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THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 1947.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 1947.

**Barr in New Museum Post**

The appointment of Alfred H. Barr Jr. as director of the museum collections was announced yesterday by Nelson A. Rockefeller, president of the Museum of Modern Art. Mr. Barr served as director of the museum from its founding in 1929 until 1943. He then became director of research in painting and sculpture.



# THIS WEEK in ART

By EMILY GENAUER

## What's Going On Behind Scene

I see by the sports pages that from now on baseball writers are to be barred from the Yankee dug-out and clubhouse. Seems they're very unhappy about it too, not, as Joe Williams points out, because they're going to miss the stimulating company of ball players who generally are beyond their mental depth when they get past the comic strips, but because they feel the public has a right to know what goes on behind the scenes of baseball and they regard themselves as the public's watchdogs. At any rate, nobody in the Yankee camp has been able to answer their hurt "how-comes?" intelligibly, and the boys are bewildered and angry at this unprecedented kicking-around they're getting from men whose exploits, egos and pay-checks they have inflated.

They should work in my corner of the office. The better part of this week I've spent trying to find out what's behind the latest announcement from the Museum of Modern Art, a bland, brief statement from Nelson Rockefeller, president of the museum, that Alfred H. Barr Jr. has been appointed "director of the museum collections."

You think all the double-talk in art circles has to do with the chiaroscuro of it all or the plastic relations between significant forms, etc., etc., etc.? You should have heard the weasel words I got when I tried to learn how come a man who had been director of the museum 15 years and "retired" four years ago "to devote his full time to writing" after nationwide criticism of the museum's capricious, cultist policy came to a head, was back in the saddle again.

**Public's Watchdogs.**

Art writers feel the same way baseball writers do about being the public's watchdogs. They've no particular yen to spend time socially with the museum authorities (though these are Dall devotees rather than comic strip connoisseurs). But they feel the public has an important stake in the Museum of Modern Art and a right to know what goes on behind its shining facade. Over a half-million visitors paid 35 cents each to visit the tax-free museum last year. Its roster of officers and trustees, studded with names like Rockefeller, Whitney and Ford, gives everything it sponsors

an air of great authority and rightness. Its support of individual American artists and particular art trends can be an enormously influential factor in determining the whole course of our contemporary culture. Besides all this there is the little matter of \$3,650,000 the museum is seeking from the public right now for a building fund.

But the museum goes on its whimsical way, without a director for four years, and for four months without even a director of its painting and sculpture department. There never was a new director appointed after Barr retired to write (they gave him a little cubby hole to work in behind the museum library). A director of painting and sculpture was appointed, James Trail Soby, but he too resigned after a brief period.

**Sweeney Appointed**

Then James Johnson Sweeney was appointed new director of the painting and sculpture department and, after a few weeks had passed, everyone (outside the museum, that is) relaxed. A new and unprecedented era of good-will set in between museum, artists and the press. There were good shows. There were intelligent acquisitions, and, just as important, there was acknowledgement of the museum's public responsibility in its troubling to explain these purchases.

But then, four months ago, came a new bombshell. Sweeney, too, was "resigning." Nelson Rockefeller announced a "revised administrative program" with a new co-ordination committee to run the show. Sweeney had no place on the new committee. Rene d'Harnoncourt, long associated with Mr. Rockefeller on his projects as the State Department's co-ordinator of Latin-American affairs, was placed there, however, in charge of curatorial departments (which meant Mr. Sweeney's, of course). Mr. Barr had a place on it, too, under the head of "research."

Now, a brief four months later, comes this latest broadside. Mr. Barr is now "director of the museum collections." He will be in charge of all the museum's acquisitions (under the trustee's own committee). He will also be in charge of the planning, organization, care and use (including publications and display) of the collections as a whole.

"Under his general supervision the heads of the curatorial departments will assume responsibility for their respective sections of the collections and they will initiate and carry on the work related to their fields. However, the director of the collections himself will conduct activities pertaining to the acquisition of painting and sculpture for the museum collections."

**Czar Barr Again.**

So it's Czar Barr again, without the title "director of the museum," but apparently with more power than he ever had before. The only function not expressly given to him is the important one of arranging exhibitions of material assembled from outside sources. That goes to the "acting director of the department of painting and sculpture" who is, however, Mr. Barr's subordinate in curatorial functions and must work under his general supervision. The line is a very thin one here. As a matter of fact it sounds like one that could have been written by Gilbert to Sullivan's music.

Was all that complicated set-up

of four months ago (whose absolute necessity for the smooth operation of the museum meant Sweeney had to go), leading to this? What's d'Harnoncourt's role to be now? Why has no museum director been appointed? What happened to give Mr. Barr more time and spirit for the museum's active functioning now than he had before, and to change the trustee's outlook on things generally?

There's nobody home at the museum to answer any of it. Or even to protest, as happened before, the validity of a statement I made four years ago in a Harper's Magazine article examining the museum's history and policy. Despite Barr's "retirement," after museum policy became a public scandal, his was still, I said, "as it has always been, the determining voice in its councils."

After four years of retirement it may turn out to be a good voice. But we ought to be permitted to hear what it's saying.

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## Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Receives New Appointment

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
MAKES ANOTHER SHIFT

AS GRATIFYING AS IT IS to learn that Alfred H. Barr, Jr. has been given a more active part to play in the Museum of Modern Art's affairs than he has had in recent years, we are again the victim of Mr. Nelson A. Rockefeller's remarkable phraseology, which is title-ridden to the point

March 31, 1947

MKR'S art outlook

of utter confusion. In passing on to our readers the particulars of this shift in responsibilities in the fast-growing house on 53rd Street, we proceed with care and caution. For any re-wording is apt to muffle the exact meaning Mr. Rockefeller is at such pains to obscure.

We are reminded in the President's statement to the press that Mr. Barr was the Museum's *Director* from its founding in 1929 until 1943 when he became *Director of Research in Painting and Sculpture*.

Mr. Barr has now been appointed *Director of the Museum Collections* in addition to his present title. In this capacity he will be in charge of all the Museum's acquisitions.

(But the *Museum Collections* are first of all under supervision of a *Committee on the Museum Collections*, and this, Mr. Stephen C. Clark has recently become Chairman of.)

Now under Mr. Barr fall the heads of the curatorial departments who "will assume responsibility for their respective sections of the Collections and they will initiate and carry on the work related to their fields. Mr. Barr will be in charge of the planning, organization, care and use (including publications and display) of the Collections as a whole."

You might let that sink in a bit before following us further.

"However," the release reads at this point, "the *Director of the Collections* will himself conduct the activities pertaining to the acquisition of Painting and Sculpture for the *Museum Collections*."

These activities were but recently conducted by Mr. James Johnson Sweeney (see issues No. 19 & 21) as *Director of Painting and Sculpture*. When Mr. Sweeney resigned, Miss Dorothy Miller became *Acting Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture*. But it is now announced that Miss Miller has been appointed *Curator of the Museum Collections*.

That seems to us to wedge her in between the newly-created Barr-post of *Director of the Museum Collections* and the heads of the *Curatorial* departments. But not yet! For Miss Miller is to continue to serve as acting head of the *Department of Painting and Sculpture* until the appointment of "the new" *Director of Painting and Sculpture* has been culminated, a post apparently still open.

Before all this began to happen in October, 1946, Miss Miller was *Curator* of the Department staff.

Monroe Wheeler, *Director of Exhibitions and Publications*, is at this point flying (not fleeing) to Paris where he will commence making arrangements for future Museum of Modern Art exhibitions and publications to circulate through Europe.

### WILL SHOW STIEGLITZ'S WORK AND COLLECTION

It has been announced at this time also by Mr. Philip L. Goodwin, *Chairman of the Museum's Exhibition Committee*, that The Museum

of Modern Art will hold two exhibitions in June devoted to Alfred Stieglitz and his work as both photographer of note and collector of contemporary art. The two exhibitions will fill two entire floors of the Museum.

Mr. James Johnson Sweeney will come back to the museum and work in his former capacity to install this exhibition and to write the catalogs, at the express request of Georgia O'Keeffe, widow of and executrix of the estate of the late Alfred Stieglitz.

Miss O'Keeffe called Mr. Sweeney the logical person to carry out the project and the best fitted to do it. He had made preliminary plans for such exhibitions before resigning from the Museum staff. Mr. Sweeney has consented to do as Miss O'Keeffe requests.

Mr. Goodwin says of Alfred Stieglitz: "He was one of the first in America to grasp the meaning of the modern movement in Europe . . . His extraordinary intellect and brilliant conversation exercised a unique influence upon men of letters as well as painters and photographers. He made a great personal collection in the ideal way, by using farsightedness and unflinching taste instead of large sums of money."

This will be the first comprehensive exhibition of the life work of a most unusual American and art lover. (See issue No. 13.)

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MKR'S art outlook

November 25, 1946

## Nice While It Lasted

### Another Shift in Administrative Policy Forces Out Another Head at the Modern

IT SEEMS THAT THE RAPID GROWTH of the Museum of Modern Art caused the Board of Trustees to meet and consider how now, post-war, "to realign the organizational structure to meet administrative complexities."

A new plan was instituted September 30 under which the Executive Committee continues to act as the governing body of the Museum on behalf of the Board of Trustees; and the recently organized Coordination Committee takes

administrative responsibility for the Museum's five main divisions of activity: Research, Curatorial, Program, Secretarial and Business. They say this scheme is working well.

All this is in explanation of the resignation of James Johnson Sweeney as Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture (see issue No. 19). Nelson Rockefeller's statement goes like this:

"Mr. Sweeney's resignation was tendered immediately following the reorganization on the grounds that the new administrative structure altered the conditions under which his appointment had been made. Although Mr. Rockefeller discussed the matter at length with Mr. Sweeney in the hope that he might withdraw his resignation, Mr. Sweeney felt that it was impossible to do so

within the framework of the new administrative structure . . . and could stay only if the conditions under which he was originally appointed were restored. The Trustees, however, felt this would be incompatible with the design of the new administrative structure. Therefore at its regular meeting this week [November 4] the Executive Committee regretfully directed that Mr. Sweeney's resignation be entered in the records of the Museum as of September 30."

Who will replace Mr. Sweeney as Director of Painting and Sculpture? No one seems to know who the museum has in mind for this post. From the terms of the surrender, one may infer that the museum prefers to be committee-run, obviating the necessity for *direction*. It is just possible that with its record of demotion, its frequent shifts of policy, if not outright lack of policy, it will be forced to go undirected. The Modern seems inclined to take an amateur and inoculate him with a sense of importance rather than to confide in a man of proven worth the nature of their many problems and give him a field in which to function with dignity.

Retroactive resignations are a dour program to look forward to after sixteen years of life as an established institution.

From the New York Times of November 17 we reprint in part Mr. Sweeney's letter of thanks to the artists who wrote in his behalf to Mr. Nelson Rockefeller, President of the Museum of Modern Art (see issue No. 19). Wrote Mr. Sweeney:

"... It was a decision I found very difficult to make. But, as I had agreed to accept the post in January 1945 only on the condition specifically stated in a letter to Mr. Stephen C. Clark, then Chairman of the Board of Trustees, that I be delegated 'adequate powers to protect the responsibility assumed,' I could not honestly stay in the

position after the powers granted me at the time of my appointment had been abrogated.

"... The conditions I outlined in my letter to Mr. Clark were taken up and voted upon by the Board of Trustees at their meeting of January 11, 1945, and the terms of my appointment were stated in a resolution passed by the Board and available through the minutes of that meeting to all Trustees, present or absent. The resolution stated:

"Mr. Sweeney is placed in charge and responsible for: All acquisitions for the Department of Painting and Sculpture, any disposal of the Department's material from the Museum Collection, the initiation and content of exhibitions of painting, sculpture and graphic arts, publications concerning these arts, lectures sponsored by the Museum in this field (and related educational activities such as films, docent talks, etc.) and the publicity concerned with painting and sculpture or the activities of that department. In addition, the Director shall have the right of veto in all decisions concerning any of the above stated activities of the Department of Painting and Sculpture."

"On September 30, 1946, when it was announced to the Museum staff that the Trustees had appointed a new 'coordinating committee composed of five key staff executives,' omitting the Director of Painting and Sculpture, but including a newly created officer,—a Director of Curatorial Departments to administer and coordinate the organization's curatorial programs,' it was clear that the responsibility for the broader activities of the Department of Painting and Sculpture had been removed from the Director and the post of Director of Painting and Sculpture of the Museum of Modern Art had been abolished, all save in name and salary.

"I am confident that you will agree that the Director of such an important unit of an art museum should not be placed in a position where he might possibly be constrained to employ the activities of his department—purchases, exhibitions, publications—as part of a 'curatorial program' with which he does not in conscience agree.

"I sincerely hope this letter may clarify the grounds on which my resignation was based."

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One of the best areas of agreement

NEW YORK  
Herald Tribune

## Dear Mr. Rockefeller . . .

### An open letter in re use of museum gobbledegook

A SHORT while ago a man named James Johnson Sweeney quit his job at the Museum of Modern Art under conditions that greatly impressed me. The newspaper accounts said that Mr. Sweeney tendered his resignation "immediately following a reorganization of the organizational structure of the institution to meet the administrative complexities brought about by the institution's rapid growth."

This seems to me a fine way to quit a job — I wouldn't even mind being fired under such elegant circumstances.

Mr. Sweeney's case was so interesting to me that I got hold of the original press release, issued from the office of Nelson A. Rockefeller, president of the Museum. After reading it carefully, all I can say is that the Museum may be keen on functional architecture and furniture, but it can never be accused of going in for functional prose.

In this press release I found further information about why Mr. Sweeney quit his job. It seems that he tendered his resignation because "the new administrative structure altered the conditions under which his appointment had been made."

It also appears that the Trustees "deferred action on Mr. Sweeney's resignation, hoping that some area of agreement might be worked out." However, Mr. Sweeney insisted that he'd stay "only if the conditions under which he was originally appointed be restored."

#### Oh, But Incompatible!

But the Trustees decided "this would be incompatible with the design of the new administrative structure."

Quite apart from Mr. Sweeney's personal plight, the document got me to thinking that modern writers too seldom use long, non-functional words such as those that are at the command of the Museum's press agent. They are classy words, and they serve a definite need — that of impressing the hell out of a reader and at the same time confusing him so completely that he'll never be able to guess why Mr. Sweeney quit in the first place.

I remember that my grandfather used to call them "gold-tooth words," but I feel they deserve a

better name. I like to think of them as "pure words" — that is, words untrammelled by any relation to human experience, but which roll out like the pure music of Bach.

Being a magazine writer by profession, I'm never allowed to use fine expressions like "administrative complexities." Editors cut them out of a manuscript on sight. Editors insist that writing should, in general, convey a definite thought. This is very shortsighted of them. Many readers love to gaze upon words like "administrative complexities" and revel in the fact that they are able to pronounce them.

If you simplified "administrative complexities" to its actual meaning (which is, "Everything is all hauled up around here, goddammit!") readers would get offended and write letters to the publisher.

#### A Work of Art

SIMPLICITY is a good rule when you want your writing to be understood. But it's a bad rule when you don't want it to be understood — and that's why I claim the Museum's press release was a work of art.

Take that part about how Mr. Rockefeller was very sorry to lose Mr. Sweeney and tried to find "an area of agreement" with Mr. Sweeney "within the framework of the new administrative structure."

Now, I'm not sure just what Mr. Rockefeller means by an "area of agreement," but I do know of a little bar not two blocks from Mr. Rockefeller's office which is one of the best areas of agreement in the city. Why didn't he take Mr. Sweeney there?

Now that Mr. Sweeney has walked out of the Museum, with everyone leaning out the windows and hurling great weights of verbiage after him, we may expect to find some further changes in the institution.

Whenever an elevator goes wrong in the Museum, there will be a sign tacked up: "Because of reorganization of the organizational structure of this elevator, brought about by administrative complexities which have altered the conditions under which the elevator ran in the first place, we are at present attempting to arrive at an area of agreement by which the elevator can be repaired to operate within the framework of the new administration."

This is a lot finer than "Out of Order," and means precisely the same thing.

— C. D. R.

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ART DIGEST—January 1, 1947

## PEYTON BOSWELL

### Comments:

*This department expresses the personal opinion of Peyton Boswell, Jr., writing as an individual. Any reader is invited to take issue with what he says. Controversy revitalizes the spirit of art.*

#### Review of the Year\*

THE YEAR 1946 SAW ART, at least temporarily, desert its traditional role of reflecting the social and political trends of its time. While politics in the United States turned rather sharply to the right, contemporary art expression continued left-of-center, with veteran modernists, many of whom once worked for the W. P. A., carrying off most of the top prizes and much coin of the realm. For example, Karl Knaths won the coveted Carnegie First Prize, milestone along the road to success for any artist, with a semi-abstract called *Gear*, and Boris Deutsch took the \$2,500 Pepsi-Cola award with an expressionistic prophesy of *What Atomic War Will Do to You*. Max Weber, once thoroughly ignored when the accent was on the American Scene, continued his winnings ways, entering several more important museum collections.

The Whitney Annual was in line with the times, but this should not be given the emphasis most critics accorded it; the Whitney is an invitational show, and its modern complexion this year reflected more the personal taste of Director Juliana Force and Hermon More than any national trend—as was evident in open annuals.

Definitely it was a year for the modern and for aesthetic thinking along the international front. Evidently Americans, while increasingly disturbed by the United Nations' failure to rise above a debating society, were not yet ready to give up the hope of one-world peace. At any rate, there was no sign among the artists of a desperate return to the self-sufficiency of nationalism.

Economically, it was another boom year in art, despite two minor recessions—one in the Spring and one in the Fall—caused by retarded production, strikes and a general sense of weary irritation. Each time the art market rallied, drawing considerable financial support from young, new collectors, exposed for years to art appreciation and now able to indulge their desires. While there is no Mellon or Widener among them, their very numbers and varied tastes will give the art market a stability it has always lacked. Roy C. Neuberger is typical of the intelligent new collector.

Riding the wave of art buying were the nation's four major art auction firms. Surpassing all their previous totals, the Parke-Bernet Galleries closed their 1945-46 season on June 14, announcing sales in the amazing amount of \$6,684,045—an all-time high, topping last season by a half million dollars. Highest price for a painting was paid by Billy Rose, night club impresario and new art collector, when he bid \$75,000 for Rembrandt's *Pilgrim at Prayer*. Toulouse-Lautrec's *Cueule de Bois* fetched \$30,000. Chester Dale purchased through the Mellon Fund for the National Gallery Ryder's *Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens* for \$23,500—highest price ever paid for a Ryder canvas. Commented Hiram H. Parke, president of the galleries: "Taste in general has radically improved, and with buying power widely distributed, the demand for art has greatly increased. Very much in the lead is the interest in fine Americana and in modern paintings."

The Plaza Art Galleries, concluding their 30th year of dis-

persing art and antiques at auction on New York's busy 59th Street, joined the prosperity procession with a record total of \$1,441,471 for 61 sales. President William O'Reilly was impressed by the increased number of "order-bids" mailed by new collectors unable to attend the sales from out of town. The Kende Art Galleries, affiliated with Gimbel Brothers, and the Freeman Galleries of Philadelphia also reported booming times on the podium.

Having demonstrated its economic value, the alliance between art and American industry continued to gain strength on the basis of mutual benefit. Leading the trend was the Pepsi-Cola Company, progressive and admirably co-operative in its relations with artists. After experimenting with his first two competitions, run by the war-born and now defunct Artists for Victory, President Walter Mack decided to put a professional in charge, hired Roland J. McKinney, Director of the Los Angeles Museum, to run the show. Result was a truly national exhibition, a little too large (267 pictures), but far higher in aesthetic content than its predecessors. Participating artists split a prize-purse of \$15,500, made many sales, gained in public recognition; the patron-company reaped perhaps a half-million in free publicity, even in Atlanta, Georgia. Art, it seems, provides a pass key to almost any city editor.

As mentioned before, Boris Deutsch of California took first place among 20 prize winners with a powerful and thought-provoking comment on our atomic future. Probably because it dramatizes fear of the unknown, the Deutsch canvas is perhaps the best hated picture in the country today—seldom has a painting received such unanimous panning from the critics and the public. Second prize went to a lightweight chromo called *Carnival in Madrid* by Carlos Lopez-Rey. Robert Gwathmey's flat-patterned *Lullaby* placed third (\$1,500), and Abraham Rattner's rich-colored *Place of Darkness* took fourth prize of \$1,000. Heavy-handed Gregorio Prestopino, who usually splits his compositions down the middle, was fifth.

The \$500 award winners were consistently better than the Pepsi-Cola prize winners, perhaps because there was less compromising on the part of jurors Arthur Millier, Leon Kroll and Daniel Defenbacher. They were: Louis Bosa, Virginia Guthbert, Gladys Rockmore Davis, Xavier Gonzalez (best entry in the show), John Heliker (second best), Sidney Laufman, Giovanni Martino, Henry Lee McFee, I. Rice Pereira, Elmer Plummer, Charles Seide, Everett Spruce, Margaret K. Tompkins, John Wilson and Max Weber.

La Tauscu Pearls inaugurated a contest revolving around a "Woman With Pearls," expended \$4,500 in prizes. Max Weber took first place with \$2,000; Lily Cushing was second and Ruth Ray, third. It was a good exhibition, but too many artists (including Weber) had merely added pearls to an old canvas; for 1947 the company has liberalized its subject rules, will pay each of 100 invited artists a rental fee of \$100. Encyclopaedia Britannica, having completed its original collection of 135 American paintings, improvised an intelligent program, under the direction of Grace Pagano, through which a certain number of paintings will be rented at \$200 each year, with an option to buy. The first 12 artists "rented"

[Please turn to page 18]

\*Reprinted and condensed from *Americana Encyclopaedia*.

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## Review of the Year

(Continued from page 7)

are: John Rogers Cox, Joseph Di Martini, Philip Guston, William Thon, Yeffe Kimball, Ben Shahn, Guy Maccoy, Nan Lurie, Martyl Schweig, Vaclav Vytlacil, Jacob Lawrence and DeHirsh Margules.

Since the turn of the century oil has been one of the most essential elements for waging world wars, and it is said that if Hitler had had just one huge pool that lies under East Texas his fatal campaign aimed at the Caucasus fields would have been unnecessary. The visual story of this "black gold," from barren ground to consumption on far-flung battlegrounds, was the subject of another art-industry project, sponsored by one of the world's most powerful private enterprises—Standard Oil of New Jersey. The company permitted the artists to function as artists—not just illustrators—and they performed their assignments admirably, especially Joe Jones, Thomas Hart Benton, Frederic Taubes, Robert Benney, Kerr Eby, Adolf Dehn, Ernest Fiene and Carlos Lopez.

There is both hope and danger in this alliance between America's artists and her business leaders—depending, as usual, on the individual. The late George Washington Hill bought artists and crooners with the same "huckster" complex; others hired artists for their specialized qualifications as artists.

Increasing insistence on craftsmanship and paint quality had an enervating influence on the so-called "primitive," leaving the Museum of Modern Art as perhaps the only proselyting priest for home-made art. Very few of these naive efforts were exposed to public view, except on 53rd Street where they lack the common decency to cellarize John Kane's awful *Self Portrait*. Only Grandma Moses, who is a true artist in her sensitivity and inherent talent, remains undiminished in popular acclaim. Her only contemporary rival, Horace Pippin, Philadelphia's famous primitive, died July 6 at the age of 57, scarcely a decade after he emerged from obscure poverty to reach a high position among the nation's painters. He left a waiting list for his slowly evolved canvases. Morris Hirschfeld, Brooklyn tailor who attained the dignity of a one-man show dramatically presented by Sidney Janis at the Museum of Modern Art, died about the same time. The late Florine Stettheimer, less a primitive than an amateur painter, received the guerdon of the Modern, was called by Walkowitz "the feminine Chagall."

### Air-Conditioned Old Masters

Too much talk and not enough action cost the United States one of the greatest old master exhibitions of several decades—200 masterpieces were found by the U. S. Army in salt mines in the American zone of occupation, having been transported there by the Germans for safety from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin (located in the Russian zone). An Army transport conveyed the German treasures to America where they were immediately stored in the air-conditioned vaults of the National Gallery in Washington.

Plans were being made to exhibit them to Americans who would be willing to contribute to the hungry of the

old world for the privilege, when a group of American scholars and museum directors, confronted by the harsh post-war realities, protested with the tongues of babes, accused their country of nefarious ambitions. They refused to accept the fact that the only alternative was to give the paintings to Russia as prospective reparations—as we would a chemical plant. American politicians being what they are, fearing such intangibles as culture and virtue, there was no exhibition, and the masterpieces still reside, available only to scholars, in the museum Andrew Mellon gave the nation—the museum which proudly houses some of the masterpieces Stalin sold from the Hermitage to finance a Five Year Plan.

### Art as Ambassadors

Utilization of art works as ambassadors of good-will gained in scope during the year, highlighted by the Hogarth, Constable and Turner exhibition which Great Britain lent to the Chicago Art Institute and, later, the Metropolitan Museum. Such famous canvases as Hogarth's bright-eyed *Shrimp Girl*, Constable's *Hay Wain* and Turner's *Calais Pier* proved to be eloquent envoys in breaking barriers between the two peoples "separated by a common language." Commented Chicago Director Daniel Catton Rich, who did the selecting: "The loan of these masterpieces by English painters is an epoch-making event."

England's loan was partly a reciprocal gesture for a carefully chosen exhibition of 230 pictures, covering 200 years of American art from Colonial times to the present day, sent to London at the invitation of the Tate Gallery. Nine high-ranking American museum directors picked the exhibition, and it was perhaps the best representation we have yet sent abroad. The English critics, while more polite than the French writers had been under similar circumstances before the war, were not too favorably impressed. They liked the grandiose landscapes of Cole and Durand, the expatriates Whistler and Sargent, Ryder and Grant Wood; disliked those who painted the fast-paced, often raw, slices of life in these United States—particularly the French modern derivatives.

In brief, the English critics looked too hard for national traits instead of aesthetic assimilation—for American art instead of art. The London *Times*, trying to add it all up, guessed that what was really native to the American way was a "matter-of-fact approach."

Meanwhile, the State Department went seriously into the business of forming art collections for good-will tours, replacing dollar diplomacy with cultural diplomacy. It was decided that it was cheaper to buy exhibits than rent them for long terms of perhaps five years. Under the direction of LeRoy Davidson, several collections of prints and watercolors were formed and shipped to Latin America. Then requests started coming in from foreign countries for examples of American modernism.

Assistant Secretary William Benton turned Davidson loose along 57th Street to buy two groups of oils, 49 destined for the Eastern hemisphere with Paris the first stop, and 30 for the Latin American republics. Davidson did a good

job—considering his miserly appropriation of \$43,000—but when the collection was unveiled at the Metropolitan, the conservatives came out fighting. The New York *Journal-American*, which does not consider art worth a full-time professional critic, saw red, printed full-page tirades. Democracy must be protected, even at the expense of denying freedom of palette to any dissenter against the pigmental platitudes of Parrish and Bouguereau.

At this point, private enterprise joined the program to sell the quality of American art abroad, along with our mass production efficiency. From the 30,000 items International Business Machines, Inc., had purchased during the past ten years, Davidson selected canvases by "Sixty Americans Since 1800" to be sent first to Cairo, where it will open in January under the sponsorship of King Farouk, and thence go to Italy, where, joined with works from other business collections, it will tour Europe as "American Industry Sponsors Art." This exhibition is strong both in the traditional and modern wings.

Canada and the United States also decided to extend hands across the border. Early in the season Albany played host to an important survey of Canadian art. Then, the Toledo Museum and the Art Gallery of Toronto, borrowing from more than 30 museums, galleries and private collections, assembled an all-star exhibition of French painting covering the past 200 years. Opening in Toledo, the exhibition will travel later across the border for a two-months' stay in Toronto, beginning in January.

### Important Theme Shows

Activity in the Old Master field, largely restricted during the war years, staged a partial recovery—a recovery that must await full realization until stable governments are established in Continental Europe. Most important of these Old Master events was the joint show of Rubens and Van Dyck installed at the Los Angeles Museum by William R. Valentiner, consultant director.

As is usual, most of the leading theme exhibitions were presented by museums outside of New York City, the nation's art center. The Wadsworth Atheneum, in Hartford, surveyed the nude in art in a notable show. The Rhode Island School of Design Museum asked 17 other museums to lend their "three best paintings done by Americans since 1929." Most popular among museum directors were Marsden Hartley (first), Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Franklin Watkins, Reginald Marsh, Alexander Brook, Henry Mattson, Charles Burchfield and Edward Hopper.

The Art Institute of Chicago gave a comprehensive review of the art of George Bellows, 20 years after his unnecessary death. Guided by Critic Elizabeth McCausland and Director Cordelia Pond, the Smith Art Museum of Springfield (Mass.) re-evaluated the serene art of George Inness. The Philadelphia Museum held an important retrospective exhibition of Corot, from his solidly constructed early figures to his popular, diaphanous nymphs. Santa Barbara Museum marked its fifth anniversary with an exciting exhibition. The Boston Museum, drawing on the lush resources of seven departments, illustrated the historic role of the Animal Kingdom (minus

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# THIS WEEK in ART

By Emily Genauer

## Chagall in Museum Show at Last

At long last the Museum of Modern Art is giving Marc Chagall a one-man show. For more than a quarter century this Russo-French painter has been one of the outstanding figures in the international modern art movement. He has, indeed, been called the father of surrealism. Over 30 years ago, in Berlin, he had his first one-man show. Museums and private collectors all over the world have acquired his work. Books have been written about him, ballets designed by him.

But the Museum of Modern Art, usually so quick to hail the experimental and the strange, for some reason withheld its official cachet, a one-man show.

If the reason for the museum's neglect could possibly have been uncertainty as to public interest in Chagall's art, its doubts must be dissipated now. Around 3500 persons (as many as attended the Picasso opening, and a record for a one-man show premiere in the museum's history) crowded into the exhibition preview the other night. But the Picasso show was a large affair, spread out over three floors of the museum.

That given to Chagall was jammed into the small main floor area usually (although not always) given to photography, fashion and architectural exhibitions. The paintings, all blazing colors and fantastic forms, are hung on close, labyrinthine walls that never permit one to get back from them for any distance. The ballet sketches are downstairs, in the auditorium foyer, so most of the visitors never saw them at all.

### Many Were Confused.

For all that, the museum show must still be recognized as a most important and constructive contribution, a great spur to popular understanding of a great painter.

For even among the invited guests at the opening were many who were deeply interested but audibly confused by what they found. In the make-believe world of the ballet they could accept the brilliant hues and illogical forms of Chagall's sets and costumes. His designs for "Firebird" and "Aleko," for instance, were no

stranger than swan-queens, or dancing bluebirds, or dolls and puppets come to life.

But in art such phenomena are apparently harder to accept. Painting must be literal, even if literature itself can be as fantastic as a writer's imagination wills. "Of time is still a-flying" goes the well-loved English lyric. But Chagall's clock with wings is incredible. Happy people may well "walk on air" and have their "heads in the clouds"—but not in a Chagall painting. "Alice in Wonderland" the whole world loves and never questions. "Take the wings of the morning," and "Let the floods clap their hands," sang the Psalmist. And no one replies, "That's ridiculous!"

But let a painter put down his memories and dreams, fusing them into strangely beautiful harmonies of colors and shape, and everyone demands, "What's the reason?"

Actually there are reasons. All these symbols of fiddlers on roofs, sad-eyed cows, double-faced people, have a definite source that you can trace, if you like jig-saw puzzles, in the artist's past. (That man of the roof, for instance. In his autobiography he tells of how his grandfather, one night, disappeared from a holiday celebration to refresh himself in the cool night air on the roof.)

That figure who persistently wanders over the rooftops, staff in hand. Has he his origin in the artist's consciousness of his race and its eternal wanderings? That ubiquitous cow. Is this another reflection of that childhood love for the sad-eyed cows of his village, and his feeling of loss when they were slaughtered, which he relates in his autobiography?

But while searching out the sources of his apparent incongruities may be fun, knowing them is no prerequisite for enjoyment. For this you need some familiarity with the language of modern art. Then it is rewarding to note how Chagall, using always, in 40 years of work, the same symbolism, and expressing the same spiritual and sensuous outlook on the world, translated it always into the current idiom of the modernists, an

idiom he was himself instrumental in establishing.

### Paintings of 1911.

For example, there are the pictures he painted in 1911 on his first trip to Paris, when he first came into contact with cubism. He shunned this intellectual approach to art. He preferred, as James Johnson Sweeney puts it in his excellent study of Chagall for the exhibition catalog, "the breaking up of memories" rather than the "breaking up of forms." But he profited from their experiments none the less, and his pictures painted during that first Paris sojourn are all flat surfaces and boldly delineated planes as architecturally put together as the "purest" abstractions.

Later on this preoccupation with pictorial structure was replaced by greater assurance. You don't see the planes and angles. But they're there, underneath, holding his pictures compactly together.

It is in the opportunity it offers for a study of this development that, for art lovers who have long understood and accepted Chagall's symbolism, the Museum show serves its most important purpose. It traces his growth from 1908 to the present, clarifies as no previous exhibition has been able to the solidity of his pictorial architecture and the brilliance of his technique.

Also it includes 18 canvases, recently arrived from Europe, that never have been shown in this country before. Along with these are a series of those extraordinary prints that are so little known in America, the brilliant illustrations for his autobiography, for Gogol's "Dead Souls," for Fontaine's "Fables" and the Bible.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 1946.



The Chicago Art Institute loaned this 1914 painting by Chagall, entitled the "Rabbi of Vitebsk," to the Museum of Modern Art's current one-man show of the Russo-French painter's work.

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## Chagall's Fantasy

### The Strangest Things Happen in the Russian Village He Came From.

By HENRY McBRIDE.

More than most artists who have had one, Marc Chagall profits by the retrospective show of his paintings in the Modern Museum. He has never entirely lacked appreciation in this city for his works came with the stamp of Parisian approval upon them and collectors promptly appeared with sufficient courage to buy them, but the single pictures in occasional shows never quite explained the artist to a public that is always just a bit afraid of fantasy—his specialty.

With this big exhibition, where the artist carries you right out of this world into the realms of imagination where everything is as startling as it was to Alice in

Wonderland and where anything can happen and does happen, he takes you with him easily. It is likely he will take most of us with him this time, not even those escaping who used to be known as the "lower classes," for really Chagall isn't above the heads of anybody and plays continually with the elementary mental past-times of humanity.

When his first examples appeared here there was some skepticism about the cows leaping over house-tops, about the figures with two faces and those with none at all, about the drunken fiddlers at the weddings, and the candelabra and other things floating in the air. It was thought to be an effort at eccentricity, and especially since the colors were raw to the point of barbarity.

But the complete showing vindicates the artist. It is curious to note how thoroughly it does so. The artist, it seems is a poet. He is a first-rate colorist. He is an expert painter. He does whatever he sets out to do, and if there should be any trouble in the doing of it, he manages to conceal the effort from the spectator. The repetition of the cows, roosters and fiddlers up in the air is no more wearisome than the aspect of Fujiyama in the background of the Hokusai prints, for the symbol is not so much the real thing in the picture as the presence of the artist invisibly but persistently there. He is charmed with the jugglery he is able to do with his toys; his excitement is catching, his behaviour as a painter alluring.

What amazes and touches the beholder is the Russianism that this artist carries with him into distant lands. His latest pictures, after five years of New York, are as undiluted Russian as the earliest known ones, and though I had occasion to remark only a few weeks ago that the new pictures had an increased suavity in the brush-stroke that might be a concession to our rage for refinement, nevertheless the essential matters in the work were as Russian as Gorki. And if you ask how we Americans can assay the true Russian atmosphere, I can only say that we always do. Genuineness may be recognized when nothing else is. New Yorkers laughed with instant glee at the drunken peasants in the Shostakovitch opera, "Lady Macbeth From Minsk," done some years ago, knowing them to be the real thing. If you remember them at all, you must recall how perfectly Chagall they were. Chagall corroborates all the Russians.

James Johnson Sweeney, who arranged this exhibition, writes a documented history of the painter for the catalogue, giving details of the early village life, and of the later recognitions of the artist in Paris by the poets Cendrars and Apollinaire. In discussing the impossibility of charting the no-man's-land in which imaginative artists work, he quotes this excellent remark by Andre Lhote: "It is the glory and the misery of the artist's lot to transmit a message of which he does not possess the translation," and follows this up with Chagall's refusal to explain his work; "They are only pictorial arrangements of images that obsess me. The theories which I would make up to explain myself, and those which others elaborate in connection with my work are nonsense. My paintings are my reason for my existence, my life and that's all."

The  Sun

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 1946.  
NEW YORK.

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# America

VOL. LXXVI. NO. 15  
JANUARY 11, 1947

## Art

The widely publicized resignation of James Johnson Sweeney from the post of Director of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art well merited the general protest voiced by artists and critics against the conditions within the Museum that brought it about. Not that there was any lack of esteem for Mr. Sweeney and his ability on the part of the Museum's trustees, an esteem shared generally by persons of discriminating taste.

The point at issue was a more vital one and affected his ultimate and best functioning in his post. It involved his control of his work, and the free exercise of a judgment that is rather rare in this country. This rarity must have seemed well worth while to the trustees when he was tendered the post in question, which he accepted under the proviso that his decisions were to be final. A later re-organization of the administrative set-up of the institution promised to nullify this condition and forced his resignation, which the Museum authorities, after prolonged delay, accepted.

Aside from the fact that the loss of this director to the Museum is of a serious nature, this whole occurrence has another and more general significance. It is not, as is often the case, merely a clash of temperaments within an institution. For art curators, in the main, are persons of social inclination and ability, with an overlay of art knowledge that is acquired rather than instinctive. They are the courtier type of persons, adept at the shades of deference to be paid to people of varying importance, financial and social, as these have weight in the control of a particular museum.

Their tint, as one might say, is necessarily neutral, and their decisions of an artistic kind also take on this predominant tone. They rarely advance beyond the stage of acquiescent assistants to the financially important trustees who like to play with art. If the harried museum director escapes this onerous roll he is supposed to play, it is only by a political type of adroitness that is scarcely compatible with self-respect.

This was a rôle that Mr. Sweeney refused to enact, even though his path, undoubtedly, promised to be made an easy one by sufficient social patronage of a temperament-soothing kind. As a

person of distinction in his own right, possessed of scholarship allied to creative ability, and with the logic that accrued from his Jesuit training, he could scarcely involve himself in a game which museum trustees insist on playing. And that game has much of "make believe" about it, a fact that has promoted the orchidaceous character of such institutions but which the Museum of Modern Art has sought to escape. Their loss in this instance constitutes a set-back, for Mr. Sweeney's work exemplifies his statement in one of his early books, that criticism becomes



vital to the extent its content is creative. His arrangement of an exhibition, as an instance, becomes another and separate artistic performance, based on the art works included in it; and his writing, while occasionally obscure and esoteric, is genuinely perceptive and profound.

