

THE PARADOX OF THE AMERICAN ART MUSEUM

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Introduction

The Shape of the Study

The American art museum was born in the nineteenth century, the child of wealthy industrialists who viewed the collecting of art as a symbol of prosperity, wealth, and power for themselves and for the new nation. From its beginnings, the art museum was understood to define the American nation as an advancing culture, one rich, not only in the art collected, but also in the methods and means of sharing those treasures with all the people. The American art museum proclaimed a new society based on industry, commerce, democracy, and capitalism.

The democratic and capitalistic underpinnings of the museum created an institution sometimes at odds with itself since the holdings of the institution were of a rarefied nature, precious, even spiritual, and required a certain level of knowledge for full appreciation. The contradictions and conflicts arising from this situation are the subject of this dissertation.

The study is divided into three main parts. It begins (Chapter 1-4) with an examination of the motives and systems of art patronage in the American society of

the nineteenth century, and a consideration of how these shaped the American art museum. (Chapter 1) The art museum stood as a symbol of the triumph of democracy and capitalism on the North American continent, (Chapter 2) first made concrete in the architecture and collections of the Metropolitan and Boston Museums. (Chapter 3) The paradoxical legacy of the Metropolitan as America's first great museum, continues today as powerful and elitist boards manage the acquisition of rare and valuable objects for institutions claiming democratic missions. In the public sector, democratic concerns prove dangerously intrusive in the institutions funded by federal tax dollars. A review of the programs of the National Gallery and the National Endowment for the Arts sheds light on areas of concern. (Chapter 4)

The second section (Chapters 5-7) examines three major influences on the American art museum: modernism, democracy, and capitalism. Modernism, first introduced to America in the Armory Show of 1913, influenced not only American art, but museum architecture and design. The art propagated by modernism required a specific museum context in which to be displayed and, because of the difficulty of the new art forms, that museum context

included a logical, instructional focus for the public. Education, a pillar of democracy, was a central mission of the American art museum. Perhaps more than any other internal force in museum administration, the growth of educational programming reflected both democratic and economic concerns. Educational programming attracted large numbers of visitors who in turn supported the museum through admission fees, membership dues, and book store and restaurant spending. The popular appeal of the art museum also attracted corporate sponsors who greatly influenced museum administration.

The final section (Chapter 8 and 9) is a case study of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, America's first museum devoted exclusively to modernism. Established by the Rockefellers, America's leading capitalists, the Museum of Modern Art instituted museum practices adopted from the American corporation. The influences of modernism, capitalism, and democracy are present in full force and their implications may be clarified through an in-depth look at this one museum.

Approaches to Research

The analysis of the Museum of Modern Art focuses first on two key people, the founding director, Alfred H.

Barr, and Nelson Rockefeller who, as a leading board member beginning in 1932, played an important part in establishing the physical plant, the collections, and the financial operation of the museum. Research into the roles of these two men was conducted through the archives of the Museum of Modern Art which contain the Rockefeller Papers and the Alfred H. Barr Papers. The Alfred H. Barr Papers were accessed through the Archives of American Art. Contained also in the museum's archives and essential to this research, are the collection of annual financial reports issued by the museum, and the Bulletin, the museum's newsletter beginning in 1934. These resources allowed for the charting of growth patterns including exhibition space and collections, (Figures 7,8 and 11) attendance and membership, various sources of income including the capital campaigns of 1959 and 1980. (Figures 9,10) In addition to the archival analysis, a more personal view of the museum was provided through an interview with Zara Cohan, a museum employee from 1956 until 1965. (Appendix III) Ms Cohan also opened her personal archives which contain copies of internal memos and minutes as well as press releases, brochures and news clippings, thus establishing background information on

the internal workings of the museum. (Chapter 9, "The First Expansion")

