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BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE

Rona Roob

I am Director of the Archives Program at The Museum of Modern Art in New York. In this capacity I manage an oral history project, write articles on Museum history and lecture on aspects of modern art, museum history and archival issues. The activities of this program also include processing historical papers, preparing finding aids, providing reference service and advising other institutions on organizing archives.

Since my student years as an art history major at Barnard, where my program included graduate courses with Professors Rudolf Wittkower, Julius Held, Otto Brendel and Evelyn Harrison, among others, I have worked as a curatorial assistant, researcher, librarian and archivist in the modern-art field. In September 1961 I was hired by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., founding Director of The Museum of Modern Art, as his assistant.

Barr became my mentor. Knowing of my desire to continue my formal education, he recommended that I be awarded a Museum fellowship to study part-time at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, where I took whatever courses were offered in the evenings. Barr believed that in the modern field I would be best served by continuing to work for him, which I did full-time until Fall 1965, when my first child was born. My association with Barr continued until illness overcame him in the early 1970s.

In the 1970s, while occupied with family, my interest in contemporary art continued unabated. I frequented museums and galleries, attended lectures and, of course, read. It was during that time that I became associated with the Archives of American Art, a branch of the Smithsonian, where I now serve as a Trustee and Vice-President.

In 1979 The Museum of Modern Art asked me to do confidential research on Picasso's Guernica for the Spanish government, pending the picture's return to Spain. This led to other freelance projects, and the Museum suggested that I get the formal credentials of the archivist's profession. I obtained funding to attend the Columbia School of Library Science, specializing in archival management, while working as an archives librarian at the Modern. I received an M.L.S. degree in 1982 with highest honors.

As the full-time archives librarian at The Museum of Modern Art from 1981 to 1986, I organized the Barr Papers and made them available to the public, in addition to providing reference service. One result of this work was the complete annotated bibliography of Barr's published writings that became the basis for an anthology entitled Defining Modern Art (NY: Abrams; 1986: 274-292). In the course of processing the Barr papers I developed a close relationship with Margaret Scolari Barr, or Marga, as I came to call her, that continued until her death in December 1987. A special issue of The New Criterion, Summer 1987, published an account that I co-authored with Marga of some of the Barrs' "campaigns" together.

In 1986 I conceived, formulated and drafted the plan that established the Archives Program at the Museum. Since that time I have served as its Director.

I believe no one else could tell the Barrs' story in the way I propose in the attached Plan of Work. My professional experience and personal relationships with the Barrs have resulted in my acquiring a unique perspective. At this juncture in my life I feel a responsibility to share this knowledge and I seek the opportunity to write the kind of book I have been wanting to read. I have been encouraged to believe that my knowledge and observations would make a valuable contribution to the literature on this subject.

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PUBLICATIONS Rona Roob

"From the Archives: The Museum and Latin American Art." MoMA Magazine. Issue 14: 16; Summer 1993.

"From the Archives: German Painting and Sculpture at the Museum in 1931." MoMA Magazine. Issue 13: 6; Winter/Spring 1993.

"From the Archives: Matisse and the Museum." MoMA Members Quarterly. Issue 13: 22; Fall 1992.

"From the Archives: William S. Paley and the Getrude Stein Collection." MoMA Members Quarterly. Issue 10: 5; Winter 1992.

"From the Archives: Ephemeral Art." MoMA Members Quarterly. Issue 9: 23; Fall 1991.

"From the Archives: Ad Reinhardt and the Museum." MoMA Members Quarterly. Issue 8: 6; Summer 1991.

"From the Archives: Fire and Waterlilies." MoMA Members Quarterly. Issue 7: 24; Spring 1991.

"From the Archives: Refugee Artists." MoMA Members Quarterly. Issue 6: 18; Winter 1991.

"Members Notes." MoMA Members Quarterly. 2:17; Fall 1990.

"From the Archives: Matisse in Morocco." MoMA Members Quarterly. 2(5): 15; Summer 1990.

"From the Archives: James Thrall Soby and Francis Bacon." MoMA Members Quarterly. 2(4): 6-7; Spring 1990.

"From the Archives: Photography Comes to the Museum." MoMA Members Quarterly. 2(3): 3; Winter 1990.

"From the Archives: Opening the Modern." MoMA Members Quarterly. 2(2): 22; Fall 1989.

A Guide to The Papers of James Thrall Soby in The Museum of Modern Art Archives. New York: The Museum of Modern Art; 1988.

"Alfred H. Barr, Jr.: A Chronicle of the Years 1902-1929." The New Criterion. Special summer issue, 1987: 1-19. (Reviewed: John Russell. The New York Times. Sect. 2:29-30; 26 July 1987.

"Letter to the Editor." The Museum Archivist [newsletter of the Museum Archives Roundtable, Society of American Archivists]. August 1987:2.

"Special Report: The Soby Papers at The Museum of Modern Art in New York." The Museum Archivist. April 1987:1-2.

"Alfred H. Barr, Jr.: A Bibliography of Published Writings." In: Defining Modern Art: Selected Writings of Alfred H. Barr, Jr. New York: Harry N. Abrams; 1986: 274-292. Spanish edition, 1991.

"1936: The Museum of Modern Art Selects an Architect - Excerpts from the Barr Papers of The Museum of Modern Art." Archives of American Art Journal. 23;1:22-30; 1983.

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MARGARET SCOLARI AND ALFRED H. BARR, JR.

CHRONICLE OF A PARTNERSHIP

PLAN OF WORK

In every generation there are careers that mark turning points in history, and that of Alfred H. Barr, Jr. was certainly one of them. In processing Barr's papers for The Museum of Modern Art, I came to realize that his achievements were made possible in no small measure by the fact that he married Margaret Fitzmaurice Scolari.

Although Margaret Scolari Barr never occupied an official position at The Museum of Modern Art, her contributions were essential to Barr's achievements. An art historian and accomplished linguist -- an intellectual thoroughbred -- Marga, as I came to call her when I became Director of the Archives at The Museum of Modern Art, referred to herself as "Alfred's factotum"; their affection and intellectual pursuits existed in tandem. She was his most loyal and honest friend and sometimes his harshest critic. Before her death in December, 1987, Mrs. Barr and I collaborated on a chronicle of their fascinating life together, a small portion of which was excerpted for publication in the Summer 1987 issue of The New Criterion. Using unpublished material, diaries and letters I propose to complete the story of an extraordinary partnership.

That Alfred Barr played a greater role than any other figure in shaping our understanding of the artistic achievements of the modern age is well-known. However, the role of Marga Barr in this achievement is not known and is worthy of further study.

Marga Barr was a formidable woman. In 1930 she turned down a position in the art department at Smith College to marry Alfred. She served as his interpreter in all his encounters with the European art world, translated important documents (which became essential appendices to landmark publications) and did research for exhibitions. The dedication of his Picasso book in 1946 read "for my wife Margaret Scolari-Fitzmaurice/advisor and invaluable assistant in the Picasso campaigns of 1931, 32, 36, and 39." On another occasion he referred to her as his "muse".

Marga was born in Rome (1901) to a father who was an antique dealer and a lively Irish Protestant mother from whom she inherited her gift for languages. Her father died in World War I when she was fifteen; her mother worked outside the home, as did Marga later when she attended university in Rome. In 1925 she left Italy with her mother's blessing to teach at Vassar, where she received her masters degree and where she began a lifelong friendship with the architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock. She first heard about Alfred at this time, through letters that Hitchcock received from Barr who was travelling abroad. Marga and Alfred did not meet for several years.

Letters between mother and daughter reveal two fiercely independent non-conformists. These letters reveal Marga as a keen observer of the social scene in America during the 20s and 30s from a European point of view. Her colorful, extroverted personality coupled with a brilliant mind gave her entry to a variety of social and academic circles.

At the end of 1928, she was awarded a Carnegie scholarship to study art history at the graduate school of New York University (not yet known as the Institute of Fine Arts). Living in an apartment at 91st Street and Madison Avenue, she taught at Sarah Lawrence, took courses at New York University (given

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at that time in the basement of the Metropolitan Museum of Art), and continued to teach at Vassar. As Marga told me, "I slept in three places every week that year." She began to look at modern art to which she had been introduced by Agnes Rindge, whose course on modern sculpture Marga had taken at Vassar. Although she was steeped in the art of the past, she found modern art very exciting. In 1929, she attended the opening of The Museum of Modern Art with Professor Walter Cook, director of the graduate program at New York University, but did not meet Alfred until she returned to the Museum weeks later with Agnes Rindge who introduced them. Marga and Alfred were married in Paris six months later. The next day they began researching the Corot-Daumier exhibition held at the Museum that fall, Marga doing most of the communicating as Alfred did not speak French.

They travelled every year this way and met everyone. Sometimes she went ahead and made the contacts. She was a well-regarded academic and had a vast circle of friends apart from Alfred's - including the great art historian Erwin Panofsky to whom she taught English when he arrived here after his flight from Hitler's Germany and with whom she corresponded throughout her life in German, Greek, and Latin as well as English; other friends included Richard Offner, Arthur McComb, Bernard Berenson, Kenneth Clark, Philip Johnson, Agnes Mongan, and many others. She was always interested in "brighties" and among her confidantes of the next generation were Walter Kaiser, Alan Rosenbaum, Pamela Askew, and Joan Mertens, all of whom believe Marga's role and story must be told.

