

# The Museum of Modern Art

West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

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## A SHORT CHRONOLOGY OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 1929-1968

### Space

1929

Founded by Miss Lillie P. Bliss, Mrs. Cornelius Sullivan, and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.) to help people enjoy, understand, and use the visual arts of our time.

Summer Heckscher Building, 730 Fifth Ave., 6 rooms rented for galleries and offices.

1932  
May

Moved to town house at 11 West 53 St., part of present site.

### Program

1929

Nov. 7 Opening exhibition, Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, van Gogh. Attendance - 47,000 first month. Catalogue launched Museum's publication program.

First work acquired, bronze torso by Aristide Maillol.

Print collection begun with 8 works given by Paul J. Sachs.

1930

Jan. First painting acquired, House by the Railroad (1925), by Edward Hopper, gift of anonymous donor.

1931

May Memorial Exhibition: The Collection of the late Lillie P. Bliss; conditionally bequeathed in 1931, the collection was formally accessioned in 1934 at the time of permanent charter by New York State Board of Regents. The basis of the Museum collection of painting and sculpture.

1932

Feb. Modern Architecture: International Exhibition, opening presentation of Department of Architecture; first exhibition other than painting and sculpture; first to be circulated.

Reference Library founded with 2,000 books.

May

Murals by American Painters and Photographers; first showing of work by photographers.

(more)

1933

April

Department of Circulating Exhibitions established.

Objects 1900 and Today. First design show of furniture and decorative arts.

Nov.

First one-man photography show: Walker Evans: Photographs of 19th Century Houses.

1934

Machine Art exhibition initiated design collection.

1935

June

The Film Library (now called Department of Film) organized "to trace, catalogue, assemble, exhibit, and circulate a library of film programs so that the motion picture may be studied and enjoyed as any other one of the arts is studied and enjoyed;" first international film archive.

1935

Film Library given working space by William S. Paley in CBS Building on Madison Ave.

1936

May

Acquisition of 4 buildings on West 53 St.

1937

June

Temporary quarters in Time-Life Building, Rockefeller Center, 14 West 49 St., while new building constructed.

1937

Educational project initiated as 2-year experiment with New York City high schools.

Oct.

Gift by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., of site of present sculpture garden.

1938

Three Centuries of Art in the United States; first Museum exhibition sent abroad.

1939

May 10

Opening of new building, 11 West 53 St. Philip L. Goodwin and Edward D. Stone, architects. Dedication by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

1939

Beginning of regularly scheduled Auditorium film showings.

By 1940, 1,600,000 people had viewed 125 special exhibitions at the Museum, and Membership totaled more than 4,000.

(more)

1940

Department of Photography established with a basic collection and reference library - the first curatorial department devoted exclusively to photography in any museum.

1941

War activities through June 1945: film contracts with CIAA, Army, Navy, Air Force; special exhibitions, special traveling exhibitions, poster competitions, Armed Services Program, canteens and servicemen's parties, Veteran's Art Center, etc.

1945

War Veteran's Art Center established in rented quarters on Fifth Ave., between 53 and 54 St. Became People's Art Center offering courses for children and adults in 1948; moved to 21 West 53 St. in 1951; as The Art Center moved in 1964 to Garden Wing with entrance at 4 West 54 St.

1949

Summer Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room opened.

1949

March Junior Council founded, now numbering about 60 young men and women who operate the Art Lending Service, sponsor exhibitions and special presentations related to the Museum program.

In the second decade, from 1940 to 1950, 4,000,000 people attended more than 350 special exhibitions at the Museum, and membership rose to more than 8,500.

1951

Summer Grace Rainey Rogers Annex opened, 21 West 53 St. Philip C. Johnson, architect. Two floors equipped for Art Center classes.

1951

Oct. Art Lending Service established.

1952

Jan. Long-range International Program of circulating exhibitions initiated by five-year grant from Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

(more)

1953

Spring Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden opened, designed by Philip C. Johnson. Dedication by Trygve Lie, First Secretary General of the U.N.

Purchase of privately-owned United States Pavilion at Venice Biennale, Italy.

Acquisition of 27 West 53 St.

1954

Oct. Whitney Museum building opened at 20 West 54 St. (Acquired by Museum of Modern Art in 1963.)

Garden Restaurant adjacent to outdoor Sculpture Garden opened. Philip C. Johnson, architect.

1955

First annual summer art classes for children and adults held in rented space at Amagansett, on eastern Long Island.

1956

Acquisition of Theater Guild building, 23 West 53 St. Used for offices.

1953

International Council of the Museum founded.

1957

July

International Council assumed sponsorship of the Museum's program of exhibitions abroad.

1958

Apr. Museum closed following fire.  
15-30

June 2- Museum closed for renovation.  
Oct. 5

1959

Nov.

30th Anniversary Drive launched, with goal of \$25,000,000 for endowment, building, and program expansion.

During the third decade, 1950 to 1960, almost 5,000,000 visitors saw 250 special exhibitions at the Museum, and annual attendance mounted to more than 600,000. Membership rose to almost 25,000, and the collections grew from 2,600 items in 1929 to almost 12,000.

(more)

1960  
March Announcement of gift by  
Mrs. E. Parmalee Prentice  
of two town houses at 5 - 7  
West 53 St.

1960  
Dec. Institute of Modern Art formed  
to assume responsibility for the  
People's Art Center and other  
educational services.

1961  
Summer Former barge purchased and  
converted into Summer Art Center  
for vacation art classes at  
Amagansett.

In addition to above exhibition and office  
space, storage facilities continue to be  
rented in various warehouses in New York.

1963  
June Announcement of acquisition of  
Whitney Museum building at 20  
West 54 St. Now part of The  
Lillie P. Bliss International  
Study Center.

1963-64  
Dec. 2- Museum closed for construction  
May 24 and remodeling.

1963-64  
Dec. 17- 153 paintings from the Museum  
Mar. 1 collection loaned to The National  
Gallery in Washington, D.C.  
while Museum was closed.

1964  
May 25 Opening of enlarged Sculpture  
Garden and two new wings;  
Edward Steichen Galleries and  
Photography Study Center; Paul  
J. Sachs Galleries for Drawings  
and Prints; and Philip L. Goodwin  
Galleries for Architecture and  
Design. Philip C. Johnson,  
architect. Dedication by Mrs.  
Lyndon B. Johnson.

1965  
Jan. Opening of enlarged Abby Aldrich  
Rockefeller Print Room.

1968  
May 27 Dedication of North Wing, The  
Lillie P. Bliss International  
Study Center.

Between 1960 and 1968 some 5,500,000 people have viewed more than 185 special exhibi-  
tions at the Museum, with annual attendance now at 1,000,000. The collections  
include some 18,500 works and 3,500 films, and membership has grown to 38,000.

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Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public  
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