The impact of modernism on the American art museum is best understood through the direct observation of modern art and architecture. The analysis of the work of Marcel Duchamp ("The Influence of Surrealism", Chapter 5) and Jackson Pollock ("Surrealism and Pollock", Chapter 5) in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art provide an understanding of the introduction of modernist ideas to the American public. Access to the photographs of Jackson Pollock in his studio taken by Hans Namuth allowed for further analysis of the work and of the mythology surrounding its production. The parallel yet opposing influence of the Bauhaus philosophy was researched through the documents compiled by Hans Wingler as well as through the direct observation of modern museum architecture. ("The Influence of the Bauhaus", Chapter 5)

As a way to understand the role of education in the art museum, the general art museum was studied first followed by an examination of one educational program for modern art. (Chapter 6) The Cleveland Museum's educational program was selected to set an historical

precedent because it is considered by the profession to be outstanding. This program was reviewed through the financial reports held in the museum's archives, the direct analysis of programs, and through the writings of Thomas Munro, Curator of Education during the program's formative years. Current educational efforts in four large North-East museums were then considered. An information-collecting survey of each of the four museums (Appendix V) was followed by site visits which provided an overview of the collections, facilities and programs. This information was supplemented by archival materials in the form of financial reports, and statistics on staff, space, volunteers and numbers of visitors served. ("A Comparative Survey", Chapter 6) All these materials were analyzed and growth patterns were charted. (Figures 4,5,6)

Educational methods in the Museum of Modern Art in New York City were examined separately because modern art presented a different set of problems. Background was established through materials in the museum's archives and then one program was analyzed in depth. The exhibition of the Work of Vito Acconci and the educational efforts accompanying it were assessed through

direct analysis of the art and the exhibition catalog essay as well as through an interview with the artist in his studio. (Appendix I)

Finally, the influence of the corporation on the art museum was evaluated. (Chapter 7) The Metropolitan Museum's relationships with corporations while under the direction of Thomas Hoving is reviewed through archival records of programs and financial reports. The corporate-museum partnership was further investigated in an interview with the artist Hans Haacke. (Appendix II) Haacke has made that partnership central to his art for more than twenty years and is considered to be the social conscience of the art museum professional. Access to his art and related documentation in the artist's studio allowed for a thorough analysis. This was followed by two case studies of the two American museums most closely associated with corporate tactics: The Whitney Museum (Case Study I, Chapter 7) and The Guggenheim Museum. (Case Study II, Chapter 7) These studies were conducted by analysis of financial reports and program statistics in the museum archives, reviews and commentary published in the New York Times and professional journals, and visitor surveys. (Appendix VI)

All of this is set against the historical back drop
of a democratic, capitalistic nation building the museum
that reflects those concerns.

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SECTION ONE

CHAPTER 1

The Motives of Art Patronage
During The American Renaissance

Introduction

America 's art museums were built, for the most part, by wealthy individuals whose fortunes resulted from capitalist enterprises. The founders and developers of the first museums, the likes of J.P. Morgan and Henry Clay Frick, saw themselves as the kings of industry and looked to art collecting and art patronage as another way of establishing their place in history while gaining status and pleasure in the present (Morgan, 1971, p. 92). They organized these institutions based on a corporate structure to be governed by a private board of trustees and funded with private dollars. (See Chapter 3) This uniquely American situation and the amassing of great works of art that resulted was viewed with pride by the still young nation as the activity of an advanced culture (Veysey, 1979, p.81). The major influence to be cited during this period is the Italian Renaissance which impacted on both the society and on individual patrons. The Havemeyers, Corcorans, and Morgans looked to the early capitalists and found a model for art patronage in the Medici family. To understand what motivated the Americans, we must look to their models.

The Italian Renaissance was viewed by nineteenth century Americans as the epitome of high culture, and so would serve as a model for the new civilization in the new world (Wilson, 1979, p.39). The leaders of the

Renaissance, in particular the great Florentine banking family, the Medici, would serve as models for the new American leaders, establishing the concept of princely donorship and strengthening the link between collecting and social status. (The role of the late twentieth century Medici, the corporation, is discussed in Chapter 7.) This second aspect of collecting, conspicuous accumulation, served to spark the imaginations of America's industrial giants who considered themselves the royalty of the new empire (Morgan, 1971, p.92). Both the motives and the systems of art patronage during this period determined the shape of the American art museum.