In 1943, when Alfred was fired from the Museum, Marga had to go to work. She taught art history at the Spence School for 40 years and was much beloved and feared, for her personality was strong and her manner flamboyant. Her notes and observations on Picasso and Matisse provided the material for brilliant lectures.

During World War II, after the fall of Paris in June 1940, it was Marga who wrote letters, mostly in French and all on Museum letterhead, enabling those in the arts fleeing Hitler to come to America.

In 1962, in preparation for a Museum of Modern Art exhibition, she wrote her pioneering monograph on Medardo Rosso, still considered the definitive work on the artist. I worked for Barr during this period and know she received little help from him; he did not have time to read the final manuscript.

While processing the Alfred Barr papers in the early 1980s, I had many questions about personalities, events and dates. Marga was very enthusiastic about filling me in on the details. Our conversations began informally and unofficially, over lunch, then evenings and on weekends. We lived near each other and visited frequently. Her reminiscences were fascinating and art historically important but she adamantly refused to use a tape recorder. I have notebooks of these meetings but I realized this method did not truly capture her inimitable manner of delivery. As we became better acquainted, I became increasingly aware that she wrote in a breezy, fluid style, and typed easily. I suggested that she reply to my questions in writing and with some urging she agreed. Eventually, over summers and during school vacations and with encouragement from me (I provided the facts from letters and other documents), she expanded what were notations to candid profiles of friends and descriptive narratives of events and adventures. Among these friends were dealers, collectors, academics, and museum people. Only a very small portion of this material was published in The New Criterion Summer 1987 issue. When Mrs. Barr died, her interest in the copyright to this work, which we co-owned, was left to me. This material will be an important part of the research for the chronicle of Marga's partnership with Alfred that I want to write.

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In addition, my plan of research for the period of the grant is to read the Margaret Scolari Barr Papers which are not processed and to which I have access. In addition, I shall consult papers of other individuals, such as Roland Penrose, Dorothy C. Miller, Philip Johnson, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, and A. Conger Goodyear, among others. Reference interviews will be conducted with family, friends, acquaintances, and those who can give shape to individuals and events that I have come to know other ways. I have already spoken in a preliminary way with many of these individuals.

A detailed outline of the book and abstracts of each chapter will be prepared during the grant period. Indeed, I already have a rough outline of this proposed work-in-progress. I expect that the publication will be completed within three years.

When Alfred Barr retired in 1967 he was asked what part of his work at the Museum he most enjoyed. He replied, "Seeing dreams come true." Marga met and married Alfred when he was at the very cusp of a great adventure: The Museum of Modern Art was in its first season and America was in the midst of the Great Depression. This venture could have failed but it succeeded brilliantly. I propose to show Marga's essential role in the direction their lives took and in enabling Alfred to see his dreams come true.

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b:gug.lit

Literature on the subject:

STCF <> l.c. ~~We regularly read today of the latest exhibition of Matisse or avant-garde artists.~~ Accounts of ~~what~~ what is happening in the modern arts- photography, architecture, film, painting, sculpture, drawing, prints and video- are routinely reported and critiqueed in mass media. Much of this interest can be traced to the powerful influence of The Museum of Modern Art which was established in 1929 and to the influential career of its founding Director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr, Since Russell Lynes' book, Good Old Modern: An Intimate Portrait of the Museum of Modern Art was published in 1973, there have been biograp[hies of individual museum people such as Barr, Julianna Force, Albert Barnes, and such collectors as Peggy Guggenheim, Joseph Hirshhorn, John Hay Whitney, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (to be published fall, 1993), and Philip Johnson (to be published fall 1994). The excellent biography of John Quinn (Reid's Man from New York: John Quinn and His Friends) ~~related to my subject~~ appeared in 1968. Nicholas Fox Weber's Patron Saints (published 1992) dealt collectively with the art activity of five individuals active in the 1920's and 1930's. As part of the published literature in this subject area, I particularly admire James Mellow's The Charmed Circle (published). A book on The Museum of Modern Art by Michael Kimmelman is scheduled to appear in 1995 (Simon & Schuster).

+ worked w. both Alfred + Marga

NO one who has ~~known~~ personally known, has written
~~But nowhere is there an account such as I propose,~~ an account of their important + interesting life together, using, as much a possible, their own words.

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~~the fascinating and important lives of the Barrs, documented from primary source material, using letters, diaries, and chronicles written by them and to them by some of the most powerful and influential persons of the twentieth century.~~ [Models for such an approach include Frederick Pottle's handling of Boswell's Journal and the method utilized by Winifred Gerin in her Brontë and Gaskell biographies.]

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GLEN HARTLEY

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NEW YORK, NY 10011-4202
(212) 620-9009

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR PROPOSALS

We have found that it usually works best to conceive of your proposal for a book as the introduction to a book already written. You are addressing the potential editor who is reading your proposal in order to buy the manuscript for his or her publishing company, just as you will address the future potential reader who will consider purchasing the book in a bookstore. Avoid any "hyping" of commercial aspects--those are best left to presentation by us, the agents, and should be mentioned to us separately. Try to adapt the following outline to explain the need for your book:

1) WHAT THE BOOK IS ABOUT -- Why your subject is interesting, important, relevant

2) WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO DO WITH THE SUBJECT

3) HOW YOU PLAN TO DO IT -- How you are going to lead the reader from the beginning to the end of your book. This can amount to a chapter by chapter outline, but what one wants to convey is the narrative flow, the profluence, the ineluctable narrative drive that is going to take a reader from A to Z. (You also want to bring out here what specifically you will focus on, what source materials you may use, etc.)

4) THE COMPETITION -- Are there other books published to which yours may be compared? Contrast your book to others on the same or similar subjects. One needn't simply disparage competing books. If there are things to praise in them, praise them. Where there are clear differences in approach, conclusions, or in quality, make them clear. If there is another book that you particularly admire and hope to emulate (particularly if it is a well-known, successful trade book), mention it. This portion of the proposal also helps to show your knowledge of the area in which you are writing.

5) YOUR CREDENTIALS FOR WRITING THE BOOK

6) PROJECT A DELIVERY DATE FOR THE COMPLETE MANUSCRIPT

7) ESTIMATE THE LENGTH OF THE MANUSCRIPT (in # of words)

N.B. Length of the proposal: Usually, the longer the proposal, the better. You are then giving the editor more on which to judge your book and to convince his or her colleagues of its worth (and grounds for greater confidence in spending money on it). However, do not write pointless filler.

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Proposal

15-20 pps.

1. Briefly summarize rationale of the bk - 2 sections

2. little def. - implied main subjects:

what does this mean in terms of American Culture

. How was M.; why was d important

. How were they perceived by their friends + colleagues

. What were their personal lives like

3. ____ . The apparatus used - name them: artists
dealers
Parties
collectors - [Dale]
$ + power

(Phones.
2 P - 1 on art types
1 on Money types)

. Nelson Rockefeller.; Davis; Dondero: POLITICS

4. - Narrative structure: Not academic; a flowing narrative.
(Charmed Circle; Painter on Priest)

. encapsulate into proposal - quotes ok to illus. points (Can make it in the proposal - + be involved w. these should sex $ + power >

. Story of Dan's mother the story of the Museum; - 3 generations of Rockefellers etc.

. Ramifications influ. of the Modern - in other areas

. Drama in Dan's own life: story of the 1963. Did Museum ever recover. i.e. Was it the same afterwards...

5. My qualifications for writing this book:

. Worked for both of them

(let go time) (Ref. 17 or 18 Feb)

1

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1995 : proposed publication date

@ 300 pages length

Span : 1930 – 1975. the core : will go back + branch outwards w. other relevant contemp events.

Alfred one of the greatest Museum men of this century ;

but one of the great institutions of our times could not have done it alone

Barr's + Margo's relationship was an intellectual love affair – (much like Hilary + Bill's); also was v. much involved; there was a romance + an intellectual partnership;

CORE Margo + Alfred Barr + the relationship btwn them ;

How this relationship was intrinsically important to the success of the Museum of Modern Art.

their affection, their intimacy + love were existed in tandem with the intellectual.

she was his harshest critic + his most loyal, honest friend. – this duality of 2 people as one unit that helped produced a great institution is the raison d'être for this book.

transpose TPs for Nick Lehr's preface @ other bks available. + studies

from BW

Memo to CP – from me it's really important etc. other in the house done this.

Ethel Did not want to bother you during Matisse Spoke w. B. before I left door then. she wanted me to explain that we want to do this during time we have recess staff.

Russell Lynes – focused on this intimate portrait of the M. as personalities – but not on the great interrelationship of M + M.

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Why I want to do it
When I want to do

10 page

- changes perception about : history of
- " " " major role of persons known as deceased

show : intensity tension of unusual marriage in
wh they were devoted to each other
but in wh there was extramarital -

[modern in the - modernity is on stock in trade -

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Draft #2

BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE

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Barr became my mentor. Knowing of my desire to continue my formal education, he recommended that I be awarded the Museum fellowship to study part-time at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, where I took whatever courses were offered in the evenings. Barr believed that in the modern field I would be best served by continuing to work for him which I did full-time until Fall, 1965 when my first child was born. My friendship with Barr continued until illness overcame him in the early 1970s.

In the 1970s I was preoccupied with family but my interest in contemporary art continued unabated - frequenting galleries, attending lectures and, of course, reading and looking. It was during that time

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that I became associated with the Archives of American Art, a branch of the Smithsonian, on whose Board of Trustees I now serve as a Vice-President.