While this is a case of Sweeney among the trustees, rather than "among the nightingales," the results are rather depressing for these will not be singing at the Museum of Modern Art.

BARRY BYRNE

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MKR'S art outlook

January 13, 1947

## Museum Gobbledygook

One C.D.R. made comedy in the H-T's *This Week* magazine December 15 on the affair Rockefeller vs. Sweeney, reported in issues No. 19 & 21. Taking a literal view of the Museum of Modern Art's news release issued in explanation of Mr. Sweeney's resignation, C.D.R. explains the Museum's failure to reconcile his objections with its newly reformed policies as due to complicated phraseology meant only to confuse. In order to be in keeping with its usual literature, the writer advises that next time an elevator goes wrong, the Museum tack up a sign that reads, instead of "Out of Order":

"Because of reorganization of the organizational structure of this elevator, brought about by administrative complexities which have altered the conditions under which the elevator ran in the first place, we are at present attempting to arrive at an area of agreement by which the elevator can be repaired to operate within the framework of the new administration." It means the same thing, he says, but sounds a lot finer.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES

BOOK REVIEW, MAY 18,

## People Who Read and Write

**A**T this writing no riot squads had been summoned to quell public arguments about the Pulitzer prizes for literature—1946 was, perhaps, that kind of year in letters. Even the literary critics—or, anyhow, seventeen of them whom our contemporary *The Saturday Review of Literature* polled after the announcements—didn't react as testily as they usually do.

Thus, nine of the seventeen approved the garland placed on Robert Penn Warren's novel, "All the King's Men"; ditto "The Autobiography of William Allen White"; eight agreed on James Phinney Baxter's "Scientists Against Time" (history) and eleven did not quarrel over the choice of Robert Lowell's book of poems, "Lord Weary's Castle."

Three of the newspaper and magazine pundits would have picked Sholem Asch's "East River" as the best novel; three favored Ferris Greenslet's "The Lowells and Their Seven Worlds" in the biography division; two voted for Harry Butcher's "My Three Years With Eisenhower" as the leading history, while Norman Rosten's "The Big Road" and Martha Keller's "Brady's Bend" each picked up a vote in the poetry department. There were other scattered selections, and a total of nine "no opinions."

Going from art to box office: Harcourt, Brace, the happy publisher of two prize winners, has gone to press with small, quick printings of "All the King's Men" and "Lord Weary's Castle," which previously had sold 50,000 copies and 2,000 copies, respectively.

### Men of Art

**A** COUPLE of Toms, pound for pound perhaps carrying more talent in their spare frames than any two fellows you could think of, paid brief visits to our town the other day. We refer, of course, to Mr. T. S. Eliot and Mr. Thomas Mann.

A colleague of ours, who feels a kinship with Mr. Eliot's generation (he, too, found himself between two wars), maneuvered his way into the lecture the poet gave on John Milton. He says it wasn't so much a revision of Mr. Eliot's position of twenty-five years ago, but rather that of a second look from a later period of time. Mr. Eliot, he tells us, concluded that young poets can now read Milton's verse profitably. Also, that Mr. Eliot is a fine talker: one can hear every word he says, and (negative virtues, he calls them) what Mr. Eliot says is stripped of emotionalism, cuteness or any display of platform wit. A relief, our colleague sums it up.

Further, our man followed up by wriggling his way into an even more select tea given for Mr. Eliot and Mr. Eliot's friends, among them I. A. Richards, Allen Tate, E. E. Cummings, Djuna Barnes, Georgia O'Keefe and James Johnson Sweeney. In the course of conversation our interloper referred to an essay that Mr. Eliot had written long ago and that had meant a great deal to him, and still did. "Yes," Mr.

Eliot replied, "I've been very lucky in that one, haven't I?"

All in all, our colleague reported, a deep and most gratifying experience. What he was struck by was Mr. Eliot's profound modesty, and that, if he was conscious at all of the controversial and decisive role he has played in British and American letters, it has done nothing to him. In short, Mr. Eliot was a gentle and serious man.



T. S. Eliot.

After that our same colleague attended a press conference for Thomas Mann who, he reports, is looking excellent at 72—what with his trim, compact figure, fine features and mild California sunburn. The occasion for the gathering of the bookish fourth estate was a volume of pieces, "Essays of Three Decades," that Knopf is bringing out next month and, for later on, a novel, "Dr. Faustus." A fictional biography of a modern German composer, Mr. Mann says about the novel, which is at the same time a tragic history with political implications and symbolic of the destiny of the German people themselves.

Mr. Mann spoke, among other things, of his brother Heinrich (a good writer in his own right, who has finished an autobiography, "An Epoch Is Surveyed"); of his favorite essay, "The Greatness and Suffering of Richard Wagner"; of American writers (holding in "high esteem" Faulkner and Wolfe), and of Germany (a cultural desert). Later, in a corner of the room, our colleague got to speak to Mr. Mann. The talk got on poetry, and Mr. Mann said: "If you are a lyric poet it is fortunate to be born in England or America. English is the language of lyric poetry." Our colleague was cheered, and left resolving to take advantage of his birthright, and thinking that Mr. Mann was a vigorous and serious man.

### Publishers' Row

**T**HE manuscript of Harold Laski's monumental opus, entitled "The American Democracy," which Mr. Laski regards as his most significant work to date, has arrived in the Viking office. . . . Thurston Macauley has signed Lydia Holland to a contract for the publication of her biographical novel, "Rebellious, Puritan," based on the life

of Elizabeth Hallett, a settler of Greenwich in the seventeenth century. Mrs. Holland says of her protagonist: "Three hundred years ago she achieved a spiritual, political and sexual freedom that most Americans have yet to attain." . . . Margaret French Cresson's biography of her father, the late Daniel Chester French, entitled "Journey Into Fame," will come next month by Harvard University Press. . . . Doubleday announces that David C. Mearns (director of reference department of Library of Congress) will do a book based on the contents of the Robert Todd Lincoln collection, beginning his work immediately after release of the papers to the general public on July 26.

Title of the book by James F. Byrnes (to be published by Harpers this fall) is "Speaking Frankly." . . . Vanguard, for late this year or early next: "A Book About Myself," by Jonathan Titelescu Fogarty, and edited by James T. Farrell. . . . Walter B. Pitkin has signed with A. A. Wyn for a new book, "Want More and Get It." Tough-minded, down-to-earth, says the release. For next fall. . . . Lippincott's newest cookbook, for late this month, is "At Home on the Range: Or How to Make Friends With Your Stove," by Margaret Yardley Potter. . . . Arthur Koestler has reported to Macmillan that his new book is entitled "The Tragic and the Comic" and subtitled "Elements of a Theory of the Creative Mental Functions." . . . Simon & Schuster for the end of June: "Albert Sears," a novel by Millen Brand, and for July "The Eagle on the Plain," a novel by Victor Wolfson.

### Little Mags

**S**INCE a good deal of the best writing turns up in little magazines that do not easily come to hand, herewith the first of what will be a regular series of glances at same:

Partisan Review's past issue had the first of the London Letters written by Arthur Koestler (who replaced George Orwell as British correspondent). The current Partisan features Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., who has written on "The Future of Socialism," as well as a prose piece by Wallace Stevens and a short story by Delmore Schwartz. . . . Kenyon Review offers for those interested in Existentialism an essay on Sartre and Heidegger, and for those interested in art another on the controversial painter Marsden Hartley. . . . The winter issue of Chimera, edited by Barbara Howes, has a correspondence, on "Mythology and the Novel," between Thomas Mann and Karl Kerényi. The spring number will contain an article by Dr. C. G. Jung, entitled "Individual and Mass Psychology," and a satirical story by the Italian, Alberto Moravia. . . . Last year, the Quarterly Review, in New Haven, ran an all-Kafka number; the current number is an all-Valéry issue, with translations from Valéry's poetry and prose, as well as a piece by T. S. Eliot on the French master.

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## ART DIVISION, PROGRESSIVE CITIZENS OF AMERICA

*Calls on you to attend an*

### ARTISTS ACTION MEETING

*to protest the State Department cancellation  
and recall of its exhibitions from abroad.*

#### SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

An American Group • Artists Equity • Artists League of America • Audubon Society • New York Society of Women Painters • Serigraph Society • Sculptors Guild, and others.

#### SPEAKERS

Edward Alden Jewell, *Art Critic New York Times* • James Johnson Sweeney • John D. Morse, *Magazine of Art* • Juliana Force, *Whitney Museum of Art* • Henry Schnackenberg, *Artists Equity*, and others.

**MONDAY, MAY 5, 1947, 8 P. M.**

**OAK ROOM, Hotel Capitol, 51st St. and 8th Ave.**

**ADMISSION FREE**

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, MAY 6, 1947.

## ARTISTS PROTEST HALTING ART TOUR

'Action Meeting' Here Assails  
Marshall's Decision—Called  
'Wave of Reaction'

The State Department's cancellation of its touring exhibition of modern American paintings was protested last night at an "Artists Action Meeting" in the Hotel Capitol. The meeting was held under the joint sponsorship of Artists Equity, American Group, Artists League of America, the Audubon Society, the New York Society of Women Painters, the Serigraph Society, the Art Division of the Progressive Citizens of America and the Sculptors' Guild.

The part of the exhibition that was shown in parts of South America is back in this country. The paintings that were sent to Europe are still there in, storage pending final action.

#### Shown in Metropolitan

The collection was shown in the Metropolitan Museum of Art last October before it was sent abroad. The initiation of the State Department's cultural project was hailed by all sections of the art world.

Speakers at the meeting agreed that Secretary of State George C. Marshall's decision, "No more taxpayers' money for modern art" was a blow to the cultural progress in this country and a step backward in our cultural relations with other countries.

James Johnson Sweeney, former curator of painting and sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art, said he regarded the criticisms that had been effective in stopping the tour as a threat to liberty of expression, and foresaw serious consequences if we condoned it.

Juliana Force, director of the Whitney Museum urged that "we fight arrogance appearing in official guise." The seventy-nine paintings that had been purchased and administered for \$49,000, had been termed "radical" by several members of Congress.

#### Wave of Reaction Seen

"We are really protesting a wave of reaction," John D. Morse, editor of the *Magazine of Art*, said. "Somebody doesn't like modern art. It is a symptom, an emblem of change, and will always be resisted."

Edward Alden Jewell, art critic of THE NEW YORK TIMES, took the position that the State Department should have backed up its collection; that no objection to it had been taken in the first place. He said he considered the collection an excellent one. "Not all the artists represented were at their best, but they were limited by the small budget."

Another speaker was Edith Halpert of the Downtown Gallery. "Works of art are not a dispensable luxury for any nation," she said. "We will have communitism in art if Congress can control what we paint, and free and individual expression is stifled."

Henry Schnackenberg, representing Artist Equity Association, said that artists should have a voice in matters that concern the arts. His organization, he added, felt a sense of shame over the cancellation of the tour made at the requests of foreign governments and now subject to political censorship.

Presiding at the meeting was the artist, Robert Gwathmey.

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VOGUE, May 15, 1947

Paul Klee:



the great Swiss painter whose works are being collected for a Klee museum

Paul Klee, a gentle, small man, with a small but intensely sensitive imagination, has left an unmistakable signature on many younger painters. All over the world critics use as a flatly descriptive phrase—almost an example of art jargon—"a touch of Klee." For in his drawings, prints, and paintings, as James Johnson Sweeney once wrote, "Klee lived fully in elaborating nuances and capturing fancies...the result was a curious pictorial poetry of his own." That pictorial poetry is in the painting on the opposite page, in the suggestion of Oriental pattern, the calligraphic line, the lyric sensibility. To some, Klee's work has seemed to have a naive spontaneity, but into Klee's work went years of study, of wide experimentation. He was born near Berne in 1879; died in 1940, a world-famous figure. Just as Paul Klee lived in an orderly confusion of small objects, so does his sister, Mathilde, in her one room, which achieves the minute complications of certain Klee designs. Both Klees were musical; their father was a music teacher, their mother a singer. At one time, Paul Klee had to make the decision between music and art, chose the latter, but kept up his violin playing. Left-handed, he later deliberately learned to paint with his right hand, as he felt that ambidexterity produced a harmonious balance. Although Klee was born in Switzerland, of a Bavarian father and a French mother, he was not given his longed-for Swiss citizenship until almost at the end of his life—the papers arriving after his death. Now a Klee Association has been formed to keep some of the great works for a Klee Museum. One of the founders is Hans Meyer-Benteli, who owns "Tropical Twilight," that delicate impression of bird and fronds.



Mathilde Klee, sister of the artist

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NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE,

SUNDAY, MAY 4, 1947

## Art of the Week: Foreign and American Art in Full Flood

By Carlyle Burrows

WITH the art galleries now at full flood, exhibitions continue, as for some time past, to represent art on an extremely wide basis. This is indicated this week by (1) the show of paintings by José Clemente Orozco at the Gallery Vivienne, (2) by the Theo Van Doesburg retrospective at the Art of This Century, and (3) by the group shows at the Rehn and the Downtown Galleries. These latter bring forward numerous American artists. Besides which, the work by the Canadian women painters (noted in an adjacent column) further signifies the wide extent of gallery interests.

The thirty canvases by Orozco, marking the first presentation in several years, provide a satisfying survey of his work, though a much more extensive group would doubtless be required for a full-scale review of his different achievements. Pictures such as "The Departure of Quetzalcoatl" and "The Martyrdom of St. Stephen" present, with vigor, concepts which, though perhaps best conveyed in mural scope, nevertheless reveal the artist's intensity of feeling and show dramatic treatment in the easel form. The major emphasis at the same time is placed on the work of the 1920s and '30s, which is largely familiar, whereas more work of recent production than is sparingly shown would be to the event's advantage.

The exhibition is fortunate, however, in having as loans from the Museum of Modern Art the "Barricade," one of two pictures from that source that show the phases of revolutionary and human subject matter Orozco dealt with in his impressive Mexican mural paintings, the other of which is the picture called "Peace." Both are exceptional canvases, with the former especially notable for its dramatic unity and powerful color. In contrast, the recent nudes and portraits, one of the artist himself being a forthright and competent document, are relatively informal exhibits of only a little more than minor esthetic importance. This show, like the Blakelock exhibition at the Whitney Museum, has been arranged (continuing through Saturday) as a feature of the City College centennial.

Van Doesburg's paintings, at the Art of This Century, follow a consistently abstract trend, their patterns concisely and at best, decoratively, resembling the work of Mondrian. Better, it should be said, this artist, who worked with the Dutch De Stijl group of thirty years ago, shared with Mondrian in his development of the "purist" process. Though their aims appear to us to have coincided at all major points, it is possible to follow in Van Doesburg's favor such distinctions in regard to style, as his "dynamic equilibrium" in opposition to the so-called "static" of Mondrian.

The exhibition, meticulously and affectionately arranged by Mme. Van Doesburg, embraces work of the years 1906 to 1930. Starting with the early "Portrait of Mr. L," and following through the "Jeune Fille aux Fleurs" to the prettily decorative "Joueurs aux Cartes," of 1917, progressive simplification of natural forms is observed.

Everything subsequent to this date, up to the year preceding the artist's death, in 1931, is, by contrast, entirely detached from objectivity, increasingly restricted to pattern for its own sake. James Johnson Sweeney has provided the comprehensive show with an excellent catalogue.

The artists at the Rehn gallery, where the "Spring" exhibition is now on, have contributed liberally of their works, making a show which amply fills all of the rooms there. It is one of the events of longer duration on the schedule and may be seen through May, with a good number of new pictures included. Of these, Charles Burchfield's "Cardinal Flowers" proves somewhat exceptional in its mingled fantasy and naturalism. The Henry Mattson "Blue, Black and Silver," large and haunted by the splendor of the sea, is another poetic picture, especially to be noted for its color, now trending perceptibly, it seems, toward the abstract. Though the paintings at Rehn's, including Bradley W. Tomlin's "Arrangement," are in several instances thus sensitively, or in the instance of Vincent Campanella's "Windy Afternoon," robustly formalized, others such as Eugene Speicher's "Young Actress" and Edward Hopper's "Corn Belt City," on the contrary are realized with taste and skill, the former in color and form being an especially successful achievement. Two pictures which sound a different note, the landscape "Crehaven," by Bellows, and the Halsian "Old Woman With Pitcher," by Luks, are distinguished works by earlier Americans included.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, MAY 4, 1947.

### Doesburg in Retrospect

As her final show before flying off from us to live in a Venetian palace, Peggy Guggenheim offers at Art of This Century a very thoroughly prepared retrospective display of work by the pioneer abstractionist Theo van Doesburg, who died in 1931. As this artist's first American retrospective, the event is important, relating itself to the Mondrian memorial show, put on some time back at the Museum of Modern Art.

The link between Doesburg and Mondrian becomes apparent at a glance; and although James Johnson Sweeney in his keen and clarifying catalogue foreword directs notice to essential divergence in aims and methods, at some points the parallel is very close (in the 1924 "Composition," for example). Applicability of Doesburg's geometrically nonobjective painting to architecture is interestingly argued, if not always too persuasively demonstrated, in photographs.

The first part of the exhibition illustrates phases of the artist's development prior to his perfecting of the distinctive nonobjective style in 1916 or 1917, when the course was definitely charted.

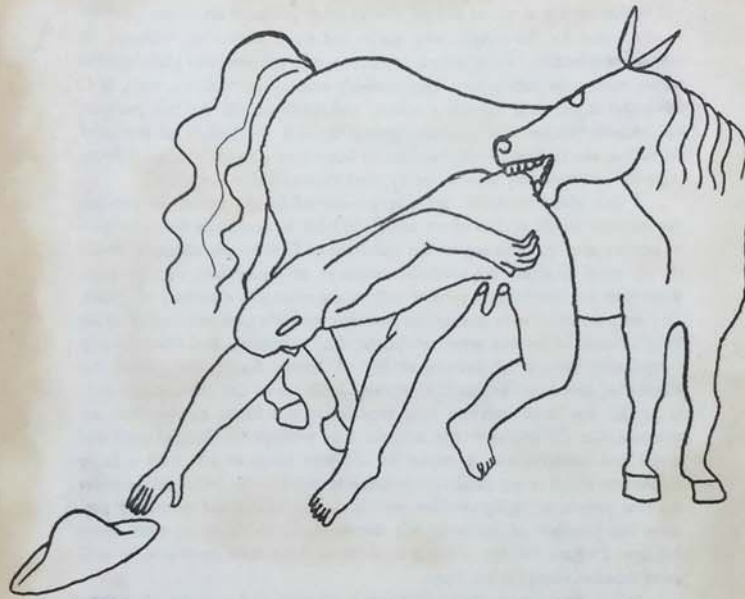
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# college art journal

SPRING 1947

Number 3



ALEXANDER CALDER, *The Steed bit his Master*, ink drawing, from *Three Young Rats*, New York, Curt Valentin, 1944.

THE PRESIDENT AND TRUSTEES OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

invite you to the opening of an exhibition

Wednesday evening, April 16, 8 to 10 o'clock

SCULPTURE AND DRAWINGS BY

Henry Moore

MEMBERS MAY BRING GUESTS

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PADRAIC COLUM, Pres. ELIZABETH DEELY, Treas.  
Sec. SEAN L. O'SCANNLAIN 780 MADSON AVE NEW YORK 21.

A special lecture on

***The Poets of Easter Week***

to be delivered by ***Mary Colum & Padraic Colum***

***Sunday night March 30th at 8:30 p.m.***

JAMES J. SWEENEY will be Chairman of the evening

CARROLL CLUB, 120 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK  
Subscription 1.00 Refreshments Served



Marc Chagall 1917

From "Marc Chagall"  
by James Johnson Sweeney  
by permission of  
The Museum of Modern Art

The American Committee of Jewish Writers  
Artists and Scientists

invites you to greet

MARC CHAGALL who has been named  
Honorary Chairman of Art of the  
International Jewish Conference on Culture  
at a dinner to be held  
Wednesday evening, April 16, 7 o'clock  
at the Delmonico Hotel

502 Park Avenue at 59 Street, New York

R. S. V. P.

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CARROLL CLUB, 120 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK  
Subscription 1.00 Refreshments Served

Our Honored guests will be

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- JAN GALEWICZ, Consul General, Poland
- EMILY GENAUER
- LILLIAN HELLMAN
- CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUS, Cultural Attache, France
- JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY
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THE NEW YORKER

MARCH 1, 1947



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THE NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 1947.

***Photographs and the Collected Art Works  
Of Stieglitz Will Be Exhibited by Museum***

The Museum of Modern Art will devote two major summer exhibitions to the late Alfred Stieglitz: one to the modern paintings, sculpture, drawings and prints assembled by him during his lifetime; the other to a retrospective showing of his own photography. These large exhibitions will fill two entire floors of the museum and will open on June 11.

At the request of Georgia O'Keeffe, widow of Stieglitz and executrix of his estate, James Johnson Sweeney, until recently director of paintings and sculpture at the museum, will write the catalogues and install the exhibitions.

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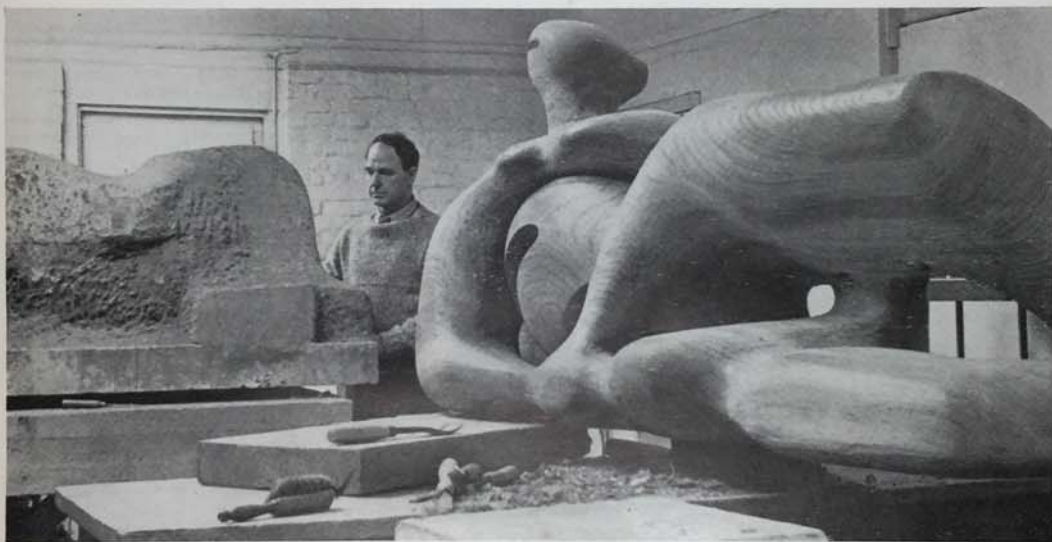
## HENRY MOORE COMES TO AMERICA

BY JOHN D. MORSE

"MY AIM in work," says Henry Moore, "is to combine as intensely as possible the abstract principles of sculpture along with the realization of my idea. All art is an abstraction to some degree: (in sculpture the material alone forces one away from pure representation and towards abstraction). Abstract qualities of design are essential to the value of a work, but to me of equal importance is the psychological, human element. If both abstract and human elements are welded together in a work, it must have a fuller, deeper meaning.

"For me a work must first have a vitality of its own. I do not mean a reflection of the vitality of life, of movement, physical action, frisking, dancing figures and so on, but that a work can have in it a pent-up energy, an intense life of

I met him in the big, bare gallery at the Museum of Modern Art, where the first important retrospective exhibition of his work (Dec. 18, 1946—Mar. 16, 1947) was being noisily assembled, I asked him if some of the pieces were not really pure abstractions. He replied (above the pounding of the carpenters) that there was only one pure abstraction in the show (*String Relief*), and that even it had a bonelike shape at one end. Then he led me eagerly from one figure to another, pushing and pulling the heavy stones into the right light with surprising ease for so small a man, all the time thumping, rubbing, and caressing them. "There, feel that," he said as he rubbed his hand over the surface of *Square Form*. "Feel how it comes up and out, like a torso expanding into a chest." And again, beside the



Henry Moore in his studio. The reclining figure in the foreground is the same as that shown in the detail on the opposite page.

its own, independent of the object it may represent. When a work has this powerful vitality we do not connect the word Beauty with it.

"Beauty, in the later Greek or Renaissance sense, is not the aim of my sculpture. Between beauty of expression and power of expression there is a difference of function. The first aims at pleasing the senses; the second has a spiritual vitality which for me is more moving and goes deeper than the senses.

"Because a work does not aim at reproducing natural appearances it is not, therefore, an escape from life—but may be a penetration into reality, not a sedative or drug, not just the exercise of good taste, the provision of pleasant shapes and colours in a pleasing combination, not a decoration to life, but an expression of the significance of life, a stimulation to greater effort in living."

These statements by Henry Moore I had read,<sup>1</sup> and so when

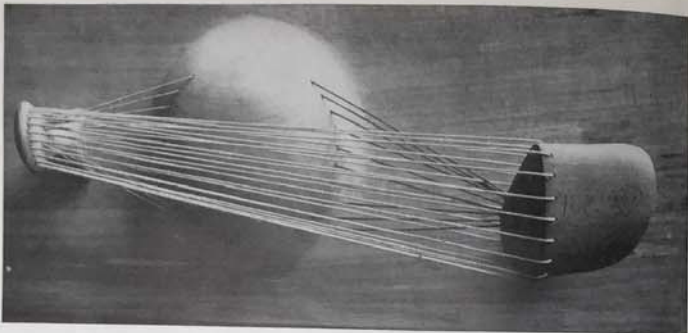
<sup>1</sup>"Henry Moore: Sculpture and Drawings" with an introduction by Herbert Read, Curt Valentin, New York; Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., Ltd. London, 1944.

lead and wire figure called *The Bride*: "Feel this part in back. Just like picking up a kitten or rabbit by the scruff of the neck."

Presently he was called away for a few moments, and I stood looking at the disordered group of fifty-odd figures, varying from hand-size to life-size, that would soon be carefully arranged about the room. And I suddenly realized how completely right he had been. There were no pure abstractions in the show. Each piece, in its own particular and individual way, was deeply involved in humanity; each was, as he had written, an "expression of the significance of life, a stimulation to greater effort in living."

These seated and reclining figures, whether immediately recognizable or not, seem to me to reveal their creator's profound awareness of the human drama, compounded of both tragedy and comedy. They are neither bitter or abject. Nor is their acceptance merely passive. They retain childhood's gift of wonderment, expectancy, and humor, yet with an adult awareness that this is, after all, not the best of all possible worlds. As Moore said of the stone called *Figure* (and it

Moore: STRING RELIEF, 1937, beech wood and string, 21". Coll. J. C. Pritchard. The only pure abstraction in the show, according to Moore, and even it has "a bonelike shape at one end."



Moore: SCULPTURE, 1937, bird's eye marble, 19". Coll. A. Lancaster Lloyd. Henry Moore's "ideas about deliberately adding realistic details to his sculpture are as direct as his carving. 'I want the feeling' [he says] '... to come out of the form, and not the features.'"



Moore: RECLINING FIGURE, 1938, lead, 13" long. Collection of Museum of Modern Art. Moore "is essentially a carver instead of a modeler. When he does model in clay for his bronze and lead figures he makes the clay figure much larger than necessary, and after it hardens a little he carves it down to the size and texture he wants."



applies to many of the others), "I wanted to give it a startled turn of the head. She looks out to goodness knows what."

Like D. H. Lawrence (whose complete works he read between the ages of 25 and 30, after having finished all of Scott at 15 and Hardy at 20), Henry Moore was born the son of an English coal miner. In 1910, when he was twelve years old, he won a scholarship to Castleford, Yorkshire, Grammar School, where he attracted the special notice of the art mistress. He was teaching in his own elementary school at Castleford when he joined the army in 1917, and after demobilization in 1919 returned briefly to the job. But an ex-servicemen's educational grant gave him the opportunity to spend two years at the Leeds School of Art (Leeds University has since conferred on him an honorary doctor of letters degree), and in 1925 he won a traveling scholarship at the Royal College of Art in London, which took him to Paris, Rome, Florence, Venice, and Ravenna. His first one-man exhibition was held in London in 1928, and in that year he was commissioned to carve a decorative panel for the main office of the Underground Railway at St. James. Since then, his steady production has solidly established his reputation as one of the world's great living sculptors, whose work may be seen in the following American public collections: The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1937); the Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo (1943); the Art Institute of Chicago (1945); Washington University, St. Louis (1946).

In 1940 Moore was commissioned by the progressive Canon of Saint Matthew's in Northampton, England, to carve a *Madonna and Child* for his church. (See *MAGAZINE OF ART*, Oct., 1943.) The resulting figure, and the sculptor's feeling about it, throws considerable light on the whole subject of his work. In a leaflet commemorating the occasion of a festival at the church in 1943 he wrote: "When I was first asked to carve a 'Madonna and Child' for St. Matthew's, although I was very interested, I wasn't sure whether I could do it, or whether I even wanted to do it. One knows that Religion has been the inspiration of most of Europe's greatest painting and sculpture, and that the Church in the past has encouraged and employed the greatest artists; but the great tradition of religious art seems to have got lost completely in the present day, and the general level of church art has fallen very low (as anyone can see from the affected and sentimental prettiness sold for church decoration in church art shops). Therefore I felt it was not a commission straightaway and lightheartedly to agree to undertake, and I could only promise to make notebook drawings from which I would do small clay models, and only then should I be able to say whether I could produce something which would be satisfactory as sculpture and also satisfy my idea of the 'Madonna and Child' theme as well.

"There are two particular motives or subjects which I have constantly used in my sculpture in the last twenty years; they are the 'Reclining Figure' idea and the 'Mother and Child' idea. Perhaps of the two the 'Mother and Child' differs from a carving of just a 'Mother and Child'—that is, by considering how in my opinion religious art differs from secular art. "It's not easy to describe in words what this difference is, except by saying in general terms that the 'Madonna and Child' should have an austerity and a nobility, and some touch of grandeur (even hieratic aloofness) which is missing in the everyday 'Mother and Child' idea. Of the sketches and models I have done, the one chosen has I think a quiet dignity and gentleness. I have tried to give a sense of complete easiness and repose, as though the Madonna could stay in that position for ever (as, being in stone, she will have to do)."

The sculptor was well aware also that in accepting the commission for the *Madonna and Child* he would have to modify



Moore: THE BRIDE, 1940, lead and wire, 12". Coll. Museum of Modern Art. "Feel this part in back," [said Moore] "Just like picking up a kitten or rabbit by the scruff of the neck."

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his style, that he would have to "meet the subject half-way," as he says. The features of the Child, for example, posed a very real problem. They would have to satisfy both himself and a number of devout parishioners who already had decided notions of what the Christ Child should look like. "It was the most worrying fortnight I ever spent," he told me, but the result seems eventually to have satisfied everyone concerned.

Moore believes it a good thing for the modern artist to "meet the subject half-way" by accepting a commission about every three years—"to prove to himself that he can face the problem of realism in art." He feels that the *Madonna and Child* for St. Matthew's provided this discipline, also the "Shelter Drawings" of the war years, and he hopes that a possible commission for a Family Group for the Village College at Impington may do the same.

But his ideas about deliberately adding realistic details to his sculpture are as direct as his carving. "I want the feeling—of expectancy or whatever—to come out of the form, and not the features." When I pointed to one of the figures in the exhibition that has little wire beads in the center of its eyes, suggesting pupils, he promptly replied that it was one reason why he believes as he now does, that the figure was the product of a period of experimenting. "Now I know that basic form is what lasts. The surface does not."

This led us to talking about materials, and I remembered what he had written—in 1934: "Truth to material. Every material has its own individual qualities. It is only when the sculptor works direct, when there is an active relationship with his material, that the material can take its part in the shaping of an idea. Stone, for example, is hard and concentrated and should not be falsified to look like soft flesh—it should not be forced beyond its constructive build to a point of weakness. It should keep its hard, tense stoniness."

Now, surrounded by work done chiefly during the twelve

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*

Moore: Left, SQUARE FORM, 1936, brown Horton stone, 24". "There, feel that," [Henry Moore] said as he rubbed his hand over the surface of SQUARE FORM. "Feel how it comes up and out, like a torso expanding into a chest." Right, TUBE SHELTER PERSPECTIVE, watercolor and pen, 1941, 18 1/4" x 17". Coll. War Artists. "... here the figures are reclining row on row in the tubes of the London Underground, instead of in free space."



years since, he said: "We all used to talk a lot about suiting material to subject. That is important for a young sculptor. He has to learn. But eventually, if one doesn't transcend one's material, one isn't much of a sculptor. A great artist can make a great work of art out of what a minor artist would call the wrong material. But the minor artist, with exactly the right material, will still produce a minor work of art."

Today Moore uses any material he can get (the lead figures were made out of the same material as plumbers' "drains"), but he is essentially a carver instead of a modeler. When he does model in clay for his bronze and lead figures he makes the clay figure much larger than necessary, and after it hardens a little he carves it down to the size and texture he wants. When he could not get big stones during the war he tried making his own out of reinforced concrete, but the tension of working with it as it hardened, adding the reinforcing steel at just the right time, he found "very worry-making." He says it took his mind off the main job, which was carving his idea. He is mildly contemptuous of casting in artificial stone, but supposes that "we might get used to it, just like we got used to copies in bronze." He pointed out that he had liked the cast of the reclining Aztec figure in the Trocadero which influenced his work so profoundly. "There is really no reason why casts should not be made. I'm really not against the idea at all."

But wood and stone to carve (preferably stone) remain his favorite materials, and I discovered how this fact has had an important bearing on his art. Although he had written that the Mother and Child idea was perhaps his "fundamental obsession," the truth is that the reclining figure idea occurs just as frequently, if not more often, in his work. I asked him why. Immediately his interest quickened, and he thought a moment before replying.

"There are three fundamental poses of the human figure," he said, speaking slowly and precisely, as though he had given the matter long thought. "One is standing, the other is seated,

and the third is lying down. Now, if you like to carve the human figure in stone, as I do, the standing pose is no good. Stone is not so strong as bone, and the figure will break off at the ankles and topple over. The early Greeks solved this problem by draping the figure and covering the ankles. Later on they supported it against a silly tree trunk.

"But with either the seated or the reclining figure one doesn't have this worry. And between them are enough variations to occupy any sculptor for a lifetime. In fact if I were told that from now on I should have stone only for seated figures I should not mind it at all.

"But of the three poses, the reclining figure gives the most freedom, compositionally and spatially. The seated figure has to have something to sit on. You can't free it from its pedestal. A reclining figure can recline on any surface. It is free and stable at the same time. It fits in with my belief that sculpture should be permanent, should last for eternity. Also, it has repose. And it suits me—if you know what I mean."

What Henry Moore "means" is also implicit in the series of "Shelter Drawings" which the Government commissioned him to make in London during the war, forty-eight of which are included in the exhibition. Only here the figures are reclining row on row in the tubes of the London Underground, instead of in free space. And still they are neither bitter nor abject. They are human beings, bored and weary, sick of the indignities and privations that war has dumped upon them. But they are painted in warm, rich colors: reds, blues, and greens that are surprising for the inside of a bomb shelter, and surprisingly right in the pictures by Henry Moore.

Every Londoner who went through the war knows what Moore "means," and now the Americans who will see this exhibition in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco will have a chance to find out for themselves.

Moore: GROUP OF DRAPED FIGURES IN A SHELTER, gouache and watercolor, 1941, 22" x 12 1/2". Coll. Dr. Julian Huxley. "... reds, blues, and greens ... surprising for the inside of a bomb shelter, and surprisingly right in the pictures by Henry Moore."



Moore: FIGURE, 1932, Armenian marble, 33". Coll. Eric C. Gregory. "As Moore said of the stone called VIGGUS (and it applies to many of the others); 'I wanted to give it a startled turn of the head. She looks out in goodness knows what.'"



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THE NEW YORKER

FEBRUARY 22, 1947

*Visit*

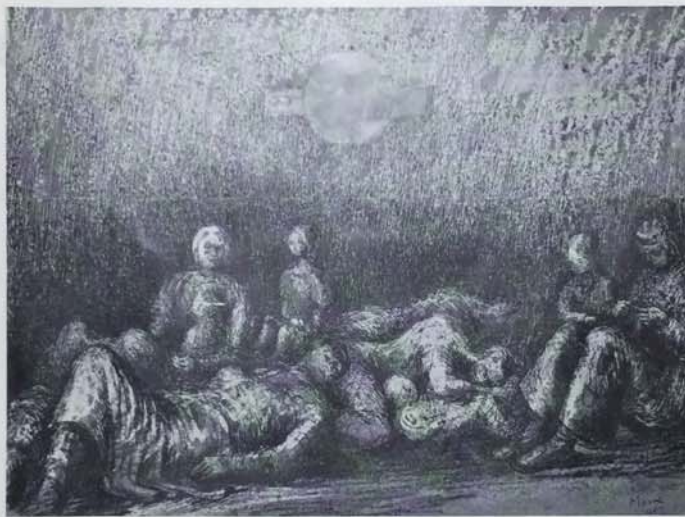
**P**ARTLY because the Museum of Modern Art is run on such Pentagon-like lines that anybody wanting to see one of its curators has to get a pass before being admitted to the elevator, certain people have long prayed for an incident that would ruffle its composure. Their prayers have been granted. The other day—so we are informed by a gentleman who happened to be around at the time—a rough-looking character, cigarette dangling from lip, turned up at the reception counter and fixed one of the impeccable young ladies behind it with a questioning eye. "You can't smoke here," she said. "Why not?" asked the visitor. "It's a bar, isn't it? It looks like a bar." The caller then

asked to see Mr. Sweeney, the former director of paintings and sculpture, and was told that he was no longer there. "Who's left, anyway?" he inquired, and asked for one of the curators. "Who shall I say wants him?" the reception girl asked, picking up an intramural phone. "Dr. Barnes, of Philadelphia," the smoker replied, removing his cigarette and emitting a terrible puff. Advised, shakily, that his second choice was off for the day, Dr. Barnes (for it was indeed he) said, "Tell him Barnes was here, and that he wasn't drunk," blew a well-defined ring, and departed.

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# WORCESTER ART MUSEUM NEWS BULLETIN AND CALENDAR

FEBRUARY, 1947



BROWN TUBE SHELTER

by Henry Moore

LENT BY THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM, LONDON

## BRITISH CONTEMPORARY PAINTERS

Examples of the independent and imaginative painting of certain British artists may be seen in the exhibition, *British Contemporary Painters*, on view at the Museum from February 12 through March 16. Selected by John Rothenstein, Director of the Tate Gallery, London; Philip Hendy, Director of the National Gallery, London; and Clive Bell, the well-known English art critic, the exhibition was organized by the Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, in cooperation with the British Council. Its only New England appearance will be at the Worcester Art Museum.