We will first examine the Italian Renaissance as model for the American Renaissance and then briefly review the patronage of the Medici family as a general model for American art collecting. We will also review the Renaissance systems of patronage, the role of the Vasarian Canon and their influence on American thinking. The motives of art patronage and collecting during the fifteenth century (piety, prestige, and pleasure) will then be compared to those of nineteenth century America (patriotism, prestige, and pleasure through moral elevation).

The Italian Renaissance As Model

Nineteenth century America looked to European culture to locate a model for the new nation. The

Italian Renaissance, as it was viewed in nineteenth century America, was a period in which the arts flourished, an interest in and imitation of the classical period began, and an interest in the secular and the individual emerged. All of these were indications to the nineteenth century mind that the Middle Ages were over and the modern world had begun. While historians generally agree that the Renaissance man did not perceive his time as a distinct period, our concern here is with the perceptions of nineteenth century Americans.

One important contribution to the nineteenth century idea of the Renaissance is the fact that the period was full of 'firsts'. It was the time of the first oil painting and the development of linear perspective. Other methods used to create the illusion of depth, such as color theory, foreshortening, proportion, and relative positioning were also employed. This age also witnessed the first copperplate, the first printed book and the first woodcut (Murray, 1979, p.9).

The neo-classical enthusiasm of the nineteenth century was an important stimulus to interest in the Renaissance as was the revival of the humanist tradition. Romantic nationalism and the trend toward historical thinking also exerted an influence on attitudes toward the Renaissance. The ideal form established by the ancient Greeks and re-discovered in the Renaissance was

considered valid for all people, for all time (Alsop, 1982, p.111). The neo-classicists in America supported and preserved the Vasari tradition. At the same time, the Romantic influence, which emphasized moral earnestness and Christian piety, found models in Renaissance art and expression in national sentiments.

The use of the term "Renaissance" to denote a definite epoch in the history of art was well established in France by about 1830 (Murray, 1979, p.9). From there it spread without benefit of translation to Germany and was naturalized in England by about 1845. From recognizing the Renaissance as a period in the history of art, it was a short step, taken by the middle of the century, to the application of the term in other areas of culture.

The Renaissance period did celebrate the individual and Renaissance historiography featured the biographical form. More than any other period, the Renaissance was depicted as an age characterized by individualism and typified by powerful personalities: scholars, artists, poets, princes, popes. Their biographies became inspiration to those Americans who would be great and established the importance of wealth as the economic foundation of an advanced culture (Martines, 1979, p.184). As the foundations of economics were perceived to have shifted from the medieval land to the Renaissance

city, Florence became an ideal type. Community was replaced by society, and religiously sanctioned political power was replaced by intellectually supported economic power. All this seemed rational and realistic, and as emphasized earlier, individualistic. In short, the Renaissance became the prototype for the new American society as Americans identified with the ways in which early capitalism caused changes in the social structure and created entrepreneurs whose dominance depended on wealth and intellect (Cashman, 1984, p.50). The nineteenth century historians' emphasis on the role of capitalism is understandable since this was a relatively recent discovery and easily locked into a socioeconomic theory of the genesis of Renaissance culture.

So nineteenth century historians looked at the despair of the Civil War period in America and drew a parallel to the Middle Ages. They looked at the post war American civilization, its industry, commerce, democracy and art, and declared it the legitimate heir to the concept of the Renaissance. This identification by many Americans including artists, scholars, politicians, and industrialists, with the Italian Renaissance resulted in the introduction of the term "American Renaissance" to describe that period in American history dating from approximately 1876 to 1917 (Wilson, 1979, p.12).

In almost every area there were made analogies with

the Renaissance. Artists attempted to assume the humanist example: painting murals and designing buildings, sculpting as well as etching. There was also great collaboration among the artists, architects, designers and decorators as public art projects took as a model the unity displayed in High Renaissance Rome. There was also of course the analogy of the American robber baron to the Italian merchant prince. In this way the Medici became models for the Whitneys, Morgans and Fricks. We will now look to the history of the Medici family and their influence on art patronage in nineteenth century America.