In 1979 I was asked to return to the Museum of Modern Art to do confidential research on Picasso's Guernica for the Spanish government, pending that picture's return to Spain. It was suggested by the Museum that I get the formal professional credentials of the Archivist's profession. I obtained funding to attend the Columbia School of Library Science, specializing in archival management. I received an M.L.S. degree with highest honors, maintaining a 4.0 average while working part-time as an archives librarian.

From 1981 to 1986 as the full-time archives librarian at The Museum of Modern Art, one of my projects was to organize and make them available to the public the Barr Papers, in addition to provideing reference service. [One result of the work on Barr was the complete annotated bibliography of his published writings that became the basis for an anthology entitled Defining Modern Art (NY: Abrams; 1986: 274-292).] In 1987 I conceived, formulated and drafted the plan that established the Archives as a separate program at the Museum.

In my capacity as Museum Archivist I manage an oral history project, write articles on Museum history, and lecture on aspects of modern art, museum history and/or archival procedures. The routine activities of this program include processing papers, and preparing finding aids,

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providing reference services and advising other institutions on organizing archives. We service around 600 researchers a year.

In processing the Barr Papers, I realized that although she never occupied an official position at the Museum, the contributions of Margaret Scolari-Fitzmaurice, his wife, were essential to his accomplishments and crucial to the development and success of the institution around which their life was built, The Museum of Modern Art. She was an art historian, accomplished linguist and an intellectual thoroughbred. When I asked Marga, as I came to call her when I became head of the Museum Archives and her collaborator, she referred to herself privately as "Alfred's factotum."

Marga and I shared a close relationship until her death in December, 1987. In July 1987 a special Summer issue of The New Criterion published an account of Barr's activities co-authored by Mrs. Barr and me. It received wide attention, has been frequently cited and was favorably reviewed by John Russell in a seven-column article in The New York Times Sunday Art Section. When Mrs. Barr died, the copyright to this work, which we co-owned, was left to me. It is this memoir, a small portion of which published in The New Criterion, See yell. sheet

At this juncture in my life I wish to have the opportunity to write the kind of book I have been wanting to read. I have spent a lifetime helping others with their projects and research and am thus knowledgeable about current trends in art research. There is a need for those involved in the culture of our time to read firsthand the letters

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and documentary material on which so many current assumptions are based. During an average year I administer a full-time program - two assistants, several interns; we service around five hundred researchers and scholars and are routinely acknowledged in a variety of publications. I love my work and am proud of my accomplishments. However, I would welcome the opportunity to make another kind of contribution and hope the Guggenheim Foundation will elect to make this happen.

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P(1)

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organizing archives. ~~We serve around 600 researchers a year.~~

In processing the Barr Papers, I realized that the contributions of Margaret Barr, his wife, although she never occupied an official position at the Museum, were essential to Barr's accomplishments and ~~were influential~~ to the development and success of the institution around which their life was built, The Museum of Modern Art. Marga and I shared a close relationship until her death in December, 1987. A special issue of The New Criterion, Summer 1987, published an account of Barr's activities co-authored by Mrs. Barr and me. It received wide attention, has been frequently cited and was enthusiastically reviewed by John Russell in a seven-column article in The New York Times Sunday Art Section. When Mrs. Barr died, the copyright to this work, which we co-owned, was left to me.

At this juncture in my life I wish to have the opportunity to write the kind of book I have been wanting to read. I have spent a lifetime helping others with their projects and research and am thus knowledgeable about current trends in art research. There is a need for those involved in the culture of our time to read firsthand the letters and documentary material on which so many current assumptions are based. During an average year I administer a full-time program and am routinely acknowledged in a variety of publications. I love my work and am proud of my accomplishments. However, I would welcome the opportunity to make another kind of contribution and hope the Guggenheim Foundation will elect to make this happen.

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conclu.

who.

b:gug.lit

Literature on the subject:

We regularly read today accounts of what is happening in the modern arts: photography, architecture, film, painting, sculpture, drawing, prints and video are routinely reported and critiqued in mass media. Much of this interest can be traced to the powerful influence of The Museum of Modern Art which was established in 1929 and to the influential career of its founding Director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr, Since Russell Lynes' book, Good Old Modern: An Intimate Portrait of the Museum of Modern Art was published in 1973, there have been biographies of individual museum people such as Barr, Juliana Force, Albert Barnes, and such collectors as Peggy Guggenheim, Joseph Hirshhorn, John Hay Whitney, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (to be published fall, 1993), and Philip Johnson (to be published fall 1994). The excellent biography of John Quinn (Reid's Man from New York: John Quinn and His Friends) appeared in 1968. Nicholas Fox Weber's Patron Saints (published 1992) dealt collectively with the art activity of five individuals active in the 1920's and 1930's. As part of the published literature in this subject area, I particularly admire James Mellow's The Charmed Circle (published 1974). A book on The Museum of Modern Art by Michael Kimmelman is scheduled to appear in 1995 (Simon & Schuster).

No one who has personally known and worked with both Alfred and Marga has written an account of their important and interesting

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almost exclusively primary source material

life together, using, as much as feasible, their own words. [Models for such an approach include Frederick Pottle's handling of Boswell's Journal and the method utilized by Winifred Gerin in her Brontë and Gaskell biographies.]

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• Author's point of view > v. important. >

would be so totally ignored. But in institutional politics such things are possible. As I subsequently learned, in 1967 Barr had been rather unceremoniously "retired" from the museum he founded, and by the time I heard about him he was in the final stages of Alzheimer's disease, which would lead to his death in Greensboro, Vermont, on Aug. 15, 1981. By the time Barr lay dying in Vermont, MOMA had been transformed into a virtual corporation, and the modernism he fought for was being declared passé. But Barr was a living reminder of our close proximity to modernism, symbolizing, more than anything else, that modern art was not yet dead.

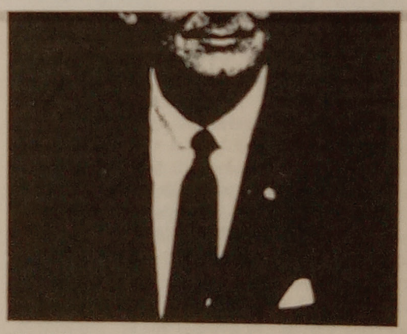
Indeed, despite postmodernist claims to the contrary, modernism is still very much with us, and it is particularly visible in the various incarnations of modern art. For the most part what we recognize as "modern art," or even modernist culture (high, low and sub-), is still defined by the terms set down by Barr over 50 years ago. And the contemporary art museums now popping up in every medium-sized city would be unthinkable without Barr's precedent. Of course, he did not invent modern art, but he taught an entire generation how to look at it, how to understand it and even how to buy it. More than any other single figure—more than Picasso or Matisse or Pollock—Alfred H. Barr, Jr. defined modern art in the U.S.

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One important question any biography of Barr might be expected to answer is: Where did Barr's concept of modern art originate? Yet Marquis offers very little primary evidence regarding Barr's formative influences, and what she does provide is strictly factual material with no real analysis of the conceptual development of Barr's



Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

seeks to answer, although her biography does provide some clues. At Princeton, where he earned his B.A. and M.A., Barr studied with Charles Rufus Morey and Frank Jewett Mather, art historians who, despite contrasting styles, both emphasized connoisseurship and an organic model of stylistic development. Moreover, both were quite open to the study of contemporary art. At Harvard, where he studied for his Ph.D., Barr was profoundly influenced by Paul Sachs and the circle of wealthy young intellectuals (including Jere Abbott, Henry-Russell Hitchcock and A. Everett Austin) who took Sachs's course on museum management and his seminar on

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The Man Who Made the Modern Modern

Two recent books provide an occasion to assess Alfred Barr's role at MOMA as well as the methodology he developed for the study of modern art.

BY BRIAN WALLIS

Alfred H. Barr, Jr.: Missionary for the Modern, by Alice Goldfarb Marquis, New York, Contemporary Books, 1989; 431 pp., $21.95.
Defining Modern Art: Selected Writings of Alfred H. Barr, Jr., edited by Irving Sandler and Amy Newman, New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1986; 302 pp., $27.50.

Less than ten years ago, when I was working as a lowly scrivener at the Museum of Modern Art, I was surprised one day to learn that Alfred Barr, the legendary first director of the museum, was still alive. Not only had I distinctly heard him discussed in the past tense around the museum, but reminiscences about the old man were often uttered dismissively or with the type of derogation generally reserved for the departed. To me, it had seemed improbable that such a significant figure from the museum's past, if still alive, would be so totally ignored. But in institutional politics such things are possible. As I subsequently learned, in 1967 Barr had been rather unceremoniously "retired" from the museum he founded, and by the time I heard about him he was in the final stages of Alzheimer's disease, which would lead to his death in Greensboro, Vermont, on Aug. 15, 1981. By the time Barr lay dying in Vermont, MOMA had been transformed into a virtual corporation, and the modernism he fought for was being declared passé. But Barr was a living reminder of our close proximity to modernism, symbolizing, more than anything else, that modern art was not yet dead.

