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January 3, 1945, (personal, confidential) Barr to Sachs

Dear Paul :

Your note of December 30th seems to have been slow in the mail. I don't know what may come up at the trustees' meeting on the 11th. I know of no special crisis, but perhaps for that very reason it might be helpful if you were to attend. If the meeting were critical, Clark would suppose that I had conspired to have you there. It's quite likely he thought I had inspired your letter to Harpers. He actually said so about Dan Rich's. In any case, he has never read yours to the board, unfortunately, for thanks to his discouragement, no trustee defended the Museum's record publicly except Philip Goodwin. Did he ever explain to you?

However, the current events and issues are, Sobey has resigned, officially to write, actually in disgust at the bad management, frustration, and continuous intrigue under Clark's regime. He is a great loss. Francis Hawkins, a very efficient and honest secretary, has resigned in protest against the administration. (Officially no reason is given.)

Very confidential--Sweeney may take Sobey's place. That would be good.

The Museum collection of paintings will be reviewed by the trustees, Clark being eager to get rid of a lot of things he doesn't like. The review, originally scheduled for spring with adequate space and time, will be held in January, much of it

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January 5, 1945 - 2 -

in a warehouse under crowded and disadvantageous conditions.
 Issue: shall the collection be reduced and confined to master works of the first quality, or shall educational and historical purposes involving secondary works also be served? Much silly and unnecessary argument on this. I am not involved because I'm not asked by Clark. This is too long an argument to trouble you with by longhand.

Issue: shall a professional, or experts, be interested entrusted? with collection, or shall a trustee committee continue to be responsible? This may well come up.

There are Museum problems. As for my interests, which you very kindly asked about. My battle personally seems lost. Clark scrapped the (my) collection plan last April, after it had been approved enthusiastically by the executive committee. He also refused to make any official statement repudiating the Harpers attack on the Museum's staff and me, coming out against Dan Rich in Art News for defending me, etc. So I am on the shelf for the time being, although I'd rather try to complete the Museum collection more than anything I should think of. But that's gone by, for now, anyway, and I am very fond of Sweeney.

If you were to be in New York anyway, it would be fine to have you, although I should like to have a chat with you first, if you are free and we could do so privately, perhaps with Sobey, who is so much wiser, I think, than I. We do need your advice and help, though how to give it voice I'm not sure. Many thanks to you, and best greetings to Nita, devotedly, Alfred

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January 5, 1945 - 3

P.S. Have you received the report of the policy committee sent to all trustees?

presented itself for you to say anything. The very fact of your presence and the fact you've shown interest in the past should, I think, offer great support to those who share your views. As I understand it, Jim Leboy stays on the board even though he resigns from the staff. I have not strongly your feel about museum selling works of art, and you might appear at a critical moment if they discuss, as they seem to favor of doing, the selling of their paintings. If you do not know it already, you might be interested to learn that it was not Alfred that Steven Clark said that about one week very eager to sell the things which have already appeared on the market in New York. I should think if the question arose about the value of professional or expert care of the collection, you might have some very robust arguments. Whether or not you could bring up the collection also supported by the museum's collection and supported by Clark, I do not know.

For your information, John Johnson told me last night that Francis Perkins, when she resigned recently--and Alfred's letter--quite six or eight pages giving the reasons for her resignation. Clark verified that she was a socialist and should see a psychiatrist. The following week she presented Clark with statements from three of New York's eminent psychiatrists, each of them said she was one of the sanest women he'd ever seen.

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Agnes Mongdon to PJB, re letter from Barr, January, 1945

I should be entirely in favor of your attending the meeting of the trustees on the 11th. Even if no opportunity presented itself for you to say anything, the very fact of your presence and the stand you've always taken in the past should, I think, offer moral support to those who share your views. As I understand it, Jim Sobey stays on the board even though he resigns from the staff. I know how strongly you feel about museums selling works of art, and you might appear at a critical moment if they discuss, as they seem in favor of doing, the selling of their paintings. If you do not know it already, you might be interested to learn that it was not Alfred but Steven Clark and Dick Abbott who were very eager to sell the things which have ^{already} appeared on the market in New York. I should think if the question arose about the value of professional or expert care of the collection, you might have some very potent arguments. Whether or not you could bring up the collection plan approved by the executive committee and scrapped by Clark, I do not know.

For your information, John McAndrew told me last night that Francis Hawkins, when she resigned recently--see Alfred's letter--wrote six or eight pages giving the reasons for her resignation. Clark replied that she was a neurotic and should see a psychiatrist. The following week she presented Clark with statements from three of New York's eminent psychiatrists, each of whom said she was one of the sanest women he'd ever seen.

