

The Museum of Modern Art

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PRESS PREVIEW:
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The Lillie P. Bliss International Study Center of The Museum of Modern Art will be dedicated by William S. Paley, President-Elect of the Museum, on Monday, May 27, at 12:30 p.m., at a luncheon for 125 guests in the Founders Room. Tours of the new exhibition-type storage facilities, located in the north wing of the Museum (a remodeled building that formerly housed the Whitney Museum) and in adjacent areas in the Museum's main building, will be conducted at 2:30 p.m. for the luncheon guests and from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. for 500 additional invited guests.

The establishment of The Lillie P. Bliss International Study Center is a major step in the Museum's growth. Originally announced in 1959 by René d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum, the Center will make available to the interested public, scholars, students, and artists a unique combination of resources concerned with all the visual arts; more than 25,000 original works of art in the Museum collections, including painting, sculpture, photographs, drawings, prints, films, architectural drawings, and objects from the design collection; and a remarkable body of related documentary material acquired during the past four decades in the course of developing a reference library, and of presenting 700 exhibitions and publishing more than 300 books on the 20th-century arts. The Center is being dedicated to Miss Bliss, a founder of the Museum, in recognition of her role in establishing the painting and sculpture collection.

An unusual aspect of the Center is the new kind of open exhibition-type storage space that is much more flexible than the usual kind of static storage for works of art. The Museum is constantly rearranging its galleries because of the addition of new acquisitions, and loans to other institutions and to its own traveling shows.

In the new facilities, all the paintings not on exhibition in the Museum galleries are hung on specially designed sliding aluminum panels which can be easily moved into

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adjacent viewing rooms and seen under gallery conditions. Large sculptures are placed on low pallets, which can also be easily moved, while small sculptures are arranged, by artist, in wall-vitrines from which they too can be easily removed. Large hanging works are suspended from ceiling hooks instead of being stored in separate pieces. Electrical outlets make it possible for kinetic works to perform in place. Until now, about half the painting and sculpture collection not on public exhibition was scattered in relatively inaccessible dead storage areas where their bulk was easily discernible, but not their qualities as works of art.

In the new exhibition-style storage area for architecture and design, objects in the design collection and architectural drawings owned by the Museum that are not in public galleries can be seen and studied conveniently. Not only is it easy to find an object one knows is there, but all the works are visible. Formerly this material was in inaccessible storage. The graphic design material, which includes more than 1,900 posters, and the furniture, dating from 1875 to the present, not on view in the Museum's Philip L. Goodwin Galleries, will remain temporarily in other storage areas.

For students of the history of film the Study Center provides additional space and such new facilities as library readers (Moviolas), and a new projection room equipped with a self-threading 16mm projector and adjacent storage of 16mm prints for the use of individuals and small groups. Approximately 3,500 films, 1,000,000 stills, and other unique archival material have been acquired by the Department of Film since it was founded in 1935.

The International Study Center is being developed in stages: the Edward Steichen Photography Center opened in 1964; the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room, established in 1949, opened in expanded quarters in 1965. The 1,200 drawings in the collection, formerly in inaccessible storage, are now in rooms adjacent to the Print Room.

Long-needed additional space for the Museum reference library is also in the new wing. The newly developed Remington Rand Lektriever, an electrically operated

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revolving file, brings files containing up-to-date material on individual artists, including exhibition announcements, press releases, newspaper and magazine reviews, catalogues, and cross-reference notices to the researcher when he pushes a button.

Approximately 25,000 books in 16 languages, including many not available in general libraries, as well as photocopies of unique works owned by libraries in other parts of the world are available here. Dreiser's An American Tragedy with penciled notes made in the margins by Eisenstein in preparation for his film, a facsimile edition of Gauguin's Noanoa. Voyage de Tahiti, and Paul Eluard's collection of Surrealist material are some examples of special books available on request to library visitors.

Another valuable resource of the library is the collection of scrapbooks of such famous exhibitions as the 1913 Armory Show which contains photographs, press reviews, and cartoons relating to the exhibition. The library also has all the official publications of the Armory Show, together with postcards, posters, and even the lapel button designed by Arthur B. Davies which was worn during the exhibition.

The reference resources of The Museum of Modern Art also include approximately 5,000 black-and-white photographs of objects in the Museum collection; 500 albums of photographs of exhibitions at the Museum, including both individual works and installation shots; photographs of work reproduced in Museum publications, and of works in circulating exhibitions; and an extensive general photo archive of works of 20th-century art in private and other public collections, including approximately 1,500 black-and-white photos of W.P.A. and World War II art projects, and 112 albums containing 9,000 photos of works handled by the gallery of the late Curt Valentin.

Other archival material, which will eventually be available for study in conjunction with the original works of art in the collection, includes correspondence with artists, patrons, and dealers, and questionnaires filled out by artists represented in the Museum collection.

The Television Archive of the Arts, also housed in the Study Center, makes available for reference more than 90 films of such contemporary artists as Stuart

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Davis, Henry Moore, Edward Hopper, and Robert Rauschenberg, originally created as television documentaries. When this Archive was established under the sponsorship of the Museum's Junior Council, René d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum, pointed out that, "In saving these films and making them available for study purposes the Museum is preserving a valuable new source of original research material, documentation in which television's cameras provide a chronicle of the expressions and reactions -- visual and verbal -- of the contemporary artist discussing his work and/or demonstrating his technique. It is hoped that the Archive will continue to grow as the networks produce an increasing number of new documentary programs about the art and artists of our time."

In dedicating the Center, Mr. Paley paid tribute to Lillie P. Bliss, a founder of the Museum who died in 1931, and to René d'Harnoncourt, under whose direction the concept of the Center was developed.

At the luncheon, Robert Herbert, Chairman of the Department of the History of Art at Yale University and a member of the Study Center's Advisory Board, spoke on the advantages to students, art historians, writers, and scholars of the establishment of the Center.

Anne Coffin Hanson, who was named Director of The Lillie P. Bliss International Study Center, will assume her post on September 1. A 16-man Advisory Board will assist the Museum in developing research and study programs for the Center, which will include fellowships, publications, and experimental exhibitions.

A plaque at the entrance to the Center on the fourth floor lists as Benefactors Mrs. Edsel B. Ford; The Ford Foundation, in memory of Edsel B. Ford; The Rockefeller Brothers Fund; and The Rockefeller Foundation. Patrons listed on the same plaque are The Edward John Noble Foundation and The Howard Johnson Foundation.

The Lillie P. Bliss International Study Center was remodeled by Philip Johnson Associates in co-operation with the Museum staff.

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director,
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