

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

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## SELECTIVE CHRONOLOGY OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART: 1929-1964

1929

- Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.), Mrs. Cornelius Sullivan, Miss Lillie P. Bliss, Mrs. W. Murray Crane and Frank Crowninshield form Committee of Organization with A. Conger Goodyear as Chairman with the purpose of founding an institution which will bring the works of such artists as van Gogh, Seurat and Gauguin to the Manhattan public. Until this time not one museum in Manhattan owned a single canvas by these artists, though they had been dead for forty years, or such 20th century masters as Matisse or Picasso, Miró or Klee.

"(In 1929) we were all, as a matter of course, reading modern literature; we were listening to modern music; but in spite of the excitement engendered by the Armory Show of 1913, our country was, on the whole, antagonistic to modern art."

Paul J. Sachs  
Professor of Fine Arts, Emeritus  
Harvard University

- A six-room suite in the Heckscher Building in midtown Manhattan is rented for galleries and offices.
- Alfred H. Barr, Jr. is named Director of The Museum of Modern Art, assisted by a staff of five.
- The Museum of Modern Art is chartered as a non-profit institution by the State of New York "for the purpose of encouraging and developing the study of modern arts ..."
- November 7, the opening exhibition CÉZANNE, GAUGUIN, SEURAT, VAN GOGH is presented; 47,000 attend during the first month. The catalog for the show marks the beginning of the Museum's publication program.
- In December, the Museum's second exhibition, PAINTINGS BY NINETEEN LIVING AMERICANS opens, begins a continuing series of exhibitions of new American painting and sculpture.

THE THIRTIES: a period of expansion and consolidation in which the Museum is firmly established as part of the American scene. 1,600,000 persons view 125 special exhibitions; and the Museum Collections grow during this first decade. Thousands more see traveling exhibitions; and in Europe, the Museum sends American art to Paris for the first time. More than 4,000 people are members by the end of the decade.

1930

- First painting is acquired: House by the Railroad (1925) by Edward Hopper, the gift of an anonymous donor.
- Over 58,000 people attend Museum's exhibition of PAINTING IN PARIS.

1931

- MEMORIAL EXHIBITION: THE COLLECTION OF THE LATE LILLIE P. BLISS  
Conditionally bequeathed in 1931, the Bliss Collection is formally accessioned in 1934 and immediately gives importance to the Museum Collection.

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1932

- . Department of Architecture is inaugurated with MODERN ARCHITECTURE: INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION; the Museum's first show outside the media of painting and sculpture and the first to circulate throughout the United States, thus introducing the country to its modern architecture.
- . Having outgrown its quarters, the Museum moves to a brownstone on West 53 Street. The first exhibition there is MURALS BY AMERICAN PAINTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS, first time photography is included in an art exhibition.
- . Library is founded in the converted attic, with 2,000 books.

1933

- . Department of Circulating Exhibitions is established.
- . Whistler's Portrait of Artist's Mother, first loan from the Louvre. Later toured the country and is seen by 2,000,000 persons in 11 cities.

1934

- . MACHINE ART, pioneer exhibition of the exquisitely finished, largely anonymous objects characteristic of machine production; initiates the Design Collection.
- . MODERN WORKS OF ART, fifth anniversary exhibition.

1935

- . Museum sponsors Gertrude Stein's first lecture in the United States.
- . Film Library is organized, the first international film archive and the first department in any museum in the world devoted to this 20th century art form.
- . VINCENT VAN GOGH, first large exhibition of his works to circulate throughout the United States and Canada; over 142,000 persons saw the exhibition in New York; approximately 887,000 saw it on tour.

1936

- . CUBISM AND ABSTRACT ART and FANTASTIC ART, DADA, SURREALISM, first comprehensive surveys in the United States of the works of these European innovators, giving historical perspective to the principle movements of modern art -- Fantastic Art dates back to 15th century. The books published in conjunction with the shows are considered standards.

1937

- . Educational Project is initiated as a two-year experimental program in cooperation with ten New York City high schools.
- . Museum moves into the Time-Life Building while new building at 11 West 53 is under construction.
- . PHOTOGRAPHY 1839-1937, first comprehensive photography exhibition.

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1938

- . ~~THREE CENTURIES OF MODERN ART~~ <sup>AMERICAN</sup>, the first comprehensive review of American art to be seen in Europe is shown in Paris at the invitation of the French Government.
- . BAUHAUS: 1919-1928, exhibition of work of the school in Germany which was the focal point in the integration of design with the machine age.

