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Forwarded as of Possible Interest to

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A MUSEUM OF MODERN ART.

Nothing has recently stirred more interest in art circles—and outside of them for that matter—than the project to establish in this city a modern art museum. The plans are as yet tentative, but are promising. Artistic direction and financial backing are already assured. The new institution is expected to have a place by itself, doing all it can to exhibit modern works of art, to encourage living painters and sculptors, at any rate to the extent of giving them new opportunities for having their creations seen by the public and studied by both amateurs and connoisseurs. It will not be in competition with any existing museum. Its collections will at first be modest, though select, and ought to do for New York what has been done in Paris and Berlin and London and other cities in setting up small but fine museums alongside the great national and municipal repositories.

This modern art museum would in no sense be antagonistic to the Metropolitan. The prospectus, with not too great modesty, speaks of its hope to be to the Metropolitan what the Luxembourg is to the Louvre. It surely will have some distance to travel before arriving at the Luxembourg—much further, in fact, than the Metropolitan has to go before catching up with the Louvre. It also seems to be something of a misapprehension to speak of the new museum as a place of "probation" for modern art. The main thing is to get it shown. Whether or not it later passes from Purgatory into Paradise, whether the public understands it or not, likes it or not, there should be ampler facilities for its exhibit. That, we conceive, is really one of the great objects of the new enterprise. It may, in time, succeed in building a fine museum where a choice collection may be slowly gathered, but meanwhile there should be arrangements to have frequent shows of the work of modern artists, under favorable conditions for them and at not too great expense. In the very range and diversity thus attained there will be useful public instruction. As the youthful artistic genius in Punch says to the lady visiting the art gallery: "Of course, if they were all exactly like me, there wouldn't be much in being 'me.'"

Loan collections, it is stated, will be the basis of the activity of the new museum for a year or two. It must occasion a little surprise, not to say regret, that the first exhibition is to be French. American artists will feel that they might well have been given the earliest chance in an American museum of contemporary art to show what they can do. Yet there can be no doubt that the sponsors of the new museum intend to be hospitable and even generous to American artists. In any case, it is so gratifying to know that this city is to make a beginning of the sort that few will care to dispute over the question on which foot we ought to start off. That we are at last starting is the chief and encouraging thing.