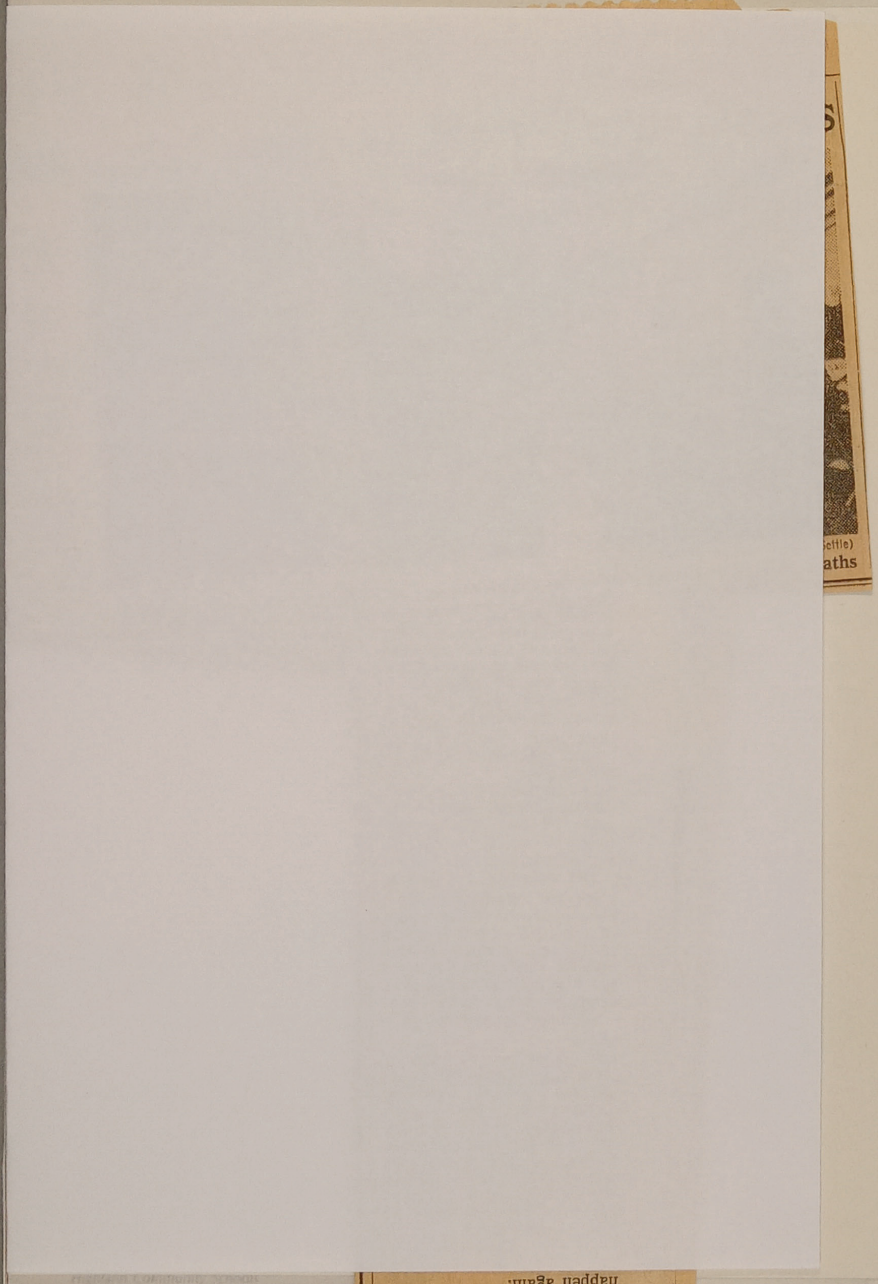
MAY 21 1978



not go gentle into that good night."

"It really sort of turns your stomach," said Jim Nichols, a senior, "but maybe if enough people had their stomachs turned, it wouldn't happen again."