1939

- . Opening of the new building at 11 West 53 Street; Philip L. Goodwin and Edward Durrell Stone, architects. President Franklin D. Roosevelt broadcasts message to opening ceremonies:  
"The standards of American taste will inevitably be raised by bringing into far-flung communities results of the latest and finest achievements in all the arts ..."
- . ART IN OUR TIME, tenth anniversary exhibition and publication, achievements of living artists and important masters of the past in painting, sculpture, graphic arts, architecture, furniture design, photography and films.
- . PICASSO: FORTY YEARS OF HIS ART, exhibition and publication. In the first 50 days attendance numbered 100,000.
- . New Library opens with over 6,500 volumes.

THE FORTIES: In this second decade of its existence, now in the new Museum of Modern Art building on West 53 Street -- considered, in itself, a distinguished example of modern architecture -- the Museum attracts over 4,000,000 visitors, four times the number in the previous decade. More than 350 special exhibitions were shown in the Museum, including many related to war and defense: BRITAIN AT WAR, ART FROM FIGHTING CHINA, WAR POSTERS AND CARTOONS OF THE USSR, THE PEOPLE OF BALI: BACKGROUND FOR WAR, TUNISIAN TRIUMPH: PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELIOT ELISOFFON, THE LESSON OF WAR HOUSING and many others. Hundreds of others were distributed through the United States, Canada and Latin America. And, the number of members grew from 4,000 to more than 8,500 in ten years.

1940

- . Photography Department established, first curatorial department devoted exclusively to photography.
- . ITALIAN MASTERS, 28 works of art from the period 1400 to 1750 including Botticelli's Birth of Venus, Raphael's Madonna of the Chair lent by the Italian government.
- . TWENTY CENTURIES OF MEXICAN ART, the most comprehensive survey of the art of a single nation presented at the Museum.
- . USEFUL OBJECTS OF AMERICAN DESIGN UNDER \$10, first exhibition of the best progressive design in home furnishings.

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1941

- . War activities through June 1945: film contracts with CIAA, Army, Navy, Air Force; special exhibitions, special traveling exhibitions, poster competitions, Armed Services Program, canteen's and servicemen's parties, Veteran's Art Center, etc.
- . INDIAN ART OF THE UNITED STATES.
- . ORGANIC DESIGN IN HOME FURNISHINGS, competition open to North and South American designers. Eames-Saarinen molded plywood chair leads to later Eames version called "one of the truly original innovations in 20th century design."
- . TWO AMERICAN PIONEERS, exhibition of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect, and D. W. Griffith, Film-maker.

1942

- . National Committee on Art Education is formed to develop a sound philosophy of creative education and to improve teaching methods from pre-school age through college; 1,200 members throughout the United States (as of 1963).
- . First CHILDREN'S CARNIVAL OF ART is presented in the Garden.
- . ROAD TO VICTORY, photography exhibition directed by Edward Steichen.
- . Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion Deployment Unit is erected in the Museum's outdoor exhibition area.

1943

- . BRAZIL BUILDS.
- . Virgil Thomson's Five Serenade Concerts.
- . John Cage directs concert of his own music.
- . "What is Modern Painting" by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., is published; reprinted in 1953, 1956 and 1959, it is the Museum's best-selling publication.

1944

- . ART IN PROGRESS, fifteenth anniversary exhibition surveys all aspects of the Museum's program.
- . HAYTER AND STUDIO 17: NEW DIRECTIONS IN GRAVURE, exhibition tracing new developments in the graphic arts under the direction of Stanley William Hayter in his Paris studio.

1945

- . War Veteran's Art Center, a center for adult art education, is established in a rented building on Fifth Avenue.
- . POWER IN THE PACIFIC, Steichen photography show.

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1946

- . ARTS OF THE SOUTH SEAS
- . NEW FURNITURE DESIGNED BY CHARLES EAMES
- . THE HISTORY OF THE MOTION PICTURE, 1895-1946, film cycle tracing the development of the art of film making.

1947

- . Museum Collections, now numbering more than 6,500 items, becomes a separate department with Alfred H. Barr, Jr. as Director.
- . MIES VAN DER ROHE exhibition

1948

- . Veteran's Art Center moves to 21 West 53 Street, becomes People's Art Center, classes in adult education as well as pre-school through college educational program.
- . TIMELESS ASPECTS OF MODERN ART, exhibition and publication showing the integral relationship between modern art and the art of past periods, first part of twentieth anniversary exhibition.