Widely divergent in style, the work of these artists does not constitute a cross section of British painting, but furnishes examples of its most creative phase.

One of the most important artists represented is the sculptor Henry Moore, who was recently honored by a one-man show at the Museum of Modern Art. As a government war artist, he produced some remarkable drawings, such as *Brown Tube Shelter*, which reflect the power of his sculptural compositions.

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*(Affilié au Gouvernement Français)*

122 WEST 50TH STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

Le Président de FRANCE FOREVER vous prie de lui faire l'honneur d'assister à une conférence par

Mademoiselle SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

*Ecrivain et Philosophe*

"LA RESPONSABILITE DE L'ECRIVAIN"

sous les auspices du Conseiller Culturel près l'Ambassade de France  
le mardi 11 février 1947 à 8 heures 30

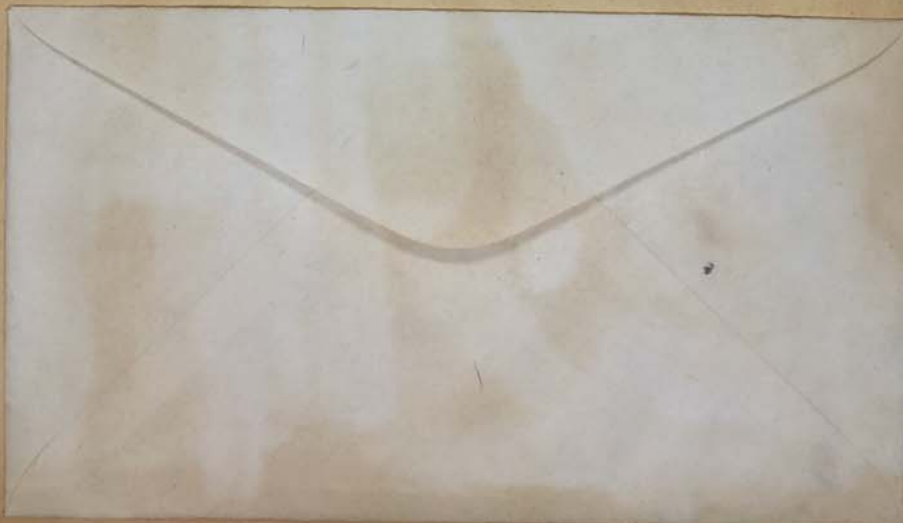
MR. JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY *présentera la conférence*

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
11 WEST 53RD ST., NEW YORK CITY

*Invitation pour deux personnes  
R. S. V. P.*

FRANCE FOREVER

587 FIFTH AVENUE  
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 Pierre-André Weill  
 Paul Wertheimer  
 Arthur Wiley

February 14, 1947

Mr. James Johnson Sweeney  
 120 East End Avenue  
 New York City, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Sweeney:

I wish to thank you again for your kindness in accepting to preside over the de Beauvoir lecture at the Museum of Modern Art. You did it magnificently and I want to tell you how much we appreciated both your graciousness and also your patience in waiting to meet Miss de Beauvoir and making everything so easy for me.

Thank you again, and I remain

Sincerely yours,

*Marcel J. Brun*  
 Marcel J. Brun,  
 Executive Vice-President

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*The Saturday Review*  
of Literature

## THE FINE ARTS

### SLIGHTED FIELDS AND FAMILIAR GROUND

FOR several years now art books have been appearing in profusion, a few of them excellent, many poor, the majority simply indifferent. Whatever their quality, their number is an encouraging sign that art is still on the upswing in America, that it begins to crowd hard our traditional favorites, music and literature. The pity is that publishers here and abroad practise such duplication of subject, concentrating on certain artists and fields, neglecting others. If, for example, one book on Renoir appears, more are sure to follow. To give a specific case in point, Claude Roger-Marx's very good monograph on the late French master Edouard Vuillard arrived from France last year; in the same shipment came a rather poor one by Jacques Salomon.

The cases can be repeated endlessly. Perhaps that is why some of the recent art books seem especially valuable in that they deal with subjects on which little first-rate material is available. Otto Benesch's "The Art of the Renaissance in Northern Europe" (Harvard University Press) has a wealth of illuminating data on the intellectual and emotional currents which produced Dürer, Grünevald, Altdorfer, Cranach, Bruegel, the Fontainebleau Mannerists, and other important sixteenth-century painters in the North. Dr. Benesch's book tells us so much that it makes us realize how little has been published in English on this vital subject. Another neglected aspect of sixteenth-century art is treated in Giuliano Briganti's "Il Manierismo e Pellegrino Tibaldi" (Cosmopolita, Rome), now available in our larger bookshops. The book deals with Italian Mannerism as the separate style it is now widely admitted to be, though until recently and in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary many of our scholars dismissed the movement as merely a deathbed convulsion of the Renaissance. I read Italian with such difficulty that I have made little headway with the text, but many of the illustrations—those of works by Beccafumi and Tibaldi, among others—are an exciting revelation.

Other recent art books are noteworthy, not because they explore slighted fields, but because they re-evaluate familiar ground. A truly remarkable example is John Summer-

son's "Georgian London" (Scribner's), one of the major events in modern architectural criticism. Many Americans who have been to London cherish a dream of its eighteenth-century grace as having evolved from a society endowed with superlative taste. So, in a sense, it did. But Mr. Summer-son's book makes clear that Georgian London was produced largely by hard-boiled speculators, sometimes with brilliant results, yet often with sad waste of architectural opportunity. He does not belabor his subject, he is not interested in the petulant esthetic game of locating moles on the Venus de Milo, but his scholarly reappraisal of eighteenth-century London provides an irrefutable argument in favor of city planning.

The late nineteenth century in France continues to be a favorite subject for publishers and hence for writers, and Hyperion Press has lately added "Van Gogh" and "The Etchings of the French Impressionists" to their series in this field. The former book has a lucid text by Edward Alden Jewell and inferior plates. The color plates in the latter volume, and some of the black-and-whites as well, can only be described as appalling. The reproduction of Cézanne's "The Bathers," for instance, is a travesty of that master's style, and in general very great graphic art struggles against grayness and bad register. It is a relief to turn from such slapdash bookmaking to John Rewald's "History of Impressionism" (Museum of Modern Art, distributed by Simon & Schuster). Mr. Rewald's book supplies an impressive answer to those who had assumed there was not much left to say about Impressionism: obviously none of us knew the half of it. The book has been criticized as excessively factual, but that, I think, is its virtue. Stylistic analyses of Impressionism have continually been based on errors of chronology which Mr. Rewald has now corrected. His



book should henceforth be used by students as a check against R. H. Wilenski's "Modern French Painters," an entrenched textbook because of its brilliant virtues, but abounding in factual mistakes.

The American nineteenth-century field is slowly being re-examined. The New York State Museum at Albany has devoted its bulletin No. 339 to a study of the life and works of Edward Lamson Henry by Elizabeth McCausland. The text and captions have been carefully prepared, and are illustrated by numerous reproductions which are small but adequate; included are fascinating photographs relating to Henry and his period. Miss McCausland has also published this year a much-needed study of one of our finest landscapists, George Inness. And the Brooklyn Museum has issued a monograph on the American Impressionist Theodore Robinson, with an excellent text by John I. H. Baur—the whole a model of painstaking research, clarity, and reproduction.

As to the modern Americans, Doubleday & Co. has recently printed a large volume, "Painting in the U.S.A.," with a host of quite good plates, many in color, and a rambling but refreshingly non-dogmatic text by Alan D. Gruskin. The paintings illustrated are mostly middle-of-the-road "subject" pictures. I frankly find a great number of them tedious and already stale, but there is nothing wrong with this genre if the artists' talents are strong, as some of the plates testify. Moreover, it is to Mr. Gruskin's credit that he has tried to give a sense of modern American art's variety, instead of writing a platform for his favorites. A rather exceptional publication, it seems to me, is the monograph on Philip Evergood issued by the A.C.A. Gallery and distributed by Simon & Schuster. Evergood is one of our most original artists, occasionally one of our most inspired, and this book is a welcome and handsome document on his career; it contains Evergood's own clear statement of his beliefs and a good essay on his humanism by Oliver Larkin. The Dryden Press has printed a monograph on the now celebrated American primitive Grandma Moses, edited by Otto Kallir and including one of those blue-jean forewords by Louis Bromfield. I cannot respond to the excitement of those who find in Grandma Moses another Rousseau or John Kane, but she is certainly a fresh and amiable painter, and her modest quality comes through both in the reproductions and her writing.

In praising Grandma Moses's pictures, Mr. Bromfield notes that they are far from "the assembly line abstractions of the later Picasso." To

understand the full banality of this statement, you need only look at Sidney and Harriet Janis's "Picasso: The Recent Years" (Doubleday & Co.), a book whose plates reveal the extraordinary creative power of an artist who, almost alone among modern painters, has gone on for fifty years with unrelenting vigor. The full half decade of his great career is treated in Alfred H. Barr Jr.'s "Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art" (Museum of Modern Art, distributed by Simon & Schuster). This is by all odds the most distinguished monograph yet published here or abroad on a twentieth-century artist. The same publishers have also produced a fine book on Marc Chagall, with an eminently readable and informative text by James Johnson Sweeney.

There have been several omnibus publications, of which I have space to mention only two: "Masterpieces of Painting from the National Gallery," superbly edited by Huntington Cairns and John Walker, distributed by Random House. This, surely, is one of the outstanding art books of recent years; its eighty-five color plates are good; its commentaries by famous writers of all periods have been chosen with rare inspiration and cogency. The "Art News Annual for 1946-47" maintains that publication's honest standards; this year its high spots are articles on the Gardner Collection in Boston, the new vision in abstract photography, and master drawings of today.

Well, art is long indeed, and every so often someone has to take it bravely in hand, cry "bottoms up!", and down it at one gulp. Aline B. Louchheim has done this in "5,000 Years of Art" (Howell, Soskin), and done it well; her text is lively, to the point, and serious. Included are good plates and almanacs of the various periods. The latter might have been more carefully proofread, since every word counts for so much, but the facts are there, and when they are not salient they are provocative. Personally, I was especially pleased to read the entry for 1931: "Rockefeller Center in New York begun. Alexander Calder's first mobiles." That's the way to boil these things down—the creative mechanic, alone with his pliers, as important as the massive engineering boast.

Five thousand years! We build so slowly. And then, in a few years of war, much of the magic accumulation is destroyed. Just how much we lost between 1939 and 1945 may be seen in "Lost Treasures of Europe: A Pictorial Record" (Pantheon Books). Read it and weep, but read it, please.

JAMES THRALL SOBY.

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# ANDRE MASSON

EXAMPLES OF HIS WORK  
FROM 1922 TO 1945



FEBRUARY 4—MARCH 1, 1947

BUCHHOLZ GALLERY  
CURT VALENTIN  
32 EAST 57 STREET • NEW YORK

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CAT. No. 22

## ANDRÉ MASSON ON SURREALISM AND "ABSTRACT" ART\*

"Yes, I was associated with surrealism. With me surrealism has been a cyclic affair. I was one of the first group of surrealists. Then in a manner of speaking I became separated from them.

"But I am actually more a surrealist in my illustrations than in my painting. Perhaps it is really that my romanticism appears surrealist.

"Fundamentally I am more a sympathiser with surrealism, than a surrealist or a non-surrealist. . . I like Chardin too much ever to be a surrealist. In Chardin we find no association with things outside the representation itself, or at any rate, a minimum of them. Plastic rigour cannot be replaced by even the richest literary imagination. A painting or sculpture does not have a survival value if it lacks this plastic rigour. The literary imagination in such work is never anything but a pretext or excuse for it and must be absorbed into the plastic form. If it is not, the literary imaginative element soon becomes dated.

"As a consequence I am solitary: I am too surrealist for those who do not like

\*From James Johnson Sweeney, *ELEVEN EUROPEANS IN AMERICA*. Museum of Modern Art, 1946; and André Masson, *A CRISIS OF THE IMAGINARY*, Horizon, London, 1945.

The Buchholz Gallery gratefully acknowledges the generous loans of The Museum of Modern Art, Mr. Stephen C. Clark and Mr. F. Karoly.

### PAINTINGS BY ANDRÉ MASSON

André Masson's work is represented by paintings in the following museums: The Baltimore Museum of Art (Saldie May Collection); The Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo; The San Francisco Museum of Art; The Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington.

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1924 5 Man  
39 1/2 x 25 3/4"

1925 6 Dead Bird  
28 3/4 x 21 1/2"

7 Woman  
28 1/2 x 23 3/2"

8 Amphora  
31 3/4 x 21 1/4"

9 Meteors  
28 3/4 x 21 1/4"

1926 10 *La Reine Marguerite*  
18 1/4 x 13"

1927 11 *Enfants des Iles*  
36 x 23 1/2"

12 On the Beach  
22 x 19 1/4"

13 *Les Promeneurs*  
28 3/4 x 14 1/4"

14 Death Mask  
15 x 18"

15 The Knife  
16 1/4 x 13"

16 Haunted Castle  
18 x 15"

17 Horse Devouring  
Birds  
43 1/4 x 19 3/4"

18 Battle of the Fish  
14 x 28"  
*Lent by The Museum of  
Modern Art*

1930 19 Fish  
37 1/2 x 51"

1941 20 The Couple  
34 3/4 x 14 1/4"

1942 21 Meditation on an  
Oak Leaf  
40 x 32 3/4"  
*Lent by Stephen G. Clark*

1943 22 Theseus  
15 x 62"  
*Private Collection*

23 Antille  
50 x 33"  
*Lent by F. Karoly*

1944 24 The Wind  
40 x 30"

1945 25 The Elk Hunt  
22 x 27"

26 Tiger's Skull  
8 x 9"

27 *La Renne de Sable*  
31 1/4 x 24 1/4"

28 Reading  
12 x 10"

29 Turtle  
10 x 12 1/2"



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CAT. No. 19



CAT. No. 29

ON EXHIBITION AT THE WILLARD GALLERY

DRAWINGS

1922 30 Man with Mandolin  
*Charcoal and pastel.*  
23½ x 18¾"

1929 31 Battle of the Fish  
*Pastel.* 19 x 24¾"

1931 32 Bacchanal  
*Charcoal.* 17½ x 23"

1939 33 Fraternity of  
Natural Kingdoms  
*Ink.* 17¾ x 24½"

34 Love of the Plants  
*Ink.* 24¾ x 17¼"

35 Morphology of  
Passions  
*Ink.* 24 x 18"



CAT. No. 30



CAT. No. 43

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- 1940 36 The Philosopher  
*Ink, 19 1/2 x 13 1/2"*
- 37 The Dead Tree  
*Ink, 14 1/2 x 10 1/2"*
- 1942 38 *Divertissement*  
*Pastel, 19 3/4 x 25 1/2"*
- 39 Homage to John Donne  
*Ink, 22 x 18"*
- 1944 40 Nude with Butterfly  
*Ink and pastel, 24 x 17 1/4"*
- 41 Centauress  
*Ink, 22 x 17 1/2"*



CAT. No. 40

- 1945 42 Head of a Child  
*Ink and pastel, 24 x 18"*
- 43 Famine  
*Ink and pastel, 24 x 18"*
- 44 Turtle  
*Ink and pastel, 18 x 24"*
- 45 Turtle  
*Ink and charcoal, 18 x 24"*
- 46 Self Portrait  
*Ink and wash, 14 1/2 x 16 1/4"*
- 47 Centauress with Shells  
*Ink and pastel, 24 x 18"*



CAT. No. 47

## PORTFOLIOS AND BOOKS



ILLUSTRATED BY ANDRE MASSON

**ANATOMY OF MY UNIVERSE.** Text and 34 drawings. out of print

**NOCTURNAL NOTEBOOK.** 14 Drawings. \$ 2.00  
Limited edition with one etching. \$18.00

**GEORGES DUTHUIT. LE SERPENT DANS LA GALERE.** With 8 Drawings in colotype and 20 Drawings. Limited edition of 500 copies. \$20.00

**BESTIAIRE.** 12 Lithographs and 10 Drawings. Text by Georges Duthuit. Limited edition of 135 copies. \$100.00

\* \* \*

**MYTHOLOGY OF BEING.** A Poem. Eight pen and ink drawings, and a frontispiece. (Wittenborn) 1942. \$10.00

**ANDRE MASSON.** Texts by André Breton, Robert Desnos, Paul Eluard, Michel Leiris, Benjamin Peret and others. 53 Drawings. (Paris, 1940) Limited edition of 400 copies. \$12.50

**MYTHOLOGIES.** 41 Drawings. (Editions Fontaine, Paris)

**MICHEL LEIRIS. GLOSSAIRE J'Y SERRE MES GLOSES.** 15 Lithographs. Paris 1939.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 1947.

## Events Today

Cooper Union Forum, Great Hall,  
Eighth Street and Astor Place, 8:15  
P. M. "Arts and Civilizations: The  
Twentieth Century," James Johnson  
Sweeney.

### ★ ★ THE DIVISION OF SOCIAL

FRIDAY  
EVENING 8:15

## Arts and

OCT 18: THE RECORD OF THE VISION

FRANCIS TAYLOR  
Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

OCT 25: THE FIRST AMERICAN CIVILIZATION—  
THE MAYANS

H. J. SPINDEN  
Curator, American Indian Art and Primitive Cul-  
tures, The Brooklyn Museum

NOV 1: ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS OF PERU

WILLIAM DUNCAN STRONG  
Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University

NOV 8: THE PLAINS INDIANS

RALPH LINTON  
Professor of Anthropology, Yale University

NOV 15: EGYPT

AMBROSE LANSING  
Curator, Egyptian Art, The Metropolitan Museum  
of Art

NOV 22: ART IN THE DAYS OF CYRUS AND DARIUS

ARTHUR UPHAM POPE  
Director, The Iranian Institute

NOV 29: FIFTH CENTURY ATHENS

WILLIAM BELL DINSMOOR  
Professor of Archeology, Columbia University

### PHILOSOPHY OF THE COOPER UNION

## Civilizations

DEC 6: THE SPIRIT OF HARMONY IN CHINESE  
PAINTING

WING-TSIT CHAN  
Professor of Chinese Culture, Dartmouth College

DEC 13: EARLY ART OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

FRANKLIN M. BIEBEL  
Assistant Director, The Frick Collection

DEC 20: THE WORLDLY OUTLOOK OF MODERN  
CULTURE

RALPH E. TURNER  
Professor of History, Yale University

DEC 27: NO MEETING

JAN 3: NO MEETING

JAN 10: MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC ARTS

ARTHUR UPHAM POPE

JAN 17: PATRONAGE AND THE GRAND MANNER

CALVIN S. HATHAWAY  
Curator, The Cooper Union Museum

JAN 24: THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY  
Director, Department of Paintings and Sculpture,  
The Museum of Modern Art

JAN 31: SUMMING UP

The Chairman and The Audience

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THE ART SCHOOL - Pratt Institute

1946 - 1947

Assignment Sheet No. 3

HISTORY OF ART

Architecture and Sculpture

I. Notes on the following subjects presented by James C. Boudreau, Dean

11. The Christ in Sculpture (Michelangelo)
12. Evolution of the Skyscraper
13. Bridge Design

II. Notes on parallel reading from "ART THROUGH THE AGES"

- |                              |     |     |   |     |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|---|-----|
| 13. Early Egyptian Sculpture | pp. | 27  | - | 35  |
| 14. Middle Kingdom Sculpture | pp. | 53  | - | 59  |
| 15. Greek Sculpture          | pp. | 170 | - | 176 |

III. Special Assignments

9. Make a drawing or tracing showing modern fenestration.
10. Draw the five types of bridges (side view).
11. Make a careful perspective in line of a bridge you know.

IV. Notes on Addresses of Guest Speakers

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
1. Problems of the Hollywood Artist-designer	Mr. Willy Fogarty Hollywood Art Director
2. Contemporary Sculpture	Mr. James J. Sweeney Director, Dept. of Painting & Sculpture, Museum of Modern Art

- V. Mount one set of "Architecture and Sculpture prints" and insert in note book. (These prints are on sale in the Pratt Institute Book Store for \$1.50).
- VI. First semester note book due Monday morning, January 20, 1947. Deliver note book to the Office of your Head of Department.

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## HENRY MOORE

(Continued from page 81)

form of the hillside from which the stone had been quarried. Like Shelley, he seems spontaneously to personify the forces of Nature, to notice no cleavage between the organic and the inanimate. To some extent we all share this sensation; do we not talk about the shoulder of a mountain, the foot of a cliff, the arms of a river?

In some of his recent work Moore has, however, developed a new interest in what may be called the human situation.

During the war he was commissioned by the State to make a series of drawings in air-raid shelters (also some in coal mines). Very surprisingly to those of us who had followed his previous work, and with outstanding success, he employed classical draperies to express his vision of the shelterers in their tragic plight. Some of these coloured drawings—he has a very personal sense of colour—might be illustrations for Dante's *Inferno*: long perspectives of recumbent figures pressed shoulder to shoulder and thigh to thigh, cruelly without privacy in a claustrophobic underworld; men and women sleeping beside their children, reminding us of Mantegna by their anguished and fore-shortened heads and the folds that mould their uneasy frames. No realism here; yet no other artist in any country has, so far as I know, come near to expressing so fully the pity inspired by the lamentable victims of scientific war.

Another most fortunate and well-timed commission encouraged Moore to persevere in this return to humanism. The Madonna and Child that he was invited to carve for a church near Northampton (England) must be accounted one of his finest works, as it is also certainly the most approachable. No recourse here to the idioms of another age, Romanesque or Gothic or Renaissance; no self-conscious modernism either; but a marvellously majestic and luminous statue that reveals, without a touch of the sentimentality which disfigures most modern religious art, the traditional conception of a woman who has been chosen to be the Mother of God. So impressive is this image that if it were in an Italian church I can conceive of its being credited with miraculous powers.

Moore's latest work is a group in which he has undertaken the particularly difficult task of relating two adult figures and two children. Here he has taken much greater liberties, departed much farther from representation, than he could have done in a work designed for a church. I feel here little of the disquieting quality which emanates from so many of his earlier figures, with dwarfish heads surmounting colossal frames. Henry Moore has recently become for the first time a father, and perhaps this group may have flowered from a new sense in him of the family as the fundamental pattern in human life.

Moore has always been passionately interested in shapes as such, in three-dimensional form for its own sake. Sometimes this has led him to

(Continued on page 147)

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## HENRY MOORE

(Continued from page 146)

make abstract works, among them some remarkable objects in which taut lines of string are used in contrast to the subtle modulations of the carved wood. He is always peculiarly sensible to the specific character of the material he is using; he varies his rhythms according to whether he carves wood or stone; and he never uses wood or stone, as many good sculptors have done, to mimic the skin and hair in which the human body is clad. He gives to his material qualities not imitative of, but parallel to, those he has responded to in his model. Here he will contrive a shape that possesses the elastic strength of flesh, here another that exploits the girder-like hardness of bone. For whereas much contemporary painting and sculpture reveals a preoccupation with geometrical forms, Moore seems to abhor any suggestion of rigidity and to pursue always organic forms with their suggestion of striving and life. This signal preference makes him essentially and passionately a romantic artist.

Confronted with one of his works, let the imagination send the hand sliding over the delicate variety of valleys and hills and caves, notice the warmth of the sculptor's appetite for his material, for the grain of wood, for the differing textures of the stones he carves. Having thus made contact with his craftsmanship, one begins to find oneself sympathizing with the vision that this craftsmanship makes palpable. Great art can spring only from a happy marriage between imagination and technique.

Moore is now aged forty-eight; that is to say, he is mature as an artist, though probably he has not yet attained the summit of his achievement. (Sculptors, like painters and musicians, but unlike writers, can reasonably hope to go from strength to strength till the end of their lives.)

One reason for the scarcity of good sculpture in the modern world is that there is so little demand for it. Most sculptural masterpieces have been produced for a particular purpose to take a place in some architectural scheme. Unluckily genius today is even more rarely to be found among architects than among sculptors; and, moreover, the recent trend in architecture has been towards a puritanical distrust of ornament. They like to conceal the function of a church or a town hall, a museum or a school, under the disguise of either a hospital or a factory. But a reaction against this confusion of thought is gaining strength. And I look forward to seeing some great new building of which carvings by Henry Moore will be an integral part. Sculpture, until it can renew its intimacy with architecture, must remain the Cinderella of the arts.

## RAYMOND MORTIMER

Literary editor of the *New Statesman and Nation*, he is also an art critic...intuitive and exact. His books, published in England, include the war-written *Channel Packet* and Manet's "Bar aux Folies Bergère." (Page 81.)

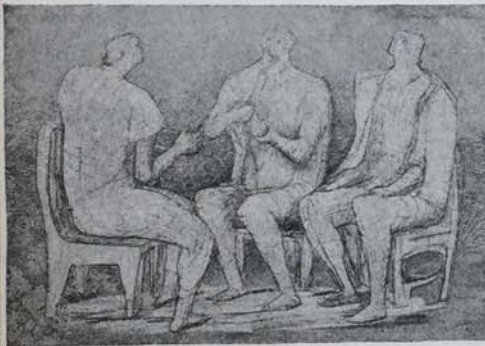


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# Henry Moore

ENGLAND'S FOREMOST SCULPTOR—HIS WORK, A SHOW OF POWER, IS NOW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

by  
Raymond Mortimer



"WOMEN WINDING WOOL"

COLLECTION:  
W. H. JANSON



HENRY MOORE, SKETCHED BY VOGUE'S ARTIST, RENÉ R. BOUCHÉ

RATHER over a century ago Canning, who was then Britain's Prime Minister, was offered, by a proud host, a glass of a new type of wine. He tasted it; made a grimace; and gave his verdict: "A man who says he likes this will say anything!" I have met with a similar incredulity sometimes when I have admitted, in unsuitable company, to an admiration for Picasso's paintings or Henry Moore's carvings. But what was the wine that Canning thought so obviously disgusting? Dry champagne. Previously all champagne had been sweet; and the first reaction to anything unfamiliar is apt to be dismay.

Picasso is now generally accepted as a man of genius by everyone under seventy who spends much time looking at pictures. Moore, who is young enough to be Picasso's son, is still a subject for controversy. People have not had time to get used to his work. The Post-Impressionist way of painting has long since made its influence felt in posters and textiles; nor would any but the most unsophisticated complain of a landscape or a nude for not being "like." But the analogous approach to sculpture has enjoyed much less success, and none of its practitioners has yet attained the world-wide celebrity of Matisse, Picasso, and Rouault.

The first emotion excited by a Moore carving is likely to be quietude, or even alarm. Though the human body has provided the subject, the final result is inhuman. This, of course, is a liberty that many of the best contemporary artists have taken when painting the figure. We may be reminded also of the methods used by men all over the world when making images of their gods—in Egypt, deities with the head of a hawk or a jackal; in Assyria, winged bulls with bearded human heads; in India, bodhisattvas with eight heads and a hundred arms; and a whole multitudinous Olympus of fetiches and idols from Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific.

It is with these that Henry Moore's carvings usually invite comparison rather than with the Elgin Marbles, or the masterpieces of Donatello and Michelangelo. European sculptors, whose aim was not humanistic but religious, were inspired to emphasize the dignity of the human frame. The incomparable figures on the west portal of Chartres are distorted indeed, but the distortion serves only to make them nobler and more majestic.

Moore, on the other hand, uses the human form as a theme upon which to devise variations in plastic form, variations that display original harmonies between convex and concave forms.

Looking at some of his recumbent figures I have found it more profitable to avoid all thought of the human frame which inspired them, and to compare them rather with a range of hills or a coast eroded into caves by the ocean. Hitherto sculptors have never treated landscape, except occasionally, in the background of a relief. But landscape, one notices, has increasingly taken the place of the nude figure as the subject most inspiring to the painter. And Moore's figures often suggest that he has been influenced by the (Continued on page 146)

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L. E. MILLER  
HENRY MOORE WITH HIS RUSSIAN-BORN WIFE, IRISA



COLLECTION:  
ROLAND PENROSE

CAST IN GLEAMING GREY LEAD, "THE HELMET"



A TERRA-COTTA MAQUETTE, "THREE STANDING FIGURES"

CARVED OF CONCRETE, "MOTHER AND CHILD"



A DETAIL FROM "TWO SLEEPING SHELTERERS"

COLLECTION:  
WILLIAM WALTON



COLLECTION:  
IAN PHILLIPS

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# VOGUE

*Incorporating Vanity Fair*

JANUARY 15, 1947

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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT SATURDAY JANUARY 4 1947

## PICTORIAL "ARRANGEMENTS"

*Marc Chagall* by JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY, New York: Museum of Modern Art. In collaboration with The Art Institute of Chicago. \$3.

*Art Quarterly*. Editor, R. O. DUNLOP. Vol. I No. 2 Summer, 1946. Editor (Mill Cottage, Barnham, Sussex). 2s. 6d.

The limitations of the language of art criticism are notorious. In the present anarchy of standards of achievement they threaten to make criticism unintelligible. The pronouncements, the manifestos, the statements of aims of contemporary groups or individuals are seldom of much assistance to the visitor to the picture galleries; for the most part they hinder rather than help. There is no reason why a painter who paints in a novel way should be able to describe in coherent words the particular vision or purpose of his painting; nor can there be any guarantee that such words as he may find will in fact throw any light upon his performance, since the intention may remain in his mind without having been transferred to his painting. In deprecating the mass of written "interpretation" of art to-day Miss Cathleen Mann has wise things to say in a short article, entitled "Paint Should be Enough," which appears in the *Art Quarterly*:—

What the painter [she observes] has wanted to express he should be able to do without the interpretation being necessary in literature as well. . . . The technique of painting, which takes a lifetime of work, is of small consequence compared to the mind of the artist. . . . That is why I feel so strongly that words, which are such inadequate things, cannot be used to express the emotive force of the artist, which is explained, or tries to explain itself, by colour, form, space, drawing, simplification, texture, and so many other things that go to make a picture.

It is very well said. Yet it is precisely this saving truth about painting which is made to serve as an apology, often a wordy apology, for so much in contemporary art that is mere sterile self-indulgence.

The case of Mr. Marc Chagall is a challenging one, and the present volume issued by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, which contains fifty-five plates, including three in full colour, illustrating the whole range of his work, brings out clearly the nature of the challenge. What it fails to do is to win support for Mr. James Johnson Sweeney's view of Mr. Chagall's achievement as a painter or of the "key position in the world of modern art" which he thinks Chagall occupies. The latter's autobiography was published in France in 1931 and provides some instructive sidelights on his work generally. Without having read a line of it and knowing only the principal events of his life anybody who looks at the paintings reproduced here will realize that Chagall's im-

pulse as a painter is essentially autobiographical. But there are two threads of autobiography, which remain for the most part unrelated to one another—Vitebsk and Paris. And only the experience of Vitebsk assumes a quality of individual and coherent vision in his work.

Chagall's restoration of metaphor to painting, as Mr. Sweeney puts it, characterizes both types of picture. In the Russian or Russian-Jewish scenes, portraits and fantasies, the emotion that pervades the autobiographical metaphor is communicated with a singularly transparent fervour; the drawing is often perfunctory, the design naive or ill-balanced, yet the ghetto street and figures, the wooden houses, the superimposed images and associations of childhood carry a vivid personal sentiment. These, in fact, are essays in "expressionism" which carry a subjective stage farther than the racial sensibility evident in the celebrated portrait of "The Praying Jew." But in the other type of picture, with its seemingly freakish fantasy and more random personal metaphor, what is there of individual vision to compensate for Chagall's neglect of the ordinary discipline of pictorial art? The flying figures, the decapitated or double-headed bodies, the juxtapositions of Freudian and other symbols on the one hand, the incoherent design, crude representation and arbitrary tones on the other—what are they for?

It is here that Miss Cathleen Mann's spirited defence of imagination as against technique has its dangers at the present time. Is the autobiographical impulse enough? Is the significance of Chagall's work, which occupies a key position, Mr. Sweeney insists, in contemporary painting, to be sought simply in "the mind of the artist"? According to Mr. Sweeney (it is not clear whether he is actually quoting from Chagall's autobiography), Chagall observes of his paintings: "I don't understand them at all. They are not literature. They are only pictorial arrangements of images that obsess me." But if no more conscious purpose than that is involved, if deliberate symbolic motives are excluded, the only valid basis of judgment for most of Chagall's paintings, of which the representational qualities do not merit any serious consideration, is to regard them primarily as compositions of form and colour. As such they have surely too little virtue to justify their "poetic" eccentricities.

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## A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH TO THE PAINTING OF MARC CHAGALL

By Daniel E. Schneider, M.D.

IN HIS famous study of Leonardo da Vinci, Sigmund Freud said:

"When psychoanalytic investigation, which usually contents itself with frail human material, approaches great personages of humanity, it is not impelled to it by motives which are often imputed to it by laymen. It does not strive 'to blacken the radiant and to drag the sublime into the mire'; it finds no satisfaction in diminishing the distance between the perfection of the great and the inadequacy of the ordinary objects. But it cannot help finding that everything is worthy of understanding that can be perceived through those prototypes, and it also believes that none is so big as to be ashamed of being subject to the laws which control the normal and morbid actions with the same strictness."<sup>1</sup>

Today, thirty years since the study on da Vinci, psychoanalysis has exerted its influence upon practically all the arts as well as upon some of our society. Its net result is not destructive and impoverishing; rather the evidence seems clear that its result is constructive and enriching. Indeed psychoanalysis has been seized upon with such energy, as for example in certain recent novels and cinemas, that considerable abuse and distortion of its validities and its limitations have occurred. Most of the offenders have been rather mediocre writers; the offense has been not only poor psychoanalysis, but what is worse, poor art,—the inevitable result of a search for sensationalism which admits the absence of true genius. Fortunately in Marc Chagall's painting we are confronted not with the sensationalism of a Dali but with a true artist painting spontaneously the particular and peculiar contents of his unconscious, and reflecting the caprice, the sadness, and the power of the however tortured imagination of his people. This does not mean that Chagall's paintings are not painstakingly constructed; of course they are. But they are true symbolic formulations; and to a striking degree, perhaps paralleled only by James Joyce in the field of language, he has heightened the capacity to transport his symbolical imagery, unalloyed by rational contrivances, from his unconscious to his canvas.

James Johnson Sweeney, in his recent excellent book on Chagall,<sup>2</sup> quotes

<sup>1</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci: A Psychosexual Study*, New York, Dodd Mead, 1932, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> James Johnson Sweeney, *Marc Chagall*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1946, p. 7.

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the painter himself:

"If you ask Chagall to explain his paintings even today he will reply: 'I don't understand them at all. They are not literature. They are only pictorial arrangements of images that obsess me. . . . The theories which I would make up to explain myself and those which others elaborate in connection with my work are nonsense. . . . My paintings are my reason for existence, my life and that's all.'"

We would by now of course be in complete agreement with Chagall; any attempt to explain *obsessive visual images* by rational theory *which does not know the roots of the obsession* must end up in unintelligible formulae, however esoteric and penetrating they sound.

Nor can we analyze Chagall the person simply by looking at and studying his admittedly obsessive artistic constructs, any more than a psychoanalyst can analyze a patient simply by looking at the surface of a dream, at its manifest content. It is necessary in practically all instances to know the specific situation out of which a dream arises and the mental and emotional *associations* of the individual with the manifest symbols of his dream before one can discern its latent or hidden content. Only then is it possible to relate the manifest symbol to the concealed radiances which formed it, and, beyond that, only then is it possible to demonstrate scientifically how the specific situation of life provoked the dream. In this manner the dream-study functions to elucidate the nature and scope of repression, conflict, and symptom-formation.

We have then neither the intention nor the opportunity to analyze Chagall the person. What we can do however is to study the characteristics of his paintings *as though each of his paintings were dreams which we ourselves have had*. Then, if Chagall's dreams, however obsessive, are "world-dreams," though colored by his own life and clothed in symbols of his own choosing, our own associations might, however puny our own imagination, have some validity. So to speak, we shall borrow the dream of a great dreamer and pretend for a moment that it is our own. Of course, we have, to assist us, the comments of various critics who indeed have all in some measure "free-associated" around Chagall's paintings. Finally, we are in possession of the fact that these are obsessive visual images which, the painter says, are his *reason for existence*. And, we do know some of the factors which promote the obsession in general and some of the factors which do induce relaxation once the obsession has been given its outlet, in this case, visually, in paintings.

Let us for example listen to Lionello Venturi<sup>3</sup> as he reacts to the painting entitled *Death*, (fig. 1).

<sup>3</sup> Lionello Venturi, *Marc Chagall*, New York, Pierre Matisse, 1945, p. 18.

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"Why is a dead man lying in a street, surrounded by candlesticks? Why is a violin player sitting on a roof? Why is a sweeper hurrying, a desperate woman fleeing, a man entering an izba so hurriedly that flower-pots are tumbling into the street? What is the connection between these various elements? To these questions there is *no answer*; but everyone can feel the *atmosphere of catastrophe* that emanates from this canvas. It is night. The street is black. The intense reds, yellows and greens are also dark and the green of the sky promises no good, it is a completion of the effect of death. The colors are sad despite their energy; they are like banked fires. But the sadness is a resigned sadness. *When the child Chagall saw his beloved cows go to the slaughter-house he pitied them and kissed their muzzles, but he was quite willing to eat their meat*. Sadness and resignation exist side by side in Chagall, for *everything obeys a Power too strong to be resisted*. . . . His paintings were dreams that he dreamed with open eyes, because nature appeared to Chagall not as a reality but as a dream. . . ." (Emphases, mine —D.E.S.)

The commentary of Venturi may indeed be likened to a set of associations to a dream as though Venturi himself were dreaming and caught in the perplexity and bewilderment of his own dream.

Fortunately we have also Sweeney's attempt to appraise this particular painting which has alternatively been called *Candles in the Dark Street*. Painted in 1908, *Candles in the Dark Street (La Mort)* has apparently often been described as Chagall's first illogical or fantastic painting and, in Sweeney's view, it is a good example of the manner in which he turns biographical material into "fantasy" by means of what Sweeney calls "curious representational juxtapositions." These "juxtapositions" are of course commonly seen by every analyst in the dreams of his patients. Sweeney sees the fiddler on the roof as a *condensation symbol* forged of two eventual components: Chagall's grandfather once climbed to the roof of his house on a feast-day because the weather was so fine and sat there eating raw carrots while everyone searched for him, and the second biographic fact that Chagall said of his uncle: "He played the violin like a shoemaker." Hence, according to Sweeney, the source of the fiddler atop the roof and the shoemaker's shop sign swinging from the apex of the roof. Sweeney feels that the rest of the subject matter of the picture is to be found in Chagall's autobiographic recollection of his first encounter with death as follows:

"One morning before dawn suddenly I heard cries from the street below my windows. By the feeble glimmer of the night lamp I managed to distinguish a woman running alone down the deserted street. She waved her arms, sobbed, begged the neighbors who were still asleep to come save her husband as if I, or my fat cousin sound asleep in her bed, could cure or save a dying man."

