

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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INCREASED ENDOWMENT, MORE EXHIBITION SPACE NEEDED

BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, WILLIAM A.M. BURDEN

SAYS IN FINAL REPORT ON 25TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

An increased endowment and additional exhibition space for the Museum Collection are the two pressing needs facing the Museum of Modern Art in its second quarter century, William A. M. Burden, Museum President, says in a report issued today. The report, a final statement on the Museum's 25th Anniversary Year celebrated in 1954-55, contains in addition to Mr. Burden's report to the trustees and members, a full survey of the Anniversary Year events at home and abroad by René d'Harnoncourt Director of the Museum, a comparative statement of income and expenses for 1950-55, a summary listing of Anniversary Year activities, and a list of Museum patrons, contributing members, committees, officers and staff.

The Museum's unique financial situation, shown in charts and tables and in Mr. Burden's statement, rests on the fact that the Museum receives no subsidy from the city or state and that its small endowment provides only a little over 5 per cent of the annual operating expenses, or less than the cost of providing guard service. Two-thirds of the Museum's income comes from thousands of people in the form of admissions, sales of publications and other services rendered. The rest is contributed by trustees, friends and charitable organizations.

The earned income coming from thousands of individuals, Mr. Burden points out, indicates strong public support. On the other hand, heavy dependence on earnings often makes it difficult for the Museum to undertake projects of great intrinsic value which do not promise high attendance or popular appeal, he says.

"The other great need of the Museum in the years immediately ahead," Mr. Burden continues, "is for the improvement and expansion of the facilities for exhibiting its collections. At present two-thirds of the gallery space - on the average - is taken up by temporary exhibitions. The remaining space available for the Museum's Collection can display about 12 per cent of our paintings and sculpture. There is no space for regular exhibition of our collections in other important areas of modern art such as prints, architecture, design and photography.

"This is most regrettable not only because it deprives the public of the opportunity of seeing many important works of art, but because it prevents the Museum's temporary exhibitions from being compared with the broad background of modern art as a whole, a background which is almost essential for placing them in their proper context. Additional gallery space is a primary requirement so that

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the Museum can have its most important works permanently on view."

The special Anniversary Year program, reported on in detail by Mr. d'Harnoncourt, was well received by the Museum's public. Attendance at the Museum increased 38 per cent over the previous year to reach a new high of 678,645 and membership increased 21 per cent, reaching a high of 21,474 members. At the same time publication sales increased 55 per cent over the previous year.

Mr. d'Harnoncourt, in surveying the extraordinary Anniversary Year program of exhibitions, publications and special events at home and abroad, points out that in addition to 16 exhibitions presented in the Museum's own galleries, exhibitions were also presented in 162 cities throughout the United States and nine exhibitions, organized under the Museum's International Exhibitions Program, were shown in 22 cities abroad. Nine books were published and special services and events, including dance and music programs organized by the Junior Council, gallery lectures, educational activities including classes for 2,800 children, young people and adults, and special film cycles presented to the public in the auditorium, were arranged for the year-long celebration. In addition, the gift or pledge of many major paintings and sculptures for the Museum Collection announced during the Anniversary Year were gratefully acknowledged by both Mr. Burden and Mr. d'Harnoncourt.

The sources of the Museum's income for the Anniversary Year activities, which were carried by a total budget of \$1,768,217, the largest in the Museum's history, are illustrated in a series of pie charts. Sixty-three per cent of the total income came from operations, including membership fees, admissions, publications sales, and educational services. Ten per cent of the funds received were special grants for the International Program and Television Research, while 21 per cent was contributed by trustees and by contributing and corporate memberships. Only 5 per cent came from the Museum's endowment. As a relatively young institution, the Museum has not been able to accumulate endowment funds which provide a large, regular income for most other institutions of similar size and widespread activity.

The steady increase in operating expenses, in Museum attendance and in number of members from 1950 to 1955 is shown in another table in the report. Operating expenses increased from \$1,005,027 in 1950-51 to \$1,772,267 in 1954-55. Attendance increased from 443,783 to 678,645 in the same period while membership rose from 11,631 to 21,474.

The comparative statement of income and expenses from 1950 to 1955 reveals that during the five-year period, the Museum almost doubled the amount of funds spent on the curatorial activities and program of education. During the Anniversary

year, almost one million dollars was spent for this purpose. This includes in addition to exhibitions, the operation of the Museum library, free gallery talks, and running the Museum school, attended by more than 2,800 children, young people and adults each year. Building maintenance, which also increased during the five year period, cost \$277,927 during the 25th Anniversary Year - over 35 times the cost of similar items the first year the Museum was founded. General administration amounted to \$478,080 during the year.

In concluding his report, Mr. d'Harnoncourt said: "Like all milestones, the 25th Anniversary provided an opportunity for a review of the past, and even more important, for a look at the Museum's future in the light of its achievement to date. The formation of a great collection entails responsibility for its best use; a notable record of exhibitions and publications is an incentive to do more than merely maintain the standards of the past, by constantly seeking imaginative new solutions to meet changing needs. As we move into our second quarter century, we feel the obligation to make wise and effective use of the resources and experience that we have acquired in growing to maturity, while still retaining the ideals and broad vision of our founders, and the venturesome spirit of our formative years."

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Copies of the report available from Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York City, Circle 5-8900.