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Mongdon to PJS, Jan '45- 2 -

I should think that if you could see Alfred privately some time before the 11th, first alone and then with Sobey, you would be wonderfully primed for the meeting. Jim Sobey's article in the October Art in America runs from page 230 to 235. It won't take you more than ten minutes to read. When you have finished it, may I suggest that you have a look at Gordon's contribution.

Agnes Mongdon.

(These prima donnas are something to handle, you know. And of course, some of the ablest are always prima donnas. It takes great patience. This all worked out pretty well. - PJS)

Your opinion is important not only because you are a trustee but also because you are a member of the public with a special interest in art.

Should you be interested, I have borrowed from our publicity department the album with clippings of all the criticisms and notices of the exhibition. This book of clippings will be available to you at the desk of the Museum library, on the 4th floor, during the next month or so. The reviews on the whole were very favorable, but few of the critics really faced the problem of analyzing so comprehensive a collection. Nevertheless you may care to go through them. I enclose a release which states the facts of the show. However, it is your own call on when

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October 30, 1945

Dear Paul:

The Museum collection has now been on view for several months. Though a few changes have been made to compensate for the loan of certain pictures, the show on the whole is much as it was when first hung. About the middle of November, however, one of the galleries must be turned over to the Christmas circus for children, so that a considerable revision will be necessary. At that time I hope to add a few new acquisitions made by Mr. Sweeney in recent months, and also to make several substitutions in cases where we had two pictures of about equal quality but too little room to hang both. At this time, therefore, I would very much like to have your advice on the selection and installation. Your opinion is important not only because you are a trustee but also because you are a member of the public with a special interest in art.

Should you be interested, I have borrowed from our publicity department the album with clippings of all the criticisms and notices of the exhibition. This book of clippings will be available to you at the desk of the Museum librarian, on the 4th floor, during the next month or so. The reviews on the whole were very favorable, but few of the critics really faced the problem of analyzing so comprehensive a collection. Nevertheless you may care to go through them. I enclose a release which states the thesis of the show. However, it is your own opinion which

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October 30, 1945 - 2 -

would now be valuable to my colleagues and myself, as we consider revisions of the installation. Later in January the whole installation will be scrapped and the collection compressed into the 3rd floor galleries for several months. Sincerely

Alfred
Should any of your class have seen the show, I'd much appreciate their critical opinion. None would be more severe.

For sending me your release, which I shall read at the first opportunity. Sincerely,

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October ? 1945

Dear Alfred:

Thank you for your interesting letter of the 30th. I hope that my opinion may prove of value. In any case, I plan to be in New York on Monday and Tuesday, November 12th and 13th, until 5 o'clock on the 13th. I'll be glad to give you a telephone call when I get to New York, after my rather full program has been worked out. In the meantime, many thanks for sending me your release, which I shall read at the first opportunity. Sincerely,

PJS

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May 2, 1947

Dear Paul:

Most reluctantly we accept your second invitation, since really Marga and I feel that you should dine with us. However, I realize that your prior engagements will prevent this. Actually we are both delighted to join you and Wita and Miss Loveman, though I think you've forgotten that you introduced me to Miss Loveman over twenty years ago. Indeed, she published my first article, the book review of Alfred Barnes's The Art in Painting. We look forward very much to seeing you.

Alfred

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follows May 5, 1947

The first major exhibition of drawings owned by the Museum of Modern Art will be presented when "Drawings from the Museum Collection" opens to the public Wednesday, May 5th April 16th, in the first floor galleries of the Museum, 11 West 53rd street. The exhibition consists of 142 drawings selected from the Museum's collection of over 230 works. The drawings shown are chiefly by 20th century artists, but important 19th century works are also included. Most important represented in either the 19th or 20th century groups is Seurat, whose five crayon drawings bequeathed to the Museum by Miss Lillie P. Bliss, together with a drawing on extended loan, constitute probably the finest group by this man in any museum.