And a few paragraphs later in Chagall's autobiography, this:

"The dead man, solemnly sad, is already stretched out on the ground, his face

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lighted by six candles. In the end they carry him away. Our street is no longer the same. I do not recognize it."

Of this Sweeney says further: "This apparently illogical grouping of naturalistic features is the basis of the painting's metaphorical character—a resemblance to a group of literary images with suppressed connections."<sup>4</sup>

With this concept of a *metaphorical character* to the painting, we cannot agree, nor with the concept of resemblance to a group of literary images with suppressed connectives. Sweeney has however called attention to two definite attributes of dreams without realizing that he is speaking of the actual psychophysiology of dreams, namely: the *condensation* of actual events or persons into *one* symbol, and second the *juxtaposition of various events or of the symbols themselves*.

Sweeney's reference to the biographical material, though it helps us to understand *why* these particular symbols have been chosen, gives us no clue to the *why of the actual condensation* or to the *why of the actual juxtaposition*; therefore sheer biography alone cannot supply a rational answer to the puzzle. To put it simply, why are the fiddler symbol and the shoeshop sign symbol put in the *same* picture—indeed on the same side of the picture as the dead man? Why is the dead man stretched out *on the street*? And why is there a *sweeper* added to the autobiographical material, and placed in the center of the composition? Venturi says (cf. above) that there is no connection between the various elements but of course there is and to some measure it can be delineated.

First of all, the painting is as much the study of the feeling of *Night* to a timid and imaginative boy as it is the feeling of *Death*. None of us ever completely leaves the terrors of childhood behind us, and the terrors of Chagall's Jewish childhood in the Russian village of Lyozno near Vitebsk are in this painting. The candle-lights around the body are connected with *Night* as well as with *Death*. The hurrying of the people suggest not only the terror of actual death, as in the biography, but also the fear of monstrous or fantasy-terror. It is not inconceivable that a child walking down a dark street might say to himself: "I wish that at night there were more light along the streets. . . . But the only time I have seen as much candlelight as I might like was around the body of a dead man. But," our enfant terrible might go on, "this would be terribly grotesque and out of place. What if, while the dead man lies in the streets, a street-sweeper comes along? . . . Of course a dead man is really something to be swept up and carted away."

<sup>4</sup> Sweeney, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

Here we may interrupt to quote once more the autobiographical remark made above: "In the end they carry him away. Our street is no longer the same. I do not recognize it."

Why does the shock of the experience alter the appearance of the familiar street? Surely death as such is nothing new to a boy who lives in close proximity to animals. The answer the psychoanalyst is tempted to give is that the experience is shocking for the same reason that the symbols of *male relatives* are joined to the symbol of the dead man used to light up the dark street. On the left-hand or *Death* side of the picture we have the grandfather (who *escaped* to the roof one fine day) and the uncle (who fiddled badly like a shoemaker but fiddled for all that) and finally what is probably the father-prototype lying full-length providing the necessary light.

Our hypothetical child has put all his important male relatives on the death side of things but has made use of their death to allay the terrors of night: there is light and music. It is not simply that we have here a pictorial representation of the Oedipus complex with its obvious attack against the males in authority (Chagall had a half a dozen or more uncles and aunts and his paternal grandfather was a religious instructor while his maternal grandfather was a butcher.) Nor is it simply that the left-hand or *sinister* side is used to express the attack. It is rather that the sentence above *I do not recognize it* suggests the wish *not* to recognize the Oedipal death-wish against the oppressive males. And, by putting the fiddler on top of the roof, and adding the shoeshop sign, and finally interposing the sweeper, the painter would be theoretically able to *screen from himself* the meaning of his attack while nevertheless feeling the necessity to attack. Hence, even to Chagall they are not comprehensible while being obsessive pictorial arrangements. *The concealed aggression is carried implicitly in the pictorial arrangement*. Indeed it is just such a talent as Chagall's which can make use of pictorial arrangement to express his aggression in constructive and beautiful ways. And, finally, one must not omit the impression of *mourning* for the death of a father which is, in a sense, the central theme of the painting, however much aggression is contained in it.

There is more to be learned from the *incessant continuity of the street scenes* in Chagall's paintings. Not only is there a definite *style* to the dream-paintings just as, in every human being, there is a style to one's dreams, but over and above that there is constant bubbling up from the never quite extinct volcanoes of the obsession.

If now we look at his painting entitled: *In the Night* (fig. 2), we find that again the scene is a village street at night with snow (whiteness) covering

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the houses and the roadway. A cold quarter moon shines, lighting up the snow. In the center of the street (foreground), two lovers stand embracing. Directly overhead, as though suspended from a non-existent ceiling, is a large bright lamp. Again, to the left in the heavens, are the starry outlines of a barnyard animal—a constellation which flies through the skies.

Here, to this writer, such a dream would at once suggest that there is a lovely inter-relationship of sentiments woven around a powerful primitive impulse. The lamp suggests of course the wish to see the lovers not in the open public place but in the intimacy of a room; at the same time it proclaims that the white, starry night is like a room and is made for love. The color of the snow achieves the poetic effect of purity. At the same time the animal that flies through the heavens expresses, however rarefactive be the purity of the stars, the primitive wish of the bird-man symbolization, a symbol that is so frequent in Chagall's paintings as to constitute practically a principle of his art. To quote Freud again, in his *Leonardo da Vinci*:

"A very obscure as well as a prophetically sounding passage in his [Leonardo's] notes dealing with the flight of the bird demonstrates in the nicest way with how much affective interest he clung to the wish that he himself should be able to imitate the art of flying: 'The human bird shall take his first flight, filling the world with amazement, all writings with his fame, and bringing eternal glory to the nest whence he sprang.' He probably hoped that he himself would sometime be able to fly, and we know from the wish fulfilling dreams of people what bliss one expects from the fulfillment of this hope.

"But why do so many people dream that they are able to fly? Psychoanalysis answers this question by stating that to fly or to be a bird in the dream is only a concealment of another wish, to the recognition of which one can reach by more than one linguistic or objective bridge. When the inquisitive child is told that a big bird like the stork brings the little children, when the ancients have formed the phallus winged, when the popular designation of the sexual activity of man is expressed in German by the word "to bird" (vögeln), when the male member is directly called *Pucello* (bird) by the Italians, all these facts are only small fragments from a large collection which teaches us that the wish to be able to fly signifies in the dream nothing more or less than the longing for the ability of sexual accomplishment. This is an early infantile wish."

The flying figure occurs so frequently in Chagall's paintings that it has become a kind of signature. In sixty-four plates in the book by Venturi we count it twenty-two times, in twenty-two separate paintings. And in the book by Sweeney there are still others. To go into an analysis of each of these figures in relation to the total composition of the paintings in which they occur would require several volumes of exposition. What is unusual about the flying figures of Chagall is that he has actually expressed, stripped of its

\* Freud, *op. cit.*, pp. 107 and 108.

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# THE ART DIGEST

Vol. 21, No. 7

The News Magazine of Art

January 1, 1947



Seated Women with Children in Shelter: HENRY MOORE (Drawing)



Family Group: MOORE (Bronze 17" High)

## Henry Moore, Modern Briton, Impresses With His Aesthetic Vitality

EVEN BEFORE we began to see a fair amount of modern British art here, within the last year, reports were filtering in from men in uniform that there was something going on in England that couldn't be matched in that time-honored art capital, Paris. And, like Abou Ben Adhem, the name of Henry Moore led all the rest.

To go all the way out on a limb without further ado, I would like to nominate at least part of Moore's sculpture for a place in the sun anywhere, any time, with or without his name attached to it—along with other name-competition as well as the offerings of the Mayan civilization and Easter Island. There is no question that James Johnson Sweeney's selection and arrangement of Moore's work, now on view at the Museum of Modern Art, and the most comprehensive exhibition ever to be held even in England, displays the artist to very best advantage, but Mr. Sweeney had some of the most exciting material with which to work that has been seen here in a long, long time.

Moore, himself, freely admits his "influences"—African Primitive, pre-Colombian, Medieval, Sumerian and an admiration for Picasso. Most are recognizable, singly or in combination at sometime during this 24-year survey of a career. The eerie part of it all is how little this eclecticism matters. It is a sprinkle of salt and pepper on a dish indigineous to Britain long before roast beef and suet pudding. Beneath the surface, creatively expressed most often in semi-abstracted figures, is a force elemental and universal on one hand, and frighteningly a part of the primal history of that tight little island at the same time. There is the answer

to latter-day Britain's fortitude during bombings and deprivation, filtered through Stonehenge, the druids, pre-conquest warriors smeared with blue paint and H. G. Wells' *Time Machine*. Nature, the elements and man get all mixed up. Do the rocks and trees whence these sculptures sprang resemble man, or vice versa?

Another remarkable feature of

Madonna and Child: HENRY MOORE



Moore's work—or perhaps a natural outgrowth from the base on which it stands—is the fact that the tiniest sculpture, 5½ inches tall, has a quality that makes one wish the word "monumental" hadn't been so loosely used in the past. The small *Madonna and Child*, a study for a carving in the Church of Saint Matthew in Northampton, England, and three family groups, one seven and another nine inches high, are as large in conception as the huge elm wood figures. They also call to mind two other words that should be used with caution—timeless and true.

Chronologically, the exhibition begins with a *Head of a Girl*, carved from wood in 1922. It has a faint flavor of Paris. A little later, a substantial, blocked-out *Mother and Child* is Mexican-influenced to an extent. But even in the 20s, the strange, rhythmic, pin-headed figures which are Moore's unique contribution to his medium, began to appear. Along with them, during the 30s, two tangents developed which were productive of some fine pieces and add considerably to the diversity of the show, but however handsome, the pure abstractions and abstract-constructions are colder and more impersonal than the figures.

For sheer size and elemental power, the crescendo builds up to the over-six-foot elm wood *Reclining Figure*, completed in 1940, subsides during the war years, then reaches another climax in another enormous elm wood figure completed just this last year which amply demonstrates the artist's contention that "a hole can itself have as much shape-meaning as a solid mass."

If the war years and lack of time and

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### Moore, Modern Briton

*[Continued from page 9]*

material kept Moore from ambitious sculptural projects, they were productive of some of the finest drawings of his career—the justly celebrated subway air-raid shelter series, commissioned by the British government. In their flowing rhythms, almost sculptural form and ominous overtones of tragedy, the best of them approach the best of his sculpture as personal statements of surpassing validity.

Although there may be room for academic argument with the artist's definition of "beauty," he explains his aims well in a book edited by Herbert Read:

"For me a work must first have a vitality of its own. I do not mean a reflection of the vitality of life, of movement, physical action, frisking, dancing figures and so on, but that a work can have in it a pent-up energy, an intense life of its own, independent of the object it may represent. When a work has this powerful vitality we do not connect the word Beauty with it. Beauty, in the later Greek and Renaissance sense, is not the aim in my sculpture. Between beauty of expression and power of expression there is a difference of function. The first aims at pleasing the senses, the second has a spiritual vitality which is for me more moving and goes deeper than the senses.

"Because a work does not aim at reproducing natural appearances it is not, therefore, an escape from life—but may be a penetration into reality, not a sedative or drug, not just an exercise in good taste, the provision of pleasant shapes and colors in a pleasing combination, not a decoration to life, but an expression of the significance of life, a stimulation to greater effort in living."

That Moore has found that "spiritual vitality" he sought, and thereby provides "a stimulation to greater effort in living" is abundantly evident in this impressive exhibition.—Jo GRASS.

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## ART

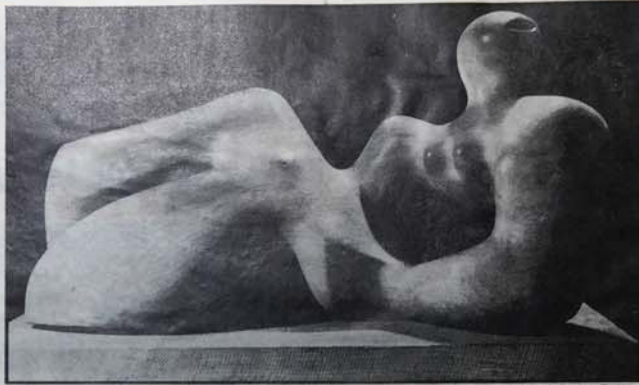
## Nudes Out of Place

Of all the things to paint, Belgian Paul Delvaux liked nothing better than painting naked, big-breasted women on windy beaches, crowded streets and moonlit terraces, among Greek ruins and in Empire ballrooms. Sometimes he showed them stooping to pluck a rose from the floor or from under a passing trolley.

Delvaux's mysteriously out-of-place nudes earned him a growing reputation as one of Europe's finest fantasists, sold almost as fast as he could paint them. Last week the first full-dress U.S. exhibition of his buff-bare ladies was on display at a Manhattan gallery, sponsored by well-clothed U.N. General Assembly President (and Belgian Foreign Minister) Paul-Henri Spaak. By careful culling, the show bared no pubic hairs, was guaranteed not to rouse the same censorship problems that harried Delvaux's recently imported painting, *Temptation of St. Anthony* (TIME, Sept. 30).

The self-portraits which now & then appeared in Delvaux's canvases looked even more out of place than the nudes; they exhibited the frozen face and faintly old-fashioned garb of a latter-day Buster Keaton, stalking gloomily amidst his dream harem or lifting his hat to a bare-backed girl friend, as in *The Meeting* (see cut).

Delvaux, 49, who really does look like Keaton (and poses before a mirror as his own model), lives and works in solid comfort on Brussels' conservative Rue d'Ecosse. He is a dreamer who reads little, belongs to no church, no political party. The tables and cupboards in his studio are cluttered with seven human skulls, and



MOORE'S "RECLINING FIGURE"  
Little heads are more organic.

Albright Art Gallery

the walls are banked with huge, infinitely complicated paintings. (A recent one, called *Unrest in the City*, includes some 1,200 figures.) Says he: "I work patiently and minutely like the Flemish primitives, Van Eyck and Memling." He paints on plywood made especially for him by a Belgian manufacturer of matchboxes.

Frequently classified as a Surrealist, Delvaux says he is not, but he admits that "dreams play a great part in my inspiration—not necessarily my own dreams, though. For instance, my *Village of Mermaids*, on exhibition in New York, is the result of a dream my wife had. She dreamed she saw women sitting in gilded chairs in the village street and diving like mermaids into the sea." Delvaux sometimes paints his wife's wide-eyed, classic face but nothing more; his nudes are painted from two professional models: a Swede and a Russian.

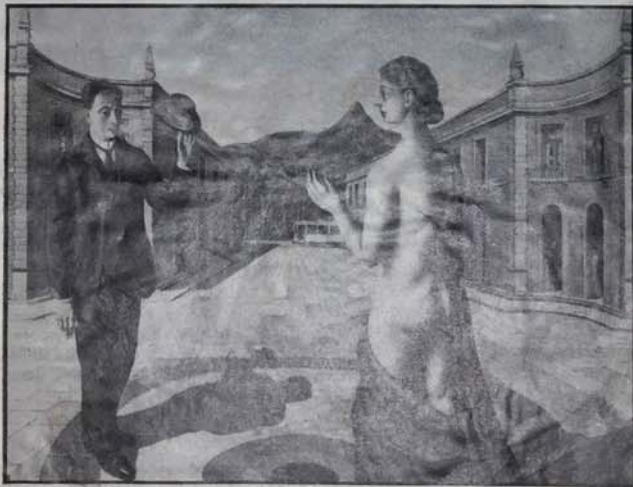
## Not Beauty

Behind the chrome, glass and marble façade of Manhattan's Museum of Modern Art, a host of pierced, twisted creatures lay in wait for the public last week. Their featureless pinheads reared from vast bodies shaped like waves, polished tree trunks, and sand-smoothed desert rocks.

They were the carvings of British Sculptor Henry Moore, who, the British think, is something special. Last week he was having his first big U.S. show, and London *Times* Art Critic Eric Newton tried to explain (in the *New York Times*) just what sort of person it was who created such distressingly inhuman things.

Wrote Newton: "Imagine a smallish compact man in the only two settings that really suit him. One is in his studio, working steadily but not furiously, with a mildly determined look in his eye and a steady hand holding his chisel. The other . . . is in a country lane, deep in the center of Hertfordshire. . . . He's walking slowly, either on his way to the pub with his Russian wife, or on his way back from it. He has either just had a glass of beer before lunch, or he's going to have one . . . a smallish, tough, elemental man with unhurried, gentle ways. Doesn't that fit in? Doesn't it exactly explain his sculpture?"

"How Can One Hope?" Most Museum visitors would probably answer no. Even in the flesh, pink-faced, tweedy little Henry Moore (who had come over for the show) seemed hard to connect with his own work. Born the son of a Castleford coal miner in Yorkshire 48 years ago, Moore decided on sculpture when he first heard about Michelangelo at the age of ten. He was gassed in World War I, spent the next six years on a veteran's scholarship, drawing and modeling from life at the Leeds School of Art and the Royal College of Art in London. "All the modern talk against art schools is silly," says Moore. "There is no tradition now, so of course every sculptor must find his own way, but if one can't



DELVAUX' "THE MEETING"  
Borrowed dreams are also inspiring.

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## ART

## Moore Modernism

The parishioners of St. Matthew's, in Northampton, England, were more than a little disturbed when, in 1943, they learned that a modernist sculptor named Henry Moore was doing a Madonna and Child for their church. To many of them, modern art was incomprehensible and slightly ludicrous, and its use on a religious subject seemed to them to verge on the profane.

When, however, the statue was unveiled, they were surprised to find that Moore's modernism had in this case been limited to a softening and smoothing of the contours, which gave the figures a kind of dignity and repose altogether in keeping with the subject matter. They realized that modernism, when intelligently handled, can suggest and mean more than strict adherence to form.

This theory is well illustrated by the exhibition of Moore's sculpture and drawings which opened last week at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and which runs the gamut from the wildest abstraction down to almost-lifelike figures. In each case, Moore's approach to—or flight from—reality is governed by the mood he is trying to convey, but the fig-

ures have in common a well-polished smoothness of line which makes it appear that they have been sculptured by running water.

**Eye Through:** A typical Moore figure is seated or reclining (of 58 pieces of sculpture, seventeen are titled "Reclining Figure"), often with holes carved through it. The holes, Moore feels, add to the three-dimensionality and excite the observer's interest by drawing his eye through as well as around the object. He explains further: "For me a work must first have a vitality of its own. I do not mean a reflection of the vitality of life . . . but that a work can have in it a pent-up energy, an intense life of its own, independent of the object it may represent." Moore carves from wood, stone, concrete, marble, or lead. Each medium has its own characteristics, suitable to the impression he wants to make.

To keep in touch with reality, which is the springboard for all his sculpture, Moore does considerable drawing. The exhibition includes 48 of his sketches, the most famous of which are the series he made in the London underground shelters during the blitz. It was, as a matter of fact, these drawings which inspired the vicar of St. Matthew's to ask Moore to do



Museum of Modern Art

"The Helmet" in lead by Henry Moore

the Madonna and Child, because of what he called their "spiritual quality and deep humanity." They have all of that, as well as considerable mass and movement.

Moore, a small, modest, 48-year-old Yorkshireman, is considered one of the most able of Britain's new generation of sculptors. The exhibition, the first retrospective one of his work to be held in the United States, will stay in New York until March, after which it will go to Chicago and later San Francisco.



Museum of Modern Art

A Moore version of a London tube shelter during the blitz . . . and his "Madonna and Child"



European

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even copy from a model, how can one hope to do anything from imagination?"

If there is any tradition in Moore's carvings, it stems from his childhood memories of the Romanesque sculpture in the local church, and from Aztec idols in the British Museum. But Moore's figures also incorporate the shapes of natural objects like pebbles, rocks, bones, trees and plants. His style, which combines blocky strength with stretched and rubbed roundness, is unmistakable, and unmistakably his own. His men & women are pinheaded, he explains, because "big heads are more humanistic. I prefer little heads, which are more organic."

**Essence of Rudeness.** With the possible exception of U.S. expatriate Jacob Epstein, Moore is now rated Britain's foremost sculptor. He cheerfully explains that the holes he delights in carving through his sculptured human figures "connect one side with the other, making [them] immediately more three-dimensional. A hole can itself have as much



Seichi Sunami  
MOORE'S "TUBE SHELTER"  
*Excitement without rudeness.*

shape-meaning as a solid mass. Sculpture in air is possible. . . ."

In World War II, Moore found himself "strangely excited by the bombed buildings, but more still by the unbelievable scenes and life of the Underground Shelter." He looked long and hard at the "rows and rows of reclining figures," went home to fill his sketchbooks with them. Moore never drew on the spot, because "that would have been the essence of rudeness," but he remembered London's buried heroism well, in drawings of catacombish tunnels filled with mummies swaddled in grave clothes. They were widely displayed, became part of the English landscape in the blitz days. Moore lost interest in shelters as a subject when they became too tidied up.

Generally Moore has no interest in the kind of beauty which is acceptable to the man in the street. Says he: "A work can have in it a pent-up energy, an intense life of its own, independent of the object it may represent. When a work has this powerful vitality we do not connect the word Beauty with it. Beauty, in the later Greek or Renaissance sense, is not the aim in my sculpture."

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THE NEW YORKER

DECEMBER 28, 1946

## THE ART GALLERIES

*Introducing Mr. Moore  
and Mr. Delvaux*



THOUGH he has risen to the point where he must now be considered one of the world's top modern sculptors, Henry Moore, the English abstract artist, is still largely unknown here. To be sure, he has exhibited here rather regularly since 1942, when he had his first one-man show, at the Buchholz. But that affair was a curiously roundabout introduction for a sculptor, since it consisted only of drawings, and the drawings (especially those mummylike bomb-shelter sketches he made during the war for the British Ministry of Information) were so spectacularly successful that for a long time they overshadowed his other work.

Because of the war, and the difficulty of transportation, his sculpture was slow in getting over to this country. It was not till a year or two later that any of it arrived in the galleries, and then it came mainly in dribbles—mid-career pieces, rather randomly selected, and the more tantalizing because one couldn't help suspecting, despite their scatteredness, that a thoroughly original and quite logical mind was behind them. The broad view, however, was lacking, and it has remained for the Museum of Modern Art, in its current retrospective of Moore's work, to give us the first comprehensive survey we have had.

The show reveals him not only as an original mind but also, and perhaps more particularly, as an inquiring one—creating new forms (you have merely to look at his "Reclining Figure" of 1933, the large, flowerlike "Carving" of 1935, and the abstract study of a female torso called "Composition," done in African wood and dated 1932, to see that) as well as experimenting, in extremely adroit and perceptive fashion, with old ones, when the old ones can be adapted to suit his uses.

In this, of course, he is like that other, more famous adapter, Picasso, and there are many other odd resemblances between the two—not so much in subject or in style as in basic approach—that are likely to strike you as you walk through the show. Like Picasso, Moore

has shown a tendency to go far afield for his inspiration—in his case, it runs all the way from Hans Arp and Archipenko to Aztec carving and the sculptures of the South Pacific—and, again like Picasso, he has shown a peculiar ability to assimilate his influences and to make their styles his own. There is, too, a certain intellectual boldness, a sort of willingness to go all the way with an idea once he has started on it, which sets him above most other modern sculptors and which, regardless of the differences in medium, links him again with Picasso. But I think it is time that I dropped this comparison, for Moore is, after all, an important enough artist to be considered in his own right. This the show amply proves.

It is a good-sized collection, well planned and well selected, with some sixty sculptures and an almost equal number of drawings and water colors on display, and the range in dates is from 1922, when Moore was only twenty-four, to the present—enough to give an excellent perspective on the man's whole artistic development. It is clear that from the first there was little fumbling in his approach. He zig-zagged for a while in style (compare, for instance, the Archipenko-esque angularities of his "Head and Shoulders" of 1923 with the blocky archaism of his "Mother and Child," done just two years later). But this, no doubt, was a part of his tendency to experiment, and there was, even then, a feeling for mass and sculptural balance that gave strength to his work.

It was not, though, till around 1930 that his work took on real direction, moving first toward the abstract and then toward the Mayan, and finally toward an amalgamation of the two. There are fine pieces all through these later sections. Note particularly his "Square Form" (numbered 34 in the catalogue), his small "Reclining Figure" of 1938, and the larger one, in elm wood, of 1939-40, as well as his small, elegant "Family Group" of 1946. Moore has faults, certainly. There are times when he stoops to the merely tricky, and times when his facility in his medium leads him simply to play with an idea instead of trying really to plumb it. But his technical address is truly enormous, and when he is at his best, his work has an authentic air of monumentality that makes him one of the major sculptors of our time.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 1947.

## RECENT AND DIVERSE ART PUBLICATIONS

SPACE has been found today for another short installment in our piecemeal roundup of art books. The present assortment consists of a few recent books dealing with individual foreign artists or artists of European origin.

Crown Publishers has reissued, at \$3.50, "The Complete Woodcuts of Albrecht Dürer," edited by Dr. Willi Kurth. The book first appeared several years ago and had been for some time out of print. It is announced that new plates were made for this edition. The reproductions are good and Dr. Kurth covers the great German artist's career in a general way, devoting much attention, besides, to single woodcuts.

The latest book on Daumier reproduces 240 lithographs selected by Wilhelm Wartmann of the Zürich Art Museum, with an introduction by Bernard Lemann. It is published by Reynal & Hitchcock at \$12.50. Full justice is done in these reproductions to Daumier's marvelous social satires, which form, of course, one of the richest contributions in the entire graphic field.

While English translations of the French legends, under the plates,

might make the experience, for many, more immediately complete, Dr. Wartmann offers descriptive notes at the end of the book. As for Bernard Lemann's ample text, that deals with the theme in a very thorough and interesting manner. But this extremely large format and the fact that type lines run clear across make the pages, though handsome, difficult to read. The plates themselves, however, are splendid—our chief concern.

**Lautrec, Chagall**

First published under the supervision of André Gloeckner in 1939, the book on Toulouse-Lautrec by Jacques Lassaigue has been brought out anew by Hyperion Press and is being circulated by Crown Publishers (\$6.50). Black and white reproductions are copious and excellent. Without being able to compare originals and color plates, I have a feeling that many of the latter distort, erring mostly on the score of feebleness. In this I may be wrong. The text, that is certain, cries out for a sharp-eyed proofreader.

James Johnson Sweeney was responsible for the catalogue prepared in connection with the Chagall show held last April at the

Museum of Modern Art. Quite early in his admirable account Sweeney illuminates the whole complex (yet perhaps essentially simple) panorama by quoting these words of the artist's in response to a question as to the intended significance of his paintings:

I don't understand them at all. They are not literature. They are only pictorial arrangements of images that obsess me. \* \* \* The theories which I would make up to explain myself, and those which others elaborate in connection with my work, are nonsense. \* \* \* My paintings are my only reason for existence, my life, and that's all.

Sweeney's task, however, and naturally, does not end there. He discusses the artist's development stage by stage, with scholarly and perceptive diligence, arriving at definite, reasonable conclusions, which make Chagall, in the end, far more clearly "seen" than he had been before. Carl O. Schniewind provides a special chapter on the artist's graphic work. The book, published by the Museum of Modern Art at \$3, is profusely illustrated.

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# The New York Times Book Review

DECEMBER 22, 1946

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SECTION 7

## Marc Chagall: Two Viewpoints on His Life and Works

**BURNING LIGHTS.** By Bella Chagall. 268 pp. New York: Schocken Books. \$3.

**MARC CHAGALL.** By James Johnson Sweeney. Illustrated. 102 pp. New York: The Museum of Modern Art. \$3.

By ALFRED WERNER

ON JUNE 21, 1941 the Chagalls, refugees from Nazi-dominated France, arrived in

New York. On the same day the Hitlerites invaded Russia, and only a short while later virtually obliterated the ancient White Russian city of Vitebsk where Marc and Bella were born in 1889 and 1895, respectively, and where they had been married in 1915. Yet the beloved image of the "sad and joyful city," as the

painter described it in his autobiography, "Ma Vie," continued to live in the minds of its faithful children, each of them having taken with him, "in place of his vanished inheritance . . . like a piece of his father's shroud, the breath of the parental home."

THE painter's wife began writing her memoirs after having revisited the old country in 1935. By the time of her death in 1944, she had covered only part of her life—thus the present volume constitutes merely a fragment of her unfinished autobiography. She wrote it in her mother tongue, Yiddish, that curious blending of medieval German, Hebrew, Russian and various other languages, an idiom lending itself superbly to the expression of tender thoughts and sentimental feelings. There is little action in the unpretentious twenty-five sketches of which the book is composed; they try, at times successfully, to recreate the strangely poetical atmosphere of a world long passed, of a traditional Jewish home with all its splendors and limitations.

Judging by this book, the Jews of Vitebsk seem to have been rather simple, somewhat superstitious and generally good-natured people. Religion played a

paramount part in their lives. There was the joyful Sabbath, ushered in by mother's lighting of the candles, and ending when father snuffed out the lights. There were the solemn holidays when the men would moan and sigh the whole day long in their white prayer shawls, but there were also less dignified festivals when all, including the children, would sing and dance and stomp, and father might even drink too much wine. There was the Purim festival when mother would distribute gifts among the family and the employes, and merry-makers would turn somersaults and show tricks; there was the feast of Passover when no crumb of leavened bread would be tolerated in the house, and when there would be kept a goblet of wine for the Prophet Elijah, and then finally the autumn festival of Succoth when the family would take their meals in a leafy tabernacle.

AS a child, Mrs. Chagall must have been a most sensitive person, enjoying equally laughter and tears. Tears and laughter also fill her memoirs which she wrote in a slow-moving, rather playful style. What the book

lacks in persuasiveness and vigor is balanced by Marc Chagall's masterly illustrations, expressing a wealth of emotion through a few bold lines, depending upon swift suggestion rather than upon precise definition.

ONCE, when Chagall wanted to express his love of Paris where he spent the better part of his life, he fondly, if oddly, resorted to the phrase: "Mon second Vitebsk." In his book Mr. Sweeney duly records the painter's indebtedness to his Jewish orthodox background and to his Russian traditions, but he stresses the influence which classic and modern French art, expressionism and cubism, had exerted upon Chagall before he created a style of his own. Skillfully the author unfolds the career of the young firebrand who, in 1910, arrived in Paris "with a ripe color gift, a fresh, unashamed response to sentiment, a feeling for simple poetry and a sense of humor." The book leads us up to last spring when Chagall, at the height of his fame, opened his most comprehensive retrospective one-man show at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Mr. Sweeney, who was instru-

(Continued on Page 12)



"The Red Cock." 1940. From "Marc Chagall."

BOOK REVIEW, DECEMBER 22, 1946.

## Art of Marc Chagall

(Continued from Page 9)

mental in organizing the exhibition, wisely refrains from trying to "explain" Chagall's puzzling pictures to the layman, almost apologetically quoting the artist who claimed that he did not understand them, either, as they were merely "pictorial arrangements of images" which possessed him. Yet no objection can be raised to Mr. Sweeney's attempt to demonstrate how the painter "built" his pictures out of apparently disparate elements which, actually, are based on various recollections, tumbling around, helter-skelter, in the artist's subconscious mind. In general, the elements are drawn in a realistic manner—it is, as Mr. Sweeney points out, their illogical grouping that affords the metaphorical character of the canvases. The author characterizes Chagall's contribution to modern art as "the reawakening of a poetry of representation, avoid-

ing factual illustration on the one hand and non-figurative abstraction on the other." Our debt to Chagall is as an artist "who has brought poetry back into painting through subject-matter, without any sacrifice of his painter's interest in the picture for itself, and entirely aside from any communication that can be put into words."

Carl O. Schnlewind, of Chicago's Art Institute, contributes a valuable chapter on Chagall's etchings and drypoints, including illustrations for Gogol's "Dead Souls," La Fontaine's "Fables," and the Bible. He predicts that "when Chagall's prints become better known he will probably prove to be one of the really great printmakers of our day." The lucidly written and instructive volume contains 55 plates and a bibliography listing no fewer than 200 books and major articles on Chagall's work published in nine languages.

REMEMBER THE NEEDIEST!

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"The shelter scenes in the London Underground, an immensely impressive comment on modern warfare, are a synthesis of the whole emotional atmosphere of the blitz."

terests of some purely esthetic whim. They are the essence of their creator in solid form (the slowness, toughness, elementalness, etc.) which has somehow got itself entangled with humanity and has therefore become human in meaning.

**I**T is no use trying to explain Moore's sculpture in detail. If the relationship between the isolated forms of the "Four-Piece Composition" doesn't strike the beholder as (a) characteristic of Moore and (b) extraordinarily satisfying to the exploring eye and fingertips, then more and more words of mine won't help.

But the big reclining figures in wood provide the chief clue to the workings of his creative mind. You either accept his shapes as possessing an inherent, massive nobility, or you don't. If you do, then you can go further and note how these sprawling creatures are essentially creatures of wood—live, growing wood, muscular and tense, even though they are static. If he carves a hole through his figure it is because he wants to help you to explore it—to lead your eye around it and through it and make you feel that it has a thickness as well as a surface. Also, he wants the mystery of a cave as well as the solidity of a mountain.

And just as he has an intuitive understanding of the essential forms required by wood, so with all the other media he uses. Molded concrete, cast lead, modeled clay, carved stone—all find their appropriate shapes. There is an extraordinary interpretation between his creative will and their resistant behavior. Each modifies the other.

Lately, a third element has been appearing in his work. Perhaps the best way of explaining it is to say that he has shown signs of becoming not more human but more humanistic. Some of the carvings begin to have a specific meaning. They are no longer essays in the creation of strange but noble form. They refer to definite humanistic ideas, like the Madonna and Child done for a church in Northampton. Superficially, one would say, they are more realistic: and for that reason some of his admirers have regretted that he should have made this compromise with reality, thereby sacrificing the grand generalizations of his recumbent figures in

wood or the pure shapeliness of his abstract conceptions in stone or the delightful complexity of his inventions in metal.

I do not agree, but I refuse to be tempted to argue about it. A sculptor with a rich and flexible mind should, surely, manage to generalize or particularize at will without being untrue to himself in either sphere.

In his drawings Henry Moore has tackled both problems. Many of the earlier ones were explorations on paper of purely sculptural ideas; they were not drawings of sculpture but for it, extensions of ideas about the surfaces of bones or pebbles, attempts to feel his way around an imaginary complex of hollows and bosses. But just as his carving has grown closer to observed fact without losing its timeless quality, so too, during the war, did his drawings grow.

The shelter scenes in the London Underground system, where, night after night, he prowled with a note book, picking his way among the recumbent forms of sleeping Londoners, are an immensely impres-

sive comment on modern warfare. Uneasiness and fear temporarily assuaged by the safety of subterranean passages is what these drawings portray. They are not eyewitness accounts of the little family dramas that one could observe any night in 1940 and 1941. They are a synthesis of the whole emotional atmosphere of the blitz.

**F**ROM that to illustration is only a step. Moore has just illustrated a book—Edward Sackville-West's dramatization of the *Odyssey*. But note that it had to be an epic. If Henry Moore wants to transfer his attention from the world of pure form to the world of human endeavor, his humans have to be heroes, and remote bronze-age heroes at that.

Fix your mind once more on that tough, serious little man, strolling along a Hertfordshire lane. You can see that he could make drawings and carvings inspired by Homer or Aeschylus but never by Austen or Henry James. That gives the measure of his seriousness, hisness and his freedom from all associated conventions.



Henry Moore.

DO NOT FORGET THE NEEDIES

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"Some of Henry Moore's carvings have begun to have a specific meaning."  
—"The Family," 1946.



Above, "Reclining Figure," 1936—"Muscular and tense, even though static." Below, "Mother and Child," 1925—"It has inherent, massive nobility."



## England Sends Us a Controversial Artist

Next Wednesday the Museum of Modern Art will open an exhibition of the work of Henry Moore, whom it calls "Great Britain's most noted modern sculptor." What Moore is "getting at" is explained in this article by a sympathetic critic.

LONDON.

**A**N artist and his work may bear little or no superficial resemblance to each other, yet there must be, quite literally, a vital connection between them. The artist is both mother and father to his picture or his statue, and the laws of heredity are as operative in art as they are in life.

Therefore, since Henry Moore's work is to be exhibited in a continent that he has never visited, it is certainly not irrelevant to say a little about the man himself. To introduce him as a man will certainly go part of the way toward explaining him as an artist.

How can I introduce him? Certainly not by giving his age (by the way, he is 48) or his measurements in feet and inches and his weight in pounds—though

**Henry Moore, sculptor in many materials and a noted draftsman, explores new fields.**

By ERIC NEWTON

Art Critic of The Sunday Times, London.

that would throw a little light on him.

Very well, imagine a smallish compact man in the only two settings that really suit him. One is in his studio, working steadily but not furiously, with a mildly determined look in his eye and a steady hand holding his chisel. The other—more important, more revealing—is in a country lane, deep in the center of Hertfordshire, with only two buildings in sight. One of them is his own cottage (a real English country cottage: not a townsman's make-believe); the other is the local pub. He's walking slowly, either on his way to the pub with his Russian wife, or on his way back from it. He has either just had a glass of beer before lunch, or he's going to have one.

At first glance you'd make two mental

notes. Nothing could be more English and nothing could be more ordinary. Your first would be right; your second, of course, hopelessly wrong. Ordinary men don't produce drawings and carvings like Henry Moore's. Look again at that tough, unremarkable head. And listen to that gentle, steady, unhurried, unaffected voice.

There is nothing about his face or his voice or his clothes or his movements (which are as steady and unhurried as his voice) to suggest the artist. But once you had recovered from your surprise, in that green Hertfordshire lane, at being told that he was not only an artist but one of the most distinguished England has produced in this generation, you'd guess at once that he was a sculptor. Sculptors are stouter, more earthy, more elemental than

painters. Molding stone and wood to your will is a slower job than manipulating paint. You need less brilliance, more stamina.

Well, there is a picture of a smallish, tough, elemental man with unhurried, gentle ways. Doesn't that fit in? Doesn't it exactly explain his sculpture? Strange, though it is (and it would have been stranger still, incomprehensible, in fact, thirty years ago), it has, surely, exactly those characteristics.

**I**T has them to such a degree and so completely distilled that, looking at it for the first time and comparing it with the familiar kind of sculpture that imitates instead of creating form, we are slightly shocked. All we can see is its negative side. It isn't like the forms we meet everyday life. It isn't like human anatomy.