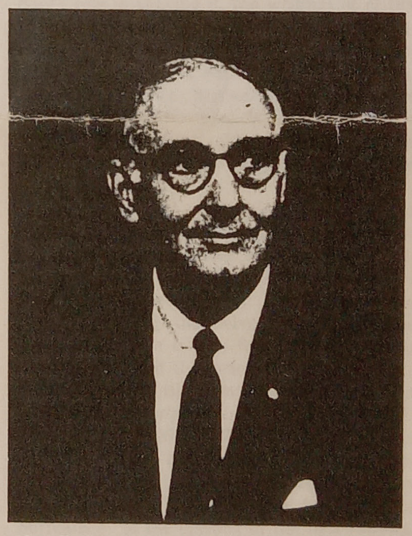
Indeed, despite postmodernist claims to the contrary, modernism is still very much with us, and it is particularly visible in the various incarnations of modern art. For the most part what we recognize as "modern art," or even modernist culture (high, low and sub-), is still defined by the terms set down by Barr over 50 years ago. And the contemporary art museums now popping up in every medium-sized city would be unthinkable without Barr's precedent. Of course, he did not invent modern art, but he taught an entire generation how to look at it, how to understand it and even how to buy it. More than any other single figure—more than Picasso or Matisse or Pollock—Alfred H. Barr, Jr. defined modern art in the U.S.

Surprisingly, until recently, very little had been published on Barr's life and thought. Two recent books have attempted to fill this gap. Alice Goldfarb Marquis, a cultural historian known for her book on the life of Marcel Duchamp, has written a much-needed biography, and Irving Sandler, a critic and devoted follower of the Barr doctrine of modernism, has, with Amy Newman, edited a collection of Barr's writings. The Sandler/Newman collection, while not strictly speaking a biography, supplies a sort of skeletal outline of Barr's life based on a wealth of factual material. Besides the actual texts reproduced, the book includes an introduction by Sandler, succinct headnotes by Newman, a very useful chronology of Barr's life by Jane Fluegel and an exhaustive bibliography of Barr's published writings by Rona Roob. Although neither of these books fully addresses the larger critical questions that might be raised about Barr's complex relation to modernist culture, together they constitute the essential groundwork for all further investigations.

Marquis begins her biography with the analogy of Barr as a missionary, suggesting that modernism was for him both a sort of religion and an evangelical crusade to convert the public. This response she traces to the influence of his father, an ambitious and powerful minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Baltimore, who managed to enlarge considerably his primarily middle-class congregation and to attract to it a circle of wealthy patrons. She argues, for instance, that the specific promotional, fund-raising and audience-gathering techniques used by Barr derived from his father's evangelical endeavors. Marquis numbingly reinforces her point by giving her chapters titles like "Building the Congregation," "Converting the Heathen" and "Defending the Faith." This heavy-handedness is typical of the unfortunate way in which Marquis's unreflective approach to biography has led her to neglect the more compelling aspects of what is nevertheless a wholly plausible thesis.

One important question any biography of Barr might be expected to answer is: Where did Barr's concept of modern art originate? Yet Marquis offers very little primary evidence regarding Barr's formative influences, and what she does provide is strictly factual material with no real analysis of the conceptual development of Barr's thought. A scant dozen pages are devoted to Barr's youth in Baltimore, and another dozen to his education. Why did Barr choose the study and promotion of modern art as his means of rebellion against his middle-class upbringing? It would be interesting to know, for example, about the germination of two traits from Barr's childhood that Marquis only alludes to: a conflicted relationship to class and money and an underlying Puritanism that showed itself in his esthetic penchant for moralism and order.

When Barr was appointed as the first director of the then unnamed Museum of Modern Art in 1929, he was just 27 years old, with a freshly minted doctorate and less than three years of teaching under his belt. Yet at that point his conception of modern art and of the type of museum he hoped to establish were already clearly developed. Where did Barr achieve this extraordinary awareness of the main currents of modern art at a time when, as he himself proclaimed, America was a "modern art pauper"? Unfortunately this is not a question Marquis seeks to answer, although her biography does provide some clues. At Princeton, where he earned his B.A. and M.A., Barr studied with Charles Rufus Morey and Frank Jewett Mather, art historians who, despite contrasting styles, both emphasized connoisseurship and an organic model of stylistic development. Moreover, both were quite open to the study of contemporary art. At Harvard, where he studied for his Ph.D., Barr was profoundly influenced by Paul Sachs and the circle of wealthy young intellectuals (including Jere Abbott, Henry-Russell Hitchcock and A. Everett Austin) who took Sachs's course on museum management and his seminar on



Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

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prints. Sachs was a follower of Bernard Berenson, and he elevated connoisseurship (the detection of individual styles on the basis of formal similarities) to a science, insisting on hands-on experience and an allegiance to style as a primary means of attributing authorship. Although this methodology appealed to Barr's sense of order, he criticized Sachs for not specifically addressing modern art and pledged his future efforts to sorting out modernism.

What needs to be stressed is Barr's unique ability to convincingly graft this training in conservative art-historical methodologies developed for the study of medieval or Renaissance art onto his spotty knowledge of the radical forms of modern art. This transposition allowed him to develop, for the first time, a modern art history. Barr claimed that in modern art, as in earlier art, style, iconography and individual hands could be detected and lines of influence could be charted. Because this model of modern art history is now so pervasive, it is important to examine its implications and to consider how Barr's methodology functioned in the interwar years—how it was a symptom of the widespread necessity, even in the U.S., to reconstruct and reassert the strength of Western European culture.

By the time Barr set out for Europe in midsummer 1927, he had developed a working definition of modern art. He had taught a course on the subject at Wellesley (the first in America) and published several notorious articles on America's failure to appreciate modernism. But that same failure of appreciation in America meant that Barr himself had not yet really seen much modern art before the European excursion that brought him face-to-face with the revolutionary artists of the Bauhaus and the Soviet Union. Barr's famous diary of his trip to Moscow that winter (first published in *October* in 1978 and reprinted in the Sandler/Newman collection) reflects both enthusiasm and disappointment. Barr's approach to Russian Productivism was so colored by academic preconceptions that he kept asking why no one was making paintings.

Barr could not recognize that the original projects of modernist art were by then already outdated and had been abandoned by the Russians. As in most of Germany and much of Europe, in the Soviet Union the abstraction that Barr took to be the hallmark of modernism had been replaced by a variety of figurative or realist styles (including Expressionism and Social Realism) and the idea of art's purity had been replaced by functions (such as advertising and political activism) that didn't square with Barr's notion of disengaged form. Rather than adjusting his beliefs, however, Barr used his European experience selectively to further codify his notion of modern art, and when he returned to Wellesley that fall his course was called "Modern Art: The Ideal of 'Pure' Art."

Barr, who was after all an academic, had his first great impact in education, where he introduced the study of modern art to the college curriculum. He managed to take the topical but confusing subject of modern art and reduce it to simple rules, patterns and formulae—a process that reached its culmination in 1936 in his famous chart of the evolution of modern art styles. Issuing from various strains of Neo-Impressionism, Cézannism and Synthetism in the 1890s, the main currents of modern art here follow neat arrows through Cubism and Futurism on their way to the end results of nongeometrical and geometrical abstract art.

Despite his ability to present this coherent view of modern art in his teaching and exhibitions and in the organizational plan of the Museum of Modern Art, Barr was remarkably reluctant to commit to writing his views on the subject. In 1934, for instance, he said, "The truth is that modern art cannot be defined with any degree of finality either in time or in character and any attempt to do so implies a blind faith, insufficient knowledge, or an academic lack of realism." When he did try to be specific, as in his best-selling booklet *What is Modern Painting?*, it was more often than not in a simple, straightforward prose aimed more at the layman or student than at critics or other professionals. In the writings collected by Sandler and Newman, those most specifically directed toward the key question "What is Modernism?" are often simply evasive.

Barr's approach to modern art was never theoretical. To him the history of modern art was simply a "story" with a conventional narrative structure easily comprehended by the average museum visitor. (Curators at the Modern still refer to the "story" the museum is trying to tell; in museological terms, such an approach is in itself fairly novel.) The story that Barr told in a remarkable series of exhibitions and publications was one in which abstraction was viewed as the goal of modern art, the culmination of a utopian cultural drive that swept aside other contemporary tendencies, such as realism, expressionism, figuration and narrative. Though Barr clearly was aware of the full complexity of the modern arts, he just narrowed his focus selectively. Abstract art, Barr claimed, was "worth looking at primarily because it presents a composition or organization of color, line, light and shade." He willingly acknowledged that "such an attitude of course involves a great impoverishment of painting, an elimination of a wide range of values such as the connotations of subject matter [—i.e.,] sentimental, documentary, political, sexual, religious [—but] the abstract artist prefers impoverishment to adulteration."

For Barr abstract art was cut off from political influence or effect; it was self-sufficient and self-sustaining. He rejected the importance of context, either historical or social. In a system based on tradition and continuity, Barr allowed no sense of rupture, dissonance, contradiction or reversal. Inasmuch as his view of modern art was based on a timeless, linear model of history, an individual artist's achievements were taken to simply reflect larger cultural tendencies, with the history of modern art seen as a succession of avant-gardist movements comprised of individual "geniuses." Within this model, individualism itself was sanctified and personal freedom and expression were seen as a result of, not opposed to, liberal-minded corporate culture. Since Barr saw all art as deriving from previous art movements, he was able to structure very clear genealogies for each movement and to map these roots in a unidirectional passage through MOMA's permanent collection, constituting, in effect, a straight line from van Gogh's *Starry Night* to Picasso's *Guernica*.