1949

- . MODERN ART IN YOUR LIFE, exhibition and publication showing the appearance and shape of countless objects of our everyday environment as they are related to and derived from developments in modern painting and sculpture; another aspect of the twentieth anniversary exhibition.
- . Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room is inaugurated with MASTER PRINTS FROM THE MUSEUM COLLECTION.
- . Complete house by Marcel Breuer is erected in the Museum's outdoor exhibition area.
- . Junior Council of The Museum of Modern Art is founded, now numbers about 60 young men and women who operate the Art Lending Service, sponsor publications and special presentations related to the Museum's program.
- . René d'Harnoncourt is named Director of The Museum of Modern Art.  
(Had originally joined the staff in 1944 as Vice President in charge of Foreign Affairs and Director of the Department of Manual Industries.)

THE FIFTIES: In this third decade of its existence, it becomes increasingly evident that the Museum had outgrown its facilities. Almost five million visitors had come to view 250 special exhibitions in the Museum galleries. Annual attendance mounted to more than 600,000. Membership rose to almost 25,000 a year. The Collection grows from 2,600 items in 1939 to almost 12,000 at the end of the fifties; thus only a small part of the works in the Collection can be shown in the gallery space available. In 1959, in order to make a greater part of these works of art accessible to the public -- for study as well as for exhibition purposes -- the Museum begins a drive to raise \$25,000,000 for endowment, additional building and program expansion.

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1950

- . Five Evenings with Modern Poets, special lecture series, includes: W. H. Auden, Marianne Moore, E. E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams and Robert Frost.
- . PRIZE DESIGNS FOR MODERN FURNITURE, international competition.
- . GOOD DESIGN, first exhibition of this show held in conjunction with the Chicago Merchandise Mart. A selection of the best progressive design in home furnishings shown twice a year in Chicago for the nation's buyers and yearly at the Museum in New York for the general public. An extension of the USEFUL OBJECTS exhibitions, it was held annually through 1955.

1951

- . Grace Rainey Rogers Annex opens at 21 West 53 Street; Philip C. Johnson architect.
- . Art Lending Service is established by the Junior Council with the cooperation of more than 70 New York City galleries.
- . EIGHT AUTOMOBILES, an exhibition concerned with the aesthetics of design, includes Mercedes, Cistalia, Bentley, Talbot, Jeep, Cord, MG and the Lincoln Continental.
- . MATISSE, exhibition and definitive publication of the works of this outstanding 20th century artist.

1952

- . International Program is initiated with the aid of a five-year grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.
- . MASTERWORKS ACQUIRED THROUGH THE MRS. SIMON GUGGENHEIM FUND: an exhibition of paintings and sculpture acquired since 1937 through the Museum's major purchase fund.
- . OLIVETTI: DESIGN FOR INDUSTRY
- . THROUGH THE ENCHANTED GATE, TV series of 13 half-hour programs sponsored by the Museum's Department of Education and the National Broadcasting Company.

1953

- . American premiere of Anna Magnani's "Bellissima" is held in the Museum Auditorium.
- . Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden opens; designed by Philip C. Johnson. Trygve Lie, First Secretary General of the United Nations says at the opening ceremonies: "When The Museum of Modern Art was founded in 1929, Mrs. Rockefeller and the other trustees agreed that the approach of the Museum to the visual arts of our time should be international. The exhibition in this Sculpture Garden, representing as it does the work of artists of many countries, is a worthy monument to that ideal. In the United Nations this same spiritual ideal is the hope of the world for peace and understanding among nations."

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(1953 cont'd)

- . International Council of The Museum of Modern Art is founded, an organization of art patrons and community leaders from 18 states and six foreign countries, devoted to the promotion of international good-will through exchange in the arts. Sponsors the Museum's activities abroad.
- . SCULPTURE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
- . PREMIUM TOYS: DESIGN FOR INDUSTRY
- . Museum purchases the privately-owned United States Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, begins to take full responsibility for U.S. representation at the large international exhibitions.

