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WHITNEY MUSEUM TO ERECT NEW BUILDING IN GARDEN OF MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Mrs. G. Macculloch Miller, President of the Board of Trustees of the Whitney Museum of American Art, and Mr. John Hay Whitney, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art, announce that an agreement between the Boards of Trustees of the two museums has been reached by which the Museum of Modern Art will transfer by gift a plot of land 50 x 100 feet in the west portion of its property on 54th Street for a new building for the Whitney Museum.

The agreement will not affect the current art policies of the two museums and their complete independence of one another. The Whitney Museum will continue to devote its activities entirely to American art and will not exhibit foreign works; and the Museum of Modern Art will not arrange shows comparable to the Whitney Museum's annual exhibitions of American painting and sculpture.

Upon the announcement of the decision of the Trustees of both museums, John Hay Whitney, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art, stated:

"The Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art are delighted at the opportunity to welcome such a good neighbor as the Whitney Museum of American Art. As in the past, the two institutions will continue their friendly competition in the field of American art. We feel that the proximity of the two institutions in the section of the city most accessible both to New Yorkers and to out-of-town visitors will greatly increase the effectiveness of their independent but supplementary programs."

Mrs. G. Macculloch Miller, President of the Board of Trustees of the Whitney Museum, made the following statement:

"The Trustees of the Whitney Museum of American Art wish to express their deep appreciation of the generosity of the Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art in making available a site on 54th Street for a new building. The building on Eighth Street which it has occupied since its founding in 1930 has become inadequate in size and facilities for the Museum's growing activities. The generous action of the Museum of Modern Art will give the Whitney Museum a location in the exhibition center of New York City and in one of the city's chief cultural centers. Plans are now being drawn for the new building, which will provide increased exhibition space and modern facilities, with an entrance on 54th Street. It is hoped that the building will be ready by the fall of 1951. In the meantime the Whitney Museum's regular activities will be continued in its building on Eighth Street. The exhibition program for the season of 1949 to 1950 has already been announced.

"Both museums wish to emphasize that this is not in any sense a merger and that the two institutions will retain their

independent existence. Both museums believe that in as broad and varied a field as contemporary American art, a variety of institutional viewpoints is healthy and necessary. Their exhibition programs will be arranged to avoid duplication, but otherwise the two museums will continue the individual policies that have governed them since their foundation.

"The Whitney Museum will leave Eighth Street with real regret. It was here that the founder of the Museum, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, began her activities on behalf of American art over forty years ago. The district with its many artist residents is closely associated with the history of art in this country. The Museum hopes always to retain the friendly relations with artists which have developed during its years on Eighth Street. In its new building on 54th Street it looks forward to reaching a wider public with the work of American artists."

History and Aims of Whitney Museum:

The Whitney Museum's origins go back to about 1908, when Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney began exhibiting in her studio on West Eighth Street the work of her fellow artists, including progressive artists who were not accepted by academic organizations. This led to the founding in 1918 of the Whitney Studio Club, which soon included most of the liberal and modern artists of the time. Here many future leaders of American art received their first exhibitions and purchases. The Club was disbanded in 1928 and succeeded by the Whitney Studio Galleries. In 1930 Mrs. Whitney established the Whitney Museum of American Art, with Juliana Force as Director and with a collection of over six hundred works acquired over the years. Four houses on West Eighth Street were remodelled, and the Museum opened to the public in November 1931.

The Whitney Museum embodied the basic principles developed during the preceding years: concentration on American art and particularly on the work of living artists; comprehensive representation of all leading tendencies and individuals, regardless of schools; receptiveness to new artists and new trends; and replacement of the old prize system by purchases. Among the Museum's chief activities have been its two large annual exhibitions of contemporary American art, one of paintings, and one of sculpture, watercolors and drawings. It has also held regional shows, one-man exhibitions of leading American artists of the past and present, and surveys of particular periods, schools and subjects. Although devoted primarily to contemporary art, the Museum has arranged a number of historical exhibitions of 18th- and 19th-century American art.

History and Aims of Museum of Modern Art:

The Museum of Modern Art was founded in 1929 with the intention of "en-

couraging and developing the study of modern arts and the application of such arts to manufacture and practical life...." Later the Museum's purpose was restated as follows: "... to help people understand, use and enjoy the visual arts of our time." By "modern" the Museum has meant not only the contemporary but the challenging and the new.

This concept for the Museum grew out of the widespread public interest in the 1913 Armory Show and from the particular interest of Miss Lillie P. Bliss, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan. Together with A. Conger Goodyear, the Museum's first president, Paul J. Sachs, Mrs. W. Murray Crane and Frank Crowninshield, they became the founders of the new museum.

From its inception the Trustees of the Museum interpreted art as including all the visual means of communication, and during its 20 years the Museum has come to embrace not only painting and sculpture but architecture, industrial and commercial design, motion pictures, photography, prints and drawings. It has in addition become the largest publisher of art books in the United States and has assembled the largest library on modern art in the world.

The Trustees have also held to the purpose of the founders in making the institution international in scope not only by means of its collections and changing exhibitions, but also because the Museum circulates exhibitions throughout the United States and abroad.

The Museum has occupied four homes in its 20-year history, outgrowing one after the other until it moved into its own building in 1939. The turning point in the Museum's growth was reached in the depths of the depression in 1934 when the Trustees raised \$650,000 thereby meeting the terms of the will of Miss Bliss, who had left her rich collection to the Museum on condition that the Museum be established on a foundation of permanence.

Before the Museum opened its doors in 1929 the Trustees stated: "The Museum of Modern Art will in no way conflict with the Metropolitan Museum of Art but will seek rather to supplement the older institution...." Early negotiations between the two museums came to an end in 1933, and although further conversations were held in subsequent years it was not until 1947 that negotiations were formally reopened.

Meanwhile the Museum's collection had greatly increased in size. A number of works which had still been controversially modern in 1929 seemed by 1947 to be safely classic. The Trustees preferred not to sell the best of the older works in the open market; yet at the same time

they did not wish to pass them on to another museum without recompense. Under the terms of the 1947 agreement the Museum of Modern Art now gives the Metropolitan Museum an option to buy paintings and sculpture from its collection as they come of age, the Museum of Modern Art using the money from these purchases to buy new works.

The Metropolitan Museum agreed to retain in its future catalogs the names of donors who had originally given the works of art (or purchase funds) to the Museum of Modern Art even after the works had been incorporated in the collection of the older institution. The Museum's transfer by gift of a plot of land to the Whitney Museum will not affect this agreement in any way.