This "story" is retold in a variety of forms in the collection of writings assembled by Sandler and Newman. Although the anthology of necessity excludes Barr's classic, book-length writings such as *Cubism and Abstract Art*, *What is Modern Painting?* and the Matisse and Picasso monographs, the editors have attempted to retain the sense of those works by reprinting important excerpts or related works. (They have included, for instance, the introduction from the Cubism book and an article Barr extracted from the Picasso book.) The result is an invaluable compilation, one essential for modern-art scholars, but one that also makes for surprisingly dull reading. Barr's meticulous style, which seemed so fervent in its own time, today often appears elementary or outdated. And, perhaps sensing this, Sandler, in his excellent 40-page introduction, tries to protect Barr from postmodern and neo-Marxist revisers. Both Sandler and Marquis weaken their cases by ignoring or refusing to accept the recent critiques of MOMA as an institution. For a contemporary understanding of the museum and of Barr's role in shaping it, the writings of critics such as Allan Sekula, Carol Duncan, Alan Wallach, Douglas Crimp, Benjamin Buchloh and Serge Guilbaut are essential. Their interpretations address the mythic structure of the museum, examine how it constructs and addresses its audience, and show how its idealistic foundations govern subsequent readings of art and ideology.

Barr's principal accomplishment was, of course, the Museum of Modern Art itself, a thorough innovation in terms of organization, outreach and exhibition practices. This aspect of Barr's life is more familiar: in addition to the classic catalogues themselves, the story of the Modern has been told in Russell Lynes's *Good Old Modern*, and the genesis of the museum's collection was outlined in detail in Barr's own *Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art, 1929-1967* (1977). Particularly in the early years, from the opening exhibition in 1929 through the twin monuments of 1936, "Cubism and Abstract Art" and "Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism" to the opening of the new International Style building on 53rd Street in 1939, Barr presented an extraordinary, unrivaled run of exhibitions in a variety of fields. Barr's own writings (particularly his early prospectus for the museum, "A New Art Museum," 1929) stress the museum's multidisciplinary approach. He apparently based his idea of the structure of the Modern on the Bauhaus—an appropriate model, since Barr's purposes were educational and didactic. Like the Bauhaus (the subject of a major exhibition at the museum in 1938), Barr determined that the museum should be multidepartmental, and that it should exhibit all the arts including film, photography, typography, design and architecture. Although Barr displayed a creative genius in establishing an expansive

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model of the modern art museum, he himself was never entirely certain about what its final form should be.

During his years at the Modern, two particular lapses in Barr's construction of modern art continued to haunt the museum's program. First, Barr's natural proclivity toward European modernism led him to almost completely shun contemporary American art. In his crowning exhibition, "Cubism and Abstract Art," for instance, the only Americans represented in that international survey were the expatriates Alexander Calder and Man Ray. American artists continually protested the Modern's policy of exclusion, and Barr countered weakly, either by showing older American artists (as in "Homer, Ryder, and Eakins" in 1929) or by arguing that the Whitney Museum was already specializing in American art. The second lapse was Barr's curious inability to fully accept or understand popular culture, even though he had been an early promoter of the popular arts, and his earliest plans for the museum had included departments for various mass-culture art forms. Barr's definition of popular culture was extremely narrow, however, and excluded what might be classified as kitsch. Always seeking to elevate mass-produced objects of quality, Barr observed an exclusionary standard of "good design" (he saw the museum's mission as "the discovery and proclamation of excellence"). As a result, the museum misunderstood and misrepresented a vital element of modernist culture.

A somewhat different problem that continually dogged Barr during his tenure at the museum was the discrepancy between his view of the museum's project and that of the trustees. Although Barr possessed a wily ability to extract contributions and donations from wealthy patrons, it also seems clear that he never fully understood their motivations in forming or supporting the museum. While Barr spoke of the institution's purpose as "the conscientious, continuous, resolute distinction of quality from mediocrity" (for him, a kind of utopian social mission), the museum's rich trustees seem to have more often regarded the museum as a type of men's club, established for them to secure or consolidate social and financial power (Nelson Rockefeller once said that everything he learned about politics and power he learned at the Museum of Modern Art.)

Barr's alliance with the upper-class trustees meant not only personal concessions or compromises in the nature of the museum itself, but also the institutionalization of a type of modern art that reinforced bourgeois values. In the United States, for instance, it is important to see Barr's position in stark contrast to the governmental programs sponsored by the Works Project Administration (WPA). While the Modern emphasized the perpetuation of private ownership, easel painting and the work of art as interior decoration, the WPA emphasized the public work of art, and particularly the mural, as an agency for the consolidation of social, national and class values. Leaving aside the equally problematic political agenda of the WPA, it is clear that the Modern offered an alternate—and deliberately less radical—view of art's function. The Museum of Modern Art, Marquis argues, was always allied with the class of its principal patrons, despite what Barr saw as its populism.

Marquis's biography is most valuable in tracing the widening gap between Barr's idealism and the mercenary interests of his patrons. Marquis reveals that Barr was surprisingly accommodating in advising trustees on modern-art bargains, and that he saw no conflict in purchasing works for the trustees with the museum discount or in inflating the value of trustees' works by exhibiting them at the museum. Especially after the decision was made to form a permanent collection, Barr often made special concessions to potential donors, providing art-market tips, installation advice and loans from the museum's collection. Barr even developed a rationale for preferring private patronage over governmental support for the arts.

For years there was considerable debate about the Modern's own process of collecting and acquiring. The central point of debate concerned whether the Modern could retain its modernity with the passage of time. Should the museum have a permanent collection, as Barr suggested, or should it continually rotate works out of its collection once they became accepted? In the years 1947 to '53, the Modern and the Whitney actually had an agreement to "sell to the Metropolitan Museum of Art paintings and sculptures which the two museums agree have passed from the category of modern to that of 'classic.'"

Throughout his years as director of the museum and of the painting and sculpture collection, Barr became increasingly consumed by the idea of tradition and progress in art; he saw modernism as an art of renewal. Believing, like later commentators on modern art such as Clement Greenberg, that all art derived from preceding art, Barr justified the inclusion at the museum of a host of exhibitions with no apparent relation to modern art. One such exhibition was "Whistler's Mother," shown at MOMA on Mother's Day, 1934; another was the "Exhibition of Italian Masters" (which the Metropolitan refused because it came from Mussolini's fascist state), a show that included Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*. In the case of the Italian Renaissance works, Barr justified their inclusion at the Museum of Modern Art by adjusting his famous chart of the lineage of modern art to trace its sources all the way back to Giotto. Such tampering with the Modern's stated purpose as an institution caused trustees to look askance, and led the American Abstract Artists to picket the museum and to ask, in Ad Reinhardt's words, "How Modern Is the Museum of Modern Art?"

As Barr's view of modernism became more expansive, his troubles with the administration increased. By the late 1930s, Barr had become interested in popular arts, folk art, children's art and the art of mental patients. His catholic inclinations diverged ever more sharply from the trustees' focus on forming a collection of masterpieces. The final straw was MOMA's critically disastrous showing, in December 1942, of a project called "Joe Milone's Shoe Shine Stand." The exhibition consisted of an actual shoe-shine stand decorated in an elaborate folk style by a Sicilian immigrant. The work, which Barr deemed "as festive as a Christmas tree, a baroque shrine or a super-juke box," had been discovered by a then-struggling young artist named Louise Nevelson. To the trustees and the press the presentation of this crude work was a deliberate affront, a scandal, the worst caricature of modern art. In less than a year the trustees demanded and received Barr's resignation as director of the museum. Barr remained at the museum in various capacities for another 25 years, but his power was considerably diminished. When he finally retired for good in 1967, the Museum of Modern Art had become a thoroughly different place—unsteady under a succession of directors, ruled by the post-Rockefeller corporate influence of William Paley, distanced from the concerns of contemporary art and inclined increasingly (along with most other museums) toward corporate-sponsored blockbuster exhibitions. Whether this type of museum was the logical culmination of Barr's vision or not is unclear. But by then Barr himself was long forgotten. □

Loaded Images

The relative poverty of France's caricatural tradition is here contrasted with the amplitude and gravity of attention paid to it in a current collection of scholarly essays.

BY SIMON SCHAMA

French Caricature and the French Revolution, 1789–1799, Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, University of California, Los Angeles, 1989; 280 pp., $30.

Arguing in the Constituent Assembly for the adoption of the tricolor flag on French naval vessels, Mirabeau spoke of "an empire of signs" that had to be conquered if the Revolution was to prevail in the hearts and minds of citizens. Though the phrase has a startlingly modern ring, it accurately reflects an acute awareness on the part of revolutionary politicians that signs and symbols, images and visual codes, could determine allegiance as much as speeches or decrees. Once neglected in favor of more conventional

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(Re: conflict btwn MW + AHB -)

AMB chronology from RHIC/CP 2½" document box

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Date January 26, 1944

To: Mr. Wheeler cc: Mr. Abbott
Mr. Soby

From: Mr. Barr

Re:

It would interest me to work on the drawings catalog essay but I cannot do so under the present circumstances without going through the subcommittee of the Coordinating Committee, as described in my memo of January 22.

A.B.

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CUBAN

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Date January 22, 1944

To: Mr. Monroe Wheeler **Re:**

From: Mr. Alfred Barr

Dear Monroe:

As you know, I would like to follow your suggestion, made sometime ago and again yesterday, that I help select the Cuban paintings for the exhibition. But as you know, it has been decided that requests for my advice should pass through the sub-committee of the Coordinating Committee as indicated in the following paragraph in a memo I received sometime ago:

"Advisory Duties
You are expected to be subject to call by any of the Museum committees, particularly by the sub-committee of the Coordinating Committee. To keep your schedule clear and prevent interruptions, department heads or staff members who wish to consult you will ask to have you attend a specific meeting of the sub-committee of the Coordinating Committee at which their problems will be resolved."