His purely abstract carvings are easy because they don't invite such comparisons, and therefore we must begin with them in order to understand how the last semi-human figures evolved. They are beings willfully distorted in the

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**Humor**

**Disengaged**

A short while ago a man named James Johnson Sweeney quit his job at the Museum of Modern Art under conditions that greatly impressed me. The newspaper accounts said that Mr. Sweeney tendered his resignation "immediately following a reorganization of the organizational structure of the institution to meet the administrative complexities brought about by the institution's rapid growth."

This seems to me a fine way to quit a job — I wouldn't even mind being fired under such elegant circumstances.—C.D.R. in *This Week*.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 1946.

## Modern Art Exhibits Works of Chagall; Prints and Ballet Sketches Are Featured

By EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West Fifty-third Street, opened with a preview last evening its one-man show of work by the Russian modernist, Marc Chagall. This exhibition, directed by James Johnson Sweeney, opens to the public today and will be current through June 23.

The paintings and prints are placed in a series of galleries on the first floor of the museum; Chagall's sketches for ballet décor and costumes in the auditorium lounge downstairs. These sketches pertain to the two ballets, "Aleko" and "Firebird," produced by Ballet Theatre in 1942 and 1945 respectively.

The main body of Chagall's work, borrowed from European and American collections, is arranged chronologically. Installation matches in excellence the discrimination Mr. Sweeney has used in selecting the material for this ample though not wearisome retrospective.

The first room contains an early group of canvases: "Candles in the Dark Street," painted in 1906; "Portrait of My Fiancée in Black Gloves," 1909; "The Wedding," 1910; "My Studio, Paris," of the same year and "To Russia, Asses and Others" and "Half-Past Three," or "The Poet," both dated 1911. In just this small initial group considerable ground is covered, for by 1911 the fauve expressionism of the first phase begins to show the influence of French cubism—an influence that obtains for a while and then gradually disappears, or becomes too thoroughly integrated with Chagall's very personal style to manifest itself further as such.

From the beginning, and straight through, the "peasant" quality of this artist's work is felt. Chagall is deeply affiliated with the soil, so to speak. His spirit moves in perfect accord with that

of his race, although qualities peculiarly individual make this art of his distinctive. He is whimsical, droll, blithely irrational, and the opulence of his imagination is given all the rein that a bewitched Pegasus could wish. Yet it is frequently evident too (if by no means always) that a sound sense of design acts as ultimate check, keeping the opulence amenable to some code of order. When the theme itself seems roguishly to make no sense at all, the design often will.

While certain elements of change may be detected as the pageant unfolds, Chagall seems to have altered but little, fundamentally, in the years that have come and gone since 1908. Although the earliest canvases are low in key, the 1910 "Wedding," breaks with unexpected verve into high color. In fact some of the latest canvases are in their own way more subdued. Yet all in all, color, with the passing of time, has taken on a greater depth and purity.

The prints, wisely given a place of prominence in the exhibition, are as a rule of great charm and delicacy. Often they seem of a more substantial worth than the paintings, despite the fact that Chagall, the painter, relies so much on soaring decorative color, which must, of course, be dispensed with entirely in the black and white prints. Etching and drypoint are commonly combined in these plates, particularly fine being the series of 1927-31 devoted to "The Fables" and that of 1929-39, consisting of biblical subjects. Most of Chagall's graphic work was commissioned by the late Ambroise Vollard.

The catalogue, not yet ready, will contain, besides reproductions, critical and biographical text by Mr. Sweeney and a brief article on the prints by Carl O. Schiewind of the Chicago Art Institute.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1946.

## MR. SWEENEY EXPLAINS

**A** CONCLUDING chapter in the unhappy drama of resignation that has stirred widespread comment and saddened the art world is furnished by the following letter from James Johnson Sweeney to Stuart Davis, in which the reasons making urgent Mr. Sweeney's action are further clarified:

I want to thank you and all the artists who signed your warm letter to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art in the matter of my resignation as Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture. It was a decision I found very difficult to make. But, as I had agreed to accept the post in January 1945 only on the condition specifically stated in a letter to Mr. Stephen C. Clark, then Chairman of the Board of Trustees, that I be delegated "adequate powers to protect the responsibility assumed," I could not honestly stay in the position after the powers granted me at the time of my appointment had been abrogated.

As I explained to Mr. Clark in that letter, I felt that "the Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture should assume full responsibility for the quality of performance of his department in all the Museum activities in which it is involved"; and that adequate powers to protect the responsibility assumed "can only derive from a delegation to the Director of a full right of veto in any decision concerning his department"; and that "without such a right to protect his plans, a director cannot undertake any serious long-term program."

The conditions I outlined in my letter to Mr. Clark were taken up and voted upon by the Board of Trustees at their meeting of January 11, 1945, and the terms of my appointment were stated in a resolution passed by the Board and available through the minutes of that meeting to all Trustees, pres-

ent or absent. The resolution \*\*\* stated: "Mr. Sweeney is placed in charge and responsible for: All acquisitions for the Department of Painting and Sculpture, any disposal of the Department's material from the Museum Collection, the initiation and content of exhibitions of painting, sculpture and graphic arts, publications concerning these arts, lectures sponsored by the Museum in this field (and related educational activities such as films, docent talks, etc.) and the publicity concerned with painting and sculpture or the activities of that department. In addition, the Director shall have the right of veto in all decisions concerning any of the above stated activities of the Department of Painting and Sculpture."

On September 30, 1946, when it was announced to the Museum staff that the Trustees had appointed a new "coordinating committee composed of five key staff executives," omitting the Director of Painting and Sculpture, but including a newly created officer,— "a Director of Curatorial Departments to administer and coordinate the organization's curatorial programs," it was clear that the responsibility for the broader activities of the Department of Painting and Sculpture had been removed from the Director and the post of Director of Painting and Sculpture of the Museum of Modern Art had been abolished, all save in name and salary.

I am confident that you will agree that the Director of such an important unit of an art museum should not be placed in a position where he might possibly be constrained to employ the activities of his department—purchases, exhibitions, publications—as part of a "curatorial program" with which he does not in conscience agree.

I sincerely hope this letter may clarify the grounds on which my resignation was based.

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NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1946.

## Sweeney Resigns Art Museum Post

James Johnson Sweeney, director of the department of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, has resigned his post, it was learned by the World-Telegram today.

The resignation was made in a letter sent this week to the museum's board of trustees. "A change in the structure of the museum" and altered conditions from those under which he accepted the post less than two years ago are given as his reasons. No new appointment has been announced.

Mr. Sweeney, who served as a member of the museum's advisory committee for many years, has directed several of its most important exhibitions and written many of its catalogs. His appointment as head of the painting and sculpture departments of the institution was made in January, 1945, a few months after the resignation of James Thrall Soby, who served briefly in the same capacity.

At the time of Mr. Sweeney's appointment it was rumored that he had accepted it only on condition that he be given a contract including a veto clause which would enable him, if he were to assume responsibility for museum activities, to have final word in determining them.

THE NEW YORK TIMES,

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1946.

## DIRECTOR RESIGNS ART MUSEUM POST

The resignation of James Johnson Sweeney as director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West Fifty-third Street, was announced yesterday "with regret" on behalf of the board of trustees by Nelson A. Rockefeller, museum president.

The announcement said that Mr. Sweeney's resignation was tendered "immediately following" a reorganization of the organizational structure of the institution "to meet the administrative complexities brought about by the institution's rapid growth."

The resignation, the announcement said, was given "on grounds that the new administrative structure altered the conditions under which his (Mr. Sweeney's) appointment had been made." Mr. Rockefeller tried to persuade Mr. Sweeney to remain, the announcement explained, but the latter felt it was "impossible to do so within the framework" of the new plan.

The announcement paid tribute to Mr. Sweeney's activities in the post, to which he was named in January, 1945, and said the executive committee had expressed the hope that Mr. Sweeney would "continue to participate actively in the councils of the museum."

It was understood that no successor has been chosen.

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NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1946.

# THIS WEEK IN ART

Emily <sup>by</sup> Genauer

## Windfall from the Mailman Touches on Some Grave Probl

Somewhere in Shakespeare there's a reference to "a critic, nay a night-watch." This week the line might appropriately have been altered to read "a critic, nay a mail-drop."

There were more artists' open letters, manifestos, resolutions and the like found their way to my desk this week than ordinarily arrive in a season. They were directed to Nelson Rockefeller, as chairman of the Museum of Modern Art's board of trustees; to William Benton, Assistant Secretary of State; to the State Department itself; to the War Department and to industrial sponsors of art programs. They were signed by many of the most eminent artists



Emily Genauer.

of America. And copies were sent to me so the public may also know what artists currently are stewing about. (Housing shortage note: Some place around town there's an old ivory-tower for rent. The artists don't live there any more.)

Issue I. A group of painters including Stuart Davis, Peter Blume, Karl Knaths, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, John Marin, Georgia O'Keeffe, Loren MacIver and many others have protested to the Modern Museum the resignation of James Johnson Sweeney as director of its department of painting and sculpture. The resignation, (first reported in the World-Telegram Oct. 4) these artists feel, would be a great loss to artists and laymen alike, if accepted.

"Without comment on the questions involved in the situation, our concern is that a man of Mr. Sweeney's special qualifications for that position is constrained to forego it," they write. "The role of the Museum of Modern Art, as

leader in public education in modern art, has had in Mr. Sweeney one who is foremost in its interpretation. . . ."

The signatory artists to the letters (there are 27) express their hope that the museum will not accept the resignation.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1946.

### ARTISTS UPHOLD SWEENEY

**I**N connection with the recent resignation of James Johnson Sweeney as director of the department of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art and pending announcement of official action on the part of the museum, a group of American artists has given expression to its sentiment in the following communication:

"In response to the information, now widely current, in regard to James Johnson Sweeney's submitted resignation as director of painting and sculpture, the undersigned artists are moved to express their hope against its acceptance. Without comment on the questions involved in the situation, our concern is that a man of Mr. Sweeney's special qualifications for that position is constrained to forego it. The role of the Museum of Modern Art, as leader in public education in modern art, has had in Mr. Sweeney one who is foremost in its interpretation. In the activities of the museum which have specific reference to contemporary painting

and sculpture, we feel that Mr. Sweeney's abilities to give meaningful direction are rare. The absence of his knowledge and vision would be a source of great regret to us, and to many others, artists and laymen alike.

"We address the board of trustees, for their information, as to the feelings of some of those artists who have the most direct regard for the museum's role as a progressive force in American culture."

The letter is signed by Stuart Davis, Milton Avery, Romare Bearden, Peter Blume, Byron Browne, Paul Burlin, Alexander Calder, Russell Cowles, Ralston Crawford, Arthur Dove, Lyonel Feininger, Louis Guglielmi, William Hayter, Karl Knaths, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Jacob Lawrence, LeCorbusier, Julian Levi, Jack Levine, Loren MacIver, John Marin, Robert Motherwell, Georgia O'Keeffe, Amédée Ozenfant, Jackson Pollack, I. Rice Pereira, Abe Rattner, Kurt Seligmann and Niles Spencer.

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NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1944



# THIS WEEK in ART

By Emily Genauer

## Sweeney Resignation Explained

It was possible this week to pry open a little the iron curtain which the Museum of Modern Art, via a series of ambiguous press releases, has dropped around the resignation of James Johnson Sweeney as director of its department of painting and sculpture.

Originally revealed in the World-Telegram Oct. 4 (although not officially announced by the museum until a week ago), the resignation has resulted in considerable art world agitation spearheaded by the dispatch of a protesting letter to the museum signed by many of the country's most distinguished artists. The gist of their remarks was that a man as capable as Mr. Sweeney has proved himself since his appointment in January, 1945, especially one with his impressive background of art scholarship, writing and exhibition experience, and one who has been responsible for an unprecedented era of good will between museum and artists, should not be allowed to leave the museum.

It is not surprising that artists and the public alike (13,000 of the latter are museum members and well over a half-million visited it last year) should be deeply concerned with the internal affairs and directing personnel of the museum. It is unquestionably the country's foremost institution in promoting understanding and appreciation of modern art. Regularly it presents the city's most dramatic exhibitions. Its support spells success for a struggling artist. Its list of officers and trustees includes such internationally important names as Nelson Rockefeller, John Hay Whitney, Marshall Field and Henry Luce.

In an exclusive interview with the World-Telegram yesterday, Mr. Rockefeller, president of the museum, explained the "revised administrative program," as the official announcement puts it, which has mystified the art world and caused Mr. Sweeney to resign on the grounds that it altered the conditions under which his appointment had been made.

Mr. Rockefeller described the makeup and function of a new co-ordination committee which has been set up to act with the existing seven-member executive committee consisting entirely of trustees and continuing to serve as the museum's governing body on behalf of the entire board.

### Committeemen Listed.

This co-ordination committee, which will take complete administrative responsibility for "the five major divisions of the museum's activities," will be composed, Mr. Rockefeller revealed for the first time, of staff members, Monroe Wheeler, programs; Alfred Barr, research; John Abbott, secretarial; Jone Ulrich, business, and Rene d'Harnoncourt, curatorial, with Messrs. Wheeler and d'Harnoncourt acting as co-chairmen.

The functions of this committee, Mr. Rockefeller emphasized, are entirely and solely administrative, its purpose being to "meet the administrative complexities brought about by the institution's rapid growth."

Of Mr. Sweeney's charge that under the new setup the terms of his original appointment would be abrogated, Mr. Rockefeller replied that this would not necessarily be the case. Mr. Sweeney's duties,

program it is to purchase first class pictures, plan and hang important exhibitions, publish catalogs illuminating those exhibitions and acquisitions, sponsor lectures on art, etc?

### Head of Department.

Could the museum's powers—that-be reasonably have expected Mr. Sweeney to remain on, when his original letter of appointment specifically provided that as head of the department of painting and sculpture he would be "in charge of and responsible for all acquisitions for the department, any disposal of the department's material from the Museum Collection, the initiation and content of exhibitions of painting, sculpture and graphic arts, publications concerning these arts, lectures sponsored by the museum in this field . . . (and) have the right

of veto in all decisions concerning any of the above-stated activities of the department of painting and sculpture?"

If this is to be a purely administrative committee, what is Alfred Barr doing on it, since, although for many years he was director of the museum, at present his time is devoted exclusively to research and writing?

When will the museum rid itself of internal politics, make clear and direct statements to the press, adopt an attitude of friendliness to and interest in artists?

When will it get itself a responsible, well-qualified top director who will run the show competently and take responsibility for all its functioning, admittedly complex, but surely not more so than the Metropolitan's, which has 20 times more wall space, over two million annual visitors, countless curatorial departments, and a vast building campaign on its hands?

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abrogated. Mr. Rockefeller replied that this would not necessarily be the case. Mr. Sweeney's duties, he said, were "essentially aesthetic, anyway," and the whole matter was one of "procedural relations." He admitted it was very likely that the original terms of Mr. Sweeney's contract "would have to be modified," but added that he himself had never seen the contract, since he only recently has returned to the museum from government service and as a matter of fact has not had an opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with the museum picture. He said he felt that Mr. Sweeney was anticipating a situation that might never arise, and that he and many others were genuinely sorry to see him leave, but that they had been unable to persuade him to remain.

#### *Departure Regretted.*

That is the situation on the face of it and apparently very simple—apart from the fact that it has resulted in the loss to the museum of a man whose services museum officials insist they value highly, who would himself like to remain and whose departure has precipitated deep regret in the New York art world.

Actually lengthy conversations with Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Sweeney and others yield a much more complex picture, adding up to the inevitable combination of personalities and technicalities which has been the scourge of the museum since it started functioning in 1929, which has resulted in an uneven exhibition program and in a lack of confidence among artists, and which has given the museum, for all the solid substance of its trustees, an air of caprice and intrigue.

Perhaps the new set-up will prove, as Mr. Rockefeller believes, an advantageous one for the museum, artists and the public.

In the meantime, several relevant questions remain unanswered. Why should the department of painting and sculpture, which, apart from its obvious significance per se in an art museum, also represent a capital investment (in its permanent collection) of over one million dollars, be represented on the all-important five-man co-ordination committee by one "curatorial department director" who is equally concerned in his functions with displays of old-time movies, industrial design exhibitions of objects from the 10-cent store and women's fashions.

Can administrative and aesthetic functions be satisfactorily divorced in a department whose

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1946.

## CONCERNING MR. SWEENEY

**T**O the letter he had received from Stuart Davis, Paul Burlin and a group of prominent American artists, which appeared on this page last Sunday, Nelson A. Rockefeller, president of the Museum of Modern Art, replied as follows concerning the recent resignation of James Johnson Sweeney from the directorship of the Department of Painting and Sculpture—a post for which Mr. Sweeney had showed himself so brilliantly and perceptively fitted:

"When his letter of resignation was first received, I had two long conversations with Mr. Sweeney in which I endeavored to persuade him to withdraw his resignation. Unfortunately, however, I was unsuccessful, as he was reluctant to function as Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture within the revised administrative structure of the museum as recently determined and approved by the Board of Trustees. At the meeting of the board the following week, Mr. Sweeney's letter of resignation was brought before the trustees and it was unanimously voted to defer action. Since that meeting I regret to say it has not

been possible to work out an agreement and some weeks ago Mr. Sweeney in fact carried his resignation into effect by withdrawing from his duties within the museum with the exception of his work on the catalogue for the Henry Moore exhibition.

"Yesterday, when your letter arrived, I raised the question with the executive committee at its scheduled meeting, and the members regretfully came to the conclusion that no further purpose could be served by keeping the matter in abeyance. Therefore, I was instructed to write Mr. Sweeney expressing the museum's sincere regret at his resignation and deep appreciation for his distinguished service to the cause which the museum represents. It is our earnest hope that Mr. Sweeney will continue to participate actively in the councils of the museum and that we will continue to have the benefit of his advice as well as the pleasure of association with him.

"Your interest and thoughtful communication are greatly appreciated and I can assure you that all of us deeply regret the termination of Mr. Sweeney's association as Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture."

## ART NEWS OF AMERICA

### SWEENEY RESIGNS MODERN MUSEUM POST

The recently rumored resignation of James Johnson Sweeney as Director of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art has just been confirmed by Nelson Rockefeller, President of the Museum, on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Sweeney's resignation was prompted by the "new administrative structure" within the Museum, which he felt altered the conditions under which his appointment had been made. Mr. Rockefeller pointed out that the Trustees had deferred action on the resignation, tendered on September 30 following the reorganization, hoping that some agreement might be reached.

At the time of this appointment in January 1945, following the resignation of James Thrall Soby, it was reported that Mr. Sweeney had asked for considerable power, including the right of veto over all Museum matters in which he was concerned.

Under the new plan, the Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Trustees, works closely with a recently organized Coördination Committee composed of staff executives

appointed to take administrative responsibility for the five major divisions of the Museum's activities: research, curatorial, program, secretarial, and business.

Mr. Sweeney had been at work on the Museum's forthcoming Henry Moore retrospective, latest in a series of exhibitions, devoted chiefly to his special interests in abstract art, which he directed. Before his appointment in 1945, he served for many years on the Museum's Advisory Committee.

Prior to the announcement of the resignation, a group of artists addressed an open letter to Nelson Rockefeller asking the Trustees to prevail upon Mr. Sweeney to reconsider. It said: "The absence of his knowledge and vision would be a source of great regret to us, and to many others, artists and laymen alike." The letter was signed by Stuart Davis, on behalf of twenty-eight artists ranging from such middle-of-the-road men as Russell Cowles and Julian Levi to such avant-garde figures as Stanley William Hayter and I. Rice Pereira.

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# MKR

## art outlook

### The Ayes of the Artists Are upon You!

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART comes once again into the limelight through internal disagreements and shifting of authority. James Johnson Sweeney, newly appointed Director of Painting and Sculpture, who was to relieve Alfred Barr, Jr., of too many administrative duties (as we remarked in issue No. 14) has become disgruntled by we do not know what, and tendered his resignation, notice of which appeared in one New York newspaper.

The Museum, questioned by us on this state of affairs, allowed evasively that "Mr. Sweeney is going right ahead working on the Henry Moore catalog. Only he's working more at home now than formerly, that's all."

"Has he resigned, or hasn't he?"

"His resignation has not been acted upon."

As you may have gathered from our pages from time to time, we feel that art is not a private pursuit trumped up to keep people in office in museums and societies, academies and ladies' clubs. Whether the funds on which our houses of art are run are privately gathered, or come from taxes or admissions or any two of these, the function of the museum is a public one and its administration should

(Continued on page 8)

#### AYES OF THE ARTIST

in the last analysis meet the needs of artists and art lovers and stand accountable to both.

We therefore find the following letter which was released to the press Oct. 28, of pertinence in the affair Sweeney. Let the voice of the artists be heard:

To Nelson A. Rockefeller, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the Museum of Modern Art.

#### Dear Mr. Rockefeller:

In response to the information, now widely current, in regard to James Johnson Sweeney's submitted resignation as Director of Painting and Sculpture, the undersigned artists are moved to express their hope against its acceptance. Without comment on the questions involved in the situation, our concern is that a man of Mr. Sweeney's special qualifications for that position is constrained to forego it. The role of the Museum of Modern Art, as leader in public education in Modern Art, has had in Mr. Sweeney one who is foremost in its interpretation. In the activities of the Museum which have specific reference to contemporary Painting and Sculpture, we feel that Mr. Sweeney's abilities to give meaningful direction are rare. The absence of his knowledge and vision would be a source of great regret to us, and to many others, artists and laymen alike.

We address the Board of Trustees, for their information, as to the feelings of some of those artists who have the most direct regard for the Museum's role as a progressive force in American culture. Since the matter of the resignation has already been reported in the New York *World-Telegram* of October 4th, we see no impropriety in our releasing this letter to the press. Our desire to do so is to make public our position to the many who we feel are of similar mind.

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| *STUART DAVIS      | **YASUO KUNIYOSHI   |
| **MILTON AVERY     | **JACOB LAWRENCE    |
| ROMAIRE BEARDEN    | **LE CORBUSIER      |
| **PETER BLUME      | JULIAN LEVI         |
| BYRON BROWNE       | **JACK LEVINE       |
| ***PAUL BURLIN     | **LOREN MACLIVER    |
| *ALEXANDER CALDER  | **JOHN MARIN        |
| RUSSELL COWLES     | **ROBERT MOTHERWELL |
| RALSTON CRAWFORD   | *GEORGIA O'KEEFFE   |
| **ARTHUR DÖVE      | AMADEE OZENFANT     |
| *LYONEL FEININGER  | JACKSON POLLOCK     |
| ***LOUIS GUGLIELMI | **I RICE PEREIRA    |
| ***WILLIAM HAYTER  | **ABE RATTNER       |
| **KARL KNATHS      | **KURT SELIGMANN    |
|                    | **NILES SPENCER     |

\*Given large one-man shows by the Museum.

\*\*Given small one-man shows by the Museum.

\*\*\*Importantly featured, or owned, by the Museum.

P.S. As we go to press, announcement is received from the Museum of Modern Art that "at its regular meeting this week the Executive Committee regretfully directed that Mr. Sweeney's resignation be entered in the records of the Museum as of September 30." The Museum's full explanation of this occurrence will be given next issue.

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# POST

Daily Magazine  
and Comic SECTION

NEW YORK POST

## If It's Art, Tell It to Sweeney

By DOROTHY NORMAN

Once it became known that James Johnson Sweeney, Director of Painting and Sculpture at New York's Museum of Modern Art, had resigned from his post this autumn, America's finest artists raised their voices in protest. . . .

Small wonder, for you don't find many figures in the art world equipped to carry out the kind of advanced program Sweeney has been conducting at the Museum. . . .

There is no mystery about why he resigned: When he joined the Museum's staff in 1945, it was clearly understood that he was to be in complete charge of the Department of Painting and Sculpture. Now that there has been a change in the Museum's administrative structure, he suddenly found his original agreement was to be altered.

You don't arbitrarily alter matters involving direct and clear responsibility with such a stickler for perfection as Sweeney without running into protest. . . .

Here is a tall, stalwart young American—a former football star and shot-putter of Georgetown University, a crack sailor, who does not look upon art as an extra-curricular activity outside the mainstream of life, or as something for the effete, but declares firmly that "to care about art is to live more fully."

To Sweeney an artist is not one who merely expounds art theory but one who has attained the "quality of full living."

**His Books Aim at Getting The Reader to Look**

Although he has written numerous outstanding books on art, their modest aim is not so much to get the reader to "listen" as to "look." . . .

"What I seek is to arouse interest in what is behind the expression in a work of art; to urge people to understand the influence of the life responsible for its creation. . . ."

**His Mother Guided Him In the Path of Art**

Born of Irish parents—in Brooklyn, in 1900—Sweeney was taken to Ireland to visit as a small child.

His mother, who died quite young, was deeply interested in

painting, and from his earliest years made him conscious of its existence. . . .

Even though the Sweeney house was filled with paintings, and young James was taken to museums all over Europe as a child, modern art failed to make much sense to him up to the period when he went to study at Cambridge, England, after graduating from Georgetown.

A Scotch teacher played an important role at this point. . . . He recommended books on painting and introduced Sweeney to Roger Fry, the leading British art critic of the times. Subsequent and copious reading, plus contact with such widely diverse figures as AE (the great Irish poet), I. A. Richards, Dr. Albert C. Barnes, Edward Alden Jewell and others of similar interests soon served to quicken his perceptions and led to the beginning of his own attempt to write down his evolving ideas about the arts; modern art and literature in particular.

He majored in literature while at Cambridge, writing some excellent verse; he traveled in France and studied Italian with an Italian priest in Sienna—trying to read Dante, he admits, before he could safely order lunch, in Italian. . . .

Upon returning to America, he wrote a "New York Letter" on art criticism for the Chicago Evening Post, he lectured in Chicago, arranged an important exhibition of African-Negro art in the mid '30s for the Museum of Modern Art; lectured at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, and from 1933 to '37 was Assistant Editor of the advance-guard quarterly magazine "Transition," founded in Paris.

He began to write voluminous-



SMALL WONDER he resigned.

Post Photo by Calvacco

ly on the arts before finally taking the post at the Museum of Modern Art, and while there prepared one of the most interesting documents of our time: a series of detailed and careful interviews with 11 outstanding artists who spent the "Hitler" and war years as exiles in America, and with whom Sweeney had been closely associated during that troubled period.

This unique bulletin, published recently by the Museum, includes

first-hand accounts of the credos of such diverse artists as Marcel Duchamp, Fernand Leger, Amedee Ozenfant, Marc Chagall and Piet Mondrian. . . . Another outstanding Sweeney contribution has been his constant effort to have artists receive just compensation for reproductions of their work published in magazines that can well afford to pay. . . . And during his directorship at the Museum a greater percentage of its budget was spent on acquiring

Close-up  
November 18, 1946

art than ever heretofore. . . . Certainly an outstanding achievement. . . .

He was responsible for the Miro, Calder, Mondrian, Chagall, Davis, O'Keeffe and other outstanding exhibitions there, and is now characteristically at work both on a book on T. S. Elliot, and on the catalogue for the Henry Moore show soon to be held at the Museum. In addition, he is writing a book in which Marcel Duchamp will serve "as a kind of magnifying glass through which it may be possible to see and to understand more clearly that great period in modern art—American and European from 1911 to 1927."

**Another Football Name In the Sweeney Roster**

The Sweeney apartment, high above the river on East End Av., is a feast for the eye. Severe and simple in decor, it is one of the most distinguished modern apartments in New York.

At least one of the Sweeneys' five children is following in his father's footsteps by playing football, and all of the Sweeney children—with the exception of two-year-old Ciannait—join their parents in their love of sailing at Cape Cod, summers. (The other Sweeney children possess poetic Irish names too: Ann, Sean, Siadh and Tadhg. . . .)

Sweeney's eye for color causes him to be one of the most pleasant of all people to come upon in New York: You can always count on his wearing marvelously colored ties and socks, plus superb tweeds.

How good it is to hear a man who loves painting so much that he has no special axes to grind, no "favorite" painter. . . . "It is the tradition of painting I love," he explains. "Sometimes there is the appetite for one kind of contribution, sometimes a quite opposed school of art will satisfy. . . . But the main thing is the tradition of painting, to foster it, to see that people see it. . . ."

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You are invited to attend the meeting of

***The Irish Arts  
and Literary Society***

to be held on  
SUNDAY, JANUARY 20th, 1946,  
at 8-30 P.M., in the Carroll Club,  
120 MADISON AVENUE, New York, N.Y.

***James Johnson Sweeney***  
Director of Painting and Sculpture,  
Museum of Modern Art, New York,

will lecture on

***Irish Painters of Today***

PADRAIC COLUM will preside

Subscription \$1.00 Refreshments served

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## THE NEW YORK TIMES

## MODERN MUSEUM OPENS 4 DISPLAYS

Three New Exhibitions Offer  
Architectural Phases, Other  
Has Recent Acquisitions

By EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL

Yesterday was one of those peaceful, somnolent days at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West Fifty-third Street. Only four previews were scheduled, these topped off by an announced lecture in the museum's auditorium for last evening: the lecturer, Alvar Aalto; his subject (the talk illustrated with slides) "Reconstruction Problems: Experiences in Finland."

Three of the new exhibitions (all four of them open to the public today), are related to architecture. The fourth is made up of recent acquisitions, which have been placed in the entrance gallery on the third floor of the museum, there to be shown through Feb. 24.

To the acquisitions I shall return in a moment. But first a word about the other events. Of timely interest is the exhibition of wall panels, installed in the main hall, which submits the question: "A Home for UNO: Must We Repeat the Geneva Fiasco?" The pictorial statement includes a photographic enlargement of the Palace of the League of Nations, together with photographs and photostats of the architectural plans that won prizes in the competition back in the Nineteen Twenties.

### Outcome of Competition

Text is supplied, describing the outcome of that competition—"its peculiar political maneuvering and its sad results." Also now brought into play is the project designed by LeCorbusier and Jeanneret, the competition's "rightful winners." This controversial and potentially helpful exhibition, arranged by the Swiss architect, Rudolf Mook, will remain until March 5.

In the first-floor architecture gallery may be seen, during the same period, a half-inch scale model of a steel airplane hangar, designed by Konrad Wachsmann. The truss roof, which in the actual structure would be 140 by 200 feet in size, is supported, on the cantilever principle, by four pillars. This plan makes possible a floor area almost entirely clear. The external walls are removable. The exhibition contains likewise pertinent drawings and photographs. A preface has been supplied by Le Corbusier. The material was lent to the museum by the Atlas Aircraft Products Corporation.

The third architectural show

just opened presents prize-winning plans in the Smith College competition. It seems that the college is in need of three new dormitories, and decided to let the contract on a competitive basis. The first prize (which carries the contract itself and a \$2,000 advance fee) was won by Benjamin Thompson, Norman C. Fletcher and his wife, Jean Bodman Fletcher. The second prize (\$1,000) went to Sarah and John C. Harkness. Winners of the third prize were Roy S. Johnson, Julius Stein and Fred Ginabern.

### 15 Acquisitions Shown

Acquisitions representing the Museum of Modern Art's collecting activity during the last six months make up a group of fifteen items, one of the most important of which is a strange but not unimposing seven-foot figure in bronze, "Benediction," by Jacques Lipchitz. It will ultimately be placed in the museum garden.

Paintings acquired include the 1912 "Passage de la Vierge à la Mariée" by Marcel Duchamp; a pair of cubist canvases (here instructively juxtaposed) by Picasso and Braque; a 1928 "Dutch Interior" by Joan Miro; "Tableau," painted in 1925 by Amédée Ozenfant, then an exponent of purism; "Acadia," an oil by Maurice Prendergast, together with a watercolor and two monotypes by the same artist, and Robert Motherwell's 1945 abstraction, "In Beige With Sand."

Other acquisitions now exhibited are "Pastorale," 1927, a tempera on canvas mounted on wood, by Paul Klee; an example of German expressionism, "Two Ladies in the Street" by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (color woodcut); Henri Matisse's lithograph, "Torso," and a 1938 etching and aquatint, "Dancer With Tambourine," by Picasso.

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The Art Digest

January 1, 1947

man) in plastic and pictorial art. For its annual Summer Show, the University of Iowa weighed modern trends in a controversial show; selected as its one purchase *Carnival*, a triptych by Max Beckmann.

In New York, the Metropolitan Museum opened its Diamond Jubilee celebration, through which it hopes to raise \$7,000,000 for additional plant facilities, with an exhibition of three visiting masterpieces: Delacroix's *La Barricade* (from the Louvre), Michelangelo's *Pitti Madonna* (from Bargello Museum in Florence), and an Early Christian *Good Shepherd* (from the Vatican). Latest reports are that the promotion campaign is behind schedule, needs a nationally important exhibition to dramatize the Metropolitan's needs—a more pertinent show than its recent "Taste of the Seventies."

Aside from its annual exhibition and the announcement of several score acquisitions, the Whitney Museum presented one of the peak shows of the year, the first one-man exhibition given Robert Feke, some 200 years after he and his work flourished in the Colonies. Earlier, the Whitney had engendered a feeling of nostalgia in the Village, when it reviewed the rebellious careers of 34 "American Pioneers in Modern Art," including Stella, Weber, Benton, Karfiol, McFee, Kuhn, Walkowitz, Sterne, Marin, Halpert, Weber and Maurer.

Perhaps the best exhibition staged by the Museum of Modern Art in 1946 was its survey of the Arts of the South Seas. There can be little doubt about its worst failure. The exhibition called "Fourteen Americans" was a lightweight affair, signifying little artistically, except that the inner circle decided to touch these fourteen artists with the wand of vested authority. Shortly after, but thoroughly unconnected, came the resignation of James Johnson Sweeney, one of the Modern's few strong leaders.

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THE MUSEUM NEWS

PUBLISHED BY  
THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
OF MUSEUMS

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VOL. 24 DECEMBER 1, 1946 NO. 11

Museum of Modern Art: James Johnson Sweeney, director of the Department of painting and sculpture, has resigned.

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# THE ART DIGEST

The News Magazine of Art

November 15, 1946

## *Sweeney Resigns*

FROM BEHIND the iron curtain that the Museum of Modern Art has always maintained between the public and its administrative activities, the art world learned the other day, largely by hearsay, that James Johnson Sweeney, brilliant head of the painting and sculpture department, had resigned. At first the information was semi-denied, then it was semi-confirmed through a letter from Nelson Rockefeller, Modern's president. Thousands of words were typed or printed, and still 57th Street didn't know if it was coming, going or delayed in transit. What had happened to cost the museum one of its few competent leaders? Was Sweeney fired or disgusted?

Adding strongly to the tension was a letter signed by two-score artists protesting the resignation and lauding Mr. Sweeney's work for their cause. Since artists are not especially known for their appreciation, this letter carried weight, but evidently not enough. As Mr. Rockefeller belatedly explained it, there would be a "revised administrative program," revolving around a co-ordination administrative committee composed of Monroe Wheeler, Alfred Barr, John Abbott, Ione Ulrich and Rene d'Harnoncourt. In other words, the terms of Mr. Sweeney's contract had been altered; instead of giving orders he would take them—and he wasn't even about to take them.

The art world can thank Emily Genauer, critic of the *World-Telegram*, for ferreting out what facts we now have. She alone had enough newspaper instinct to "get the story" (see *World-Telegram* for Nov. 9). At the end of her story Miss Genauer asked these embarrassing questions:

"When will the Museum of Modern Art rid itself of internal politics, make clear and direct statements to the press, adopt an attitude of friendliness to and interest in artists? When

November 15, 1946

will it get itself a responsible, well-qualified top director who will run the show competently and take responsibility for all its functioning, admittedly complex, but surely not more so than the Metropolitan's, which has 20 times more wall space, more than two million annual visitors, countless curatorial departments and a vast building campaign on its hands?" There has been no answer.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1946.

## IN THREE MUSEUMS

### Whitney, Metropolitan and Modern Art Stage Diverse Events—Other Shows

By EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL

**L**AST week was one of those weeks that are bound to occur sooner or later in the course of a season. We never know just when the Damoclean blade will drop, but recurrences, like phenomena of the heavens, are assured.

So on Monday morning the list that awaited us contained between forty and fifty urgent summonses. There was nothing for it but to start right out and try, somehow, to plow through. Today's columns witness the reticulation of our own Battle of the Bulge.

It would be manifestly appropriate to offer here a detailed account of the most recent Kress gift of paintings and sculpture to the National Gallery in Washington, with a survey of the new installation that makes a voyage through the various schools—the Italian, Flemish, Dutch, Spanish, French, English, American—now so unforgettably wonderful an experience. That obligation must for the present be sidestepped, that pleasure postponed.

As it is, a vast amount of activity will have to be telescoped. And if we succeed in fitting together a kind of complicated tabloid overall picture, that is all that need be hoped for.

#### The Whitney Exhibition

Three museums here in New York topped the horrendous list of openings.

#### Museum of Modern Art

With its dramatically installed Oceanic show just launched and attracting throngs, the Museum of Modern Art last week opened four more exhibitions, all of them small and three of them dealing with aspects of architecture. In the auditorium lounge are shown prize-winning plans in the Smith College competition (the project: a new group of dormitories). "A Home for UNO: Must We Repeat the Geneva Fiasco?" is the title of the timely little show composed of photographs, plans and wall text, arranged by Rudolf Mock and set up in one section of the main entrance hall. In an adjacent room we find the scale model of an airplane hangar daringly designed by Konrad Wachsmann.

Up on the third floor are exhibited museum acquisitions made during the last six months. Artists represented, by work in oil, water-color, tempera, monotype or print media, are Braque, Picasso, Duchamp, Klee, Miro, Ozenfant, Kirchner, Matisse, Maurice Prendergast and Motherwell. I hope that Mr. Sweeney will tack up between the cubist paintings by Braque and Picasso a card containing the gist of his informal comment to me the other day on the relationship and divergence of these two canvases. It would be a valuable service to the public, clari-

fyng an important point of transition in the cubist movement.

Also recently acquired and now on view is a large (seven-foot) figure, called "Benediction," by Jacques Lipchitz. It is puzzling, but powerful, too, in its largely abstract fusion of plastic elements, and will appear to better advantage when placed out in the museum garden.

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THE COLUMBIA WORKSHOP

presents

Readings from T. S. Eliot's

"FOUR QUARTETS"

Saturday, Mar 16, '46

2:30 - 3:00 PM

Presenting

James Johnson Sweeney

Director, Department of Painting and Sculpture

Museum of Modern Art

--and--

John Hall Wheelock  
American Poet and Editor

Director: Robert Louis Shayon

Supervisor: Robert J. Landry

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**Variety  
in  
Abstraction**

**THE ARTS CLUB OF CHICAGO**  
March 5-30, 1946

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The type of painting commonly described as "abstract" is an outgrowth of a desire on the part of early 20th century painters to emphasize order in a picture. Every generation of artists focuses its attention on certain features of artistic expression that it feels the previous generation neglected. One of the outstanding characteristics of our period is its lack of order. In the field of painting a recognition of this lack and a conscious and exacting search for a remedy has produced some of the finest and most characteristic work of our time.

