

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW YORK

11 WEST 53rd STREET
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

SARAH NEWMAYER, PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

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TO City Editors
News Photo Editors
Feature Editors

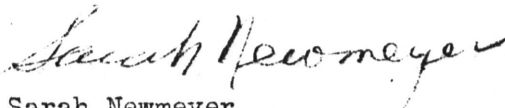
Dear Sirs:

On Tuesday, December 22, the Museum will put on exhibition "the most beautiful shoe-shine chair and box in the world"--a labor of love and art by Joe Milone who came to this country from Sicily thirty-two years ago. The chair and its accessories are completely encrusted with gay baubles and brilliant ornaments gathered over a period of years from push-carts and five-and-ten-cent stores.

Festive as a Christmas tree, this dazzling chair is being shown by the Museum as an exhibit peculiarly suited to the holiday season.

Monday afternoon, December 21, at 3:30 P.M., Joe will be on hand at the Museum to supervise the installation of the chair and to answer any questions the press or any one else may want to ask him regarding it.

Sincerely,



Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART EXHIBITS GAILY ORNAMENTED

BOOTBLACK CHAIR AND ACCESSORIES

As an exhibit peculiarly suited to the holiday season, the Museum of Modern Art will put on view Tuesday, December 22, a boot-black chair, stool and large and small foot rest, all completely encrusted with gay baubles and brilliant ornaments gathered over a period of years from pushcarts and five-and-ten-cent stores by Joe Milone, who came to this country thirty-two years ago from Sicily.

Joe Milone wanted to be a carpenter but an injury to his hand prevented this. He has worked at many things--at present he is a shirt presser in a laundry--and ekes out his wages now and then by shining shoes. One day not long ago a sculptor, Louise Nevelson, noticed the ornamented bootblack box he was carrying to his accustomed corner just beyond Wanamaker's near Seventh Street and Broadway. She stopped him and said: "You have a beautiful shoe-shine box there."

He looked her gravely in the eyes and replied: "It is the most beautiful shoe-shine box in New York City."

She agreed.

Encouraged, he said: "At home I have the most beautiful shoe-shine stand in the world."

Sure that she was on the trail of something unusual, Miss Nevelson visited Joe Milone's home later and he showed her his labor of love and art for which he says he would not take a million dollars. She brought it to the attention of the Museum of Modern Art whose Director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., decided that it was an object of such gaiety and cheer that it should be shown at the Museum during the Christmas season. Mr. Barr says of it:

"Joe Milone's shoe-shine furniture is as festive as a Christmas tree, jubilant as a circus wagon. It is like a lavish wedding cake, a baroque shrine, or a super-juke box with no blank areas in the ornament. Yet it is purer, more personal and simple-hearted than any of these. We must respect the enthusiasm and devotion of the man who made it as much as we enjoy the result. Nearby in the Museum is an exhibition of Useful Objects Under Ten Dollars; but this is a superbly useless object without price."

Every inch of the dazzling chair and its satellite objects is covered or hung with gleaming metal, with glass doorknobs and red,

blue, silver, brass and iridescent buttons, balls and bells. On a shelf beneath the chair seat a gilt Cupid in a cummerbund of pearls plays a mandolin as he stands on a tambourine splendid with glass emeralds, topazes and rubies. Little iron flowers painted by Joe in pink, blue, orange and pimento are screwed into the throne-like base of the chair. Varicolored ribbon rosettes cover the seat of the stool. A long-tailed bird in brass is placed advantageously. Delicate bathing beauties in Far Rockaway china sit on either side of the big shoe rest, while a china kitten wearing a necklace stands guard at the end.

The entire stand and its accessories repay careful scrutiny with endless discovery of new and minute objects, but the resplendent effect of the complete collection rewards even the most casual glance. As Joe Milone himself says of it, "Nice-a shine like-a diamond."

NOTE: The Museum will be closed all day on Christmas.