

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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FOR RELEASE:

After 9 p.m. Monday, Oct. 6

TEXT OF SPEECH BY NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, DELIVERED AT DINNER IN MUSEUM PENTHOUSE PRECEDING RE-OPENING PREVIEW ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1958

I am sure you all share my feeling that it is marvelous to see the Museum open its doors again to the public; to see pictures hanging on the walls, sculptures in the garden, movies in the auditorium and best of all people here to enjoy the works of art and attend the classes of our Art Center.

As Chairman of the Board, I want to welcome you and to thank you. Thank you and the thousands of individuals throughout the country who, after the fire, so generously and spontaneously contributed to our Emergency Fund. Thank you for your patience, your encouragement and interest during this summer when the Museum was closed and its services severely curtailed.

This opening marks the completion of a major job of renovation going far beyond the repair of damages.

Twenty years ago when this building was inaugurated it was a bold realization of a plan carried out by the Museum's Director Alfred H. Barr, Jr. under the sponsorship of the Museum's founders and its President General A. Conger Goodyear. In 1939 the Museum's building with its new architecture and its flexible interiors was an up-to-date spacious and adequate instrument for carrying out the Museum's pioneering program. But since 1939 a great many changes have taken place in America and in our Museum. As a result of the spectacular growth of public interest and concern with the arts of our day, our attendance has more than doubled, our membership has increased sevenfold, to 25,000, and constant public demand called for more and more services and the facilities of the building became gradually more and more inadequate. The changes made this summer will go a long way toward enabling us to better handle these increased demands. The shop and storage facilities are greatly improved, public circulation and office congestion are eased and the galleries are as safe and efficient as they would be in any building constructed this year to accommodate so many people.

We are pleased with this summer's work and hope you will be pleased too but we are also aware that we still have a long way to go to fulfill all the public's demands or to live up to our own potentialities. We still lack a great deal of space to show the Museum's Collection in all its diversity as it deserves to be shown and we lack the resources to fully execute the program for which we are qualified by our knowledge and experience. You will be glad to know that the Museum's

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Trustees under the leadership of its President William A. M. Burden together with the Director René d'Harnoncourt and his colleagues on the staff are now studying plans for additional building and exploring ways and means to raise the necessary funds for such a project. In doing so the Museum is following again the demand of our time and the demand of its public.

This is a great period of cultural development in the United States. We are becoming more and more aware of the importance of creative work in our lives. Our artists are recognized at home and abroad as never before and we are called upon to take our rightful place in the cultural exchange throughout the world. Men and women in all walks of life find that participation in the arts as art lovers and amateurs brings them deep satisfaction and enjoyment.

Creative work in the arts permeates every part of our social and economic life. It serves education, industry and commerce. We know that every effort to help the arts and the artist to function in our society is a contribution toward a fuller and richer life.

I know that I speak for the Trustees and Staff of the Museum and for our Patrons and Friends if I say in confidence that our Museum, just as it took a leading part in the development of the cultural life of today, will again take a leading part in the great cultural venture that is the America of tomorrow.