Although the selection of pictures of the Cuban exhibition could scarcely be done at the meeting of the sub-committee, I feel it should be cleared through the committee.

A.H.B.

AHB:bk

done - M.W. - 1/25/44

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Dear Dudley

Pa

talk by Mr Nelson Rockefeller
before Women's City Club
Dec. 12 - 32

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wem! com!

A MUSEUM OF MODERN ART AND ITS WORK

1. Introduction

2. Purpose of the Museum

   a. To bring about a sound and widespread understanding of modern art by impartial presentation.

   b. To raise the level of art appreciation throughout the country.

   c. To encourage living artists by exhibiting their work.

   d. To promote international understanding through art.

   e. Then I feel that the Museum offers to individuals something that they would have a hard time getting anywhere else.

In order to bring out this point I should like first to describe the life of a very simple people, the Balanese. They live on the island of Bali, just west of Java in the Dutch East Indies. Due to the many reefs and poor harbors trading vessels seldom stop on the island and therefore one can visit today people comparitively unaffected by western civilization. There is such an abundance of sea food and tropical growth that the people have to devote only a few hours each day to provide for themselves. The result is that the Balanese lead a life a leisure. It is essentially a creative existance which centers around their religion.

Each village has an elaborate and beautifully carved temple decorated with many figures. As these temples are made of a perishable brick which rapidly disintergrates they have to be rebuilt at least once every ten years. This fact has been very important in keeping the art of the country alive because all the work on the temples is done by men of the village. Another important factor in constantly stimulating creative,artistic thought is the

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many religious festivals which are held every year, over 100 in number. Of course, they vary greatly. Practically all of them include a long procession of some sort. Each person carries ~~a banner or~~ an elaborate gift which is taken to the temple. The people spend days weaving these ~~banners~~ out of strips of palm leaves and working the gifts into extraordinary designs made of flowers and fruit. They are not purchased but each person makes his own and no two are alike. Of course, new ones have to be made for every occasion.

Then too, every village has its gamelon or orchestra. These gamelons play the most elaborate symphony music on a wide variety of percussion instruments, all of which are beautifully carved and decorated. There are no professional musicians - a man might be a fisherman in the day time and play in the gamelon during the evenings. It is a great honor to be one of these players and all the young people work very hard toward that end.

There is a great deal of dancing, both ceremonial and popular. The dances are symbolic and very complicated and it takes years of practice to develop the skill and grace required to be able to perform them perfectly. The children start learning when they can barely walk and rapidly ~~learn~~ come to understand the beauty of rhythmic motion which is very important to a person's esthetic and creative development. After the young people are married they can no longer participate in the dances and in many cases marriages are delayed for some time as the boys and girls hate to give up the privilege of being allowed to participate in these dances.

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Beside these more or less specialized arts one finds the ordinary crafts flourishing - weaving, pottery, metal work, wood carving, etc. The extraordinary part is that practically every person is an artist, a musician, a dancer, or any combination of these three. The reason for this seems to be that the children are brought up to think creatively concerning the arts and as they develop their creative abilities are given more ample opportunity and encouragement for growth and development.

In comparison to this almost ideal state we have our own present day life. The creative instinct is seldom aroused or awakened in the child in this country and even when it does appear it is given very little, if any encouragement or chance to develop. Our lives are crowded with ready-made pleasures - we have no idea how to express ourselves creatively even though we may have a craving to do so. Here is where I think the Museum of Modern Art is rendering one of its greatest services. One can get tremendous emotional satisfaction by repeated association with the creative expression of others. Of course, you will say that this is true of any museum but I contend that because the works of art in the Museum of Modern Art are by contemporary men and women who are exposed to the same environment as ourselves, and because the subjects which they portray are subjects with which we are familiar, we get a far more vital creative experience than we can by viewing the works of some 16th Century artist. Therein lies the Museum's peculiar attraction as far as I am concerned.

3. The Museum
   a. History
      1 - Organized in 1929 by a group which included Miss

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Lizzie Bliss, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan, Mrs. Murray Crane, Mr. Frank Crowninshield, and Mr. A. Conger Goodyear.
2.- Heckscher Building
3.- 11 West 53rd Street.

b. Control and operation
1.- The museum operates under a broad charter.
2 - Board of Trustees decides upon the policies, determines what shows should be held, and how the Museum should be run.
   a. Officers
   b. Executive Committee
3 - Advisory Committee - composed of younger members
   a. Initiates ideas
   b. Puts on shows
   c. Has its own sub-committees.
4 - Education Committee
5 - Membership Committee -
   a. One of most active
   b. Lunch meetings every other week.
6 - Staff
   a. Director
   b. Executive Secretary
   c. Chairman of Departments

c. Museum's activities
1.- Present collection is small nucleus of modern painting and sculpture - enough to give the historical background of what is being done today.
2 - Exhibitions
   a. First year (Read page 15 of blue book)
      (1) Matisse - First 1 man show - 1 month 37,000 people
      (2) Rivera - First showing in this country - 1 month 57,000 peopl
      (3) Modern Architectural Exhibition - Philip Johnson presented models and photographs of the work of European and American architects - 1 month 34,000 people

Itinerary

Pennsylvania Museum	Currier Gallery, Manchester, N.H.
Wadsworth Atheneum - Hartford	Toledo Museum
Sears Roebuck, Chicago	Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Mass.
Bullock's Wilshire, Log Angeles	Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh
Buffalo Museum	Lyman Allyn Museum, New London
Cleveland Museum	Denver Art Museum
Milwaukee Art Institute	Rensselaer Polytechnic, Troy
Cincinnati Museum	McMaster University, Hamilton, Ont.
Rochester Museum	John Herron Institute, Indianapolis
Worcester Museum	Smith College Museum
	M.H. DeYoung Memorial, San Francisco

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4-Exhibition of Murals by American Painters and Photographs
- a. Advisory Committee under direction of Lincoln Kirstein
- b. First show in new building - very controversial
- c. Three museums have already requested it.

5- Summer Exhibitions
- a. Loan exhibitions - Bliss and Trustees
- b. Reproductions - Descriptive cards very interesting innovation
- c. Booked for two years
- d. History of show

6 - American Painting and Sculpture - 1862-1932
- a. Interesting historically -
- b. Importance of American painting - Paris
- c. Large attendance

7 - American Folk Art
- a. Interesting historically
- b. Better understand present art.
- c. Where these pictures come from (See diagram in white book)

3. Attendance
   - a. Last year 129,315 - This year 173,009 - 25% increase
   - b. Pay days Mondays and Fridays. Members free

4. Publications
   - a. Catalogs
   - b. Booklet explaining pictures in color reproductions
   - d. Bulletin

5. Library
   - a. No really complete one in existance.
   - b. Being developed
   - c. Several very generous gifts
   - d. Penthouse

6. Educational Program
   - a. Lectures
   - b. Gallery talks
   - c. Slides

7. Publicity
   - a. Experiment last year-Phoenix News Bureau 1,694 clippings in newspapers and throughout country in some 628 papers - 68 magazine articles
   - b. To be handled next year by staff again

8. Finances
   - a. Annual budget of about $80,000
   - b. Money raised by annual contributions as follows:

Patron	$5000 or more
Contributing	$1000 to $5000
Sustaining	$ 250 to $1000
Fellow	$ 100
Associate	$ 25
Annual	$ 10

9. Future
   - a. Architecture b. Motion Picture c. Art in Industry

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PERSONAL A.H.B

AHB #3
Corresp.

DESSAU
Oct. 16

Dear Alfred Barr,

It would be hopeless to catch up on all the things we have been seeing. Today naturally I am reminded of you having just come to the Bauhaus for the first time. John McAndrew and I have been traveling, rather fast to be sure, but traveling all over Germany and Holland to find modern architecture. We still think that Oud's Hook houses are the Parthenon of modern Eruope. That is putting it a little strongly, but they are splendid. Oud is building a new siedlung of 700 houses in Rotterdam, but though wonderful of course, lack the genius, and have not the utter charm of the Hook buildings. Oud is not to build the new Bourse at Rotterdam, and he is very sick with a nervous breakdown. They tell us that he works very little and has done scarcely anything for several years. Another thing we especially liked in Hoeland was the Brinkmann and Vander Vlugt factory at Rotterdam. It is just this month finished and it is a beautiful creation! You will see our pictures of it when we get back. Then the Bijvoet sanatorium at Hilversum we thought good, and though the Oudok things are pleasant, I find my attraction to that local Dutch movement as a whole diminishing. You have down on the list a kight house at Katwijk, but we hunted and found instead an old house by Oud, really good. Later we find from books that the house you meant must be the radio house at Kootwyck. We missed it. In Germany we found Essen especially progressive. They have done many things since you were there, and we got in touch with a charming man in the Stadtbauamt, who showed us everything. Fankfurt has a new Siedlung since you were there at Romerstadt. Only part of it, the best is new, so you remember where it was. Duisburg has some new lock buildings, done in fraw concrete with apple green ironwork, very stunning. In Berlin there is a new Luckhardt and Anker house done with the primary colors and white. While not as sucessful a use of this as Oud's still it is a joy to see these strong colors being used tastefully in building. And surprise upong surprise, we find that Mendelsohn, whom you know through the Einstein Turm, and the movie theatre in Berlin, has become "international". We found accidentally a new house of his in the most beatiful suburb of Berlin that is plain white plaster with brass window frames. There are no conceits, perfectly plain masses give the effects. I have always thought he had good taste, but this gives him restraint as well. Then, last but not least Dessau. We were really thrilled at the sight of the Bauhaus. It is a magnificent building. I regard it as the most beautiful building we have seen, of the larger than house variety. Perhaps the Hook has what Hitchcock would call more lyric beauty, but the Bauhaus has beauty of plan, and great strength of design. It has a majesty and smplicity which are unequaled. I wonder if you have seen the new buildings in the Torten Siedlung. I think the older buildings there are quite ugly, but the new ones are among Gropius best work, better than the Stuttgart houses. We won't find out till tomorrow when they were done.

