

The Museum of Modern Art

50th Anniversary



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MOMA INITIATES PROGRAM IN 10 NYC MUSEUMS FOR DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED MUSEUM VISITORS

A unique demonstration project, aimed at developing methods through which ongoing programs in museums throughout New York City can be made available to the deaf and hearing-impaired, will begin in February, 1980. Developed by The Museum of Modern Art's Department of Education and funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the project will offer sign language interpretation by certified interpreters of gallery talks, walking tours, demonstrations, courses and lectures. The certified sign language interpreters are being provided by The Museum of Modern Art. Subtitled silent and foreign films are also included in the program.

Participating institutions include the American Museum of Natural History, the Center for Inter-American Relations, the Japan Society, The New York Botanical Garden, the New York Hall of Science, The New York Zoological Society, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, the South Street Seaport Museum and the Studio Museum of Harlem. The project is being coordinated for The Museum of Modern Art by Sue Yabroff, co-founder of the New York City Metro Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, and Ann Silver, Book Designer/Illustrator, who also designed the logo for this pilot program. Ms. Silver is a member of the New York Deaf Cultural Arts Community.

On January 14, 1980, The Museum of Modern Art hosted a meeting of participating museum representatives, certified sign language interpreters and representatives of organizations serving the deaf community. Following a brief introduction to the scope of the project, a slide presentation on the program was made and an initial training workshop for museum staff conducted, during which the specific needs of the deaf and hearing-impaired were explored.

The demonstration program will continue through July, 1980.

"The eventual goal of this program," notes William J. Burback, Director of the Modern's Department of Education, "is to ensure that ongoing museum programs become more accessible to the deaf and hearing-impaired." Upon the project's completion, it is hoped that an expanded, ongoing program will be instituted throughout New York City museums as a direct consequence of anticipated achievements of the demonstration project, and that museums and their programs become more interesting to and enjoyable for all visitors.

For further information, including a schedule of events, contact William J. Burback, Director, Department of Education, at 956-4217, or Sharon Zane, Associate Director of Public Information at 956-7295.