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November 2, 1959

Miss Jane Mull
Fortune Magazine
9 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York

Dear Jane:

Herewith are the notes I mentioned on the phone.

November 16, on the occasion of its 30th Anniversary, the Museum of Modern Art will announce plans for a major fund raising drive for endowment and for additional building space (\$25,000,000). I'd like to suggest the possibility of Fortune's doing a sort of backward and forward look at the Museum sometime during the coming year.

It seems to me that the Museum's history is more intimately tied up with various changes in American business life than any other cultural institution in America. This is due partly to the wide scope of our activities established in the very beginning. "The Museum's charter clearly reflects the belief of American pragmatism that the primary function of thought is to serve as a guide to action" our 30th Anniversary prospectus states. The business community, also pragmatic, has from the beginning played an active role in the Museum and I think we in turn have served and influenced it.

From the famous Machine Art show in 1932 to the current Buckminster Fuller show contributed by Aluminium Ltd., it has been a two-way process. We have collected and exhibited articles of great concern to industry and in turn industry has supported our activities. (Never on a quid pro quo basis, incidentally; the record of support without strings and pressure on the part of business and industry is really extraordinary.)

This unique collection will become visible for the first time when we get a new building. We will have more things on view - particularly the design and photography collections which are now never shown - and those things not on view will be in "accessible storage" instead of warehouses scattered in two counties. As you know the collections contain hundreds of works of art given by businessmen and hundreds that are products of businessmen. This is particularly true in the design collection, which is the only one like it in the world (industrial artifacts - posters to ads to pots to a panel from a thinking machine and part of an x-ray tube.)

Business has also contributed substantially to our exhibitions program, frequently by underwriting shows. The ones that come to mind at the moment, in addition to the current Fuller show, are Textiles U.S.A., the furniture competitions, the Good Design shows, Premium Toys Designed for Industry and The Package (which was sponsored by Reynolds Metals, National Distillers and Container Corporation.)

As for forward look - well it's hard to see around corners. However, I think our international program in particular, will become increasingly important as the idea of cultural exchange becomes more widely recognized as important.

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-2- December 18, 1950

Robert Dowling, for example, told the fourth annual business conference of St. John's University that this country's program of cultural exchanges was one of the leading developments in establishing good will for the United States among peoples of the world.

And these overseas activities, which have been part of the Museum program for years and stepped up considerably in the past seven years, include exhibitions of American design, architecture, photographs etc., as well as painting and sculpture.

I'm sure you know more about the business community's interest in art and the numerous examples of business collections, business sponsored prizes in art competitions, etc. than anyone else. I have the impression that all this kind of activity is increasing rapidly and I think the Museum has been partly responsible as a source of inspiration and education in this field.

If any of this seems at all likely to you, let me know. I'll be glad to pull together supporting data of any kind.

As a matter of fact, I will be happy to sit down with you

one of these days period.

Sincerely,

Best regards,

lw

Leo Lionni

LL:ds

Mrs. Elizabeth Shaw
Director of Studies
21 West 53 Street
New York, New York

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F O R T U N E

Editorial Department

9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N.Y.

December 18, 1958

Dear Liz:

Although at this point it is difficult for me to concentrate on a manner in which we could justifiably do a story on the Museum, I will be happy to sit down with you one of these days and talk about your 30th Anniversary. As a matter of fact, I will be happy to sit down with you one of these days period.

Best regards,



Leo Lionni

LL:ds

Mrs. Elizabeth Shaw
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street
New York, New York

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3 December, 1958.

Mr. Leo Lionni,
Fortune Magazine
9 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N.Y.

Dear Leo,

I think your spread of useful objects for Christmas for the December issue of Fortune is wonderfully handsome and, naturally, I am awfully glad that you were able to include a gift to our Museum.

I ran into Dan Wiener the other day and we reminisced about the photographs he took here when you thought Fortune might do something with our 25th Anniversary. I wanted to remind you that 1959 is our 30th Anniversary which we hope to start celebrating next Fall. I think this will be the most spectacular of all our anniversaries, particularly because we have to look forward to the Museum as it will and should be, rather than as it has been.

If you think there is any possibility of reviving the interest of Fortune, do let me know.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Shaw
Publicity Director

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