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I shall take some photographs of them anyhow. I forgot to mention a little known architect Haessler in Celle near Hanover who is doing things in the best style, and who uses color better than anyone but Oud. To handle these primary color intelligently and successfully is quite a job, but by moving most of the surface white, he has succeeded in making a beautiful building of the school there at Celle. In one room for instance, the curtains are a vivid blue, the walls washed with lemon yellow, and red on the ironwork of the chairs and desks. But to get back here. We called on Feininger this morning, but he is in Halle working. But we saw Lux, who was very nice to us, and showed us his painting which he has begun only recently. Inthe afternoonwe went back and Mrs. Feininger showed us many of papa Feiningers watercolors, which I must say, I thought rather dull. We also got ourselves led through the Bauhaus by an American student of architecture. He is in the second half of the program, that is working onchairs and things. The system impressed me as being a very good one ineed for such a school. This American did not seem to know it but he was getting, as John tells me, a much better architectural education than in any architectural school in our country. Bauhaus had a close shave this last winter. There was talk in the assembly of doing away with it as an art school and using it for something "useful" a hospital or the like. It was interestingly enough the socialists and communists who by a slight vote kept it going for another five years. We are going to Halle day after tomorrow and we shall see Mr. Feininger there. I liked the family very much, but now that Feininger has left the Bauhous for good and all, Mrs. tells me not to ask anything about it. There is an exhibition of Klee on in Dessau now I have seen some very charming ones that I like. I am going to pick out one to purchase tomorrow. They are onlyab ut 600 marks. At the same time there is a show of the Blaue Vier going on in Berlin at which Kelde's pictures are not so good but cost much more than twice as much. I like the kind which may not be considered his best, that has many solid colors or it in various shapes and angles separated by an ink line. The caricatures on the plainground or on the wet paper ground I don't see so much in. Also I love the kind with long lines parallel making outlines like the section of an onion. I cannot get John to like them, and since I have no intellectual way of basing my appreciation or idiosyncrasy, he thinks of course I am a dodo. I find that my reactions to painting are horribly primitive, so I really must learnsomething about it. I think I better go back to Harvard and take courses. I wish your thesis was done and published. I want to read it. But before the end of this sheet: The Kroller collection in the Hague was magnificent expecially the Seurat, apart of course from the best Vangoghs I have ever seen. Then I remember especially the Cezanne' in Amsterdam, the Matisse in Essen, but the list is too long. The Feiningers send their best, and are delighted with your new museum. Don't be surprised if John looks you up sometime in December. He is a charming talker, and while not profound, has a good eye. I have learned a lot from him, especially about Barock, or which we are finding fine examples in Germany.

Thankfully over,

PHILIP JOHNSON

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Early Museum History
J.3.4.h.

July Sixth
1 9 3 3

Mr. Alfred H. Barr, Jr.
Greensboro
Vt.

Dear Alfred:

Since our conversation I have worked up the following rough draft for the thirty lectures.

PAINTING - 6 lectures (1865 to present time)

SCULPTURE - 2 lectures

GRAPHIC ARTS
1 lecture

ILLUSTRATION & CARICATURE
1 lecture

ARCHITECTURE
5 lectures divided as follows: (According to an outline which Phil had made out previously.)

1. The Immediate Background in the 2nd half of 19th century.
   1. Mediaeval Rationalism: Richardson
      Root
   2. Metal Construction: Roebling
      Holabird & Roche

2. The First Generation of the 20th century.
   "Half-Modern" Architecture: Sullivan
      Wright

3. Skyscraper Architects:..... Walker
      Kahn
      Corbett
      Severance & Van Alen
      Holabird and Root
      Hood

Henry Fowler

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July Sixth, 1933.

4. International Style:.....Howe & Lescaze
Neutra
Hood
Kahn

5. & 6. Housing

MUSIC - 3 lectures (divided into A. Classical
B. Popular (Jazz) (1 lecture)

ARTS & CRAFTS - 2 lectures

MOVIES - 3 lectures

THEATRE - 5 lectures as follows:
A.-History of plays
B.-" " acting
C.-" " stage craft
D.-Vaudeville and Music Hall
E.-The Dance and Ballet.

Carrington - Sam R. E Jones

I am working at present in trying to fill in, in greater detail, the actual lectures themselves. As you notice Painting and Sculpture fall rather into the background, but I cannot help feeling that this is really the case in relation to the other arts.

Music might be questionable in such a series but I am sure that I can get an excellent lecture together on Jazz, to be given either by George Gershwin or my cousin, Kay Swaring, who does that kind of thing rather magnificently. The classical side might be handled by Jere or maybe some better known person. I think it would be an interesting group, if handled correctly.

As to the actual form of the lectures, I am tending more and more towards the idea of a half-hour period with 5 minutes of introductory talk by me; 15 minutes by the guest lecturer, if any, and 10 minutes of discussion in a question and answer form in which I would ask the questions, taking them either from the mails or concocting them, as the occasion demands.

The 5 minute introductory talk, I think, would serve as a good binding medium and give the series a certain cohesion.

I am more than willing to give as many lectures as you think fit, but I wonder whether guest lecturers' names would not make the program much more attractive and authoritative, as I can hardly claim to be up in the last word in all these arts , even after a good solid Summer's work.

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July Sixth, 1933.

As to the text-book or study-book which would be worked up by us, it is questionable whether it should cover all the various headings. I think it could simply aim at supplementing the radio talks where visual material is necessary.

I talked with Tyson this morning who seemed delighted with this general layout and with the half-hour idea. He also agreed that when working out the budget a $50. average should be included to pay guest lecturers, his feeling being that if the Carnegie group took up this idea, $1500. more or less would not make much difference.

Alan is going to see Tyson during the next few days and talk to him more specifically about the financial set-up. Meanwhile I am going ahead, trying to fill out the schedule more specifically.

I would like to build up partly thru the introductory talk and partly thru the question, the general series around the idea of the relation between the arts and the public.

As to guest lecturers, I have in mind the following:
On architecture, Phil and Lewis Mumford.
On music, Kay Warburg, George Gershwin and Deems Taylor. Or Jere.
On arts and crafts, Philip or someone he may designate.
On the movies, Seldes, Loremtz, Iris, or perhaps the person who writes Lincoln's movie chronicles for the Hound & Horn.
On the theatre, John Mason Brown, Lee Simonson or Robt. Edmund Jones.
On the dance, Lincoln or someone he may suggest.

Please realize I am not trying to squirm out of the responsibility of giving the majority of the lectures, but I think I would be more useful as a general master of ceremonies, giving occasional full lectures, instead of trying to claim an authoritative knowledge in all these fields.

Do let me know your opinion.

As ever,

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W
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SUGGESTION FOR AN APPROACH TO THE ORGANIZING OF A RADIO LECTURE SERIES ON AMERICAN ART.

* * *

General Scheme: The introduction of a guest authority to the "listener-in" for the purpose of discussing the art that surrounds him.

Method: Dialogue between the authority and the interlocutor.

* * *

"THE MODERN MAN LOOKS AT LIVING".

TWO LECTURES BY PHILIP JOHNSON ###

A. The Room You Sit In. (Four lectures)

1:- Walls and Windows
- glass, mullions
- curtains
- wall materials
- color

2:- Floors & Ceilings
- base mouldings
- ceiling mouldings

3:- Furniture
- chair - large, small, couch
- table - desk, bridge-table, tea-table
- Placing - relation of furniture to fireplaces, doors, windows.

ONE LECTURE BY PHILIP JOHNSON ###

4:- Useful Objects
- lamps & lighting
- desk equipment
- smoking accessories

Miscellaneous
- vases
- waste-paper baskets
- telephones
- clocks
- radiators, etc.

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The Room You Sit In. (Continued)

5:- Decorative Objects
Ornamental bric-a-brac
Sculpture, Painting, The Graphic Arts
Plants & Flowers

One Lecture by: Mrs. Helen Appleton Reid)

***

- -

One Lecture by: Mr. George Howe)

B: The House You Live In. (Three lectures)

Interior:

Communication - hallways

Isolation - walls & doorways

in relation to:
Livingroom
Diningroom
Kitchen
Study-Library
Bedrooms
Bathroom
Porch

***

TWO LECTURES BY CATHERINE BAUER

Exterior:

1:- Facades
Walls
Windows
Doors
Terraces

2:- Roofs
Construction

3:- Garage

4:- Surroundings
Paths
Lawns
Flower-beds.

***

- -

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THREE LECTURES BY LEWIS MUMFORD

C: The Community You Live In. (Three Lectures).

1: Housing
- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

2: City Planning

3: Regional Planning

###

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December 26th, 1934.

Miss Catherine Bauer
Labor Housing Conference
2021 Chancellor St.
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Miss Bauer:

Thank you for the corrected script. I have not seen your corrections as the script arrived Saturday, after I left the museum. I had given instructions for it to be sent immediately to Mr. D'Harnoncourt, director of the program. This was done. A note from him on my desk this morning informs me that he sent the script as corrected by you to the mimeographer before he left town for the holidays.