1954

- . ANCIENT ARTS OF THE ANDES
- . Japanese Exhibition House constructed in the outdoor exhibition area.
- . Garden Restaurant opens, Philip C. Johnson, architect.
- . "Masters of Modern Art" published, a selection of more than 300 works from the various collections of The Museum of Modern Art.
- . Twenty-fifth Anniversary Exhibition, paintings from the Collection on three floors. Dwight D. Eisenhower: "... on this meaningful anniversary of a great museum of art in America ... let us resolve that these precious freedoms of America, will, day by day, year by year, become ever stronger, ever brighter in our land."

Dag Hammarskjold, Secretary General of the United Nations: "It is a museum of 'modern art' -- this is, for you and for me, a museum for the art which reflects the inner problems of our generation and is created in the hope of meeting some of its basic needs."

1955

- . LIVING ARTS OF INDIA, special programs of Indian music, dance and films; premiere of Satyajit Ray's Indian trilogy, Pather Panchali, accompanies exhibition: TEXTILES AND ORNAMENTAL ARTS OF INDIA.
- . First annual summer art classes for children and adults is established on Long Island.
- . THE FAMILY OF MAN, 500 photographs by 273 photographers from 68 countries, created by Edward Steichen. The exhibition has since traveled to all parts of the world under the auspices of the United States Information Service.
- . THE NEW DECADE: 22 EUROPEAN PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS
- . LATIN AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE SINCE 1945, exhibition and publication

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1956

- . The Theatre Guild Building at 23 West 53 Street is acquired for offices and additional storage space.
- . THE FILMS OF SAMUEL GOLDWYN, film series and publication.
- . TOULOUSE-LAUTREC
- . TEXTILES: U.S.A.
- . RECENT DRAWINGS USA, exhibition sponsored by the Junior Council
- . JACKSON POLLOCK

1957

- . PICASSO: SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION
- . TWENTIETH-CENTURY DESIGN IN EUROPE AND AMERICA, selections from the Museum Collection sent to four cities in Japan.
- . Children's Art Carnival sent to International Trade Fairs in Milan and Barcelona.
- . BUILDINGS FOR BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT
- . SEVENTY PHOTOGRAPHERS LOOK AT NEW YORK

1958

- . Five-year foundation grant enables Museum to expand its circulating exhibition program with added emphasis on small shows for colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada.
- . SEURAT PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS
- . April 15, fire in the Museum
- . May 1, first floor is re-opened
- . June 1, building is closed for alterations
- . October 8, the Museum is completely re-opened, including the Theatre Guild Building at 23 West 53. First exhibition: JEAN ARP: A RETROSPECTIVE.
- . DESIGN TODAY IN AMERICA AND EUROPE, at the request of the Indian government and with the aid of a Ford Foundation grant, an exhibition of mass-produced and hand-made objects from the marketplaces of the Western world is assembled; after touring India, the exhibition is housed in New Delhi and forms the core of India's first design collection.
- . Children's Art Carnival is shown at the United States Pavilion of the Brussels World's Fair.
- . NEW AMERICAN PAINTING, the first comprehensive exhibition of the advanced tendencies in American art that had developed since the war. Shown in eight institutions abroad, the exhibition was brought back to New York in the Spring of 1959 and was shown at the Museum.

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1959

- . NEW AMERICAN PAINTING, after being shown in eight countries abroad in 1958-1959 under the auspices of the International Council, the exhibition is brought back to New York. Originally organized at the request of European institutions.
- . THE PACKAGE
- ; MARLENE DIETRICH: IMAGE AND LEGEND, film series and publication
- . New structures by Buckminster Fuller are erected in the outdoor exhibition area.
- . NEW IMAGES OF MAN
- . 30th Anniversary Drive is announced, with goal of \$25,000,000 for endowment, building and program expansion.
- . A BID FOR SPACE, Museum Collections are re-hung to show need for increased gallery space.

THE SIXTIES: in the first three years of this new decade more than 2,350,000 visitors crowded the Museum's galleries; over 3,900 a day came during the special exhibition of Chagall's Jerusalem Windows in 1961. By the end of 1962, the Collections has grown to almost 20,000 works of art. When the Museum's galleries closed at the end of 1963, less than 10 percent of the paintings in the Collection could be exhibited; and only 2 percent of the prints and drawings in the Collection were on view, while none of the 5,000 photographs in the Collection could be placed on permanent exhibit. In these years, membership rose to almost 30,000.