There are two main currents in the abstract painting of the 20th century: one characterized by an intellectual, structural, classical approach; the other, more emotional in spirit, fluid and organic in design and romantic in its spontaneity.

The first of these two trends is based on cubism, initiated in Paris about 1908 by Picasso and Braque and carried on by Mondrian and Malevich. The second follows the work of the Russian Wassily Kandinsky, who in Germany about 1910 began to reduce the representational forms in his pictures to their elements and to emphasize the rhythmic patterns of his compositions. But, instead of the geometrical motives of the cubists, Kandinsky employed for the most part fluid, organic forms related in a decorative harmonic order. Klee and Arp took up Kandinsky's early rhythmic order of abstractions as a base for their personal fantasies, to be translated further by surrealists such as Masson and Miró. Some painters have employed one approach and then another, as in the case of Klee; some have combined them in a single picture as Kandinsky occasionally has done. These paintings provide a glimpse of the rich variety achieved in this search for pictorial order.

— JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY

## CATALOGUE

1. ARP—Leaves, 1929
2. BRAQUE—Composition, 1914
3. DUCHAMP—Drawing, 1911
4. KANDINSKY—Lighter No. 272, 1924
5. KANDINSKY—The Waterfall, 1909
6. KLEE—Equation, 1936
7. LÉGER—Smoke Over Roofs, 1913
8. MALEVICH—Suprematist Composition, 1914
9. MALEVICH—Woman With Water Pails: Dynamic Arrangement, 1912
10. MASSON—The Enchanted Castle, 1927-28
11. MATTA—Hanging Man, 1942
12. MIRÓ—Dialogue of Insects, 1924-25
13. MONDRIAN—Composition, 1925
14. PICASSO—Head, 1909
15. PICASSO—Man With a Hat, 1913
16. MOHOLY-NAGY—Variation of a Rh Picture  
Nos. 1 to 16 comprise the exhibition circulated by The Museum of Modern Art, New York
17. GRIS—Abstract  
Loaned by Mrs. Claire Florsheim, Chicago
18. GRIS—Abstraction
19. PICASSO—Harlequin  
Loaned by Mr. & Mrs. Charles B. Goodspeed, Chicago
20. GRIS—Abstraction
21. PICASSO—The Chimney Piece, 1915  
Loaned by Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Marx, Chicago
22. PIPER—Forms on Dark Blue, 1936
23. NICHOLSON—White Relief, 1935  
Loaned by Mr. & Mrs. John Duncan Miller, Chicago
24. GRIS—Nature Morte a la Guitare, 1913  
Loaned by Mrs. Flora Schofield, Chicago
25. CALDER—Abstract  
Loaned by Mrs. Alfred P. Shaw, Chicago
26. KLEE—Embraced, 1932
27. KLEE—From the Mobile to the Static, 1932
28. KLEE—Island  
Loaned by Mr. Mies van der Rohe, Chicago

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1946.



"Benediction," bronze, by Jacques Lipchitz, recently acquired.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1946

## ART OF THE WEEK

By CARLYLE BURROWS

### Primarily French

Two of the local art establishments are well provided just now with French paintings. One is the contemporary "selection" at the Bignou gallery which consists of work by fifteen artists—André Bauchant to Maurice Utrillo. The other display, in which French painting may be traced through various formative years, is at the Museum of Modern Art, where recent acquisitions range from a massive bronze sculpture to oils, watercolors and prints.

The museum has added to its collection recently not only Lipchitz's prodigious "Benediction"—seven feet tall, and a ton or so, perhaps, of bronze—but Joan Miro's fanciful "Dutch Interior," a calmly calculated and decorative "Tableau" by Amedee Ozenfant, and work by Braque, "Man With Guitar," and by Picasso, "Ma Jolie," the latter two exemplifying the early cubist-analytical styles of the artists, together with Marcel Duchamp's "Le Passage." "It is an interesting circumstance," writes James John-

son Sweeney, director of the department of painting and sculpture, "that the Braque, Picasso and Duchamp were all painted within the same twelve months" (1911-'12). For, as such, they illustrate not only the climax of the specified development, "but the mature style of Duchamp which was to win him the surrealists' recognition as a precursor." Thus, the museum steadily builds, according to preordained plan, adding bit by bit to the mosaic of the past. The American record has been increased chiefly by the addition of "Arcadia," a largish oil, by Maurice Prendergast, and by a sensitive early water color, "The Lagoon, Venice," by the same artist.

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**TIME**  
THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

February 18, 1946

**"A Little Song"**

A proud new purchase was unveiled last week by Manhattan's Museum of Modern Art. It was titled *Benediction*, stood seven feet high, was cast in bronze.

From knob head to lion feet, *Benediction's* brutal, bulbous charms were probably lost on the average layman. Most frequent questions by museumgoers: "Is it harping or scratching?" "Why has it got three legs?" If its sculptor, 51-year-old Jacques Lipchitz, had been there to



Museum of Modern Art

"BENEDICTION"

The sculptor was very mad, very anxious.

explain, he would have told them that what looks like a third leg is really a simplified drapery.

A stocky, intense French citizen, Jacques Lipchitz has been turning out weird, passionate work for 33 years. He is one of the world's most highly praised and least understood sculptors. He made the sketches for *Benediction* along the road from fallen Paris, in the midst of a wild, tragic rout. His idea was to make a statue of the harpist when & if he succeeded in reaching the U.S.

He began to be an artist in Druskienskiki, Lithuania, when he was only eight. His earliest works were carefully painted white in imitation of the plaster casts he saw at school. At 18, Lipschitz hotfooted to Paris, became the youngest member of the Cubist group, quickly developed the muscular, semi-abstract style.

Every Sunday Lipchitz takes a walk round & about Manhattan ("It is when I get nature"). Weekdays he gets up at 6 a.m., works furiously in his Manhattan studio until dark. Says he: "I am only interested in sculpture." New York, he says, is the place for him. "It is so exciting. Everything is set up for work."

For those who see little connection between his *Benediction* and its title, Lipchitz simply recalls the day on the road south from Paris when he made his first sketch of the harpist: "I was very mad, very anxious. This [sculpture] was a little song for Paris what I had to sing. It is like somebody goes to sleep. But sleep would bring *cauchemar* [nightmare], so I sing him a song that everything will come out all right. Maybe it is something that will make me feel better too."

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## Chagall's Fantasy

### The Strangest Things Happen in the Russian Village He Came From.

By HENRY McBRIDE.

More than most artists who have had one, Marc Chagall profits by the retrospective show of his paintings in the Modern Museum. He has never entirely lacked appreciation in this city for his works came with the stamp of Parisian approval upon them and collectors promptly appeared with sufficient courage to buy them, but the single pictures in occasional shows never quite explained the artist to a public that is always just a bit afraid of fantasy—his specialty.

With this big exhibition, where the artist carries you right out of this world into the realms of imagination where everything is as startling as it was to Alice in

Wonderland and where anything can happen and does happen, he takes you with him easily. It is likely he will take most of us with him this time, not even those escaping who used to be known as the "lower classes," for really Chagall isn't above the heads of anybody and plays continually with the elementary mental pastimes of humanity.

When his first examples appeared here there was some skepticism about the cows leaping over house-tops, about the figures with two faces and those with none at all, about the drunken fiddlers at the weddings, and the candelabra and other things floating in the air. It was thought to be an effort at eccentricity, and especially since the colors were raw to the point of barbarity.

But the complete showing vindicates the artist. It is curious to note how thoroughly it does so. The artist, it seems is a poet. He is a first-rate colorist. He is an expert painter. He does whatever he sets out to do, and if there should be any trouble in the doing of it, he manages to conceal the effort from the spectator. The repetition of the cows, roosters and fiddlers up in the air is no more wearisome than the aspect of Fujiyama in the background of the Hokusai prints, for the symbol is not so much the real thing in the picture as the presence of the artist invisibly but persistently there. He is charmed with the jugglery he is able to do with his toys; his excitement is catching, his behaviour as a painter alluring.

What amazes and touches the beholder is the Russianism that this artist carries with him into distant lands. His latest pictures, after five years of New York, are as undiluted Russian as the earliest known ones, and though I had occasion to remark only a few weeks ago that the new pictures had an increased suavity in the brush-stroke that might be a concession to our rage for refinement, nevertheless the essential matters in the work were as Russian as Gorki. And if you ask how we Americans can assay the true Russian atmosphere, I can only say that we always do. Genuineness may be recognized when nothing else is. New Yorkers laughed with instant glee at the drunken peasants in the Shostakovich opera, "Lady Macbeth From Minsk," done some years ago, knowing them to be the real thing. If you remember them at all, you must recall how perfectly Chagall they were. Chagall corroborates all the Russians.

The  Sun

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 1946.  
NEW YORK.

James Johnson Sweeney, who arranged this exhibition, writes a documented history of the painter for the catalogue, giving details of the early village life, and of the later recognitions of the artist in Paris by the poets Cendrars and Apollinaire. In discussing the impossibility of charting the no-man's-land in which imaginative artists work, he quotes this excellent remark by Andre Lhote: "It is the glory and the misery of the artist's lot to transmit a message of which he does not possess the translation," and follows this up with Chagall's refusal to explain his work; "They are only pictorial arrangements of images that obsess me. The theories which I would make up to explain myself, and those which others elaborate in connection with my work are nonsense. My paintings are my reason for my existence, my life and that's all."

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NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE. SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 1916

## Pioneers of Modern Painting: American Artists and Chagall

By Carlyle Burrows

### Chagall Retrospective

Those who have been following with interest the progress of fantasy in modern art will scarcely have left Marc Chagall, Russian painter, formerly closely associated with the School of Paris and since 1941 a resident of New York, out of their calculations. For, as a painter of modern pictures, as a designer, as well, of ballet stage decor, Chagall has been almost as vividly before the public here for several years as formerly he was in Paris. The Museum of Modern Art, however, is according him, in its exhibition opened last week, one of those shows it does so well for all the artists it is keenly interested in—a really comprehensive one-man show. It consists of sixty-two oils and two-thirds as many graphic works, including etchings and drypoints, and a supplementary group of ballet designs in watercolors.

Born in Vitebsk, in Russia, Chagall arrived in Paris in 1910, writes James Johnson Sweeney, "with a ripe color gift, a fresh and unashamed response to sentiment, a feeling for simple poetry and a sense of humor. He brought with him a notion of painting quite foreign to that esteemed at the time in Paris." It was intensely local in sentiment and gave rich promise of developing in the mood of fantasy foreshadowed by his early and somewhat objective canvases. Of these there are two of particular note in the exhibition: one, a non-imaginative "Portrait of My Fiance," which is sensitive in design, drawing and color; the other, a picture of a wedding procession—brightly painted, slightly grotesque in characterization, an altogether whimsical picture of native Russian life, which the artist recorded as though he had just seen it and found it entertaining rather than serious.

Then follows, in proper chronology, a considerable series of Paris-influenced paintings, works which show in the evolution of Chagall's style certain alliances with abstract theory, the paintings becoming increasingly faceted with color, and their compositions dislocated, somewhat distorted and stylized. Among a dozen of these paintings, which may be described as decorative, Chagall gained effects of some distinction but nothing, aside from their generally piquant individuality, to become really excited about, except in one or two instances. The exceptions, involving a seriousness infrequent in his work, are both essentially objective portraits, one of an individual, "The Rabbi of Vitebsk," and the other, painted on one of his visits to Russia, the "portrait" of the native scene, "The Blue House."

The Blue House, 1917



From the painting by Marc Chagall, at the Museum of Modern Art

The final sequence of the display discloses the Chagall more frequently known to us—the painter of exuberant dream pictures, filled with fine color of deep lyrical tonality. In these are the acrobats, the lovers, the brides, the street fiddlers, the barnyard animals—in a familiar assortment of goats, donkeys, horses, cats, and so forth—which the artist plucks from childhood memory and works into the calculated fabric of his composition with apparent delightful abandon. Actually, it seems to us, Chagall is too smart a painter to do anything by chance, so that, in spite of all, even the most primitive appearing fantasy, symbolizing a collection of fondly remembered and lovable items, is cleverly integrated—not unlike the raisins and cherries embedded in a luscious fruit cake.

One of the genuine high lights

of the show, we thought, were the quite unpictorial but nevertheless, in their way, eloquent illustrations, done in drypoint, for the most part, of the various projects of the artist—Gogol's "Dead Souls," "La Fontaine's Fables" and the "Bible." The technique is a chiaroscuro of light and mass, from which Chagall elicits a deep sense of the subject, its feeling and character, through the simplest of means. This simplicity is a typical trait, which permeates his best paintings and marks with charm even those of his subjects which are painted with the slyest, the most tongue-in-cheek brand of humor of which he is frequently capable.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 1946.

## EYES ON MODERNISM

Early Stages of Movement in America  
Shown at Whitney—Marc Chagall

By EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL

### The Chagall Retrospective

Another major offering of the week permits us to witness the impact of successive phases of the unfolding of Ecole de Paris modernism. This is the Chagall retrospective, presented with such understanding discrimination by James Johnson Sweeney at the Museum of Modern Art.

True, in the instance of Marc Chagall, we have to do with an artist whose development appears, upon the whole, strikingly independent. From almost the beginning Chagall appears, in Sweeney's fortunate phrase, an "intuitive expressionist." His has been, throughout, an art vitally rooted in the soil of his native Russia; an art spurning the stiltedly eclectic elegances of the Czarist court; an art nourished by simple peasant tradition and, above all, by the interior fruition of his own experience.

Yet in the work done between 1911 and 1913 we plainly discern (preceded, perhaps, by certain fauve infiltrations) the powerful influence of French cubism. It is brilliantly exemplified by canvases such as "Half Past Three," "I and the Village" (reproduced) and others of about the same period. But, apropos of this, Sweeney, in his text prepared for the forthcoming catalogue, acutely observes that "if the cubists had been interested in breaking up forms to reorganize compositionally in their paintings, Chagall was primarily interested in breaking up memories." And, in any event, it is never of cubism per se that one thinks in connection with Chagall's painting, half so much as of elements peculiar to the artist's own personality. His art cannot be just coldly analyzed. To be appreciated it must first of all be felt—in a sense, re-experienced.

That may not, for most of us, be easy, due to the strangeness of the thematic material. All this whimsical upside-downness, these weird levitations and startling juxtapositions of apparently unrelated objects belong to an experience not readily accessible. We may find ourselves falling back, in the end, upon more familiar methods of evaluation. We learn to see these pictures as the virtually abstract music of form and color. The color, if functional, is always (save in the very earliest work) decorative. That is perhaps why it has long seemed to me that Chagall reaches his happiest expression in the designing of décor and costumes for ballet.

Even a notice necessarily so brief must contain an appreciative word, at least, for Chagall's graphic art, which is of compelling fineness.

Modern Work in the New Shows



"I and the Village," in the Chagall Retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art.

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BROOKLYN EAGLE, SUN., APR. 21, 1946

## AT THE ART GALLERIES

### Modern Museum of Art Features Comprehensive Chagall Exhibit

By A. Z. KRUSE

The works of Marc Chagall, on exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, pervade the air with unspoken words which tell of a background of severe self-discipline. These homespun, metaphorical fables have been sagaciously unified into design fantasies in which the novelty and newness of Chagall's artistic approach reveal themselves. When one can make of his particular art idiom a form of self-entertainment, it is little wonder that he can continue to work indefatigably for 15 hours a day at his easel, pictorializing fond recollections. Again, painting provides Chagall with a form of solace against the specter of the grief and torment through which he so recently lived. When in this mood he poignantly symbolizes, in many of his canvases, "victimized man carrying his own cross," to put it in his own words.

Now, Chagall is in his late fifties. To fight the world, as he has, in an endeavor to be one's humble self, requires more than physical strength; it needs a genius who is meek but never weak. Chagall has gone through the process of technical change as he progressed periodically during the various stages of his industrious career as painter, printmaker and designer for the ballet theater. Yet, from the time when he was a lad in his teens up to the present, an inventory of Chagall's attainments as a natural modernist proves that his extraordinary patterns of stimulating color appear interwoven, as of a piece, a thread of creative individuality running through all of his changing periods. On the whole, his works may be likened unto mighty music dramas, in which the composer created his own librettos.

A well-illustrated catalogue contains profound observations by James Johnson Sweeney, who spared no effort in his meticulous research on the details of Chagall's gradual development.

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# THE Art Digest

April 15, 1946



*Candles in the Dark Street*: MARC CHAGALL (1903)

## Tracing the Undeviating Path of Chagall

A retrospective exhibition such as that currently being accorded Marc Chagall at the Museum of Modern Art is calculated to give pause to the most glib of critics. A customary approach when viewing such a life product by a creative artist is to attempt to recognize and call the reader's attention to the various by-paths trodden by the searching artist in the course of his development and to indicate the masters upon whom he patterned himself—whether consciously or unconsciously—until he had arrived at that point in his career when he had achieved a metier distinctively his own. Such a formula is of little avail when confronted with the life output of Marc

Chagall. Here is found little deviation from an original concept. The artist seems to have sensed his niche as a young painter and to have spent his life polishing a single aesthetic gem rather than in attempting to create a vari-garnished tiara as has that experimenter and innovator, Pablo Picasso.

There is an almost frightening surety goal-wise sensed over this artist's long and productive career that is seldom sensed in retrospective backward looks of this nature. Advancement has been in the direction of composition, surface texture, and color . . . but the cast of characters has remained virtually unchanged throughout the years.

A definitive analysis of Chagall's

charm was written upon the occasion of the artist's one-man exhibition at the Pierre Matisse Gallery by DIGEST critic Jo Gibbs (see Feb. 1 issue) and little can be added in that direction by this reviewer who therefore turns his attention to a simple discussion of the purely technical problems that have engaged Chagall's attention.

*Candles in the Dark Street*, dated 1903, is remembered for sombre color and for a diagonal composition later to appear in a more sophisticated form. A 1910 oil—titled *The Wedding*—employs strong horizontals that also were to reappear when Chagall's fantasies became more developed. Another early work dated 1911 titled *Half Past Three* today still marks a high point in the painter's career and one of the first of that series calculated to induce Isaac Newton to turn in his grave through its tongue-in-cheek disregard of gravity. In *Paris Through the Window* (1912) a triangular composition has been created through the juxtaposition of a cat, tower, and figure . . . against which the strong design of window panes has been opposed.

Angularity and broken areas are adroitly combined with a low horizon in *Self Portrait with Wine Glass* (1917). The following year produced one of the artist's most widely known works—his familiar purple and green *Green Violinist*. Why this shot-gun wedding of color works is as much a mystery to this reviewer as to anyone else . . . but it does. A growing surety coupled with less incisive forms marks an oil dated 1928 titled *Homage to the Eiffel Tower*. The painter's latest works included are distinguished by their loose application of line and color coupled with their swimming movement. For example: *Listening to the Cock* (1934) and *The Red Cock in the Night* (1944). The liquid blues in the latter will make any colorist's eyes swim. Not to be missed are his displayed prints in various media which find their inspiration in Aesop's *Fables*, *The Bible* and Gogal's *Dead Souls*.—BEN WOLF.

*The Birthday*: MARC CHAGALL (1915-23)



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APRIL 22, 1946

**Newsweek** VOL. XXVII NO. 16  
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THE MAGAZINE OF NEWS SIGNIFICANCE

Simple as cold water. No complications for Chagall."

But while the juxtaposition of images in Chagall's paintings can surely not be easily explained, the images are mostly from his childhood. Chagall's birthplace was Vitebsk, the "sad and joyful city" whose domed church towers, wooden houses, and snow-covered streets appear again and again in his painting. His family was a large one—eight sisters, one brother, and innumerable aunts and uncles. Chagall describes them as illiterate but intelligent. His father carried boxes in a herring depot. His Uncle Neuch "played the violin like a shoemaker." One feast day of Simhath Torah his grandfather disappeared. The family finally found him—sitting quietly on the roof and munching raw carrots.

**Wedding in Vitebsk:** Chagall met his wife Bella on the bridge in Vitebsk. Her death in 1944 was a staggering blow to him. He says of her: "Bella was the first to understand me. She directed all my art." Bella's parents, wealthy diamond dealers, had violently opposed her marriage to the poor painter. "They didn't do a true marriage," says Chagall, "so I had to do it in my painting." On the anniversary of their marriage, on Bella's birthday or his or their daughter Ida's, Chagall has painted lovers. They may be riding on the back of a red rooster past the Eiffel Tower, floating in the middle of a lush bouquet, or standing on a snowy village street beneath an oil lamp. Bella is usually dressed in a white bridal gown, and often there are musicians, candles, bouquets, and a small wedding ceremony going on under a canopy in the background.

Chagall's paintings have always, like Vitebsk, been "sad and joyful." Since Bella's death even his lovers are sad. A hard worker and a perfectionist who has sometimes spent fifteen years on a canvas, Chagall nowadays tries to lose himself in his work. Nonetheless he says of himself, "sad Chagall."

Carl Schniewind of the Institute to say that Chagall "must be regarded as one of the great etchers of our day."

Chagall, who was born 57 years ago in Russia, spent years in France, and came to the United States in 1941, is a warm, effervescent, and sentimental person who lives with his daughter on Riverside Drive in New York. Asked why he paints such incongruities as people floating through the air, Chagall will reply: "Because I love it very much. Through the heart it is possible to understand. Not through the head. The art is as the wind. There is no beginning, no end. For me all that is spontaneous. Not cerebral—pfft."

### He Flies Through the Air

The cow never actually jumps over the moon in Marc Chagall's paintings, but asses and winged herrings soar through the air, sometimes playing violins, and a cow on a rooftop drinks from a tub while a milkmaid, with head detached, floats down.

Fifty-one of this front-rank artist's paintings, in soft yet brilliant hues of blue and red, lavender and green, went on exhibition last week at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The Art Institute of Chicago, which helped arrange the show and pay the heavy expenses of importing eighteen of the paintings from European collections, will have it next fall. The retrospective also includes 35 of the prints which caused



Arnold Newman



Colten

Chagall: "Art is as the wind . . . simple as cold water"

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Vol. XLVII No. 16

# TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

April 22, 1946

## ART

### Pioneers

In the decade before World War I, a few wild young men with paint under their fingernails were planting the weird orchards of modern art. Their shabby Latin Quarter ateliers held the first green fruits of freedom. The sidewalk cafés of Paris rocked and rang with their back-slapping and boasting. *Les Fauves*, "the wild beasts" and their far-from-tame friends had taken over—Matisse, Braque, Derain, Duchamp, Rouault, and Picasso in command.

They felt a compulsion to go on from where the post-impressionists (Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne) left off, and an itch to show that you can forget nature (almost) and still paint pictures.

But painting, like any game, still required a rigidly defined field (or canvas), a number of players (forms and colors), and, finally, rules of play. Instead of imitating nature, referees developed new rules: 1) distorting and arbitrarily recoloring nature for emotional impact (expressionism); 2) chopping nature into small cubes in order to get a good look at it from every angle (cubism); 3) excluding recognizable nature altogether, so that familiar associations would not obscure the geometric interest of the design (abstractionism).

To learn the new rules thoroughly you had to go to Paris—and many young U.S. artists did. Last week Manhattan's Whitney Museum (now under the wing of the arch-conservative Metropolitan) honored the native sons who had brought the principles of Paris back to Manhattan, and had made them stick. In an exhibition



Pierre Matisse Gallery  
"NUDE DESCENDING A STAIRCASE"  
250,000 watched her come down.

called "Pioneers of Modern Art in America," it showed the 1908-22 works of Karfiol, Weber, Demuth, Sheeler, Marin, Hartley, and—surprisingly enough—Thomas Hart Benton.

**Roughneck in Paris.** According to Benton, Paris had meant merely "a girl friend to take care of you and run you—a lot of talk and an escape into a world of pretense and theory." Two-fisted Tom had "wallowed in every cockeyed ism that came along, and it took me ten years to get all that modernist dirt out of my system. I was merely a roughneck with a talent for fighting, perhaps, but not for painting." His muscle-bound expressionist *Three Figures*, which the Whitney exhibited without comment, proved his words.

Missouri-born Benton repented his bohemian foibles and turned to painting what the Met's Director Francis Henry Taylor describes as "the ample American landscape" (he concentrated on harvest scenes). But even after they returned to Manhattan, most of his Paris friends felt themselves closer to Paris than to the prairie, and some brilliant stay-at-homes (Burchfield, O'Keeffe) felt the same way.

Their champion was famed Photographer Alfred Stieglitz, and his "291" gallery of modern art was their headquarters. There Matisse, Rousseau, Cézanne, Picasso, Hartley, Marin and O'Keeffe were introduced to the U.S.

Another Stieglitz protégé was Max Weber, whose first, fine-chopped abstractions, like *Chinese Restaurant*, were harder to take than the India-rubber rabbits he paints now. The *New York Times* art critics are more sympathetic to him today than was the *Times* man who sputtered in 1911: "It is difficult to write of these atrocities with moderation."

**Nude in Manhattan.** Stieglitz played host to a reckless, determined band. In 1913, the modernists captured Manhattan's huge 69th Regiment Armory, stocked it with some 1,600 examples of French and U.S. modern art. They adopted a motto, "The New Spirit," and distributed thousands of buttons bearing the pine-tree flag of the American Revolution. Probably 250,000 people saw the "Armory Show," and for a good many the experience was horrifying. For a glimpse of Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (see cut), they had to stand in line.

Conservative Critic Kenyon Cox sounded a brave but ineffectual clarion: "Believing, as I do, that there are still commandments in art as in morals, and still laws in art as in physics, I have no fear that this kind of art will prevail, or even that it can long endure."

Maybe most people agreed (and still do) with Critic Cox, but most young artists did not. The paintbrush war was over; the modern beachhead was secure. Both sides could settle down to the uneasy truce, punctuated by journalistic skirmishes, which exists today.



Museum of Modern Art  
"DEDICATED TO MY FIANCEE"  
His non-Newtonians never came down.

### Love & Dread

He's asleep  
He's awake.  
Right away he's painting  
He grabs a church and paints with the church  
He grabs a cow and paints with the cow  
With a sardine  
With heads, hands, knives  
He paints with an oxtail. . . .

Parisian Poet Blaise Cendrars was trying to describe Artist Marc Chagall. Hardly anyone else in 1911 thought him worth describing. Paris was just getting used to *Les Fauves* (see above), and bright young men from all over Europe and the U.S. were there, learning to paint in the new ways. But Chagall did not want to learn anything.

"Primitive art," explained Chagall, "already had a technical perfection toward which the present generation is striving, now playing tricks of sleight of hand, now falling into stylization. I compare this formal baggage to the Pope of Rome sumptuously vested beside Christ naked, or to the lavishly decorated church beside prayer in the open fields."

**Empty Space.** Chagall has painted with the eyes (but not the hand) of a child ever since. Although his visions were primitive-on-purpose, they came out far from stark. His colors were as successfully sumptuous as the most lavish ecclesiastical or imperial vestments, and for decoration he assembled a set of props (candles, roosters, violins), to "fill up the empty space in my canvas as the structure of my picture requires . . . and according to my humor."

Chagall's peculiarly repetitive "humor" had its roots in Vitebsk, Russia. Under the Czars, no Jew could forget the burden of dread which Christian Europe forced on

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## THE NEW REPUBLIC

## Poet and Peasant

THE RECOLLECTIONS that Marc Chagall (1887-) paints of life in his home town, Vitebsk, Russia, and of his married life later in Paris, which show people moved by love or thinking about an unhappy past or present, are statements that stay very close to the surface, hardly ever indicating the artist's deepest feeling. Instead, the paintings achieve a thin, high-pitched, feverish vitality from harried, awkward form and exceedingly dramatic color that is very odd in hue, thin and pure. The color creates so much bizarre excitement that the rabbis, the swooning lovers, the flying peasants and precocious animals in his paintings take part in a life that is inspired and poetic, but somewhat strained and unreal. The color is curiously hollow, without any density or depth, and the compositions are flattened and made unconvincing by a simple-minded cubism. The painting has a floating quality—as though it were a thin, artificial surface without any backing or foundation.

Chagall's art, now on exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art, is too illustrative and weak in expression to be an important force in modern painting. (He does contribute something in color, even though it is unfulfilled color. I can't take his poetic representation seriously because it is predominantly a literary matter.) Actually his painting is very provincial in its spirit and as close to calendar art as it is to great painting. Except in some of the early cubist works, he stops at about the same place that an illustrator stops—after the subject matter has been listed, the space filled, the color harmonized and made dramatic and the subject matter recognizable. There is never the thorough composing of lines, forms and colors that makes a painting appear a solid affair of color and as though it had been soaked in a particular personal feeling. The sensation given off by a Chagall is like perfume and the structure is thin and papery. His paintings are too costumy and literary to be great.

Chagall's painting has always been split between the desire to illustrate and the desire to create deeply expressive (difficult, rebellious, abstract) works. The split has made his canvases—choked as they are with acrobats, emotionalists and husky, satisfied Russians—weak, limp and creaky. His best paintings, done between 1908 and the early twenties, are half-cubist, half-realistic, strongly composed, have bright, jazzy color and personal drawing. Since the twenties his work has had few of these features, and the chi-chi tendency, always apparent, has increased.

Chagall plays the magician's role in his pictures, transforming an everyday world into a carnival and a wonderland. The people never stand upright on the ground; instead they lie flat on it or hang suspended over it, and do a lot of house-top sitting and flying about in the air with or without their heads. His animals act like human beings and are treated that way by the human beings. Not many people will find the imagery very fantastic or subtle. It always follows a logical course. The scenes take place in the sky because they are memories and fantasies, lovers lie in flower arrangements or sprout the flowers out of their own heads, the pregnant woman points to an image of her coming child standing upright in her belly. Actually the one strange thing about this world is that there is so much of it

on each painting. The effect isn't so much one of seeing an unreal world as being forced to take in too much real world in one gulp.

It is the homely, anchored-in-soil look of the early paintings that makes them so unusual and worthwhile. Chagall consciously painted them to have something new and original in every spot and he succeeded: they are completely disparate and it is impossible to view any one of them as a whole. There is absolutely no movement from section to section and each area has to be taken alone, almost as an independent painting. No other work of that period gives more of a sense of against-the-grain painting and of an artist who was not sure at any point where he was going and was worried at every point that he had gone in the wrong direction. His lines always seem to be thrusts against the obvious, conventional direction, and the rhythm of his drawing—if you can call it that—is the choppiest affair of opposing movement. These first compositions, which appear as obvious as children's paintings, give the most uncompromising effect of personal creation by his constant, awkward-seeming struggle against the cliché maneuver.

MANNY FARBER

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 1946.

## EXHIBITION OFFERS WORK BY O'KEEFFE

Modern Art Museum Presents  
a Chronological Showing of  
Woman Artist's Paintings

By EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL

Georgia O'Keeffe's show opened with a preview last evening at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West Fifty-third Street. Installed in galleries on the third floor, this survey of a distinguished American artist's work to date will remain on view until late next August.

The Museum of Modern Art is performing an especially valuable service in presenting this series of comprehensive round-ups devoted to the achievement of individual painters and sculptors—a series that has been in progress for several years. The Chagall exhibition is still current, to continue through June 23. Both it and the just-opened O'Keeffe retrospective were staged by James Johnson Sweeney.

The arrangement is perfect. The paintings are widely spaced on white walls, thus appearing much as they would appear if shown in the familiar setting provided by Alfred Stieglitz' "An American Place." The spacing is admirable. It would be particularly calamitous to hang pictures by Georgia O'Keeffe densely, crowding them into insufficient quarters. On the other hand, the exhibition just possibly errs on the side of skimpieness. We so often complain because exhibitions are too large. In this case I think no one would mind having the circuit augmented to the extent of a few additional galleries. Yet, of course, it is far better to leave with a hankering for more than with a sense of over-stuffed satiety.

### Introduced Here in 1916

Georgia O'Keeffe was introduced to the American public in 1916, when Stieglitz exhibited ten of her drawings in the famous little "291." A few years later, then established in what was called "The Room," in the old Anderson Galleries, Stieglitz gave O'Keeffe a one-man show consisting of a hundred items (the present museum show contains fewer than sixty). In 1924 the photographer-maestro and the artist were married. And since then there has been an O'Keeffe show every season.

In his text for the catalogue-monograph that will soon accompany the exhibition, Mr. Sweeney remarks that he believes "an expression of intense emotion, stark but always constrained," to be the essence of this artist's work. "And," he adds, "the way she came to this was by the severest critical self-stripping."

### Her Own Severest Critic

O'Keeffe herself, back in 1923, dramatized the process thus: "One day I locked myself up in my room and held a private exhibition of everything I had painted. I noticed which paintings had been influenced by this painted, which by that one. Then I determined which of the finished pieces represented me alone. From that moment forward I knew exactly what kind of work I wanted to do."

The museum show is arranged chronologically, the earliest work dated 1915 and the latest 1945. There are occasional skips in the sequence—lacunae of two or three years, in one instance as many as five—due, one supposes, to decisions regarding selection. But the development appears steady. There is never a sharp break with the past, a beginning anew on an entirely altered basis. The basis remains consistently abstract, even though natural forms, however adapted, constitute the nucleus in nearly every canvas. Not once do you come upon a direct, uncreatively literal transcription from nature.

All of the principal phases of this development are illustrated, some more plentifully than others. I am relieved to find that not too much stress is laid on the prolific magnified-flower motif, and that the often fascinating, imaginatively phrased interpretations of New Mexican experiences have received generous selective attention.

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National Sculpture  
Society

*Program of Ceremonies*

For May 9th, 1945, 8:00 p.m.

at the

Auditorium of the

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

OF ART

NEW YORK

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*Reception Committee*

☆

JOHN GREGORY  
*Master of Ceremonies*

HERMAN A. MACNEIL  
*Introduction and Presentation of Award*

☆ ☆ ☆

HON. EDGAR J. NATHAN, JR.  
*Borough President — Manhattan*

HON. JOSEPH A. PALMA  
*Borough President — Richmond*

HON. JOHN CASHMORE  
*Borough President — Brooklyn*

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American Institute of Architects*

☆ ☆ ☆

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ROBERT ATKEN  
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ADOLPH ALEXANDER WEINMAN  
*Former President — National Sculpture Society*

*Presentation*

of the

**National Sculpture Society's  
Medal of Honor and Citation**

for

**Civic Achievement**

to

**HON. ROBERT MOSES**

*Commissioner of Parks, City of New York*

Auditorium

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

FIFTH AVENUE AND 82ND STREET

NEW YORK

Wednesday, May 9th, 1945 - 8 p. m.

MR. MOSES' ADDRESS

WILL BE FOLLOWED BY AN ILLUSTRATED LECTURE

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NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, SUNDAY, MAY 19, 1946

## Paintings by O'Keeffe in Large Review at the Modern Museum

By Carlyle Burrows

THE most impressive exhibition of the work of Georgia O'Keeffe, the distinguished American artist, which it has been our privilege to see opened last week at the Museum of Modern Art, consisting of fifty-odd paintings from various stages of her career and several drawings and watercolors. On display in four galleries on the third floor (next to the brilliant continuing Oceania display), it will continue through Aug. 25, one of the main summer exhibition features on the museum's calendar.

So steadily have Georgia O'Keeffe's exhibitions unfolded before New Yorkers on a year-to-year basis the show would seem perhaps superfluous to many were it not for the fact that no O'Keeffe display precisely so extensive has been held here. In 1923 Alfred Stieglitz, who began sponsoring her work as early as 1916, gave here a large show at the Anderson Galleries, and in 1934, a comparably arranged but relatively small group of paintings were shown at the gallery, An American Place. Since even the latter event much more has been placed to the artist's credit than could then be exhibited, permitting a still broader range of exhibits.

Miss O'Keeffe is widely known, of course, as a painter in the abstract, one of the leading women exponents of this form of painting. How, early in her career, she took this direction is shown in her first drawings and paintings. The exhibition, which follows a chronological plan, opens with two of the charcoals exhibited in her first display, and with paintings dating from the early 1920s, such as the "Lake George With Crows." Although little evidence is there shown of her reaching the full decorative form which she achieved in her early flower paintings, the clear drawing and precise feeling of her work is evident.

One of the first decisive achievements indicated is the painting "Birch and Pine Tree," which is dated 1925, and in a very interest-

ing way shows the exceptional control O'Keeffe exercised in painting from nature while reducing her concept of the subject to a simple and pleasing harmony of form and colors. "Black Iris," on the contrary, illustrates progress well along in the abstract, and there are several pieces, besides, which reflect a popular aspect of her work in the forms of enlarged flower motifs. In arranging the display, James Johnson Sweeney, the museum's director of painting, has met the problem of obviating too much emphasis on these items and has kept the representation down to the minimum.

There is, appropriately, a good showing of the desert subjects, including paintings of landscape, still life and other themes of New Mexico which occur mid-career in the work of the artist. Beginning with a painting of the famed

"Ranchos Church," O'Keeffe was soon to find in motifs such as "Cows Skulls and Calico Roses," "Jimson Weed," and especially in the landscape "White Place in Shadow" objectives which enabled her to express her self more personally than by drawing upon the most familiar landscape forms of the region usually popularized by other artists. These compositions ring with familiarity, having in several instances been displayed in exhibitions not long since held by the artist. But in the present collection their value is manifest by their variety of pattern, their subtle form and rhythm and restrained but still emotive color.

Miss O'Keeffe's expression throughout is to a large extent harmonious and unbroken by sharp stylistic variations—denoting marked unity of interest and purpose. Schooled in the idea of the value and dignity of craftsmanship, she is not afraid to practice a skilled art. These often exquisite, generally sensitive pictures have been hung with excellent discretion, well spaced on white backgrounds, much as they have on occasions been shown at Mr. Stieglitz's An American Place. Moreover, and adding to the authority of the museum's retrospective, an illustrated monograph by Mr. Sweeney is shortly to be published for the exhibition.

### Artists and Architects

In an imposing exhibition at the Museum Center at Broadway and 155th Street individual displays of the work of members and recipients of grants of the American Academy and National Institute of Arts and Letters consist of paintings, sculpture, prints and architecture. This event, which occurs annually, is a significant part of the cultural activities of the joint sponsoring groups, recognizing distinguished achievement.

Sculptors honored on this occasion include Lee Lawrie, Concetta Scarvaglione, Donald De Lue, Harry Rosin and Richmond Barthé. With Mr. Lawrie's centrally placed exhibits (large photographs being

used in lieu of the monumental figures in stylized classical forms) there are figures in bronze, stone and other media, amply representing the different facets of other exhibitors' achievements. Painters signaled, and notably well represented in several instances, are Reginald Marsh, Franklin Watkins, Louis Guglielmi, Robert Gwathmey, Jack Levine and Zoltan Sepeshy.