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To JBH from Wilder

...MBER 28, 1970

Theme of Nonviolence Pervades Kent State as New Term Opens

By JOHN KIFNER
Special to The New York Times

KENT, Ohio, Sept. 27—"At this point," Craig Morgan, the Kent State University student president, was saying this morning, "I'm getting a little more optimistic about school staying open."

Last May 4, four students died and nine were wounded here when National Guardsmen fired a burst of M-1 rifle fire down a grassy slope. Kent State, once called locally "the country's largest unknown university," became a symbol of the nation's divisions.

The Talk of Kent

Now, on the eve of its fall reopening, this is a campus of changes, of rumors and remembrance, tensions and emergency plans, lingering frustration and new fears, political activism and apathy, and, above all, it is a campus waiting to see what will happen.

•

On the lawn of the Commons, where a noon rally had been broken up with tear gas that sunny May afternoon, students played touch football and threw Frisbees this afternoon and boys and girls walked hand in hand.

At the edge of the Commons, where the Army Reserve Officers Training Corps building had stood before it was burned to the ground that spring weekend by students enraged at the expansion of the war into Cambodia, a brightly striped red, white and blue tent was set up to house an exhibit by students and local artists.

Among the exhibits is a relief showing four distorted faces each pierced by a hole and dripping blood. Each head is labeled with the last name of one of the students slain here — Krause, Miller, Scheuer, Schroeder—and at the bottom is a line from a Dylan Thomas poem: "Do not go gentle into that good night."

"It really sort of turns your stomach," said Jim Nichols, a senior, "but maybe if enough people had their stomachs turned, it wouldn't happen again."

•

Classes begin tomorrow, and a convocation is to be held on the Commons at noon, to be begun by President Robert I. White ringing the iron Victory Bell. This is the same bell that traditionally heralds the infrequent victories of the school's "Golden Flashes" football team and, last spring, called the students to protest rallies.

At night, there is to be a candlelight procession past the fatal slope, once a campus necking area called "Blanket Hill," and a memorial service

makes "campus disruption" a crime.

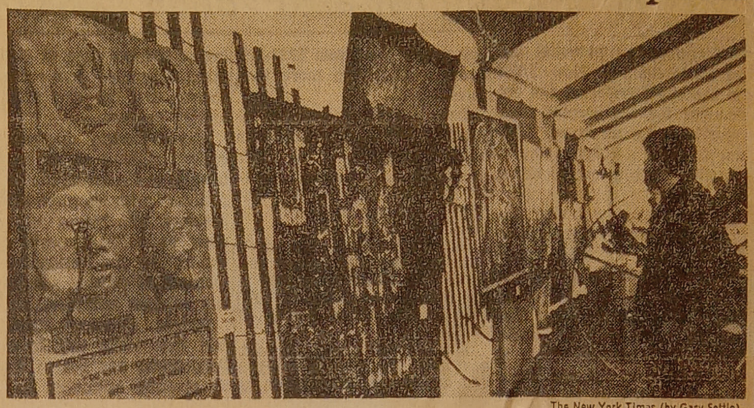
On the corner of Franklin and West Summit Streets, by the railroad tracks on the edge of town, a new cyclone fence topped with barbed wire encloses an area about as long as a football field and half as wide. The compound is empty and there are no identifying signs on it. There is a large lock on the gate. The Kent police say the area is for "private parking," but students believe it is a pen to be used if mass arrests overflow the city's tiny jail.

Rumors are rife. There have been six telephone bomb threats in the last week.

But some of the tensions between the townspeople and the students seem to have eased and many stores have Chamber of Commerce signs welcoming the students back.

"I think what happened here last spring was the end of America," a girl from Pittsburgh, Judy Showalter, said as she sipped beer and played with a beagle puppy named Peace with a group of friends in a student apartment last night.

"When I talk to a woman waiting for a bus and she says they should have shot more students, it's just the end. I don't really feel sad, because I don't consider myself an American any more. I'm going to Canada."