The Medici As Model Patrons

From about 1300 the feudal society of the Middle Ages with its agricultural economy and church-dominated intellectual life was transformed into a centrally controlled society with a commercial economy dominated by lay patronage of the arts and education. The Italian Renaissance was an urban phenomenon occurring in cities such as Florence, Milan, and Venice. The wealth concentrated in these cities allowed the arts to flourish. The arts, along with humanistic studies, were encouraged through the financial support of the leaders in commerce and politics such as the Sforza of Milan and the Doges of Venice (Murray, 1979, p.7).

The Medici, the wealthy banking and political family

that long ruled Florence, were among the greatest collectors and patrons of the Renaissance (Martines, 1979, p.242). Cosimo de Medici, the founder of Medici power and rule in Florence, was the first of a long line of rich and influential Italians to become ardent collectors of art. A look at Cosimo, his son Piero, and his grandson Lorenzo, will provide some insight into an example that exercised influence on Western art right through to America in the nineteenth century.

In the middle of the fifteenth century the city of Florence had much of which to be proud. Intellectual life had never been more vital and art and architecture had begun the move away from medieval models. The Medici family was established as one of the great dynasties of European history and already had a reputation as dutiful servants to the community. It was said of Giovanni di Bicci when he died in 1429 that he "died very rich in treasure, but far richer in fame and goodwill." (Hibbert, 1974, p.32).

Giovanni left his fortune to his son Cosimo who was known early on as a patron of scholarship and would initiate the Medici role as patrons of art (Martines, 1979, p.242). Cosimo began his role as a patron of the arts in 1429, at the age of forty, upon the inheritance of the family fortune. From this point on, but especially after his return from his brief banishment in

1434, Cosimo supported both church projects and personal artistic commissions.

The first great act of patronage undertaken by Cosimo was the comprehensive enlargement of the church and convent of San Marco. One outstanding component of the complex was the library. Cosimo acquired the book collection of Niccolo Niccoli upon his death in 1437 and transferred it to San Marco. This was an extraordinarily vast collection and was made accessible not only to the residents of San Marco but to all citizens with scholarly interests (Hibbert, 1974, p.69) a gesture to be emulated by the "princes" of nineteenth century America. Industrialist, Andrew Carnegie, for example, is credited with establishing America's public library system (Carnegie, 1986, p.45). Cosimo saw also to the acquisition of other works and to the production of copies for the library.

Another major project of this same period was the expansion of San Lorenzo which had been begun by Giovanni and which would now occupy Cosimo. This monumental project placed Cosimo in a position of princely donorship rather than the donorship of a private citizen. It was by assuming the sole responsibility for a whole great church and establishing San Lorenzo as the church of the Medici that Cosimo moved beyond the concept of private patronage (Wackernagel, 1981, p.232). This model of

patronage would also be noted in nineteenth century America, especially in the establishment of art museums (Veysey, 1979, p.82).

"In San Lorenzo only the secondary chapels were erected and patronized by individual families in the customary manner. All main parts, however, including the whole stock of furnishings, were the result of donations solely from the house of Medici. In the context of other private patronage of the time this represented a completely unique accomplishment that can be explained only through the no less unique development of Cosimo's position in the commercial and political life of the city republic and that may stand as the most evident monumental demonstration of this." (Wackernagel, 1981, p.233).

Upon the death of Cosimo in 1464, his son Piero inherited the family fortune, the palace, the villas, and the role as benefactor to the arts. His role in Florentine art and life was a brief one because Piero died just five years after his father. But in that short period of time he strove to be recognized as a friend and patron of artists. (Hibbert, 1974, p.108). His personal involvement with the artists and the types of projects he commissioned represent a transition from the more public oriented patronage of Cosimo to what can be seen as the more personal involvement of Lorenzo. There is also with

Piero, a trend toward more conspicuous acquisitions, an important influence on nineteenth century patrons.