While both painting and sculpture hold a major share of prominence in the Academy's exhibition, also exhibited in comprehensive groups are architectural works, showing the achievements (through the means of excellent photographs) by Aymar Embury 2d and David Adler, both new electees of the institute, and drawings by Rosella Hartman and Denys Wortman, and etchings by Armin Landeck.

The White Place in Shadow



From the painting by Georgia O'Keeffe, at the Museum of Modern Art

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, MAY 19, 1946.

## O'KEEFFE: 30 YEARS

### Museum of Modern Art Presents a Full View of Her Work—Other Shows

By EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL

THE evolution of Georgia O'Keeffe's art is clearly and economically demonstrated at the Museum of Modern Art, where her one-man show, arranged under the direction of James Johnson Sweeney, opened last week. This outstanding event in the artist's career will remain current through Aug. 25.

I have just spoken of the O'Keeffe retrospective as "economical," and in a preliminary notice (Wednesday morning) it was suggested that appreciative spectators might very willingly look at more paintings than have been assembled. As another critic remarked to me in passing, the end seems reached with some abruptness. However, one is likely to decide, walking back and forth through the rooms, again and again, that all of the points essential to a just summing up are made. And that is the important thing in a survey such as this.

The task of selection was most intelligently performed. A distinguished artist here emerges at full stature, and one is able to estimate, as well as a contemporary can, the quality of her achievement.

#### Consistent Development

It seems to me, as it seemed as far back as 1928, that Georgia O'Keeffe is in the ultimate sense a mystic. Her work, so much of it at any rate, is charged with a spirit of universality, even when expression appears tethered to what is immediate and finite. She paints a flower, a leaf, a shell, a desiccated skull of an animal, portraying these objects as microcosms; and it will be always the macrocosm—the enveloping sum of elements peculiar to life and death—that presses in, giving

the concept its final radiance. All this need not, should not, be made to sound too esoteric. It is really simple enough, albeit not too frequently encountered in art: Blake's grain of sand conceived as a world, an hour as eternity. And while development of this motivating idea has been consistent, the artist seems at the start to have sensed what may be termed the quintessential.

Indeed, O'Keeffe's basic thesis, later amplified, is first enunciated, in 1915, as a complete or absolute abstraction: the extraordinary water-color, "Blue Lines." The continuity of her endeavor becomes manifest if you take just one of those lines and follow its course through the adventures of the years.

You find it recurring, though of course adapted or cunningly disguised, in canvas after canvas: in, for instance, the "Corn, Dark," of 1922; the "Gray Line With Black, Blue and Yellow" (another full abstraction) of the following year; in the "Dark Abstraction" of 1924, where it adumbrates many a crisp edge of house or rock crevice to come; in the "Open Clam Shell" and "Closed Clam Shell" of 1926. It reappears in the "Line and Curve" and "Black Abstraction" of the next year, tracing also an intricate convolution in the "White Rose" abstraction.

The line runs vividly down the central passage of the 1928 "Brown and Tan Leaves"; resumes almost its initial guise in the "Jack in the Pulpit" of 1930; bifurcates the tree, "Cow's Skull With Red" and the superlatively fine "Cow's Skull With Calico Roses," of about the same period. This pliant sovereign line cuts like forked lightning across the face of the mountain

cleft in "Black Place No. I," painted as recently as 1944.

This is one aspect of the mystical rhythm that animates O'Keeffe's art. And there are many more.

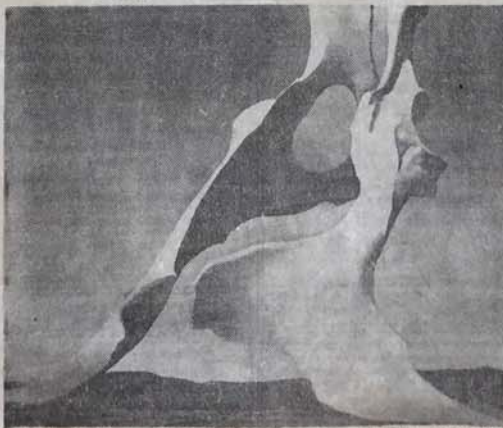
#### Craft and Style

Georgia O'Keeffe tells us that long ago she determined to offer as finished work only what she felt represented "her alone." The fruit of this decision appears abundantly, look where you will in the retrospective at the museum. The determining imprint of a particular, an always individual style is everywhere about the walls. The painting is autobiographic as thoroughly as it is mystical. Each picture might be called a portrait of the artist herself.

Of course in order to achieve style such as this, one must possess craftsmanship of a very high order—even though we know that, in art, craft can never stand as an end in itself. Another artist, Tom Loftin Johnson, asks me in a letter at hand: "Where does style begin and technique end?" The answer is that the two elements are inextricably interwoven, yet separate, too. Without the rightness of technique there can be no supreme rightness of style, though "rightness" should be defined only with reference to the individual artist. When style is fully expressive, then you may be sure that there is craftsmanship equal to all the demands implied.

No better illustration need be sought than the signal beauty of O'Keeffe's painting, whether revealed monumentally or in pictures minute in scale, such as the "Shell and Old Shingle" and "Seaweed." O'Keeffe does not always attain the summit of her quest. When she does, let the welkin ring!

#### Georgia O'Keeffe in Retrospect



"Pelvis With the Distance," lent by Mr. and Mrs. James W. Fesler for the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art.

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## The Sun

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 1946.  
NEW YORK.

### O'Keeffe at the Museum

An Exhibition That Confirms the Opinion  
Long Held by the Public.

The name Georgia O'Keeffe goes up in the lights. Stardom! It is placarded on high, along with Chagall's at the Modern Museum and may be read from as far away as Fifth avenue. Stardom at last! It has been a long time coming. Or has it? In the case of a lady perhaps one should not be too insistent on dates, yet, alas, some of them must be mentioned.

But the road to fame could have been rougher. It was softened for Miss O'Keeffe by a romantic and lucky marriage—Alfred Stieglitz the photographer. There came to notice almost at once something about some photographs showing every conceivable aspect of O'Keeffe that was a new effort in photography and something new in the way of introducing a budding artist. It made a stir. Mona Lisa got but one portrait of herself worth talking about. O'Keeffe got a hundred. It put her at once on the map. Everybody knew the name. She became what is known as a newspaper personality. The New Yorker consecrated one of its "Profiles" to her.

That was a long time ago. Practically anybody can participate in a sensation and be known for a day, but not everybody can keep it up. Miss O'Keeffe can and has. Consulting the records supplied by the museum to the press, it appears she has had twenty-nine shows, not missing a year since 1923, and sometimes showing twice in a year. As a mere success story this, of course, far outdistances anything experienced by Michelangelo or William Blake.

The suavity, serenity and extreme finish of Miss O'Keeffe's work may be contributed to the comparative ease of her career. It is not in the least likely that she could have been suppressed by hardship, but probably if there had been frustrations, disappointments, a bit of starvation and no recognition whatever, some of the bitterness that is now so noticeably absent might

have crept into her production. But its essential qualities of decoration, clarity of ideas and mysticism would have flourished just the same.

In early youth the artist studied with Prof. Dow of Boston, getting from him the bias toward decoration that has stuck to her ever since. She was born in Wisconsin, but early in her impressionable years lived for a time in Texas, where she decided that the Southwest was practically heaven. Recently she has been painting in New Mexico which is just as heavenly as Texas. She has never been afraid of the lonely mountain ranges; and clear skies and immense distances and vastness in general have fed her fancy and provided her with the material for her pictures.

There you have the genesis of this artist; design, clear color, and immense, spooky perspectives that lend themselves to mysticism but not to fear. There is nothing to frighten the ladies who are Miss O'Keeffe's main adherents in the work. In New York, where Miss O'Keeffe spends the winter, she paints the skyscrapers as though their largeness was their main attraction—as it probably is. She reduces the river vistas and the canyons between the big buildings to the utmost simplicity and paints them with the same calmness she bestows upon a petunia. Her exhibition has been beautifully installed by James Johnson Sweeney. It is the best she has ever had and places her securely in the top position among women artists. However, that is not news. The public has thought so for some time. H. McB.

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NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, SATURDAY, MAY 18, 1935



# THIS WEEK IN ART

## Georgia O'Keeffe's Exhibit

So often a comprehensive, retrospective solo show of even a familiar artist's work underlines unfamiliar facets of his talent, or throws new light on his whole expression, that I had hoped somehow this would be true of Georgia O'Keeffe's new exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Else why, at this late date, should the Modern present it?

I was wrong. How could it have been otherwise when every year now for 20 years New York has seen at least one show of recent work by this most celebrated of woman painters in America? For old-timers her work was a familiar story even before the series of annuals began. O'Keeffe made her debut in 1916 at Alfred Stieglitz's famous little "291" Gallery, the cradle of modern art in this country. By 1923 a show of 100 of her oils was held at the old Anderson Galleries.

### A Curious Paradox.

Despite its familiarity, O'Keeffe's work has offered a curious paradox over the years. At "291" and at Stieglitz's subsequent establishments, "The Intimate Gallery" and the current "An American

Place," she had always been one of a small group whose art was so experimental and cerebral as to appeal only to the avant-garde. John Marin, today hailed by museum men, collectors, students, critics, as the most important waters colorist in the country, is still far from really widespread popular understanding. Maurer, Dove, Carles, others of what Stieglitz called his "laboratory" group haven't won general acceptance even in the art world.

But O'Keeffe has been the darling of the public for years. Reproductions of her paintings long have been best-sellers in department stores and framing shops. It is ironical to read her early letters, for instance the one she sent to a friend in 1915 apropos some recent drawings. "I hate to show them. . . I am afraid people won't understand—and I hope they won't—and am afraid they will."

Perhaps if she had continued her work in the manner of 1915 they wouldn't have. Three of the efforts of that year have been included in the museum show. They're the sparsest kind of abstraction—so slight as to be little more than a line or two and a spot of color—although they are surprisingly expressive.

But later she used nature as her springboard—never springing so far that the literal-minded couldn't follow her. Flowers, landscapes, fruit, shells—however she simplified, magnified and stylized her forms they retained always their natural character.

She did something more. She used dramatic and attractive colors. Her craftsmanship was incredibly neat, with never a line losing its crispness nor a surface remaining anything but smooth. The results were extremely decorative.

In addition her pictures had an air of mystery to them, and many observers felt they had just the subtlest suggestion of the erotic. It was a combination cut to measure for popular approval.

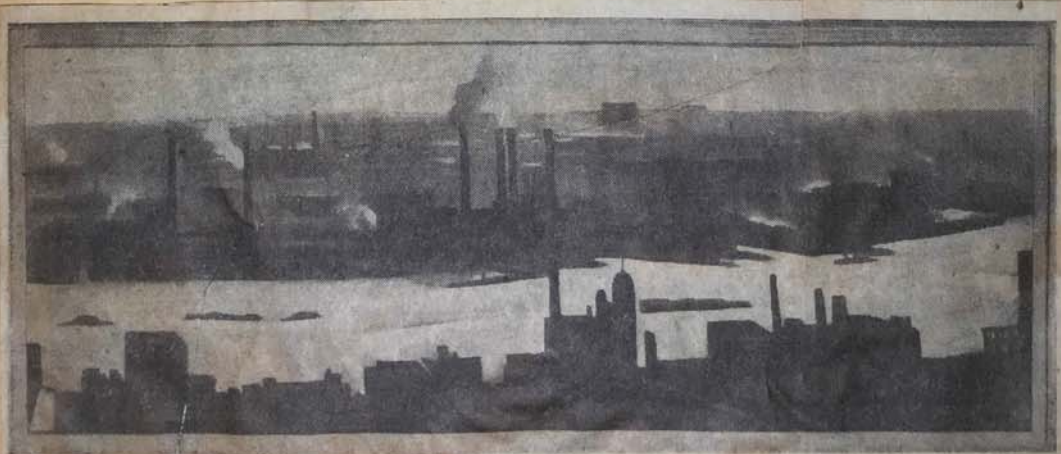
up her shortcomings, it highlights at the same time the virtues which have endeared much of her work to even the most demanding connoisseurs. These are exemplified in the exquisite relationships between the deep reticent colors of "Dark Mesa and Pink Sky"; the movement and the rhythm of design in "Black Place No. 1"; the clean, uncompromising austerity of "White Canadian Barn"; the poetry and mystery of the dark forms in "City Nights."

The show itself, incidentally, displays in its hanging the same character as some of the paintings. It's over-magnified, with too much area given to too little.

### Still Retains Hold.

Yet O'Keeffe, for all her appeal to the many, never has lost her hold on the few. More sophisticated art lovers may regret the loss of spontaneity in her work in recent years, the stretching of some of her compositions—her flowers, particularly—to the point of thinness, the fact that many of them seem productions from formula (as, for instance, the 1932 "Jimson Weed" in the show, no more substantial than a decorative screen).

If the present exhibition points



"East River from the Shelton Hotel," painted by Georgia O'Keeffe and shown in the new retrospective exhibition of her work at the Museum of Modern Art.

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# TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

May 27, 1946

## ART

### Austere Stripper

"Singing," says Artist Georgia O'Keeffe, "has always seemed to me the most perfect means of expression. Since I cannot sing, I paint." Last week 57 examples of her kind of song went on view in Manhattan's Museum of Modern Art. Each one had the contrived spontaneity of music, and in each the melody of line and color meant more than the bones, blossoms, skyscrapers, barns, crosses and canyon walls she used for lyrics.

Whatever else can be said about her, no one paints a pelvis or a skull more cleanly or searchingly than O'Keeffe. Her brush, like a surgical knife, pares the bony involutions to paper thinness, sculpturing them in icy white against the ice-blue sky of New Mexico—where she spends half of each year.

To flower painting she brings a technique familiar in photography but seldom attempted on canvas: the dramatic closeup. Like a bee, she explores the innermost recesses of hollyhocks, irises and morning-glories, and manages to extract an almost cloying degree of honey-sweet, cream-smooth satisfaction from them.

**Canyons, in City and Country.** But O'Keeffe's chief claim to fame lies in the brilliant hardness of her most ambitious work. Her cityscapes look as unyielding as asphalt, and sharp as broken glass; her barns are as antiseptic as hospitals; her crosses as forbidding as the real thing.

O'Keeffe's art, says Museum director of painting and sculpture James Johnson Sweeney, in a forthcoming Museum book on O'Keeffe, is "stark but always constrained. . . . And the way she came to this was by the severest self-stripping." O'Keeffe, a thin, austere-looking woman, has been stripping herself for a long time. Born 58 years ago in the small town of Sun Prairie, Wis., she decided to paint as she pleased, because "it seemed to be the only thing that I could do that did not concern anyone but myself. . . ."

After studying in Manhattan, doing commercial art in Chicago, and teaching in Texas, she locked herself into a room and "held a private exhibition of everything I had painted. I noticed which paintings had been influenced by this painter, which by that one. Then I determined which . . . represented me alone. From that moment forward I knew exactly what kind of work I wanted to do."

In 1916 a friend showed O'Keeffe's drawings (without her permission) to Alfred Stieglitz, pioneer photographer and missionary of modern art. Said he: "Finally—a woman on paper." When he put her work on exhibition, O'Keeffe stormed into Stieglitz' gallery to protest, afraid that gallerygoers would find the drawings incomprehensible. Stieglitz asked gently whether she herself knew what her drawings meant. Huffed O'Keeffe: "Do you think I'm an idiot?" Eight years later they were married.

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THE NEW YORKER

MAY 25, 1946

## THE ART GALLERIES

*Mostly Women*



**I**N 1915, Georgia O'Keeffe, now the subject of a concise and quite impressive retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, was teaching art at a small South Carolina college and, being more than half convinced that that was all she was going to get out of life, wasn't any too happy about it. A year later, when she was twenty-nine, she was brought, by one of those happy accidents, into contact with the very world of metropolitan galleries and museums that she had thought was closed to her. A friend to whom she had sent some drawings showed them to Alfred Stieglitz, then proprietor of the thoroughly *avant-garde* "291" Gallery. Stieglitz liked them, showed them, and O'Keeffe's career was under way. It is interesting to speculate on what might have happened if this accidental contact hadn't been made. My guess is that she would have gone on anyway. O'Keeffe wasn't naïve, either as a person or as a painter. The legend that she was self-taught is not true. She studied briefly at both the Chicago Art Institute and the Art Students League in New York. She knew a good deal about the Armory Show and she knew quite well what she wanted to do. Yet Stieglitz was probably the only dealer in New York at the time who could have had any appreciation of the abstract approach she was working on (the three pieces dated 1915 in the current showing are extremely "modern" in feeling), and the discouragement she almost certainly would have received from an old-line dealer might have weakened her confidence considerably. But she met Stieglitz, and whatever deflections or delays might otherwise have occurred in her development were avoided. She is now, of course, the most important living woman painter in America, and possibly in the world.

The new exhibition treats her career with the understanding that it deserves, but as so often happens with Modern Museum retrospectives, the affair is an encomium rather than a real investigation. Instead of trying to show her truly, the attempt is to show her favorably, and as a result there are a

### THE NEW YORKER

cards a little in her favor. O'Keeffe has been coasting a good deal these past few years—as, considering her production, she has a right to do—but the show ignores the occasional dull spots and repetitions that have resulted. It focusses on the highlights, and in "Blue and Red Hills," "Pelvis with the Distance," "Pelvis Series, No. 3," and "Black Place, No. 1," all dated from 1943 to 1945, it shows us paintings of really great stature.

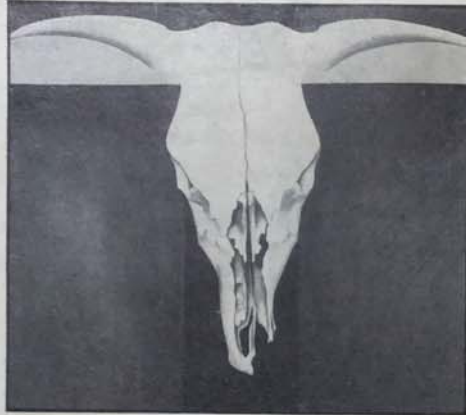
—ROBERT M. COATES

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## GEORGIA O'KEEFFE'S AMERICA



SHELTON WITH SUNSPOTS



COW'S SKULL WITH RED



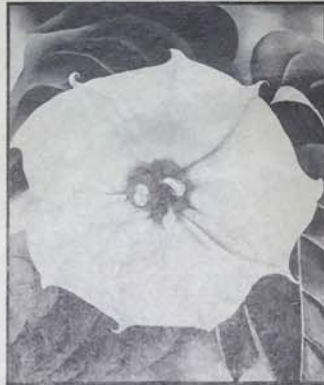
GRAY LINE



EAST RIVER FROM THE SHELTON



BLACK CROSS

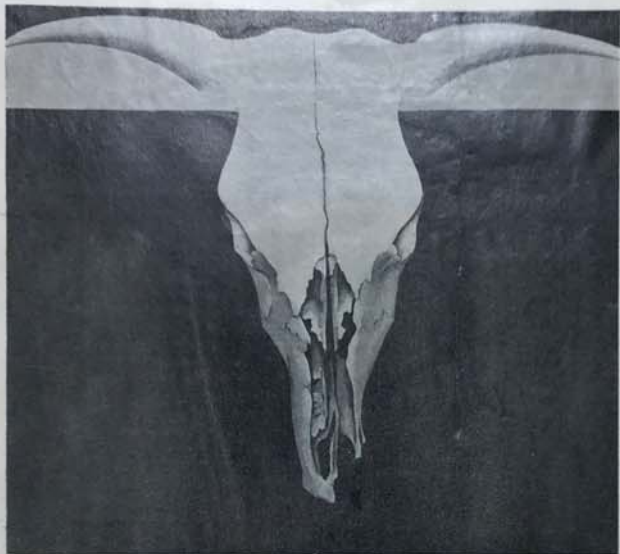


JIMSON WEED



The Museum of Modern Art  
WHITE PLACE IN SHADOW

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Cow's Skull With Red: GEORGIA O'KEEFFE (1930-34)

## The Modern Honors First Woman—O'Keeffe

PURITAN, erotic, mystic and symmetrical is the "woman" Georgia O'Keeffe has put on paper and canvas for the past three decades as one of the world's famous woman artists—yet only now elected for full showing on the walls of the Museum of Modern Art.

This exhibition of 57 works covers a fairly consecutive development—and some retrogression—in distinctly paradoxical overtones of Midwestern puritanism and exotic "modern," chronologically spanning a period from 1916 into 1945. There are hiatus apparent in the stream of canvases, most noticeable in the early New Mexico period in the thirties. In several instances the return to a former subject, or one with a similar motif after a lapse of time, is almost piquant.

A native of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, Miss O'Keeffe's beginnings in art came early as a childhood interest in painting flowers and plaster cast impressions of leaves. At the Sacred Heart Academy in Madison, a sister scolded her for "drawing too small," and then and there, no doubt, laid the psychological foundation for those gigantic close-ups through which she became known later to the masses as well as the classes.

The artist's own words go far in explaining the originality and contradictory character of the work. In 1923 she said: "I grew up pretty much as everybody else grows up and one day seven years ago I found myself saying to myself—I can't live where I want to—I can't go where I want to—I can't do what I want to. School and things that painters have taught me keep me from painting as I want to. I decided I was a very stupid fool not at least to paint as I wanted to and say what I wanted to when I painted as that seemed to be the only thing that I could do that did not concern anyone but myself—that

was nobody's business but my own."

She held a one-man show, for herself alone, weeded out everything in which she could find "influences," and started out on the path indicated by what was left. This path was a short one to glory. She sent some drawings that "represented her alone" to a friend in New York who took them to O'Keeffe's idol-worshipped-from-afar, Alfred Stieglitz. He exclaimed "Finally a woman on paper," promptly became her mentor, and, a few years later, also her husband. He has given her a show almost every year since.

There are many illuminating excerpts from her letters to her friend Anita Pollitzer (soon to be incorporated in a book by James Johnson Sweeney): "Pa (Arthur) Dow is a sweet old man. He is so nice he puts my teeth on edge." . . . "Do you like my 'music'? I didn't make it to music—it's just my own tune —It is something I wanted very much to say to someone." . . . "Anita—I feel bothered about the stuff I sent Dorothy. I wish I hadn't sent it—I have a curious sort of feeling about some of my things —I hate to show them—I am perfectly inconsistent about it—I am afraid people won't understand—and I hope they won't—and I hope they won't—and am afraid they will." And a month later: "Of course marks on paper are free—free speech—press—pictures all go together I suppose—and it is so nice I said something to you and Stieglitz. I wonder what I said—I wonder if any of you got what I tried to say."

The exhibition at the Modern reviews high spots in early work that are good to see—a studio interior, a moody Lake George subject, angle-shots of thrusting skyscrapers, and a near-representational view across East River that is filled with minor-keyed poetry. It also gives proper weight and representation to all the seeming contradictions (and

combinations thereof) of an oeuvre that is, at the same time, distinctly homogeneous. Side by side are two white clam shells. *Closed Clam Shell* is virginal in its purity; *Open Clam Shell* stands open to more than just a shadow of eroticism.

Some of the huge flowers and leaves are sheer design and decoration, others primevally libidinous. The magnificently simple *White Canadian Barn* is stark in its chastity of idea and execution; *Black Cross, New Mexico* stands calamitous before a background of breast-like hills. *Cow's Skull* and *Calico Roses*, while superb in craftsmanship and design, seems pale in more ways than palette when compared to the stronger character and color of *Cow's Skull with Red*, completed in 1934.

O'Keeffe's more recent work—especially of the last five years—is generally disappointing. Precision of design is lost in some canvases and fuzziness of idea (or its communication) shows up in others. But again, contradiction is the only constant. *Pelvis Series, No. 3* succeeds impressively in being more than decoration, even at its best. And the mystical *White Place in Shadow*, enveloped in a vast and awe-inspiring silence, is to me the painting in the show.—JO GIBBS.

The Art Digest

June 1, 1946

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smooth and soft. Though she uses velvet black and an occasional flash of red, the colors are mostly shades of white and gray and pastels, especially blue.

**The New O'Keeffe:** Georgia O'Keeffe, a farmer's daughter, was teaching art at Columbia College, South Carolina, in 1915 when she gave herself, one day, a private art show. "I could go all around the room and see I'd painted the best I could like everyone I'd worked with," she recalls. "I decided I was a very stupid fool not at least to paint as I wanted to . . . I'd never thought of doing it because I'd never seen anything like it."

So "Patsy" O'Keeffe worked as she wanted to and the next year sent some of her new-type drawings to her New York friend, the suffragette Anita Pollitzer. Earlier she had written: "Anita—do you know—I believe I would rather have Stieglitz like something—anything I had done—than anyone else I know of." Alfred Stieglitz, the photographer, was impresario of "291," a center of ferment in all the arts and the gallery which first showed Picasso, Matisse, and the other French moderns in this country. Miss Pollitzer took the drawings to Stieglitz, and he made his now famous remark: "At last, a woman on paper."

Stieglitz exhibited the drawings and then, in his words, "O'Keeffe came along and we found we were co-workers. We believed in the same things. And finally we were together." They were married in 1924. Every year since, Georgia O'Keeffe has exhibited at her husband's gallery, now called An American Place, where the prices are unusually high though the "dealer" takes no commission. Stieglitz, who has a small income, claims he has never made a cent from art. Of his wife's work he has said: "O'Keeffe gives something of a woman feeling. And a woman isn't a man."

While her early paintings were more lyrical and masterful, O'Keeffe's thin-framed, unsigned canvases have changed little through the years. Since 1929 she has spent May to November in New Mexico, which has provided her subject matter: the red hills which rise outside the back door of her eight-room adobe house near Abiquiu; the jimson weed which is allowed to grow in her patio but is neatly surrounded with bits of shiny red rock; the bleached bones which she picks up in the desert. Sometimes she combines the desert and the bones as in "Deer's Horns Near Cameron" and "Pellvis With the Distance." She likes to quote the Indian who, after seeing her collection of bones, remarked: "Everything is so alive in your house."

Winters Miss O'Keeffe returns to her New York apartment and to Stieglitz, now an ailing seer of 82 who sticks by An American Place except for two or three months at Lake George. To visitors, he still says of his wife's paintings: "Just incredible." With equally frank admiration she asks: "Did you ever see anything like that before?"

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MAY 27, 1946 **Newsweek** VOL. XXVII NO. 21  
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 THE MAGAZINE OF NEWS SIGNIFICANCE

**O'Keeffe's Woman Feeling**

Rare in the annals of art is an outstanding woman painter—so rare, in fact, that for a quarter of a century Georgia O'Keeffe has held undisputed sway as America's No. 1 woman artist. Many honors have come her way. William and Mary College at Williamsburg, Va., where she was raised, made her a Doctor of Fine Arts in 1939. Born at Sun Prairie, Wis., she was made a Doctor of Letters by the University of Wisconsin in 1942. The Art Institute of Chicago, where she studied for a year, put on her first retrospective exhibition in 1943. Last week she was honored by her present home town. In New York, the Museum of Modern Art opened a retrospective O'Keeffe show, organized by its painting chief, James Johnson Sweeney.

At 58, Miss O'Keeffe belongs to the older generation of modern artists. Like the photographer Edward Weston she takes simple objects and blows them up into even handsomer simplifications. She is best known for her enlargements of flowers—giant irises, petunias, and morning-glories—and for her desert skulls and bones. The paintings are as stark as the artist herself, with her long black skirts and her black hair drawn straight back from her pioneer-woman features. They are as clear and luminous as the air of New Mexico, where a great many of them were painted. Their edges are clean-cut but their lines are sinuous. Their texture is



Museum of Modern Art Photos

Georgia O'Keeffe and . . . her "Pelvis With the Distance"

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# THE *Nation*

AMERICA'S LEADING LIBERAL WEEKLY SINCE 1865

VOLUME 162

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NUMBER 22

## Drama

JOSEPH  
WOOD  
KRUTCH

CHEKOV'S "Uncle Vanya" is the second item of its repertory to be offered at the Century Theater by the Old Vic company. The play had not been seen here since Lillian Gish appeared in it a good many years ago, and the newspaper reviews of the present performance made it evident that most of the reviewers had at best no more than a polite interest in the author or his works. Perhaps the common opinion that "Uncle Vanya" is not so good as "The Three Sisters" or "The Cherry Orchard" is correct, but the three are so like one another, as well as so unlike anything else, that differences between them are not of the very first importance, and the thing which seems to me most worth saying upon this occasion is that the performance had exactly the merit which I thought the performance of "Henry IV" did not have: it made the play seem richer, more meaningful, and more interesting than I had thought it was.

Few modern playwrights have been talked or written about more than Chekov, and about no other have the things to be said become quite so stereotyped. Some of them, like the statement that nothing happens, are not really true. For instance, "The Sea Gull" ends with a suicide—which is certainly a happening—and in this respect it is like "Othello," the difference lying not in what happens or does not happen but in something which is suggested by the fact that one cannot possibly imagine Shakespeare's so denying himself the occasion for a big scene as to end the play in Chekov's manner by having one character whisper to another, "Don't say anything about it now, but the fact is that Othello has stabbed himself." In other words, the most striking characteristic of Chekov's method is the playing down instead of the playing up of what does happen. Because his characters are convinced that their lives are uneventful, their delineator tends to allow obvious action only brief moments on his stage, and to write at length the scenes where nothing seems to be happening, in order that he may be able to tell his story while at the same time he so communicates to his audience the romantic despair of his dramatis personae, whom nothing depresses more than their conviction that they have no story and that, therefore, life has obvi-

ously passed them by. In "Uncle Vanya" an absentee landlord returns with his beautiful young wife to an estate which has been self-sacrificingly managed for him by Uncle Vanya. The latter falls hopelessly in love with the young wife, the local doctor almost seduces her, and when Uncle Vanya discovers not only that fact but also that the owner of the estate is prepared to sell the house from over their heads, he tries to murder him. That may not be a very complicated plot, but many a play has contained no more without being described as one in which "nothing happens."

Some of the other things inevitably said about Chekov are true enough but fail to account for the strong fascination which he exerts, even though they may impressionistically suggest his quality. Inevitably his work is described as being "in a minor key," and, shifting the analogy to still another art, it is said with equal inevitability that his colors are "pastel." Even when a literary term is used it is likely to be one not originally applicable to drama, and he is said to be "elegiac." But the truest of all the accustomed descriptions is that which speaks of his "elusive charm"; and so elusive does it generally remain that only when one is immediately in its presence can one be sure even wordlessly what it is.

This charm must, moreover, always be granted a certain length of time in which to begin to work. Probably most American readers as well as most American audiences feel an impulse to titter at the extraordinary interchange which opens "The Sea Gull": "Why do you always wear black?" "I am in mourning for my dead life." And in the case of "Uncle Vanya" it is not until the beginning of the second act that the spell takes full effect and one finds both that one can no longer choose but hear and also that one has so entered into the mood of the characters that one is seeing things as the characters see them; or rather that one is sufficiently capable of doing so to make meaningful the simultaneous ironic detachment which is also Chekov's.

No doubt the Old Vic company chose to follow "Henry IV" with "Uncle Vanya" partly as a demonstration of its virtuosity, and if so the demonstration is genuinely impressive, for there can be few even among experienced repertory actors who could so satisfactorily turn—as Olivier, Richardson, and Miss Redman do—from Shallow to Doctor Astrov, from Falstaff to Uncle

Vanya, and from Doll Tearsheet to the gentle Sonya. But virtuosity is not so important as excellence; and while none of these actors has an opportunity to be as spectacular in the Chekov play as they are all invited to be in Shakespeare, the production to which they all more or less subordinate themselves evokes very successfully what I believe to be the effect intended—and that goes no less for the comedy, which seems to have mildly offended some spectators, than for the melancholy and the pathos. Whether or not Soviet Russia is justified in claiming Chekov as a sort of wistful John the Baptist of the revolution I am willing to leave an open question, though certainly one of the most effective scenes in the present play—that in which the Doctor tries to tell the bored beauty about the disappearance of the forests and the impoverishment of the land—is one they might seize upon. But I am quite sure that Chekov did not see his characters exactly as they see themselves. He is attempting to write realistically about a group of characters whose inveterate romanticism is one of their most prominent characteristics, and the result inevitably includes a kind of humor which is bound to be mocking, no matter how sympathetic it may at the same time remain.

## Art

CLEMENT  
GREENBERG

THE large retrospective exhibition of Marc Chagall's art now at the Museum of Modern Art (through June 23) makes it clear that his natural endowment, if not his actual accomplishment, enrols him among the very great artists of our time.

The earliest paintings in the show, executed before 1910—under the influence, it seems to me, of German expressionism and Munch—establish what remains narrowly and distinctively Chagall's color. The first picture to establish his style, however, is "The Wedding" of 1910—one of the best works in the entire exhibition, for all its maladroitness—which already reveals the dominating influence of cubism, then hardly born. Henceforth Chagall's development is synchronized with that of the School of Paris. Cubism gives him his style, his plastic conception, his aesthetic discipline, and the effects of cubism remain even when all visible sign of it seems to have disappeared. Matisse, in the course of time, teaches him how to

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## THE SEASON VIEWED IN RETROSPECT

By EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL

As you will see, noting the report across the page, the 1945-46 art season is still going pretty strong. It becomes increasingly difficult to determine just where an old season ends and a new one begins. Galleries remain active much later than used to be the case. Many of the galleries and most of our museums keep open all summer, though it is still exceptional for urgently important new shows to crop up between, say, the middle of June and the middle of September.

But habit can be exigent. We like to think of something in the nature of a tidy balancing of the books, a recess for meditation or just plain laziness, and then a fresh start. So despite the fact that there is no "official" finish, one Sunday may be as good as another, along about this time, for declaring the summer interregnum unofficially in force. The gavel descends today, and we break the routine of current reporting for a glance back across the season that, again of course unofficially, began with an "early rush" in the week of Sept. 11, 1945.

### Bulk and Scope

With lines forming for nylons, motor cars and now for bread, one must be prompt and emphatic in asserting that there has been no shortage whatsoever in the exhibition realm. Computation ranges retrospectively before us a total, in round numbers, of 800 local shows between Sept. 1 and the beginning of last week. And it appears safe to estimate that between now and the beginning of the 1946-47 season some fifty or sixty more shows will have entered the record, rounding out a full calendar year.

In its scope the season has covered a broad range, embracing about everything from miniatures to murals; from shows that contained a single picture to mammoth events with entries running far into the hundreds.

On the international front the season sponsored at least rudimentary evidence of reviving reciprocity, following the long isolation of the war years. Interchange of ideas is becoming re-established. In other fields of artistic expression it has been our privilege to enjoy performances by London's "Old Vic," and our Ballet Theatre is to visit Covent Garden in July. While it hasn't as yet proved feasible to resume the series of war-interrupted Internationals at Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, a few small shipments of contemporary European art have reached America. The Metropolitan is showing loans from Italy and France—the early Christian "Good Shepherd," Michelangelo's marble tondo and the Delacroix "Barriade"—which arrived just the other day.

Again on the sending side, as related in these columns May 26, an ambitious survey of American painting, organized by the National Gallery of Art in Washington, has crossed the Atlantic and will open in the Tate Gallery, London, June 14. A smaller exhibition, made up of American water-colors, is off on an extensive Latin-American tour.

No once more art's stage becomes world-wide in compass.

### Museum Activities

New York's museums have contributed generously to the season's spectacle. The Metropolitan, celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary, gave us a bitter-sweet Victorian sample in the still current "Taste of the Seventies." Another event there marks the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Print Department, so perceptively headed, all this time, by William M. Ivins Jr. In commenting, some weeks ago, upon the survey of prints from the Metropolitan collection, arranged by him, I mentioned the likelihood of his writing something about it. This expectation we find realized in the May bulletin: an article, pungent, caustic, wise on "Objects

vs. Meanings," which everyone should read.

The Whitney Museum, now affiliated with the Metropolitan though it maintains still its charming Eighth Street quarters, has been active also, presenting an annual in two installments, a one-man show of work by the early American painter, Ralph Earl, and a particularly interesting exhibition concerned with the "Pioneers of Modern Art in America."

The Museum of Modern Art continues to be a dynamic magnet—the more so since James Johnson Sweeney took up his duties there as curator of painting and sculpture. His steady influence is constantly felt, as experimentation that was in many respects chaotic acknowledges the constructive restriction of unified planning.

Mr. Sweeney himself put on three outstanding one-man shows: the Chagall, the Stuart Davis and (current through Aug. 25) the Georgia O'Keeffe, for each of which he prepared a monograph-catalogue. Among other events at the Modern have been the Edward Weston retrospective, arranged by Nancy Newhall, and the altogether extraordinary "Arts of the South Seas," which René d'Harnoncourt directed, both of them likewise cast in permanent form between covers.

The Brooklyn Museum gave us, back in November, an exhibition devoted to landscape, concurrent with a fascinating account of life on the Mississippi (prints, selected by Una E. Johnson). Henry-Russell Hitchcock wrote an introduction to the illustrated catalogue that accompanied the former show. Later arrived the Brooklyn Society of Artists' thirtieth annual; "The Negro Artist Comes of Age"; a superb Inness retrospective, with illuminating text by Elizabeth McCausland, and finally (opening a fortnight or so ago) an exhibition called "Bronze-Making in Ancient Egypt."

### Elsewhere

Of special interest at the Museum of the City of New York was the collection of originals for New Yorker covers. The Riverside Museum was copiously booked, among the many attractions there being the California Water Color Society's third biennial, the fifth annual of the League of Present Day Artists (once the Bombshell Group), and the New York Society of Women Artists' twenty-first annual.

The last-mentioned group, phenomenally energetic, presented also its twenty-second annual this season—in May, at the National Academy, where were seen likewise the annuals of the Audubon Artists Group, the American Water Color Society, the National Association of Women Artists, the American Society of Etchers and the Merchant Seamen—besides, of course, the National Academy's own 120th annual, in two parts, and its second show of contemporary drawings.

The American Academy of Arts

and Letters exhibited, earlier in the season, material acquired through the Child Hassam Fund for distribution among museums in this country; recently, work by newly elected Academy and Institute members and 1946 grantees.

The New York Historical Society offered a splendid large group of Audubon's "Birds of America," as well as the thirty-second annual of the Allied Artists of America. The National Arts Club, the Salmagundi and the Society of Illustrators all contributed to the season's long and complex list. The Morgan Library, as if in a mood of pleasant peace-bred relaxation, gave us a panorama of "Sports and Pastimes."

Out-of-town events discussed in these columns included the Pittsburgh 1945 "Painting in the United States" exhibition; recent additions to the Kress Collection at the National Gallery in Washington; the 141st painting and sculpture annual at the Pennsylvania Academy and the sumptuous (current) Corot show in the Philadelphia Museum.