The New York Times (by Gary Settle)

Exhibits at Kent State art show to raise medical funds depict tragedy of campus deaths

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At night, there is to be a candlelight procession past the fatal slope, once a campus necking area called "Blanket Hill," and a memorial service for the four dead students on the football practice field where the Guard had stood.

The theme of the service will be commitment to nonviolence, which is rapidly becoming one of the most frequently used phrases of administration and student leaders here.

More than 100 marshals have been trained by the student government to keep any future demonstrations orderly and the organization has designed a new symbol for Kent State—a stylized dove bearing an olive branch.

"This has been evolutionary thing for me since I was a freshman," said Thom Dickerson, the vice president of the student senate, who will edit a student government-sponsored news letter of "nonviolent revolution" this fall.

"I came to Kent supporting the war, I guess because of the kind of education I got in high school," the senior from Huntington, L. I., with longish blond haid said. "My first year I saw my first S.D.S. [Students for a Democratic Society] demonstration and it really shook me up. All I had thought about was having a nice house and good hours and that kind of thing."

●

Over his college years, he said, he had changed his major from predentistry to English, read and thought, and become committed to what he called "a philosophy of humanism and nonviolence." He said he now hoped to organize "a concerted draft resistance and a good program of telephone tax resistance" in Kent.

For him, as for many students here, the gunfire that spring afternoon strengthened a political commitment. But, he added, "I've met a lot of people this fall who are trying to repress May 4. They don't want to hear about it any more.—They just want to go to classes."

●

Kent State has instituted an elaborate set of new security regulations and emergency procedures, which include a "telephone tree" in each academic department, with each professor telephoning two others to alert them to an emergency, and the establishment of an order of succession should anything happen to President White.

Over the summer, the Ohio Legislature passed House Bill 1219. A stiff set of measures which, among other things,

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COPY FOR THE INFORMATION OF: John Hightower

CAK
1224 N. Mantua
Kent Ohio 44240

May 26, 1970

Willard Van Dyck
Museum of Modern Art
11 W. 53rd St.
New York, New York 10019

Dear Mr. Van Dyck:

The demand for "Confrontation at Kent" grows daily. Our seven prints are constantly tied up from coast to coast for showing. We are desperately trying to fit the available prints into the demand since proceeds will go to a memorial fund. We do not feel a print can be available until after June 15th. Because of the memorial fund we feel preview showings are inappropriate. The rental is $25.00 and the sale price is $300.00. Perhaps a showing could be arranged after June 15th. Do let us know as soon as possible if you want to show "Confrontation at Kent."

Sincerely yours,
J.M. Someroski for CAK

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July 23, 1970

Mr. Arthur Custer
Director
Metropolitan Educational Center in the Arts
4236 Lindell Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

Dear Arthur:

Many thanks for your letter of long ago commenting on my statement of May 5 on the Kent State deaths. It is always comforting to have a pat on the back especially on something as deeply consequential as this was. Your letter meant a great deal to me.

Again, thank you.

Best regards,

John B. Hightower
Director

JBH/es

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MAY 21 1970

METROPOLITAN
EDUCATIONAL CENTER
IN THE ARTS

4236 Lindell Boulevard
St. Louis, Mo. 63108

Telephone 314 652-8050

Director: ARTHUR CUSTER

EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE

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Acting Superintendent
Clayton School District

RALPH L. COX, Vice-Chairman
Superintendent, Belle Valley
District #119
Belleville, Illinois

GERALD MOELLER, Secretary
Director, Evaluation and Research
St. Louis Public Schools

The Very Reverend Monsignor
JAMES CURTIN
Superintendent
St. Louis Archdiocese Schools

MARTIN G. GARRISON
Superintendent
University City School District

NOAH E. GRAY
Superintendent
Lindbergh School District

M. GENE HENDERSON
Superintendent
Francis Howell R-3 School District

K. LANE MILLER
Superintendent, Belleville Township
High School District 201

MICHAEL NEWTON
Executive Director
St. Louis Arts & Education Council

JAMES RICKMAN
Superintendent
Fox School District, Arnold, Mo.