As I believe I told you, I finished my work on your script a long time ago and turned it over to Count D'Harnoncourt in August or early in September. I asked him a number of time to make any changes that he wanted and to send it on to you for final O.K. He took it in its turn, however, and although he made almost no changes in it from my original script, it was held up until Tuesday, December 18, the day you got it at the museum.

The broadcast is scheduled for Saturday night, January 5, from 8:00 to 8:20 Eastern Standard Time, over station WJZ and net-work.

Reynal & Hitchcock, publishers of "Art in America in Modern Times" tell me that a copy of that book was sent you long ago. At my request, however, they are sending you another copy today.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Newmeyer,
Publicity Director

SN:FS

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Literature on the Subject:

~~The evolution of~~ ~~Barr, Jr. the Museum of Modern Art~~

P

We regularly read today accounts of the ~~latest~~ latest Matisse exhibitions or avant-garde artists. ~~film makers.~~

Accounts of what is happening in the modern arts — photog, architecture & film as well as the "fine arts"; pntg and sculpture — are routinely reported & critiqued in mass media.

Much of this interest can be ~~traced~~ traced to the ~~activities~~ powerful influence of the acquisitions of the Museum of Modern which was established in 1929 & to ~~its first~~ the influential career of its first Director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Since Russell Lynes' book Good old Modern: An Intimate History of the M.o.M.A was published in ~~1973~~ 1973, there have been biographies of individual museum people such as Barr, Juliana Force, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller collectors, ~~Peggy~~ Peggy Guggenheim, Joseph Hirshhorn, ~~The Whitneys~~ John Hay Whitney, ~~A~~ Rockefeller (~~published~~ to be published fall, 1993) and Philip Johnson (to be published fall, 1994). ~~The~~ excellent Biography. ~~Related to~~ John Quinn (Reid's Man from NY:) My subject appeared in 1968. Nicholas Weber's Patrons & Painters (published 1992) deals collectively with the lives & activity of five individuals active in the 1920s & 1930s. John Quinn & His Friends

~~An excellent book~~

~~Part of the~~ As part of the published literature ~~of this~~ on this subject I ~~book~~ particularly admire James Thrall Soby's The Charmed Circle. ~~Many related books~~ Michael Kimmelman's book on the M.o.M.A is scheduled to be published in 1995 (S+Shuster).

P

But nowhere is there an ~~author~~ account such as I propose, an account of the lives of the Barr, documented from primary sources — married — work letters, ~~etc~~ diaries and chronicles written by them & to them by some of the most powerful & influential persons of the 20th C. Models for such an approach include Frederick Pottle's handling of Boswell's Journals and the methods utilized by Winifred Gerin in her Bronte & Gaskell biographies.

founder & important

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① What the book is about - briefly summarize the nature of the book: 2 sentences.
Why subject is interesting, imp., relevant.

~~The career of Alfred H. Barr, Jr. founding Director of the M.o.M.A.~~

~~The Relationship of Alfred Barr & Marga Scolari Barr~~

~~In preparing Barr papers I came to realize that Barr's achievements were~~
made possible in no small measure due to the fact he married Margaret Scolari Fitzmaurice

There are ~~certain~~ careers in every generation that mark a turning point in our history & that of Alfred Barr's was certainly one of them. ~~As founding Director of the M.o.M.A.~~ ~~this~~ ~~the history of the institution has been written but the~~ ~~fact~~ I propose to tell. The story of their ~~career~~ ~~was a human achievement~~ & unusual life together ~~in relation to an extraordinary~~ ~~marriage~~ Altho' she never occupied an official position at the M.o.M.A. the contributions of Margaret Scolari Barr were crucial to the development & success of Barr's ~~accomplishments~~ achievements. An art historian, accomplished linguist & an intellectual throughbred, Marga, as I came to call her when I became ~~head~~ of the Archives at the M.o.M.A., referred to herself proudly as "Alfred's factotum." ~~At her together~~ ~~In 1987~~ ~~The Two~~ ~~In 1987~~ Before her death in 1987, Mrs. Barr & I collaborated on a chronicle of their fascinating life together, a small ~~part~~ portion of which was excerpted for publication in the Summer 1987 issue of The New Criterion. ~~This excerpt~~ ~~included~~ ~~I have proposed to~~ ~~to~~ Using material not published ~~at~~ at the time, diaries and letters that were willed to the Archives at Bard but not yet made public, I propose ~~to tell their story~~ of their life together. to write a ~~book~~ dual biography and tell their story in, as much as possible, their own words.

was picked up at auction

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Description of Project:

Importance of the main subjects: A + M. M + her background.

The supporting cast: collectors etc — Matisses, dealers, academics, former students, friends.

The background: Rise of fascism, WW II, control of culture fr. Europe to US (M v. helpful in this) politics in this country (McCarthy, Dondero)

Narrative structure: Use W. Spies - (outline chapters.)
N4 Southern Pacific.
per to time of their mtg etc. see white sheet
ending: M's burial with A in Greensboro - under headstones
in front of AT+T Bldg. designed by PJ

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1929: PJ

28 July — Brenau. >

8 NW. - to Mother. —

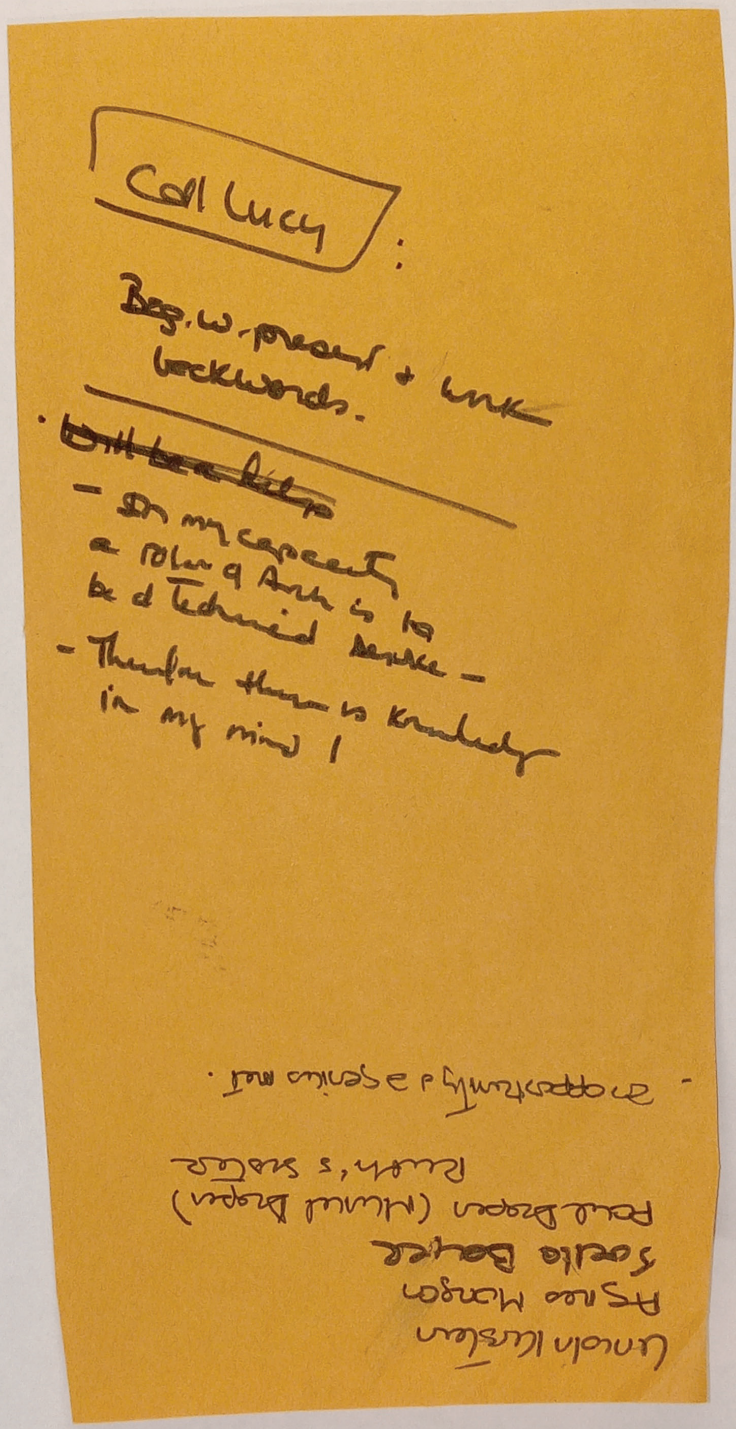
In processing Alfred Barr's Papers I realized that ~~I'll be a life's work, the~~ although she never occupied an official position at the Museum, ~~Mrs Barr, his wife was~~ the contributions of Barr's wife, Margaret Scolari, ~~were crucial~~ were crucial to the development & success of the institution, & were committed to Barr's accomplishments. Margaret, as I came to call her when I became head of the M. Archives & her colleague, referred to herself privately as Alfred's secretary. When I asked

we

An ar historian, ~~if there is this~~ accomplished linguist & ~~artist~~ an intellectual thoroughbred,

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Call Lucy:

Beg. w. present + work backwards.

- In my capacity as a [illegible] Artist is to be a Technical Master -
- Therefore there is knowledge in my mind!

[illegible]

Lincoln Kirstein
Alice Mangon
Paul Bowles (Muriel Draper)
Stella Bowles
Ruth's sister