

The Museum of Modern Art

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Monroe Wheeler, who has headed the Department of Exhibitions and Publications at The Museum of Modern Art since 1939-40, will resign from the staff July 1 and become Counsellor to the Trustees, Mrs. Bliss Parkinson, President of the Museum, announced today.

One of Mr. Wheeler's first services as Counsellor will be to select a major exhibition of paintings from American collections scheduled to open in Latin America next spring under the auspices of the Museum's International Council.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Mrs. Parkinson said, "We are extremely grateful that Mr. Wheeler has agreed to undertake new and special projects after having served in so many capacities for the Museum for more than 30 years. It is the intention of the Board to call on him frequently for such major assignments as the Latin American exhibition so that his great skill, knowledge and experience will continue to benefit our program.

"Like many dedicated people who joined the Museum in its early years and guided its growth, Monroe Wheeler wore many hats and cannot be replaced on the staff by a single individual. He has been one of our authors, an exhibition director and coordinator and our publisher. The Department of Exhibitions and Publications which he developed and headed so successfully for many years is now being reorganized, and his responsibilities will be divided among several colleagues."

The Museum's publishing activities which Mr. Wheeler managed since 1939 were made a separate department when the appointment of Gray Williams, Jr., as Director was announced last November; Mr. Wheeler's function as Director of Exhibitions is now carried out by Wilder Green.

Mr. Wheeler has directed more than a dozen major exhibitions for the Museum, including most recently Turner: Imagination and Reality, with Lawrence Gowing, Keeper of British Painting at the Tate Gallery (1966), and Henri Matisse: 64 Paintings, in the same year. He is also the author of a number of Museum publications issued in connection with exhibitions he directed, including: Ignatz Wiemeler:

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Modern Bookbinder (1935), Modern Painters and Sculptors as Illustrators (1936), and Prints of Georges Rouault (1938), for which he was guest director, and Twentieth Century Portraits (1942), Modern Drawings (1944), Soutine (1950), Rouault: Retrospective Exhibition (1953), The Last Works of Henri Matisse: Large Cut Gouaches (1961), and an essay in Bonnard and His Environment (1964).

Under Mr. Wheeler's leadership, the Museum has published over 300 books on all the visual arts, which have become known throughout the world for their excellence of layout and design, high level of scholarship, and for their faithful color reproductions. More than a score of the publications issued under his direction have received awards for their design and ^{several} have been translated into foreign languages including French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish, Serbo-Croatian, Japanese and Russian. Exhibitions of Museum books have been held in more than 20 countries in Europe, Latin America and the Far East. These books have become an important extension of the Museum's educational services by providing a permanent record of the scholarly research fostered by the Museum.

Mr. Wheeler first became associated with the Museum in 1935, six years after the institution was founded, when he was named a member of the Advisory Committee, which included William A. M. Burden, Philip Johnson, Lincoln Kirstein, Mrs. Bliss Parkinson, Nelson Rockefeller, James Thrall Soby and James Johnson Sweeney. In 1938 he joined the staff as Director of Membership. Mr. Wheeler became Director of Publications in 1939 and in the following year was appointed Director of Exhibitions and Publications. In 1945 he was elected a Trustee of the Museum and in 1965 was appointed Honorary Trustee.

Monroe Wheeler was born in Evanston, Illinois, in 1899 and was educated in Europe. He was co-founder and partner of the publishing firm of Harrison of Paris, which commissioned various typographers and printers and artists for their limited editions. Mr. Wheeler, however, designed most of the publications and chose the type faces, the artists, and the special papers.

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Since his days in Paris, Mr. Wheeler has numbered writers and poets as well as artists among his closest personal friends. At the Museum he was instrumental in arranging such special events as the first performance in this country of Dame Edith Sitwell's Facade, recited by the poet herself, in 1950, and a series of poetry readings in the same year by W. H. Auden, E. E. Cummings, Robert Frost, Marianne Moore, and William Carlos Williams.

During World War II, Mr. Wheeler served as Chairman of the Committee on Publications for the Office of Inter-American Affairs. He is a Trustee of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society and the Katherine Anne Porter Foundation, president of the International Graphic Arts Society, and former member of the Council of the Grolier Club, whose publication committee he headed for six years. He is a Life Member of the French Institute of the United States and in 1950 was awarded the Order of the Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor, in recognition of his "outstanding services to the cause of French contemporary art in the United States." He is also a member of the Advisory Board for Research and Graduate Education at Rutgers University.

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