

# The Museum of Modern Art

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## THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART INTRODUCES *MoMA INFORM*, A NEW SERIES OF AUDIO GUIDES, TO ENHANCE VISITOR EXPERIENCE OF WORLD RENOWNED COLLECTION

### First Audio Guide Highlights Painting and Sculpture Collection

The Museum of Modern Art is introducing *MoMA INFORM*, a series of audio guides, to enrich the Museum visitor's experience and understanding of its internationally renowned collection of twentieth-century art. The first guide in the series, available November 20, 1996, highlights masterworks in the Museum's painting and sculpture galleries. Unlike traditional sequential audio tours, *MoMA INFORM* enables visitors to set their own routes through the Museum and retrieve information at will. MoMA is the first U.S. museum to use the state-of-the-art INFORM digital system, developed by Acoustiguide Corporation, for a comprehensive interpretation of its permanent collection.

Museum visitors can access up to three hours of commentary that includes original recordings and dramatic readings of archival materials of such figures as Rodin, Matisse, Picasso, and Kandinsky. The narrative covers more than sixty works of art, from Vincent van Gogh's *The Starry Night* (1889) to Jasper Johns's *Flag* (1954-55). Two recent acquisitions, Rosenquist's *F-111* (1964-65) and Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962), are also included. (A complete list of works included on the tour is available.) Over time, the Museum will expand this audio program to encompass highlights of the entire collection and will add a children's tour of the painting and sculpture collection.

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"The Museum of Modern Art has the foremost collection of modern art in the world, and we want to provide the visitor with the tools to appreciate it to the fullest," said Director Glenn D. Lowry, "This is, in effect, an audio handbook of the collection, providing information and insight directly from the curators and the artists. The technology is self-contained and extremely easy to use, and does not interfere with the visitor's direct experience of the art."

Written and produced by the Museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture and Department of Education, working in conjunction with Acoustiguide, *MoMA INFORM* is narrated by Kirk Varnedoe, Chief Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, with an introductory overview and commentaries by Mr. Lowry. Other Museum curators, including John Elderfield, Chief Curator at Large; Carolyn Lanchner, Curator; and Robert Storr, Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture; Deborah Wye, Chief Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books; and Magdalena Dabrowski, Senior Curator, Department of Drawings, provide further commentary on the works.

"Through the audio guide we are able to provide many levels of information on artists, the times in which they lived, their influences, and the reactions of their peers and critics," said Mr. Varnedoe. "Giving this additional framework to the collection helps visitors to approach the art in a more informed way, and to formulate their own opinions."

"INFORM is transforming the way MoMA visitors look at art—it brings an entirely new experience to audio programming at the Museum," said Michael Plummer, Senior Vice President at Acoustiguide, the New York-based audio tour company. "Visitors who dislike following a prescribed audio tour route and schedule love INFORM. Now the visitor can have freedom of movement and the valuable insight from the audio program."

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Visitors using the *MoMA INFORM* system can set their own pace and course through the Museum's galleries, calling up as much or as little information as they choose according to their own interests. Visitors simply select a work of art on the tour, enter the identifying number on the keypad, and hold the receiver to their ear. The unit, a handheld piece that resembles an elongated cellular telephone, provides freedom of movement and eliminates the isolating experience of traditional headset tours.

*MoMA INFORM* is available when purchasing admission or at the entrance to the painting and sculpture collection galleries for a rental fee of \$4.00 for adults and \$3.50 for members.

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For further information and photographic materials, or to preview *MoMA INFORM*, please call Alexandra Partow, Department of Communications, 212/708-9756.