### One Word More

Absent from the foregoing summary, I realize, is reference to a very great deal that helped make memorable the season for which we herewith sound taps. I have scarcely alluded, save by inference,

to the enormous part played by our local galleries. Yet they were responsible for some of the season's most exhilarating high spots, as well as some of its most piquantly controversial aspects.

There was the prodigious procession of one-man shows, among them the Pissarro and Gauguin loan exhibitions, the Kaethe Kollwitz memorial, the shows devoted to Ryder, Maria, the Albright brothers, Dali, Beckmann, Rouault (prints), the Evergood twenty-four-year retrospective—alas, we run into space difficulties the moment we begin singling them out.

There was the "Critics' Choice" show. There were the "Soldiers and Sailors in American Wars" benefit at Duveen's; portraits of the Lee family, the Centennial Victory Exhibition (celebrating Annapolis) and the gallery's own hundredth anniversary show, at Knoedler's; Caravaggio and his tradition at Duriacher's; modern religious painting at the Durand-Ruel; Seventeenth-Century French painting at Wildenstein's. There was Pepsi-Cola.

And the word "abstraction" hasn't been used once, nor have I so much as intimated that the season's very cornerstone turned out to be Modernism.

But perhaps all that was sufficiently stressed from week to week.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 1946.

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NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1946.

# WEEK IN ART *by* Genauer



"The Front Page," a watercolor painted in 1912 by Stuart Davis, before he turned to abstraction. It is hung in the Museum of Modern Arts' show, "Recent Acquisitions."

## New Works at Modern Museum

Each week brings a new project to the busy Museum of Modern Art. Last week its big "Fourteen Americans" exhibition opened. The other day saw the debut of a show of "Recent Acquisitions." This one consists of only nine paintings and three sculptures, but they're highly varied, most of them are very good, and together they indicate that James Johnson Sweeney's new policy of frequent showings of newly acquired work to "enable . . . the general public to keep more closely in touch with the growth of the museum's collection" may prove a helpful one.

The two major works in the group obviously are the Matisse "Piano Lesson" and Picasso's "Card Player." And they're not major just because of the fame of the painters. The Matisse, particularly, is a handsome canvas, one of the early (this one is 1916) tapestry-like arrangements of large flat, unpatterned color areas in which figures and furniture, without for a minute losing their identity as such, or their essential savor, take their place as elements in a large near-abstract design. The Picasso is also an early work, a 1913 "Card Player," developed in dark colors and faceted planes, and quite monumental in its all-over effect.

Stuart Davis' "The Front Page" will be a surprise. This, too, goes way back—1912—and it suggests the contemporary John Sloan studies of life in New York, rather

than Davis' own more familiar abstractions.

There are two early George Grosz' items, of which one, dated 1917 and called "Metropolis" is outstanding, both for its restrained but powerful color harmonies, its animated and stylized design, and its bitter satire.

Of more recent origin are "Horned Forms," a Picasso-ish composition by the English painter, Graham Sutherland; Rene Portocarrero's "Mythological Personage," which is as lively and colorful as a fireworks display, and the Brazilian sculptor Maria's enigmatic "Impossible."

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NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1946

## Art of the Week: New Events Of the Opening Art Season

By Carlyle Burrows

NEW activity in the art galleries is supported not merely by a striking exhibition here and another there, but by a generous spreading out of events in many places. In terms of volume alone this is clearly sufficient proof of the return of a promising art season. Last week four new group shows of substance and variety were counted, together with a lively scattering of one-man displays. None of these events proved sensational, but visiting some of them was a real pleasure.

In the main foyer at the Museum of Modern Art a dozen new acquisitions, including paintings and sculptures by American, French, Latin-American, British and Dutch artists, were placed on view. The exhibits, only a few of which have been shown before outside of the museum, were acquired through the Guggenheim, Bliss, Inter-American and museum-purchase funds. This is a much smaller acquisitions show than the one opened last week at the Whitney Museum, where the Whitney and the Metropolitan Museums are showing together the purchases and gifts of contemporary art which the two have recently acquired. However, this display represents a shorter period of acquisition and encompasses a broader field.

Briefly summarized, the group at the modern museum embraces abstract paintings by Matisse, Picasso and Theo van Doesburg; satires by George Grosz and Ben Shahn; the naturalism of Robert Laurent and of the early Stuart Davis; the primitivism of Oscar Jaspers and surrealism (in different aspects) by Portocarrero, Graham Sutherland and Maria. Regarding this modest show, whose mixed appearance is surmounted by several outstanding exhibits, it is perhaps fair to point out that acquisitions are usually made as opportunities arise and with no accurate assurance of constituting a completely well balanced exhibition. Many of the objects are repeats so far as a single artist is concerned, and designed to expand or fill gaps in a larger collection. As Mr. Sweeney appropriately points out: "None of the more recent works shown in this group—such as Graham Sutherland's 'Horned Forms,' Maria's 'Impossible' and Portocarrero's 'Mythological Personage'—could be described as simple naturalism."

But a few of the exhibits fit with appropriate variations, this category: an early gouache by Ben Shahn, showing satiric heads of two witnesses in the celebrated Mooney case of 1932, also the watercolor by Stuart Davis, of vintage 1912, with an intimate scene from life as the artist then knew it. Natural, too, yet embroidered with fierce feeling, is a George Grosz oil of 1917, the vigorously painted "Metropolis," in contrast to the same artist's "Automatons," inspired by his associations (1920) with the cubist formula. Naturalism isn't dominant, of course, although traces of it are perceptible both in the aforementioned exhibits and in the graceful alabaster figure by Robert Laurent, another of the new additions.

What is more in evidence are the abstract works of pioneer modern painters, among which easily most impressive is a large Matisse, the "Music Lesson." Acquired with the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim fund, the exhibit was painted in 1916. Readily distinguished from Matisse's characteristic free-flowing and vividly decorative pictures, it is an abstract of reasonable simplicity and nicely harmonious color. Instead of vigorous arabesquery, discreet and decorative colors shape an essentially angular design, distinctive and tastefully balanced.

Closely related to the Matisse, on the basis of dating, are Picasso's precisely geometrical "Card Player," a finely brushed picture of now somewhat boring complexity, and the Van Doesburg, painted in 1914 and 1918, respectively, the latter of which reflects through its simple, brightly colored pattern the work of the artist's colleague, Mondrian.

As Mr. Sweeney suggests, several of the new acquisitions easily may prove too difficult for the novice or the visitor who is as yet unacquainted with modern art's "free adaptations of natural forms." One of these is the fearful bronze fantasy by the imaginative Brazilian sculptor, Maria. The latter has already met the test of the museum's acquisition's board, but here is represented by something altogether new. Of the three sculptors, Jaspers, I think, is the least well known here. He has a primitive style, too, but his imagination is earthy and spiritual, as befits the represented "St. Anthony."

With this showing, says the museum, "the Department of Painting and Sculpture initiates a new policy of more frequent, periodic displays of acquisitions," displays which will enable "members of the museum and the general public to keep more closely in touch with the growth of the museum's collection than was possible under the former practice of waiting to show new acquisitions until a large group exhibition was possible." The museum, at the same time, continues constant to its aims toward wide-ranging discovery in the modern field.

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The Art Digest

October 1, 1946

## Bought by Modern

NINE PAINTINGS and three sculptures recently acquired by the Museum of Modern Art are now on exhibition at the Museum, through November 10. Acquired through the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest, the Inter-American Fund and the Museum's Purchase Fund, the acquisitions range in point of date from 1912 to the present year.

Among the early acquisitions is *Card Player* by Pablo Picasso (1913-1914), a top example of that period. *Piano Lesson* by Henri Matisse (1916), a huge canvas, is a telling lesson in space control, with its triangular green form and opposing pinkish shape, punctuated by simply conceived figures.

*Rhythm of a Russian Dance* by Theo van Doesburg (1918) is Mondrian-esque in spirit. *Republican Automaton*, George Grosz (1920), is a savage satire in oil, mercilessly depicting man mechanized. *Metropolis* (1917) is an oil in the same spirit as his savage protest that appeared in his book titled *Ecce Homo*. *The Front Page* by Stuart Davis (1912) is straight illustration and a far cry from his later development. Rene Portocarrero's *Mythological Personage* (gouache, 1945), combines atavism with a Picasso influence.

*Horned Forms*, by Graham Sutherland (1944), is a penetrating semi-abstract canvas, exciting colorwise with its reds veering into yellows and oranges, punctuated by modeled forms and linear directions. *Two Witnesses* (gouache, 1932) by Ben Shahn depicts what might be termed *Daughters of the Revolution* in a different income bracket. It is a telling commentary and is from the artist's *Mooney Case* series.

Sculpture is represented by Maria Martins' 1945 bronze entitled *Impossible*, adroitly employing amorphous forms (last seen, in plaster, in the artist's one-man show at the Valentine Gallery last season); Robert Laurent's *The American Beauty* (alabaster, 1933), combining movement and economy in its approach; and *The Temptation of St. Anthony* by Oscar Jespers (Belgian, 1934), black granite, a peaceful conception of the tortured Saint seeming to find its inspiration in medieval sculpture.—BEN WOLF.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES,

## MODERN ART SHOWS 12 OF ITS NEW PIECES

9 Paintings and 3 Sculptures.  
Among Recent Acquisitions of  
Museum, Placed on Display

By EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West Fifty-third Street, placed on view yesterday in one of its main-floor galleries some of its recent acquisitions. It is a small group, only a dozen examples in all, of which nine are oils, gouaches and water-colors, and three are pieces of sculpture.

James Johnson Sweeney, director of the department of painting and sculpture, herewith initiates a new policy, the museum explains. It is the intention henceforth to show newly acquired work at much more frequent intervals than in the past, thus enabling the public "to keep more closely in touch with the growth of the collection."

A few of the present acquisitions were produced within the last two or three years; the rest dating further back. The striking sculptural work called "Impossible," by the Brazilian artist Maria was completed in 1946—just in time for inclusion in her one-man show at the Valentine Gallery in April. The work, it may be remembered, was then in the plaster stage. It has since been cast in bronze. René Portocarrero's gouache, "Mythological Personage," is dated 1945; Graham Sutherland's oil "Horned Forms," 1944. The latter was first seen here when exhibited last February in the English painter's one-man show at the Buchholz.

Earliest among the acquisitions is a 1912 water-color by the American Artist Stuart Davis. At that time he was painting quite in a naturalistic idiom, differing sharply from his present abstract manner. The water-color is in a somewhat illustrational vein, and the applicability of its title "The Front Page," seems to be anyone's conjecture.

Just a little later are Picasso's handsome cubist "Card Player" (1913-1914) and the huge Matisse "Piano Lesson," which belongs to the wonderful 1916 phase of that French artist's career. It may not stand absolutely at the top of Matisse's oeuvre, but "Piano Lesson" brilliantly represents a phase that, as Mr. Sweeney remarks, is "closest to the geometrizing of the time."

Early, too, is the Theo van Doesburg "Rhythm of a Russian Dance" (1918), typifying experimentation engaged in by the Dutch De Stijl group and basically paralleling the method later brought to such perfection by Piet Mondrian. George Groez' oil on cardboard "Metropolis," done in 1917, would seem to stem pretty directly from Futurism, whereas his 1920 "Republican Automaton," a water-color, is straightforward, clearly stylized satire. Ben Shahn's gouache, "Two Witnesses, Nellie Edeau and Sadie Edeau," comes from the 1932 "Mooney Case" series.

The sculptors not yet mentioned are Robert Laurent, represented by a fine little alabaster figure called

"The American Beauty," and Oscar Jespers of Belgium, whose black granite "Temptation of St. Anthony" has been placed out in the museum garden. The recumbent figure, bleakly rigid at best, got a good soaking in yesterday's rain, looked more stiffly rheumatic than usual, and perforce ran up a very meager visiting list.

The acquisitions, secured through the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest, the Inter-American Fund and the museum's Purchase Fund, will remain on view through Nov. 10.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1946.

*Acquired by Museum of Modern Art*



"Card Player," by Picasso, 1913-14, a recent acquisition through the Lillie P. Bliss bequest.

**Museum Acquisitions**

Three of our museums are now showing work acquired quite recently or within the last three years. A group of twelve additions to the permanent collection went on view Tuesday at the Museum of Modern Art, and down at the Whitney Museum in Eighth Street may be seen results of the combined activities since 1943 of that museum and the Metropolitan, with which it has become merged (though retaining for the present its own identity).

As contrasted with that at the Modern, the Whitney-Metropolitan group is very large, embracing more than 150 items; oils, water-colors, drawings and sculpture. Both the Whitney and the Metropolitan had of course for a long time been building up separate American collections. The present joint showing gives a sort of preview of the future policy in operation, and visitors are free, if they choose, to compare the respective

results attained in this three-year period. The assortment is extremely varied with respect to category, which is all to the good. Less commendable may seem the inclusion of so much work the status of which must be esteemed, so to speak, probationary. Perhaps that is the only reasonable way, but it does often seem that the contemporary art departments of museums are wont to become contortionists, bending alarmingly backward in their effort to acquire everything that might conceivably possess a scrap of enduring value. This has a tendency to make it difficult for the public to gauge the standards it assumes that museums keep operative.

I do not mean to imply that the Whitney and the Metropolitan have been on just a helter-skelter acquisition binge. If the true worth of some examples remains for the present at least in doubt, and if many of the artists are here represented by work not up to their own best standards, again and again the selections appear unquestionably wise and fortunate. For the rest, time will tell.

**Museum of Modern Art**

The policy followed at the Modern must perforce be generously experimental in nature. To this museum we turn for an account of the modern movement as viewed both in its current and in its historical aspects. Most of the present additions to the collection date far enough back to take their place in the complex historical mosaic, which needs constantly to be enriched and filled out.

Canvases such as the 1916 "Piano Lesson" by Matisse and the 1913-14 "Card Player" by Picasso are equipped to perform abundant service in that respect. The two examples by George Grosz reveal, within this artist's oeuvre, illuminating contrast. And the Doesburg "Rhythm of a Russian Dance" makes clearer to us one phase of development within the Dutch De Stijl group; a phase now so vividly and unqualifiedly associated with the career of a greater modernist, the late Piet Mondrian.

On the contemporary side, acquisition of something by the English artist, Graham Sutherland, would be expected; and his "Horned Forms" may well be considered the best available choice. Personally, I should scarcely miss, were it to disappear, the Jespers "Temptation of St. Anthony," out in the museum garden. But quite the reverse would apply to Maria's stunning 1946 bronze, "Impossible"—stunning and, in its title, cunning enough to snatch the ground right from under the feet of supposititious irate right-wingers!

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NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1946

## Henry Moore's Art Works Put On Exhibit Here

Sculpture and Drawings  
of Briton Are on View  
at Modern Art Museum

By Carlyle Burrows

An exhibition of the work of the English modern artist, Henry Moore, who was invited from Great Britain, opened last night with a preview at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West Fifty-third Street.

Consisting of sculpture and drawings, it will be shown to the public beginning today and continuing through March 16.

The museum, Mr. Moore, who arrived here recently, and the Arts Council of Great Britain have collaborated on the display, one of the largest given for a foreign artist at the museum since the start of the war.

The exhibition is installed throughout the third floor of the museum, and is complete with samples of Mr. Moore's work from the early 1920's to the present. Fifty-eight pieces of sculpture and forty-eight drawings are included.

Preponderantly modern and non-objective, his sculptural work is to a large extent creative, though both sculpture and drawings show basic human forms and ideas which the artist imaginatively elaborates.

Beginning with small figures and groups, which include items lent by English collections, the exhibition ranges to larger figures, some of which are in stone while others are carved from natural wood.

Among the drawings in pen and ink and gouache is a series of fifteen from life in the London air-raid shelters during 1940-41, when Londoners jammed themselves into subways and other excavations for protection.

The exhibition was selected by James Johnson Sweeney, former executive of the museum, and he has written a book, published by the museum, covering the different aspects of Mr. Moore's work.

"The carving approach," writes Mr. Sweeney, "is the basis of the most characteristic features and qualities of Henry Moore's work. In his art he strives primarily toward an organic condition. His object is liveliness of form, not life-likeness."

Lenders to the exhibition include both English and American owners; the City Art Gallery, Manchester; Mrs. Leonard K. Elmhirst, the Zwemmer Gallery, London; Sir Kenneth Clark, the Buchholz Gallery; Washington University, St. Louis; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Lady Keynes, Gordon Onslow-Ford and numerous others.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1946.

## ART SHOW OFFERS DISPLAY BY MOORE

Modern Art Opens Exhibition  
of Sculpture and Drawings  
by Contemporary Artist

By EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL

A one man show of sculpture and drawings by the distinguished contemporary British artist, Henry Moore, opened with a preview last evening at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West Fifty-third Street. This unusually interesting and challenging survey, installed in galleries on the third floor of the museum, opens to the public today and will continue through March 16. It was organized by James Johnson Sweeney, who recently resigned as director of the department of painting and sculpture at the Modern.

In selecting the work Mr. Sweeney was assisted by the sculptor himself and by the Arts Council of Great Britain. Also Moore, now visiting this country, was consulted in the matter of installation. The fifty-eight pieces of sculpture and forty-eight drawings are presented to excellent advantage, above all spaciouly. There is no sense of crowding or clutter. This is especially important in view of the prevailing serenity of the work.

While most of the material now exhibited was shipped over here from England for the showings at the Museum of Modern Art and (later) at the Chicago Art Institute and the San Francisco Museum of Art, certain examples were supplied, it is announced, by American collectors.

The illustrated catalogue, with text by Mr. Sweeney, has not yet been issued, but a check list furnished at yesterday's press view reveals that the Moore retrospective covers a period of twenty-four years, the earliest piece of sculpture, "Head of a Girl," having been made in 1922. One of the frequently encountered "Reclining Figures" and a "Family Group," together with a couple of drawings, were completed this year.

All of Henry Moore's work is abstract in some degree. One of the most naturalistic of the sculptural pieces is a fairly large "Reclining Woman" of 1932. Although a measure of distortion is involved, the representational element predominates, as contrasted with, for instance, the treatment of the two larger reclining figures done respectively in 1939-40 and 1945-46, which employ the human form as a basis only upon which a monumentally abstract theme may be developed. Some of the pieces are unqualifiedly nonobjective. Yet even these seem related to life.

A few years ago, in a volume edited by Herbert Read and published in London by Percy Lund, Humphries, and in New York by Curt Valentin, Henry Moore phrased with terseness and clarity what may be considered the core of his sculptural quest:

"For me a work must first have a vitality of its own. I do not mean a reflection of the vitality of life, of movement, physical action frisking, dancing figures and so on, but that a work can have in it a pent-up energy, an intense life of its own, independent of the object it may represent. When a work has this powerful vitality we do not connect the word Beauty with it.

"Beauty, in the later Greek or Renaissance sense, is not the aim of my sculpture.

"Between beauty of expression and power of expression there is a difference of function. The first aims at pleasing the senses, the second has a spiritual vitality which for me is more moving and goes deeper than the senses."

Reproduced in the form of a wall placard, this explanation should make less baffling the average spectator's task of appreciation. It is accompanied by other helpful statements, most of them concerned with problems of medium and of design.

Among the drawings are many that represent studies made by Moore in London's air-raid shelters during the war. These are packed with terror and pathos and unconquerable hope. Other drawings are more closely related to sculptural projects.

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NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1946.



"Family Group," a bronze sculpture by Henry Moore, English artist, which, for all its appearance of great size, is only nine inches high. It is included in the Moore one-man show at the Museum of Modern Art.

# THIS WEEK in ART

By EMILY GENAUER



## Sculptor's Work Defies Theory

Henry Moore, the most distinguished sculptor in England and the subject of a large, beautifully installed retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, belittles—virtually denies—the validity of the merely sensuous and intellectual aspects of aesthetic expression. A work must be "a penetration into reality, not a sedative or drug, not just the exercise of good taste, the provision of pleasant shapes and colours in a pleasing combination, not a decoration to life, but an expression of the significance of life."

Yet for me his tremendous appeal is primarily a sensuous one. The rhythmic, undulating flow of his forms, the exquisite balance between one volume and another, the harmony established between a solid mass of material and an adjoining open space enclosed by solid form, the counterpoint he creates between the strong jutting angles of reclining figures—these even more than the monumental, elemental strength and dignity of his conceptions, are to me a source of satisfaction and lively pleasure.

### Imitations Rejected.

Moore's aesthetic theories—and they are important because he asserts them so positively—are contradicted by themselves and by his sculpture. For instance, like most modern artists he rejects any imitations of nature. The observa-

tion of nature, on the other hand, he holds to be "part of an artist's life; it enlarges his form knowledge, keeps him fresh . . . and feeds his imagination."

That's clear enough, and widely subscribed to. But then he develops the theory by saying that "pebbles and rocks show nature's way of working stone. Shells show nature's hard but hollow form and have a wonderful completeness of single shape. . . . Some of the pebbles I pick up have holes right through them. A piece of stone can have a hole through it and not be weakened if the hole is of a studied size, shape and direction. . . . Trees show principles of growth and strength of joints, with easy passing of one section into the next. They give the ideal for wood sculpture."

### Intellect at Work.

I'm not certain why it's valid for a modern to imitate the hole worn by time and tide in a pebble, or the structure of a tree, and not the colors of a blazing sunset or the pattern of blue shadows on gleaming snow, in the now unfashionable manner of the academicians. It's the exercise of imagination, sensibility and intellect which make the difference. And if these constitute the creative process, the subject can be anything in or out of this world which the artist fancies.

Again, I'm not certain what that "reality" is which Moore says a work of art must penetrate. Is it this cosmos he has created of pin-headed giants conjuring up a spirit of wild, primitive nature? Or do these massive, stylized elemental figures represent an escape from the realities of our present-day world; in fact that very "sedative" he deprecates?

Of one thing, fortunately, there can be no question—Moore's very great accomplishment as a creative artist entirely apart from his theories. In 50 years his sculpture will be measured by an entirely new set of theories, theories which may ridicule all our current notions of the true reality, or of the "inviolability" of a sculptor's material. (This theory holds that a stone carving must have the weight and density of stone, that wood sculpture should have an upward, twisting movement, simulating that of a tree.) I'm certain that Moore's sculpture will be accounted fine even when measured against new yardsticks. And that, a long time from now, people will still enjoy its formal, sensuous aspects, and the way Moore was able to inject into even a small carving just seven inches tall, a feeling of monumental size and grandeur.

Fifty-eight of his sculptures are spaciouly and handsomely arranged on the museum's third floor, along with about 50 drawings, half of them from the artist's famous and profound series portraying the people of London taking shelter from air raids in the London underground.

The exhibition was selected by James Johnson Sweeney with the aid of the artist and of the Arts Council of Great Britain. The artist came to this country from England to assist in its installation.

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THE NEW YORK SUN, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1946.

## Henry Moore, Modernist

### The English Sculptor's Long-awaited Show Opens at the Modern Museum.

By HENRY McBRIDE.

Henry Moore, the English sculptor, knows how to carve; he knows how to draw; he knows how to make water colors; he knows how to write, and he probably knows how to talk. These two last-mentioned gifts, writing and talking, may explain why the two that were first mentioned, carving and drawing (and which he employs in a completely modern way), have been so thoroughly acknowledged and accepted in England.

It is true the English public is much more docile than ours; much more ready for art, much more inquiring. It is also true that this present generation of Londoners is the second to be confronted with modernism. It witnessed the discomfiture of its parents in their tussles with the late Roger Fry on the question of Cezanne, and the children of those parents would naturally now be equal to anything; and they do seem to be equal to Moore. Most of the sculptures that have come from abroad for this show are owned by collectors; not, as so often happens, by the artist himself.

All this is a condition that we in New York cannot resist envying, for the only sculptor we have had recently to compare in daring with Moore, the late Gaston Lachaise, had no such easy time of it. However, Lachaise neither wrote or spoke. He could not have quelled his critics with so clear a statement as the defense Moore has placarded upon the walls of the Modern Museum where his first big exhibition in America is now being held, and which is going to have, I predict, a prodigious success.

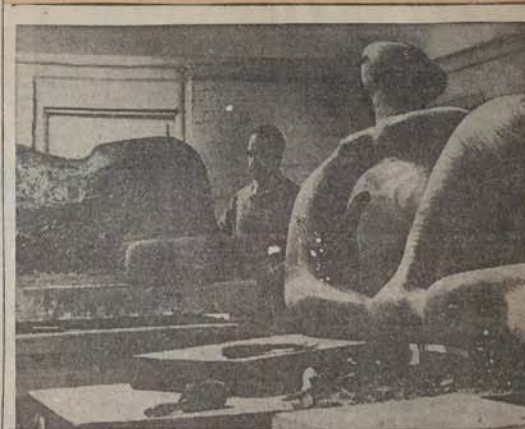
This is the statement:  
"For me a work must first have a vitality of its own. I do not mean a reflection of the vitality of life, of movement, of physical action, frisking, dancing figures and so on, but that a work can have in it a pent-up en-

ergy, an intense life of its own, independent of the object it may represent. When a work has this powerful vitality we do not connect the word 'beauty' with it."

"Beauty, in the later Greek and Renaissance sense, is not the aim of my sculpture. Between beauty of expression and power of expression there is a difference of function. The first aims at pleasing the senses, the second has a spiritual vitality which for me is more moving and goes deeper than the senses."

There are certainly scant resemblances between the Renaissance sculptures of Donatello and Michelangelo and the carvings of Moore. But why should there be? We no longer live in the Renaissance. We have moved on, not necessarily to a better, but to a vastly different world. The debris of old-world architecture is matched by the debris of old-world ideas, but out of this rubble new ideas have emerged that startle not by their dissimilarities to past experience but by their elemental continuities.

To the eye that has had no new lessons in form since Donatello's day the Moore sculptures will look like eroded shapes dug from the desert dust of centuries, or possibly rescued from immersion in immemorably salty seas, but this very appearance that they have of resurrection is the first quality, I think, that will win them respectful attention; and for that reason the remark about this art that I like best of all those that have been printed, is the opinion of the Vicar of St. Matthews, Northampton, Eng-



Henry Moore, the English sculptor now exhibiting at the Museum of Modern Art, in his studio.

land, who commissioned a Madonna and Child for his church because "the drawings seemed to possess a spiritual quality and a deep humanity as well as being monumental and suggestive of timelessness."

That "timelessness" is good. Where have we a Vicar so enlightened as that? Shame on you, you American Vicars!

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tor. ("Direct carving," he observed to us.) In 1919, he obtained an ex-serviceman's grant for two years' study at the Leeds School of Art. He next went to London's Royal College of Art, whose head, Sir William Rothenstein, has characterized him, in a book of recollections, as "the ablest student in the sculpture school." The British Museum was an eye-opener for him. "I spent all my spare time there," he said, "walking about in a maze of excitement. In the Mexican room, I found an absolute essence of sculpture, such as I'd never seen except in those early Yorkshire Romanesque carvings." In his fourth year at the college, he won a travelling scholarship that gave him six months in Italy. "I was miserable," he says of this period. "Not until years later was I able to reconcile the struggle between the Renaissance idea—the Greek side, the flesh-and-blood side—and the primitive side, the stone side."

On Moore's return from Italy, Rothenstein gave him a two-days-a-week, £240-a-year job teaching at his old school. "That's going to put the ball at your feet," he said. Moore kicked the ball happily for seven years. He worked for himself five days a week and by 1930 was averaging £200 a year in sales. "No artist's struggle," he told us. "It was just a straightforward affair." In 1932, he left the college for a similar job at the Chelsea School of Art. He was still there, and selling to the Tate Gallery and to private collectors, when the second war started. "The war in some queer way caused everything I did to sell," he said. "I'd married a Russian girl, a student of mine at the Royal College, whose family had fled the revolution, and we had a cottage in Kent, where we raised ducks and geese. After the fall of France, we moved to London, because I wanted to attend a class in precision-tool making there, but they kept putting me off, there were so many applicants, so I began drawing. It seemed silly to commence a large sculpture when any day I expected to get into the tool-making class. The air raids started and I began to draw those unbelievable scenes in the tubes—children, bundles, family parties, those hundreds of static, reclining figures going on ad infinitum. Shelter life gave me a new outlook on people."

Sir Kenneth Clark, head of the National Gallery, saw some of Moore's shelter drawings and commissioned him to do more of them, for the War Artists

### Carver

OUR English visitor for *this week* is Henry Moore, the sculptor and sketcher, for whom the Museum of Modern Art is giving the largest show ever held in America for a living British artist—fifty-eight sculptures in stone, wood, bronze, and concrete, and forty-eight drawings, mostly of London air-raid-shelter scenes during the war. Moore is widely regarded as one of the world's leading contemporary carvers. He is a short, alert, friendly man of forty-eight, with a ruddy face and an easy conversational style. He was born, the youngest of seven, in Castleford, a Yorkshire coal-mining town, pop. 22,000. His own pop was a miner. "Father went to work at nine," he told us the other day. "He taught himself algebra and mining engineering, and knew the whole of Shakespeare. As a boy, I was vividly impressed by the eleventh-century carvings I saw on churches in the neighborhood. My interest in sculpture was encouraged at the local school by the art teacher, Miss Alice Gostick. By the time I was fourteen, I was sure I wanted to be a sculptor." Moore's father tried to persuade him to become a schoolteacher, on grounds of security; the two were still arguing in 1917, when Henry joined the Army. Gassed in the first battle of Cambrai, he was invalided home to England, where, at Aldershot, he subsequently was made a bayonet instruc-

Committee. These were shown all over England. As the novelty wore off underground life, Moore's interest in it waned. "They tidied up the shelters, putting in bunks, canteens, and ventilation," he said, "until I couldn't bear them. They no longer reflected the spontaneous use of a thing for which it was not intended." Clark's committee asked him to draw coal mines (for miners' morale), and for the first time in his life he entered the mines where his father had worked. "It was like the absolute essence of hell," he said. "The noise, the heat, the dust, the darkness—nothing light except the miners' lips where they'd licked them white."

Moore is going back to England next week with a beautiful eighty-dollar suit he bought at Tripler's without a coupon.

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## Art of the Week: Henry Moore In a Striking Modern Display

By Carlyle Burrows

**H**ENRY MOORE, whose exhibition the Museum of Modern Art is brilliantly presenting, suffered the disadvantage of having reached perhaps the best stage of his maturity during the war or immediately before it. In consequence of which only a little of his work has been shown here previously, in the "Britain at War" exhibition, where his drawings were represented, and in one or two other group displays of lesser consequence. Very little of his sculpture seems to be owned over here, although the Cleveland Museum has a small group, as has the Albright gallery and the Modern museum, New York. And several are now in the hands of the Buchholz gallery, where his drawings also have been exhibited. The artist however began his experiments with modern art as long ago as the close of the last world war. He is now forty-seven, and, judging by the present display, is in the midst of his best work, especially, I would say, in the field of drawings.

Moore has taken pleasure in, among other art forms, African Negro sculpture, Mexican sculpture and the art of the early Florentine school, notably that of Masaccio. In the museum's biographical notes we learn that he was invalided back to London during the first world war at a time which turned out propitious for his future career as an artist. Though he had earlier abandoned art for a teaching profession in public schools, it was an educational grant to former service men which gave him his opportunity to resume his art study. All that he boasts of in the way of art education is two years study in Leeds and a travelling scholarship received in 1925 from the Royal College of Art in London.

The now current presentation shows Moore's different accomplishments impressively, indeed, in a large show of more than a hundred pieces of sculpture and drawings. Among the former are large and small examples, beginning with a small "Head and Shoulders" figure and a "Head of a Girl" (1922-'23), and ranging through several monumental "Reclining Figures," dated, respectively, 1932, 1939 and 1945, the first of which is in reinforced concrete, while the latter two are carvings in wood. Between these somewhat outstanding and remarkable abstractions many smaller works represent what may be considered his more regularly professional work—in stone, wood, lead and bronze. While a group of figure designs, in polished bronze, are among his most recent pieces, these effects, betraying processes of especial skill, are interesting but not altogether harmonious with, in our mind, his best examples.

In the museum's illustrated catalogue of the Moore exhibition, now in process of publication, the artist gives his esthetic credo, thus: "For me a work of art must first have a vitality of its own. I do not mean a reflection of the vitality of life, of movement, physical action . . . but that a work can have in it a pent-up energy, an intense life of its own, independent of the object it may represent." Also he speaks of "an expression of the significance of life." With these, and similar clues to his work in the media represented, the latter placarded in the exhibition for visitors to read, the process of appreciation, which is not altogether difficult to begin with, is made clearer. Several of

these symbolic figures are majestically produced, and are suffused with a mood of calm and dignity which is impressive.

Moore has not, it seems to us, as yet achieved in modern art affairs such a position of priority as a Picasso, say, or a Mollot, but he is, as many are now keenly aware, an artist who has something vital to say, something strongly individual. His drawings seem to offer an especially good index of his thoughtful grasp of the significance of natural forms, translated with feeling and given a human meaning of static but lofty eloquence. Particularly interesting of these is a series of drawings of the London air-raid shelters during the war. The spirit of placid resignation is greatly inspired in the drawings, and offers the visitor one of his best experiences in the exhibition.

The installation, quite apart from the merits of Mr. Sweeney's selection of the exhibits, is something in its self quite remarkable. Without the eloquence of spacing, lighting, and, in places, concentrated groupings, Moore's work would no doubt appear to some extent less various and perhaps a trifle repetitious, but still serene and powerful in many ways. With the aid of the planning staff's effortless disclosures, the installation really opens the way to a degree of general wonderment in the entire proceedings.

Two Seated Figures in Shelter



From the drawing by Henry Moore; at the Museum of Modern Art.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1946

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1946.

## A MODERN SCULPTOR

### The Work of Henry Moore in Retrospect —Architecture and a City Center

By EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL

IN the first place, James Johnson Sweeney is to be congratulated upon the balanced judgment he displayed in selecting the material that constitutes the one-man show by the British sculptor, Henry Moore, current at the Museum of Modern Art. So far as we are in a position to estimate, all phases of the artist's creative development to date are illustrated. No attempt was made to play up one aspect or to minimize the importance of another. In carrying out this task Mr. Sweeney, it is learned, was assisted by Mr. Moore himself and by the Arts Council of Great Britain. The result, entirely aside from one's evaluation of the work, is most felicitous.

The American art world will assuredly be grateful for this chance to see the sculpture and drawings by Henry Moore. For years we had had to be content with seeing a not more than occasional example of the sculpture, which never could give full indication of Moore's capacity and scope. Only on a scale such as that now achieved can demonstration be really adequate.

There is a great deal to be said, besides, in favor of the practice of focusing attention upon a single artist; and it would be an excellent thing if a few of our own best talents could be thus represented abroad. We seem not to have had too much success with our overseas group projects. Perhaps we could better serve the interests of the American School by sending well-selected representations of work by individual leaders.

#### A Sculptor's Aim

Especially in the absence of the delayed catalogue containing Mr. Sweeney's text, scattered wall placards prove of signal service, as I pointed out in an earlier notice (Wednesday). In this way is the gist of the sculptor's own aims communicated.

Henry Moore's repudiation of Beauty as an aim will doubtless cause a good deal of talk. He sets above this always controversially vague vocabularies such as "vitality" and "power," remarking that "between beauty of expression and power of expression there is a difference of function," the first appealing to the senses and the second, this "spiritual vitality," transcending them—or, as the sculptor puts it, "going deeper than the senses."

Words are tricky vehicles, of course, and I see nothing to prevent spiritual vitality's being, in the upshot, beautiful as well. But Moore's meaning seems sufficiently clear. He is at pains to make us see that what he has tried to express is a piece of sculpture's "intense life of its own, independent of the object it may represent." Except with respect to a few pieces more palpably decorative in treatment, the aim as stated appears to have been put above every lesser consideration.

Other points stressed by Henry Moore have to do with a feeling for the medium and with problems of dimension. What has been called "truth to material" is regarded as of paramount importance, whether

distinctly more significance than those little abstract figures of wood and string or of lead and copper wire (one of the latter type we reproduce).

Yet somehow I feel that in the long run Moore's finest achievement may be deemed to be expression less drastically alien to natural form; expression typified, let us say, by pieces so eloquently moving as the St. Matthew's "Madonna and Child" and "The Family," which, we learn, he proposes to carve in stone (presumably on a heroic scale) for a college.

This must, however, be quite without reservation conceded: throughout the Moore show we find evidenced a modern sculptor's complete integrity and sincerity. All of his exploration has been based on reasoned creative motives. Nothing betokens a surrender to whim or a superficial, irresponsible attitude toward the artistic concept, the medium or the technical means.

Moore's drawings, shown also in abundance, are generally superb; so finely sculptural in their sense of form and space; independently so expressive, besides, in their own two-dimensional right. My only doubt here concerns, at times, the color, which, in some of the papers of the magnificent air-raid-shelter series, seems psychologically wrong in that it is warm and ingratiating.

Curt Valentin published a few weeks ago a handsome portfolio of reproduced drawings by Moore, two of them in color. This portfolio is priced at \$8.50.

### Museum of Modern Art Shows Henry Moore's Sculpture



"Reclining Woman," 1932, in carved reinforced concrete.



"The Bride," 1940, in lead and wire.

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of paramount importance, that material be wood or stone or bronze. As for size, "a carving," he observes, "might be several times over-life-size and yet be petty and small in feeling," whereas "a small carving only a few inches in height can give the feeling of huge size and monumental grandeur because the vision behind it is big." This, by the way, the tiny "Madonna and Child" and the Cleveland Museum's seven-inch "Family Group" perfectly exemplify. Both are majestic, monumental, the former being a study for the piece commissioned by the Church of St. Matthew in Northampton, England.

#### Concerning Abstraction

While it should be no longer necessary to spend much time defending the practice of not copying nature or sedulously following natural form in art that is intended to be creative rather than imitative, certain aspects of Henry Moore's work nevertheless raise problems that can cloud immediate enjoyment of the forms created.

As a matter of fact, he has not always elected a method nearly so extreme, on the abstract side, as that encountered in the two largest of the reclining figures. In the "Reclining Woman" of 1932 and "Seated Girl" of the preceding year realism is of a strongly naturalistic order, despite whatever may be involved in the way of distortion. At least the effect is naturalistic in that the forms are kept intact and not carved with cave-like apertures or otherwise "abstracted" away from the semblance with which the concept began.

I feel that my acquaintance with Henry Moore's work of this abstract type is as yet insufficient to warrant positive conclusions about it. My mind is full of reservations. These may depend merely upon an old prejudice against turning natural form into forms that bear only a remote or implied relation to it. Or this holding back may indicate a basic preference in the abstract field for forms that shall be entirely "pure" in their departure from the "natural" aspect of life.

#### Ultimate Choice

The noble serenity, the "timelessness," the imaginative transfiguration of these more extremely abstracted forms of Moore's, sometimes their musing grandeur, are not to be gainsaid. They seem of