Shift in Style: Lorenzo As Collector

Piero's son, Lorenzo, would surpass his father in personal aggrandizement. He would be known to all men as Lorenzo the Magnificent and, moving beyond his father and grandfather, would become the most famous art collector Europe had seen since the decline of the Roman Empire (Hook, 1984, p.119).

Lorenzo was barely twenty-one years old when his father Piero died leaving him to the business of governing the city state. Lorenzo would also assume a role as patron of the arts though, unlike his father and grandfather, his commissions proceeded mainly from personal motives rather than the magnanimous donor's intentions (Hook, 1984, p.120).

Lorenzo came to be known as the "laurel who sheltered the birds that sang in the Tuscan spring." (Hibbert, 1974, p.122). His personal connections to artists and artistic support systems would serve as a model in nineteenth century America. His relationship with Michelangelo, for example, would be particularly inspirational.

Giorgio Vasari recorded the story of the relationship between Lorenzo and Michelangelo. Michelangelo was engaged in copying in marble the head of

an old faun. "Michelangelo succeeded in copying the faun so well that Lorenzo was amazed. Then, when he saw that Michelangelo had departed a little from the model and followed his own fancy in hollowing out a mouth for the faun and giving it a tongue and all its teeth, Lorenzo laughed in his usual charming way and said, 'But don't you know old people never have all their teeth; there are always some missing.'

"As soon as Lorenzo had gone away, Michelangelo broke off one of the faun's teeth and dug into the gum so that it looked as if the tooth had fallen out; and he waited anxiously for Lorenzo to come back. And after he had seen the result of Michelangelo's simplicity and skill, Lorenzo laughed at the incident more than once and used to tell it for a marvel to his friends. He resolved that he would help and favour the young Michelangelo; and first he sent for his father, Lodovico, and asked whether he could have the boy, adding that he wanted to keep him as one of his own sons. Lodovico agreed, and the Lorenzo arranged to have Michelangelo given a room of his own at the Palazzo Medici and looked after him as one of the Medici household. Michelangelo always ate at Lorenzo's table with the sons of the family and other distinguished and noble persons, and Lorenzo always treated him with great respect..." (Vasari, 1946, p.259);

Systems of Patronage

This system of patronage exemplified by Lorenzo and his relationship with Michelangelo was the most common during the Renaissance period. Known as the household system, it entailed the providing of room and board and often supplies and presents to the artist by a rich man in return for artistic production. A similar system, also very popular and very personal, was an arrangement of short duration ending upon the completion of the commission. Such agreements with artists, architects, and craftsmen would be imitated in nineteenth century America.

There was also at this time the beginning of a market system. In this case the artist produced objects in his studio and then sold them directly to a client or sometimes enlisted the assistance of a dealer (Martines, 1979, p.244). This last system would eventually allow for a broader patronage since works would become more affordable and more easily transferable. It would no longer be necessary to commission a mural when one could purchase a painting from the artist's studio and bring it home. This painting could, at some future point, be transferred to another household thus broadening the concept of collecting. The market system would also encourage more individualized expression since decisions of content were left more and more to the artist.

One can see how the household systems were tied to

princely patronage while the market system would lead to a pattern of collecting related to that of modern times. The market system would fit well with nineteenth century capitalism and ideas about individualism (Veysey, 1979, p.83). Before examining the Renaissance motives for patronage and/or art collecting, let us see how certain trends developed during this period.

There is some evidence that art collecting existed in ancient Greece, perhaps as early as the later fourth century B.C., and in Rome until about the fourth century A.D. But with the twilight of the classical art tradition came the end to art collecting until the beginning of the fourteenth century. With the Renaissance there came a new tradition of collecting which developed into what we are familiar with today (Bronowski, 1961, p.66).

During this period in Italy, art collecting again established itself for the first time in over eight hundred years. Italian collectors of this period were keenly interested in classical works of art. This interest grew in the following century and very important classical collections were formed. The influence of classical art was imposed on the artists of the day and they were encouraged to imitate the ancient forms. The art lovers and art makers of the Renaissance bestowed the highest status on antique art thus establishing that form

as the standard against which all art should be measured (Alsop, 1982, p.111).