Other artists represented in the exhibition include the following Europeans, some of whom now reside permanently in this country: Cezanne, Matisse, Picasso, Gauguin, Segonzat, Holzsig? Modigliani, Pascin, Tchelipchev, Ferman, Valle, Monet? Pieffner, Hoffer, Gross, Cartley, Deloney, Augenfant, Leger, Kadzinsky, Gahn, Arp, Mafone, Miro, Ernst, Taaguy, Di Chirrico, Rodin, Espial, Goguey, Berzeska, Michev and Bartok. American artists shown from the United States, Blaikens, Kuhn, Carfiol, Wawens, Korach, Stern, Kuniosht, Sheeler, O'Keefe, Aevan, Blumer, Shabera, Barky, Terera, Graves, Lachev, and Flannigan; from Mexico, Orozco, Rivera, Tirera Alvan, Meza. From Brazil, Pontinari. From Cuba, Sorango, Martinez Pedro, Belaz. From Chile, Mata.

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The exhibition has been arranged in an integral sequence, beginning with more or less traditional styles, followed by cubist, abstract and surrealist works, and concluding with a group of sculptors' drawings. A number of 19th century American folk drawings are shown on the second floor. Also on the second floor, among the Museum's collection of paintings, are several oils and water colors by Klee and Miro which are essentially drawings.

The exhibition has been arranged by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., and Dorothy S. Miller, director and curator respectively of the Museum collection. A catalogue of drawings in the collection in the field of Modern Art, edited by Mr. Barr, will be published shortly. It will contain approximately 100 plates, accompanied by notes on the drawings illustrated. Mr. Barr comments on the exhibition as follows: "This is the first general exhibition of the Museum's drawings, although the collection is now nearly eighteen years old. In fact, a drawing was one of the first works of art actually acquired by the Museum. In 1929, the same month the Museum first opened its doors to the public, Professor Paul J. Sachs of Harvard bought the Portrait of Anna Peter, by Georg Gross, and presented it to the Museum.

For five years thereafter, the drawing collection remained virtually static, although other divisions of the Museum collection were enriched by gifts, of excellent American paintings and European . In 1934, however, the bequest of

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the Museum's late vice-president, Miss Lillie P. Bliss, added a number of 19th century French drawings and above all a superb constellation of Seurat crayon drawings which remain today the most remarkable representation of a single artist in the collection.

In 1935, and again in 1940, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., presented to the Museum groups of drawings from her own collection, gifts totalling over 75 works, most of them by American artists, but including a few excellent European and Mexican drawings. It was also Mrs. Rockefeller who, in 1935, provided funds with which the first purchases of drawings were made, though none of these purchases, and only five of the drawings given by her, bear her name. More than twenty other donors have generously added drawings to the collection, and many purchases have been made from funds given by Mrs. Simon Guggenheim and Nelson A. Rockefeller within the past ten years.

The collection can make no pretense of offering a complete review of modern draftsmanship. Drawings by Van Gogh, Lautrec, Gauguin, and better works by Cezanne and Rodin should be added with Seurat. to the group. Among 20th century European masters, Rouault, Bonar, Dufy, Klee, Cleg and Bobarsbka are among the most conspicuously absent. Matisse, Maillol, Picasso, Leger, Beckman, Miro should be represented more fully.

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The American drawings are more numerous, but many good artists are represented inadequately or not at all. In time, with additions and subtractions, the collection may greatly improve. As it now stands, it is probably more comprehensive within its field than that of any other museum." The following notes on the entire drawing collection of the Museum of Modern Art may be of interest. 233 drawings are listed in the Museum's collection. Others of less interest are in the Museum's study collection. All but 11 are 20th century drawings. 16 nations are represented. The strongest national groups in number of drawings are: USA, 102; France, 41; Mexico, 19; Germany, 19; Italy, 15; Spain, 11, all ex-patriates. There are drawings by 43 American artists, 36 Europeans, 15 Latin Americans. 87 drawings are purchases made since 1935; 146 are gifts.

Artists represented by groups of drawings: Boccioni, three large drawings for his famous futurist States of Mind, 1911; Blumer, 7, including three studies for "The Eternal City;" Chirrico, 7 drawings covering the ikonography of his influential metaphysical period, 1916-19; Graves, 4 drawings called night pieces, fantastic inspired by the Munich appeasement conference of 1938; Gross, 3 drawings; LaChaise, 17 drawings, Malevitch, 4 drawings by the pioneer Russian master of abstract art and painter of the famous

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White on White. Masson, 8 drawings. Modigliani, 5 drawings, of including a study for his last painting. Moore, 3 drawings; O'Keefe, 4 drawings; Orozco, 4, including 3 studies for murals; Pascin, 4, together with an album of 166 sketches done in Cuba; Picasso, 6 drawings; Rivera, 7, including study for his Mexican murals of the 1920's; Seurat, 5 drawings bequeathed by Miss Lillie P. Bliss and on extended loan; Sheeler, 6 drawings; Tcherechev, 8, including 5 drawings for "Hide and Seek."

