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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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FOR RELEASE:

Friday P.M., May 3, 1963

August Heckscher, Special Consultant on the Arts to President Kennedy, will speak at the Spring Meeting in Houston of the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art on Friday afternoon, May 3 on "The Outlook for Government's Role in the Arts."

the District of Columbia and Canada,
The conference, which will be attended by 60 Council members from 5 states, will be held at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. James Johnson Sweeney, Director of the Museum, is an Honorary Member of the Council, and will speak at the same session on "Building a Museum Collection." John de Menil is Vice President of the Council. Other Houston members of the group, which supports the Museum of Modern Art's extensive program of international exchange in the arts, are: General Maurice Hirsch and Mrs. Cecil Blaffer Hudson.

Mr. Heckscher, who is Chairman of the International Council, will outline areas in which the federal government can increase its aid to the arts by more imaginative and better coordinated efforts in its various traditional roles from the instigator of public works, buildings and roads to the design of postage stamps.

He will discuss the future role of the National Advisory Council on the Arts which President Kennedy is setting up by executive order, and will suggest the establishment of a National Arts Foundation similar to the National Science Foundation which already exists.

"A National Arts Foundation, making matching grants to the states and to institutions for the purpose of encouraging excellence and innovation in our cultural life would, I believe, be a natural step, creating an institutional framework comparable to that which exists for science; or (to put the matter differently) doing for national cultural policy what the Hayes-Fulbright Act does for cultural exchange at the international level."

The Advisory Council, Mr. Heckscher says, will consist of the heads of the Federal Departments which are engaged in activities related to the arts, together with some 25 members drawn from private citizens--civic leaders, practicing artists in various fields, and those professionally engaged in the institutions of the arts.

The functions of the Council will be to seek ways to improve the design quality of Federal programs and activities, to represent the cause of the arts where they are involved in administrative or legislative action and to identify the needs and possibilities of the cultural life as a whole.

Government's role, Mr. Heckscher says, will always be marginal. But the fact that it will increasingly play a part need not be looked upon as anything unprecedented or radical. "We have the experience within our free, diversified and

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decentralized political framework to do the things we need to do, without harmful controls or interference."

He will conclude by reminding his audience "that the great ages of our civilization - ages in which we would like to have been alive - have been those when an intimate relationship existed between the sphere of politics and the sphere of the arts....We are again returning to their insights, facing the needs of a day when all the people have opportunity and leisure, and all crave a part in the highest enjoyments of the mind and spirit."

At the business session, to be held Friday morning at the Houston Museum, the Council will discuss proposals for sending 16 exhibitions abroad during the next four years. These include: one-man shows of painting and sculpture by Josef Albers, Max Beckmann, Jacques Lipchitz and David Smith; group shows of watercolors, sculpture and prints; a graphic design show on lettering; an exhibition devoted to Martha Graham; and two large photography shows as well as a series of small one-man exhibitions in that field.

Plans for circulating in this country exhibitions of British sculpture, recent Canadian painting and sculpture and Austrian graphics will also be discussed.

The International Council assumed sponsorship of the Museum of Modern Art's international program in 1957. Since 1938 the Museum has sent more than 100 exhibitions to almost 300 communities in more than 60 countries. Mrs. Bliss Parkinson is President of the Council.

Honorary Members include Mrs. John F. Kennedy, C. Douglas Dillon, Senator J. William Fulbright, Sir Herbert Read, Professor Paul J. Sachs, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Roland Penrose and George Salles.

NOTE: A schedule of meetings, luncheons, receptions and dinners to be attended by Council members is attached. Full text of Mr. Heckscher's talk will be available at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts.

Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Museum of Modern Art (at Rice Hotel or Houston Museum) and from Mr. Boyd, Houston Museum.