

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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The Museum of Modern Art was organized in the Summer of 1929 when three New York women--Miss Lillie P. Bliss, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan--invited four other people: A. Conger Goodyear, Mrs. W. Murray Crane, Frank Crowninshield and Paul J. Sachs to meet with them to establish a museum of modern art. Alfred H. Barr, Jr. was appointed Director of the Museum. On November 7, 1929, the Museum's first exhibition Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, van Gogh was opened to the public in the Heckscher Building at 57th Street and Fifth Avenue.

To the best of its collective ability and the extent of its resources, by means of its collections, its exhibitions and its publications, the Museum of Modern Art endeavors to minister to the enjoyment of contemporary painting, sculpture, graphic art, architecture, industrial design, theatre and dance design, photography and the films, and to be helpful to those whose task or pleasure it may be to study them.

So successful were the Museum's exhibitions from its inception, that within two years a new home at 11 West 53 Street was found for its expanding activities. On February 9, 1932 the Museum opened its first exhibition International Modern Architecture at the new address, and established its Department of Architecture. The next department to be established was the Library, in the Fall of 1932. The same year the Museum sent out its first travelling exhibition A Brief Survey of Modern Painting.

In the Fall of 1933 a Department of Circulating Exhibitions was organized. The Film Library of the Museum was founded in May 1935 and, because there was not enough room in the West 53rd Street building, occupied a suite of offices at 485 Madison Avenue. From 1935 on, various other departments including Membership, Publications, Photography, Exhibitions, Industrial Design, were established, although activities relating to most of them had existed since the early days of the Museum. The Educational Project was begun in 1937 and the Dance Archives established in March 1940 and later changed to the Department of Dance and Theatre Design.

A few statistics may indicate the Museum's growth and

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accomplishments; the Museum has held 294 exhibitions in New York and published 94 books of which 322,000 copies have been sold exclusive of the 185,000 copies distributed to its 9,200 members. The Library has more than 12,000 volumes and more than 9,000 slides. The Circulating Exhibitions Department has arranged 3,354 showings of its exhibitions in the United States and abroad, and has at present a program of approximately 153 exhibitions and slide talks with 929 bookings annually.

The Film Library has acquired 17,730,848 feet of film, which would take approximately 3,300 hours to run, or 408 eight-hour days of continuous projection. From these archives numerous programs have been made up in series or separately for showing at the Museum and for circulation to other non-commercial institutions throughout the country. In addition to the daily programs at the Museum itself, 800 other groups or organizations have shown its films. Of these, 451 have used the Museum programs regularly, the rest occasionally. Users include 58 universities and 83 colleges, many Army camps, U.S.C. clubs, churches, libraries, hospitals and prisons--institutions as varied as the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, Yale University School of Fine Arts and Cornell University Theatre.

The Museum's exhibitions fall into four categories: 1) one-man shows; 2) exhibitions devoted to a particular modern movement; 3) survey exhibitions; 4) public affairs exhibitions. Art in Progress, held in the Summer of 1944, was the Museum's third general survey of the living arts and cross section of its own activities. The other two were the fifth anniversary exhibition Modern Works of Art in 1934, and the tenth anniversary exhibition Art in Our Time held in May 1939 at the opening of the Museum's permanent home at 11 West 53 Street, to which the Museum moved after a two-year sojourn in the Time-Life building in Rockefeller Center.

The Museum of Modern Art has been visited by approximately 4,000,000 persons in the sixteen years of its existence. The highest attendance for any single exhibition in the old building on West 53rd Street was the van Gogh exhibition: 142,341, an average of 1,452 per day. The attendance in other cities throughout the country plus that in New York totaled 886,631. In the present building the highest attendance for any exhibition was 290,888 for Italian Masters, an average of 3,931 per day.