The artists who would become the old masters of Western culture began to paint secular subjects on the walls and ceilings of private domestic interiors. These included all the favorite kinds of ornamental, vegetable, heraldic, and even narrative figural subjects, all with a nod toward the ancient ideal. A series of frescoes, for example, was executed in the Medici villa of Spedaletto by the great Florentine painters Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, Perugino, and Filippino Lippi (Hook, 1984, p.132). Commissioned by Lorenzo Magnifico, the four masters produced images from Greek mythology. This type of commission and collaboration would be imitated by nineteenth century patrons and artists. For example, in 1893 Augustus Saint-Gaudens referred to the Chicago Exposition as "the greatest meeting of artists since the fifteenth century." (Wilson, 1979, p.12).

Murals commissioned by the Medici or other wealthy patrons are far outnumbered by paintings on wood and canvas which were more easily collected. These also took as their subjects, classical mythology or classical forms. Paolo Uccello, for example, painted a series of three equestrian battles while Pollaiuolo and Botticelli painted enthroned figures representing seven virtues. Botticelli's famous Venus scenes represent yet another

reference to antique mythology. Classic subjects and forms would be incorporated into the paintings and sculpture produced in the American Renaissance, and would very often represent virtues or abstract ideals.

According to the historian Joseph Alsop, the circulation in 1550 of Giorgio Vasari's Lives of the Artists established the "ancients" as the models for all art. Alsop labels this influence the "Vasarian canon". This canon dominated artistic thinking in nineteenth century America, influenced collecting and the structure of the American art museum. (See Chapter 3)

The Vasarian canon ended the random approach to art collecting. "The canon first of all ruthlessly excluded all works of art produced in Europe throughout the Dark and Middle Ages, with an extremely minor exception for Italian Romanesque architecture. This exception was made, in turn, because Vasari devoutly believed that the 'ancients' were the necessary models for all art; and buildings like the Cathedral of Pisa passed muster because they were regarded by Vasari as near enough to the works of the 'ancients'. It can be seen, then, that Vasari's viewpoint strongly confirmed the canonical status of the great artists of antiquity." (Alsop, 1982, p.111).

Alsop goes on to state that Vasari's other contribution to the new canon was his analysis of the

development of art in Italy. "Vasari conceived the story of Italian art in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as a majestic but difficult progression, consisting of a long series of triumphant solutions of technical problems mainly concerning the accurate, but also the graceful and harmonious representation of the thing seen. Within this majestic progression, the masters of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries were warmly praised for their roles in art's "rebirth", but in Vasari's eyes, they were sadly imperfect artists. The great Renaissance masters of most of the fifteenth century were then applauded for coming much nearer to perfection...Vasari held, however, that true "perfection" was only reached when Leonardo da Vinci showed how Perugino could be much improved upon; and Western art's first canonical masters were therefore Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian, and the other giants of the High Renaissance." (Alsop, 1982, p.112).

So Vasari established a canon comprised of the great artists of antiquity and the masters of the High Renaissance who he believed had surpassed the ancients for the first time in history. This canon would determine art collecting in the whole of Europe until the eighteenth century, fostering a narrow definition of what was acceptable to imitate and what was worth acquiring. We will see this canon dominate again in the nineteenth

century as the young American nation takes the Renaissance as its model.

Motives for Art Patronage

The motives for art patronage and art collecting during the period of the Italian Renaissance have been identified by Renaissance scholar Peter Burke as piety, prestige and pleasure (Burke, 1986, p.97). Similar motivating factors will be found in nineteenth century America. We will review first the Renaissance motives outlined by Burke and then compare them to the patronage of the American Renaissance.

Piety is easily demonstrated as a widespread, socially acceptable motive through the predominance of religious themes in paintings and sculpture and the number of commissions issued for the love of God. Prestige as a motive for patronage is evidenced by the inscriptions in commissions celebrating the honor and glory of the patron, or the depictions of patrons dressed in luxurious clothing in the company of saints and popes.