CHARLES R. ROBINSON
Superintendent
East St. Louis District 189

OLIN STRATTON
Highland Community Schools
District 5, Highland, Ill.

cc- Mary Martin

May 18, 1970

John B. Hightower
Director
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York, New York 10019

Dear John:

I happened to be in New York for some meetings of The Ford Foundation earlier this month, and spent May 5 in the Museum. I can't tell you how awed and delighted I was to be given a copy of your statement protesting the Kent State incident. It gives me some hope to know that an institution such as the Museum of Modern Art can speak out of social consciousness in such a meaningful way. My thanks and congratulations to you.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur Custer

Arthur Custer
Director

AC/sw

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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

KENTUCKY ARTS COMMISSION

May 27, 1970

Mr. William Hull
Executive Director
Kentucky Arts Commission
400 Wapping Street
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Dear Bill:

My apologies for missing you in St. Louis. I had to turn around and come back to the barricades at the Museum. Your comment about my statement on the Kent State deaths meant a great deal to me. Thank you - but that is something I find myself saying fairly frequently to you.

Best regards,

John B. Hightower
Director

JBH:ehn

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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

MAY 19 1970

KENTUCKY ARTS COMMISSION

Mr. John B. Hightower, Director
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street
New York, New York 10019

Dear John:

I wouldn't have believed that the pleasure derived from seeing your name over the title Director of The Museum of Modern Art could be so great. I may see less of you in that role than in your past one, but I feel very pleased that you are there.

Parenthetically, it is comforting to have the "ehn" beside the "JBH" because I won't feel you are entirely surrounded by foreigners.

Your statement about the Kent State students was very beautiful, very touching. It improves with rereading. It improves so well that I hardly dare read it again.

I was in New York that day and terribly depressed by the whole thing. I went to the Royal Ballet's "Sleeping Beauty" and it seemed somehow no less a fairy tale than we find ourselves living with today here and now.

I look forward to seeing you in St. Louis.

Sincerely,

William Hull
Executive Director

WH:eha
13 May 1970

400 WAPPING STREET/ FRANKFORT/ KENTUCKY 40601

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Frieda Pearle

John B. Hightower

May 27, 1970

It was extremely thoughtful of you to write me a note concerning the reaction to the Kent State University deaths. The reaction your daughter at Stony Brook had makes it all the more gratifying - and letting me know meant a great deal to me.

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SIDNEY FENIG, M. D.
185-01 HILLSIDE AVENUE
JAMAICA, N. Y. 11432

TELEPHONE JA 3-1177

MAY 7 1970

May 27, 1970

Mrs. Sidney Fenig
185-01 Hillside Avenue
Jamaica, New York

Dear Mrs. Fenig:

Thank you very much for your extremely thoughtful letter concerning the statement I made the day after the Kent State University deaths. It was good of you to write. Your letter meant a great deâà to me.

Sincerely,

John B. Hightower
Director

JBH/es

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SIDNEY FENIG, M. D.
185-01 HILLSIDE AVENUE
JAMICA, N. Y. 11432

TELEPHONE JA 3-1177

MAY 7 1970

5/5/70

Dear Mr. Lightower

I want to tell you how very touched I was to read your statement today as I returned the Museum. Our country is so full of citizens who "feel" but do not speak out. Thank you for not being a "Silent Majority" citizen. You changed my feeling of hopelessness to one of cautious optimism! I fully share your sentiments!

Thank you again,

Mrs Sidney Fenig

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Mr. John B. Lightowler
Director - Museum
of Modern Art
11 West 53 St
New York City
ZIP 10019

tful letter
the Kent
to write.

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	JBH	I. 5. 36

May 27, 1970

Mr. Edward Goodstein
Lincoln Center Programs
280 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Dear Mr. Goodstein:

Thank you very much for your extremely thoughtful letter concerning the statement I made the day after the Kent State University deaths. It was good of you to write. Your letter meant a great deal to me.