Donors: 7 of the most important drawings, 5 by Seurat, 2 by Cezanne, were included in the Lillie P. Bliss collection bequeathed to the Museum in '34. Mrs. John D. Rockefeller has given the Museum 75 of the drawings now in the collection, mostly in 1935 and 1940, and most of the purchases have been made with funds given by her. Almost all of these are designated "given anonymously" or "purchased anonymously." Other donors and the number of their gifts: Vico Baer, 3; Perre Cohn, 1; Frank Crowninshield, 1; Mrs. Margery Ford, 1; Mrs. Meredith Hare, 1; Edgar Kaufman Jr., 1; Lincoln Kirsten, 2; Sam A. Lewisohn, 4; Mr. and Mrs. Sam Lewisohn, 1; Pierre Loeb, 1; Paul McCreal, 1; John McAndrew, 1; Mrs. Charles McKinley, 1; Mrs. Sadie A. Made, 2; Mrs. Stanley M. J. Resore, 2; Paul J. Sachs, 2; Christen Eoro, 1; Kurt Valentine, 7; Edward Warburg, 14; Mrs. George Henry Warren, 1; Mrs. Edith Westfall, 1.

Purchases have been made from the following funds:

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Mrs. Simon Guggenheim, 18; Van Gogh purchase fund, 1;
America fund, 15; Lillie P. Bliss bequest, 4; Purchase Fund, 49.

Extended loans: 5 drawings are extended loans which
upon the death of the lenders become the property of the Museum,
unless previously withdrawn. These include a drawing by Seurat,
lent by Miss Adelaide M. de Grobb, and 4 by Masson lent by
Henry Church.

Sincerely,
Alfred

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May 15, 1947, confidential

Dear Paul:

Although we spoke about Goodall, I forgot to ask you about Irwin Shaffer, who has applied for a position in our department of industrial design. I believe Shaffer is now assistant in the department of decorative arts in the Rhode Island School of Design. Can you give me confidentially some opinion of his character and abilities? We know about his essay on "The Origin of the Two-Two-Towered Facade." We wondered about his capacities in an active museum department in which there would be a good deal of administration, contact with people, both artists and businessmen, and so forth. Also, do you think he would be interested not only in the scholarly but also in the popular side of museum educational work?

Sincerely,

(This was Alfred who recently retired, and I didn't know the young people as well then as in the earlier days. - VJG)

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Dear Alfred:

I wish I might give you valuable first-hand testimony about Irwin Shaffer. Unfortunately I am not in a position to do so, because I never came to know him intimately while he was here. I had an impression of real intelligence and general capacity, but I have no way of knowing how he would handle himself in an active museum department in which there would be a good deal of administration and contact with people, both artists and businessmen. Nor do I know whether he would be interested in the popular side of museum educational work. I think that the two people in our department who know him best are Professor Koehler and Fred Detnetell. I suggest that you communicate with them. With kind greetings, sincerely,

PJS

(This was after I had really retired, and I didn't know the young people as well then as in the earlier days. - PJS)

Very grateful. With warm greetings from home to home, I am,
Devotedly,

(I think she worked at the Museum for a time. Then she worked at the Metropolitan Museum for a long time. Just what she's doing now, I don't know. - PJS)

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November 14, 1947

Dear Alfred:

I understand ^{from} ~~that~~ Miss Rodney, who has just paid me a visit, that you commented favorably on her article on Greece, and urged her to publish it in the Magazine of Art. She is now at work on the article, getting it in shape for that purpose. I wonder whether you understand that Miss Rodney submitted this material because she hoped very much that it might lead to an opportunity to work at your museum. I am afraid that she did not make this clear to you, and it is for this reason that I am asking her to make your personal acquaintance. I know that you realize that I very rarely give any letters of introduction of this kind, for I am in the habit of keeping my powder dry until somebody comes along who has real capacity. Miss Rodney was one of the ~~best~~, if not the best, member of my museum class this past year, and both Dr. Rosenberg and I feel that she is what we like to term a young connoisseur-scholar. If in your busy life you can grant her an interview, I shall be very grateful. With warm greetings from house to house, I am, devotedly,

PJS

(I think she worked at the Museum for a time. Then she worked at the Metropolitan Museum for a long time. Just what she's doing now, I don't know. - PJS)

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May 11, 1949

Dear Paul:

I am sending you under separate cover a copy of our catalogue of our current print exhibition, put on to inaugurate the opening of our modest print room. It gave me great pleasure to recall in my introduction, page 5, an afternoon in October, 1929, when we stopped in at Viar's print shop and picked out half a dozen German prints and a drawing by George Gross, the first acquisitions made by the Museum in any field. (Mr. Goodyear says that he gave the Maillol bronze torso in the summer of 1929, but we have no record of its having arrived at the Museum until many months after.) I hope you can come in for a moment, when you pass through New York, to see our print room and show. Bill Liberman, former pupil of yours and Jacob Rosenberg's, is in charge. With very kindest regards to you and to Nita, sincerely,

Alfred.

