

The Museum of Modern Art

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

No. 121A

FOR RELEASE:

Wednesday, November 10, 1965

A major sculpture by José de Rivera started revolving in a pool in The Museum of Modern Art Sculpture Garden on Wednesday, November 10, at 3:30 p.m., when William S. Paley, Vice-Chairman of the Museum Board and Chairman of CBS, accepted the work as a gift from the American Iron and Steel Institute.

L. B. Worthington, President of the United States Steel Corporation and Chairman of the American Iron and Steel Institute, made the presentation of "Steel Century Two" ("Construction 73") in a small ceremony attended by Museum and Institute officials. The 8 1/2 foot high stainless steel arc was commissioned by the Institute to mark the beginning of the second century of steel production in the United States. He said: "In its very shape and fluid form -- seeking, soaring and evolving -- the sculpture is a reminder to the steel industry and to the public of the challenges ahead and the avenues of progress yet to be explored....Through the auspices of this great museum, we will now be able to share our enjoyment with many thousands of people for years to come. As Chairman of American Iron and Steel Institute, I present this work to you, Mr. Paley, with the hope that all who see it will enjoy it as we have."

As Mr. Paley accepted the gift he signaled to the electricians who started the underwater motor which enables the piece to revolve slowly in the reflecting pool. Mr. Paley remarked: "Long before the phrase 'the great society' became a slogan, Alfred North Whitehead wrote, 'A great society is a society in which the men of business think greatly of their functions.' Certainly one of their contemporary functions is to turn to art to express the relationship of business to the society it serves. By this standard, the men in the steel industry certainly are charter members of the great society. For 'Steel Century Two,' a happy union of material and form, speaks with very special force and relevance of the dynamics of our times and of an industry that has done so much to shape it.

"This sculpture has strength, and clarity, and beauty. And it has the quality that perhaps most epitomizes our age -- mobility. It's a magnificent work of art

(more)

and we're most happy to have it."

The pedestal on which the sculpture turns is made of a mixture of steel from a hundred steel plants in this country, Canada and Latin America. On September 14, 1964, 100 years after the first successful commercial heat of bessemer steel flowed from a small converter in Michigan, a molten sample was withdrawn from heats of steel in mills in the Western Hemisphere and then set apart to be remelted and mingled for use in the pedestal casting.

The work was commissioned by a committee of judges consisting of Leigh B. Block, Vice-President, Inland Steel, who served as Chairman; David Rockefeller, Chairman, Chase Manhattan Bank and Chairman, Board of Trustees of The Museum of Modern Art; John I. H. Baur, Associate Director, Whitney Museum; William C. Seitz, former Curator, Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions, The Museum of Modern Art; and Andrew C. Ritchie, Director, Yale Art Museum.

Prominent sculptors were invited to submit models. On January 8, 1965, the \$25,000 commission was awarded to José de Rivera.

The sculpture, executed in polished stainless steel, is an open curve formed by a cylinder of varying diameter. It rotates slowly on a vertical axis on a steel pedestal concealing an electric motor. The total diameter embraced by rotation is 11 feet, 8 inches.

The Museum of Modern Art also owns de Rivera's "Construction 8" (1954), a stainless steel forged rod given to the Collection in 1955. De Rivera's work is also represented in collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, the City Art Museum of St. Louis, the San Francisco Museum of Art and the Annenberg Foundation in Philadelphia. In 1956, eight pieces were shown in the 12 AMERICANS group show at The Museum of Modern Art. José de Rivera was born in West Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1904. Self-taught, he has been working as a sculptor since 1930.

Present at the ceremony was:

L. B. Worthington, Chairman, American Iron and Steel Institute and President,
(more)

United States Steel Corporation, who made the presentation.

John P. Roche, President, American Iron and Steel Institute.

George S. Rose, Vice-President, American Iron and Steel Institute.

Leigh B. Block, Chairman, AISI Sculpture Award Panel, and Vice-President, Inland Steel Company.

Grace Borgenicht, represented the artist who is abroad.

William S. Paley, Vice-Chairman, Board of Trustees, The Museum of Modern Art, and Chairman of CBS, who accepted the sculpture.

Mrs. Bliss Parkinson, President, The Museum of Modern Art,
Member, Collections Committee, The Museum of Modern Art.

Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd, Trustee, The Museum of Modern Art,
Member, Collections Committee, The Museum of Modern Art.

Dorothy Miller, Curator, Collections, The Museum of Modern Art.

René d'Harnoncourt, Director, The Museum of Modern Art.

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director,
Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street,
New York, New York 10019. Circle 5-8900.

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Mr. L. B. Worthington's Steel Sculpture Presentation

November 10, 1965

The American Iron and Steel Institute is proud that its Steel Century Two sculpture is to be a part of the Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection. Throughout the past year, Mr. Jose de Rivera's work has served as a rallying point for our tribute to the beginning of the second century of commercial steel production in America.

In its very shape and fluid form -- seeking, soaring and evolving -- the sculpture is a reminder to the steel industry and to the public of the challenges ahead and the avenues of progress yet to be explored.

In a small way all of us have made a contribution to this beautiful form. The pedestal on which it turns is actually a mixture of steel from the furnaces of this hemisphere. On September 14, 1964, in a hundred steel plants in this country, in Canada, and in Latin America, a moment was set aside for a simple ceremony. On that day, a molten sample was withdrawn from heats of steel, then set apart to be remelted and mingled with many other samples for use in the pedestal casting. To this extent, we have all participated in creating this work of art.

Through the auspices of this great museum, we will now be able to share our enjoyment with many thousands of people for years to come. As chairman of American Iron and Steel Institute, I present this work to you, Mr. Paley, with the hope that all who see it will enjoy it as we have.

November 4, 1965

Remarks by Mr. Paley - The Museum of Modern Art, New York - 11/10/65

Mr. Worthington and Friends of the Museum:

On behalf of the Museum of Modern Art, I'm delighted to accept this distinguished work.

Although Jose de Rivera's work is not new to the Museum, there is a special significance to this piece, so aptly called "Steel Century Two." In the first place, it was commissioned by one of our great basic industries. In the second place, the national institution representing that industry generously decided, on its own initiative, to make the sculpture accessible to the public.

Long before the phrase "the great society" became a slogan, Alfred North Whitehead wrote, "A great society is a society in which the men of business think greatly of their functions." Certainly one of their contemporary functions is to turn to art to express the relationship of business to the society it serves. By this standard, the men in the steel industry certainly are charter members of the great society. For "Steel Century Two," a happy union of material and form, speaks with very special force and relevance of the dynamics of our times and of an industry that has done so much to shape it.

This sculpture has strength, and clarity, and beauty. And it has the quality that perhaps most epitomizes our age -- mobility. It's a magnificent work of art and we're most happy to have it.

Mr. Worthington, in addition to thanking you and the members of the American Iron and Steel Institute on behalf of the Trustees and Staff of the Museum of Modern Art, I'd like to express the thanks of the hundreds of thousands of people who will come here to see and enjoy this outstanding work of art during the years ahead.