1960

- . Art in Embassies project is initiated by the International Council, designed to make original works of art available for the residences of our ambassadors and foreign service officers in order to represent American creative achievements and to demonstrate this country's interest in the visual arts.
- . Prentice Property Gift is announced. Mrs. E. Parmalee Prentice retained lifetime possession of the two brownstones between the Museum and the St. Thomas Church on Fifth Avenue; she died in June 1962 at the age of 91.
- . Fifty modern works of art, donated by collectors, artists and dealers, are auctioned at the Parke-Bernet Galleries in New York for the benefit of the Museum's Anniversary Drive. The audience in New York is linked to Dallas, Chicago and Los Angeles by a closed-circuit television network provided by Theater Network Television. \$871,850 is raised.
- . MONET: SEASONS AND MOMENTS
- ; ART NOUVEAU
- . Jazz in the Garden, series of Thursday evening summer concerts.
- . Institute of Modern Art is formed to assume responsibility for the People's Art Center and other educational activities.

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1961

- . STEICHEN THE PHOTOGRAPHER
- . THE ART OF ASSEMBLAGE
- . THE LAST WORKS OF HENRI MATISSE: LARGE CUT GOUACHES
- . CHAGALL: THE JERUSALEM WINDOWS, exhibition sets new attendance records as more than 3,900 persons visit the galleries every day. Under the sponsorship of the Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, the Windows were shown in New York and on the West Coast before being installed in the Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center outside of Jerusalem.

1962

- . DESIGN FOR SPORT, exhibition in the outdoor exhibition area, presented in co-operation with Sports Illustrated.
- . ROADS, photographic exhibition prepared for circulation throughout the United States and abroad.
- . Benefit preview Last Year at Marienbad at the Carnegie Hall Cinema for the Museum's Anniversary Drive.
- . PICASSO: 80th BIRTHDAY EXHIBITION
- . Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller officiates at groundbreaking ceremonies for the new Garden Wing.

1963

- . Board of Trustees announces successful completion of the 30th Anniversary Drive.
- . LE CORBUSIER: BUILDINGS IN EUROPE AND INDIA
- . EMIL NOLDE: 1867-1956
- . RODIN, largest exhibition of his sculpture ever seen in the United States, assembled in cooperation with the Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco.
- . MEDARDO ROSSO 1858-1928, first Museum exhibition in the United States of the works of the revolutionary Italian sculptor. Presented under the sponsorship of the Italian Government and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura in New York
- . HANS HOFMANN, large-scale retrospective of the works of outstanding abstract-expressionist painter and influential teacher, later travels.
- . Duplicate version of the Museum's Children's Art Carnival is presented to Children's Museum in New Delhi.
- . December 2, Museum closes for five and one-half months for completion of the first phase of its building program.

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1964

. ART IN A CHANGING WORLD: 1884-1964

The Museum of Modern Art re-opens May, 1964 with major exhibitions from Museum Collections.

PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURE FROM THE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS: large-scale survey of modern art, second and third floor galleries.

EDWARD STEICHEN PHOTOGRAPHY CENTER, first permanent exhibition of photography from the Museum Collection.

PAUL J. SACHS GALLERIES FOR DRAWINGS AND PRINTS, first permanent exhibitions of graphics and drawings from the Museum Collection.

PHILIP L. GOODWIN GALLERIES FOR ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN, first permanent exhibitions of design objects and architectural models, renderings, and plans from the Museum Collection.

Temporary shows in the first floor galleries and new Garden Wing include:

- . THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE
- . AMERICAN PAINTERS AS NEW LITHOGRAPHERS
- . TWENTIETH CENTURY ENGINEERING
- . TWO DESIGN PROGRAMS: THE BRAUN COMPANY, GERMANY, AND THE CHEMEX CORP., U.S.A.
- . THE CHILDREN'S ART CARNIVAL
- . THE FILMS OF OZU, daily film program in the Museum Auditorium, followed by selections from Film Collection

As the first phase of this building program, the Museum has added two new wings, lengthened its Sculpture Garden by a large upper terrace, and remodeled its previous main building. It will complete the program in the late '60s by extending the main structure further to the west and by taking over the building to be vacated by the Whitney Museum of American Art when it moves to new quarters.

The Museum's three principal, closely interrelated functions are: exhibiting its collections of the modern visual arts, now the foremost in the world; presenting a diversified program of temporary exhibitions and other scheduled activities; and providing a unique international study center in the field of modern art.

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Additional information available from Lynn Traiger, Assistant Director, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. CI 5-8900.