(Liberman's been a great success. - PJS)

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May 16, 1949

Dear Alfred:

I am indeed pleased to receive your letter of the 11th, and touched by the statement that you are recalling in your introduction to the catalogue of your current print exhibition a matter that had completely vanished from my memory, namely, that on an afternoon in October, '29, we stopped in at Vaya's print shop, and that I was able to make the first acquisitions for the Museum in any field that met with your approval. You have created a great institution. It has been a deep satisfaction to me to cooperate in small ways now and again. I wish that I might do much more.

I expect to be in New York this week for a day or two, and I shall certainly stop in to see you and enjoy the exhibition, and also to congratulate you and Lieberman, for I'm sure you've both done a splendid job as usual. With very kind regards. ...

In the case of Paul Sachs, who has followed the Museum and IJS work from the very beginning. Sincerely and cordially,

Alfred

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November 8, 1949, Barr to Sachs

Dear Paul:

The Museum of Modern Art is celebrating on November 7th the 20th Anniversary of its founding. On this occasion the Museum is asking a few distinguished persons in various walks of life to appraise our achievement, however briefly. Our plan is to have these statements read to the trustees of the Museum at the 20th Anniversary Meeting. If you would care to write such a letter, addressing it to Mr. John Hay Whitney, chairman of the board, I should assure you whatever you may wish to say will be greatly valued. Although statistics in themselves may be dull, they are nevertheless significant, and I am attaching a few for your information. There is to be no formal 20th anniversary celebration. We are, I'm afraid, too busy. For this reason the letters we are asking you and some of our other friends to write have a special meaning, particularly in the case of Paul Sachs, who has followed the Museum and its work from the very beginning. Sincerely and cordially,

Alfred

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The Museum of Modern Art has held in these first twenty years 422 exhibitions in New York, and it has circulated 932 exhibitions, which have been shown 5,437 times in 48 states and 37 foreign countries. It has published 150 books, many of which are standard reference works in schools and libraries, and in addition to the Museum's unique collections and the film library, its active departments of painting and sculpture, prints, photography and architecture and design. Over thirteen million people have seen these exhibitions.

about through the generous backing of a devoted board of trustees and through the imaginative labors of its distinguished staff. Today the Museum of Modern Art is the chief center and instrument in the Western World for the liberal and intelligent study of modern art, for studies of the entire exhibition program and its steady stream of invaluable exhibitions. It seems to us that on this happy occasion, it is appropriate to stress the fact that no man has done more than Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to secure for the Museum its present enviable position. He is known, respected and admired throughout the world. With every good wish for continued service and success, believe me, sincerely yours,

Paul J. Sachs

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Sachs to Whitney, November 19, 1949

Dear Mr. Whitney:

As an honorary trustee, I delight in congratulating you and the active members of the board on the occasion of this 20th anniversary of the Museum of Modern Art. Permit me to point out that in the brief space of twenty years, all the early high hopes have not only been realized, but have far exceeded the expectations of the founders. This happy result has come about through the generous backing of a devoted board of trustees and through the imaginative labors of its distinguished staff. Today the Museum of Modern Art is the chief center and instrument in the Western World for the liberal and intelligent study of modern art, by virtue of its active exhibition program and its steady stream of invaluable publications. It seems to me that on this happy occasion, it is appropriate to stress the fact that no man has done more than Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to secure for the Museum its present enviable position. He is known, respected and admired throughout the world. With every good wish for continued service and success, believe me, sincerely yours,

Paul J. Sachs

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November 25, 1949, Whitney to Sachs

Dear Mr. Sachs:

It's a great pleasure for me to acknowledge on behalf of the trustees of the Museum of Modern Art your very kind letter, written upon the occasion of the Museum's 20th anniversary. As an honorary trustee, you will be delighted to know how many letters we have received in this country and England, France and Scotland, showing appreciation of our services. With many thanks for your good wishes and above all, the part you have played during the past years, sincerely,

John Hay Whitney