Sincerely,

John B. Hightower
Director

JBH:ehn

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	JBH	I. 5. 36

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART 11 WEST 53 STREET NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019

Lincoln Center Programs

Metropolitan Opera
Philharmonic Hall
Vivian Beaumont Theater

380 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017
(212) 983-8888

MAY 8 1970

May 5, 1970

Mr. John B. Hightower, director
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York, N.Y. 10019

Dear Mr. Hightower:

I want you to know how moved I am today by your letter, posted at the entrance to the museum today.

As a member of the museum, at a time when you are being welcomed officially to this community, may I add my good wishes.

And my hope that yesterday's tragic occurrance will remain a thing of the past.

Cordially,

Edward Goodstein

Edward Goodstein

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Helen T. Wilson

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	JBH	I. 5. 36

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART 11 WEST 53 STREET NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019

NAME Helen P. Wilga

ADDRESS 898- ~~3~~4 Ave

N.Y. 10022

DATE May 5, 1970 Desk Assistant R

SUGGESTION:

Dear Mr. Lightower,

A thousand thanks for your courage and magnificent statement. Maybe if all intellectuals and decent people will band together "it won't happen here".

Sincerely

Helen P. Wilga

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The Museum of Modern Art

To John Hightower

From Carla O'Rorke

Date May 5, 1970

Re

I have just received your memo to the Staff informing us of your statement today concerning ... "senseless reaction to dissent..." -- during my eight years with The Museum of Modern Art, I have never felt so proud to be a part of the institution! This honest, immediate, warm human response is indeed very encouraging!

Carla O'Rorke

WE ALSO OPPOSE THE CLOSING OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WHICH IN SOME WAY NURTURE FREEDOM - SO ESSENTIAL AND FRAGILE A PART OF THE ARTS - AND WHICH PROVIDE ALL OF US WITH A FORM OF INTENSELY HUMAN COMMUNICATION. WERE IT TO BE OTHERWISE, THE ARTS COULD BE USED BY OTHERS LESS WELL-INTENTIONED TO COMPOUND RATHER THAN DISPEL THE INHUMANITY THAT SEEMS SO INTENSELY TO PERVADE OUR SOCIETY. CONSEQUENTLY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART WILL BE OPEN FREE TO THE PUBLIC TODAY.

Dear Mr. Hightower,
Thank you for this espression of sanity.
Sincerely yours,
Gertrude Ellenson

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The Museum of Modern Art

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

MAY 14 1970

May 5, 1970

John B. Hightower, Director of The Museum of Modern Art issued the following statement today:

WE PROTEST THE KILLING OF FOUR STUDENTS AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY IN OHIO AND THE WOUNDING OF OTHERS. WE PROTEST SENSELESS REACTION TO DISSENT FROM THOSE FOR WHOM ORDER IS A HIGHER PRIORITY THAN FREE DISCUSSION AND OPEN DEMONSTRATION.

WE ALSO OPPOSE THE CLOSING OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WHICH IN SOME WAY NURTURE FREEDOM - SO ESSENTIAL AND FRAGILE A PART OF THE ARTS - AND WHICH PROVIDE ALL OF US WITH A FORM OF INTENSELY HUMAN COMMUNICATION. WERE IT TO BE OTHERWISE, THE ARTS COULD BE USED BY OTHERS LESS WELL-INTENTIONED TO COMPOUND RATHER THAN DISPEL THE INHUMANITY THAT SEEMS SO INTENSELY TO PERVADE OUR SOCIETY. CONSEQUENTLY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART WILL BE OPEN FREE TO THE PUBLIC TODAY.

Dear Mr. Hightower,
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Sincerely yours,
Gertrude Ettenson

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"The streets of our country are in turmoil. The universities are filled with students rebelling and rioting. Communists are seeking to destroy our country. Russia is threating us with her might and the republic is in danger. Yes, danger from within and without.

We need Law and Order. Yes, without Law and Order our nation cannot survive. Elect us and we shall restore law and order."

ADOLF HITLER. CAMPAIGN SPEECH. HAMBURG 1932