

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 245-3200 Cable: Modernart

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bates Lowry, Director of The Museum of Modern Art, said today that the Museum deeply regrets that the labor union that represents the Museum's guards has called a strike against the Museum. Members of the curatorial and administrative staff have assumed special duties to ensure the security of the Museum and the safety of the works of art.

The Museum, a privately supported institution, has been in negotiation with the Union on the contract for six weeks, with the assistance of the State Mediation Board. The Museum's proposal for a renewed three-year contract includes a wage increase of \$8.00 per week for the first 18 months and an additional \$7.00 per week for the second 18 months, together with the as yet undetermined cost of contributions to the Union's welfare and pension plans. The Museum has also offered improved vacation benefits and additional payment for holiday work. The Union has refused to make any concession with respect to its demand for a \$25 per week increase over a three-year contract, even though the Museum indicated its willingness to continue bargaining.

The Museum's galleries, bookstore, and restaurant have been closed, and film showings and the Thursday evening jazz concert have been cancelled.

Mr. Lowry said that he particularly regretted that out-of-town visitors and members, as well as travelers from abroad, are denied an opportunity to see the Museum's collection and the special summer exhibitions.

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Additional information available from Patricia Bauman, Coordinator, Press Services, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 245-3200.

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The Museum of Modern Art regrets that it must temporarily close to the public because of the strike of the Museum's gallery guards, members of Local 32B of the Building Service Employees International Union, AFL-CIO. We sincerely hope that an agreement will be reached soon and that New Yorkers and summer visitors will not be long deprived of the opportunity to visit the Museum.

Since June 14 the Museum and the Union have been engaged in negotiations for a renewal of the three-year contract which expired on June 30. During the course of these negotiations it appeared that the majority of the issues could be amicably settled, providing improved vacation benefits, additional payment for holiday work and an increased contribution by the Museum to the Union's welfare and pension plans. The aid of the New York State Mediation Board was enlisted on July 24 when the parties found themselves at an impasse with respect to the issue of wages.

During the three-year term of the recently expired contract the wages of the Museum's guards were increased by 14.8%. During the past year the basic wage has been \$92 for a 37-1/2 hour week, which includes a paid half-hour lunch period each day. The Museum has offered an immediate increase of \$8 per week for the first eighteen months of a new contract, plus an additional \$7 per week for the second eighteen months -- increases of 8-1/2% and 7%, respectively. The Museum believes that its offer is fair and reasonable, and is actually in excess of increases accepted by many unions in recent months.

The Union is demanding increases aggregating \$25 per week over three years, and has refused to negotiate below this level. The Museum has indicated its willingness to continue bargaining provided that the Union will move from its adamant position.

The strike has made it necessary to close the Museum's galleries, bookstore and restaurants, and to cancel its daily showings of films and the jazz concerts normally held in the garden Thursday evenings during the summer.

The Museum particularly regrets the fact that out-of-town visitors and members, as well as travellers from abroad, are being denied an opportunity to see the Museum's collections and special summer exhibitions.