

The Museum of Modern Art

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ADDRESS BY WILLIAM S. PALEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CULTURAL PROGRAM,
THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

CEZANNE TO MIRO
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Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Museum of Modern Art is delighted as always to welcome some of the distinguished diplomats who represent their countries at the United Nations and in the United States. We are also most happy to have as our guests some of the Directors of the Center for Inter-American Relations which was established in New York during the past year.

It was just a year ago this month that I had the pleasure of announcing here, during Pan American Week, that we expected to send to South American cities this spring a major exhibition of European paintings from United States collections.

Today, thanks to the International Council of the Museum under the leadership of its President, Mrs. Donald Straus, and to the skill of Monroe Wheeler, who has directed the exhibition, that expectation has become a reality. I think it's appropriate to take special note of Mr. Wheeler's great skill as an exhibition maker. What we have seen here today certainly gives solid evidence that his reputation is well founded. The fifty-five distinguished pictures by forty noted artists brought together by him will be leaving the end of this week for exhibition in Argentina, Chile and Venezuela.

One of the most interesting facts about this exhibition is that the paintings come from such a wide range of sources. Besides The Museum of Modern Art, seven other museums have lent some of their most prized possessions. But it is especially interesting that the majority of the pictures have been lent by private collectors. We are deeply grateful to these institutions and individuals for their generosity in sharing with our Latin American neighbors the treasures comprising this show. It is a striking reminder that the world of the art lover has no boundaries.

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In sending this exhibit, The Museum of Modern Art is shrewdly casting bread upon the waters. For one of our curators has meanwhile been assembling, in South America, a large collection of Latin American prints, which we will show throughout this country.

As all of you know, I'm sure, the Museum's interest in Latin America is almost as old as the Museum itself. From the beginning, we have gained from our neighbors to the south at least as much as we've given. Only two years after its founding, in 1931, we had the first exhibit of Latin American art in a long and continuing exchange program that has been one of the most enriching experiences in the Museum's history. Today The Museum of Modern Art has the largest collection of Latin American art outside of Latin America, numbering over 1,700 items. And over the years we have presented here ten major exhibits of Latin American art, both from our own collection and from others.

We've tried to reciprocate by organizing and preparing more than thirty exhibitions of modern art, from all lands, that have been sent over the years to Latin American countries.

All of us associated with the Museum are proud of its international activities. Great works of art are truly international in content and relevance, and they are true reflections of the values and quality of the nations that produce them and the nations that treasure them. Certainly one of the most rewarding missions of any great museum is the sending of these silent but eloquent ambassadors out among the world's people.

Already The Museum of Modern Art has circulated, in sixty-eight countries on every continent, almost a hundred and fifty exhibitions. During the last fifteen years the International Council of the Museum has been a significant source of support for this exchange program. With its continued help and with the dedicated and expert work of our staff, we all look forward to international exchange activities in the future just as exciting if not more so both to the visitors to this Museum and to our friends throughout the world.

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