The "Adoration of the Magi", (collection of the Uffizi Museum) commissioned by Piero de Medici is an excellent example of how prestige can be derived from a work of art. In this case the painting serves to document the greatness of the Medici family, but prestige can come in other ways as well. Other outstanding demonstrations of prestige as a motivating factor are the

previously described projects by Cosimo de Medici of the enlargement of the church and convent of San Marco and the marvelous expansion of San Lorenzo. Here, the huge expenditures of money become a key factor in gaining prestige. The tabernacle commissioned by Piero de Medici for the church of the Annunziata was inscribed with the words: "Costo fior. 4 mila el marmo solo" ("The marble alone cost 4,000 florins") (Wackernagel, 1981, p.239).

Looking to the third motive identified by Burke, that is the motive of pleasure, we observe it defined by him as "a more or less discriminating delight in paintings, statues and so on, whether as objects in their own right or as a form of interior decoration." (Burke, 1986, p.98). It is noted that the pleasure taken from objects of art reached a level of importance and self-consciousness in Renaissance Italy unprecedented anywhere in Europe for a thousand years. The desire to acquire art for its own sake is generally found in people who have received a humanist education, according to Burke. As has already been demonstrated, the study of the humanities was an important part of Cosimo de Medici's life and gained in importance in the lives of his son Piero and grandson Lorenzo. Lorenzo surrounded himself with artists, writers and scholars and became the most famous patron of the arts in all of Europe.

Renaissance Patronage Motives Revived

Looking at the motives for art patronage during the Italian Renaissance as they have been identified by Peter Burke, that is piety, prestige, and pleasure, let us see how they continued as forces in the American Renaissance.

Piety, demonstrated by the number of religious commissions in the Italian Renaissance, may find a parallel in patriotism during the American Renaissance. The American Renaissance was, by both definition and action, intensely nationalistic. While it appropriated the styles and symbols of the Italian Renaissance, it used them to create the image of a new American civilization.

Americans, from the beginning, were proud and outspoken about their capabilities and achievements. Following the Civil War, however, a great surge of nationalism found form in every aspect of the culture including art (Cashman, 1984, p.4). This new awareness of a national identity was defined in word and image and, with the celebration of the centennial and the focus on American history, the images became monumental. Nationalism inspired art and architecture and they, in turn, inspired nationalism.

The Boston Public Library (McKin, Mead and White, 1887-95) is a fine example of what the American Renaissance built. The library, though financed with public funds, was in fact the result of the movement of

Boston's elite. The design is based on a Renaissance palazzo and on either side of the triple arched entrance are classically - inspired personifications of Art and Science. Across the frieze are carved the words: "The Public Library of the City of Boston Built by the People and Dedicated to the Advancement of Learning". Inside the library rooms of rich marble are memorials of heroes and patriots by Louis Saint-Gaudens and Frederick Mac Monnies. There are Venetian-style ceiling paintings and great bronze doors designed by Daniel Chester French (Wilson, 1983, p.40).

The Boston Public Library is but one example of a movement that crossed the continent and in every American city brought together the businessmen, architects and artists for the purpose of civic beautification. The movement was portrayed as American and democratic. As the muralist Edwin Blashfield wrote: "The names of public buildings are the century-marks of the ages...wherever the footprints of the spirit of civilization have rested most firmly some milestone of human progress has risen to be called the Parthenon or Notre Dame, Giotto's Tower or Louvre, and to teach from within and without, by proportion and scale, by picture and statue, the history of the people who built it; to celebrate patriotism, inculcate morals, and to stand as the visible concrete symbol of high endeavor".

(Blashfield, 1913, p.18).

Prestige as a motive for patronage is tied to the expenditure of money and the Vanderbilt family were among the Medicis of the late nineteenth century. Between 1876 and 1917, the Vanderbilts constructed at least seventeen mansions including the Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina which cost in excess of \$5,000,000. The Biltmore is a massive structure of Indiana limestone designed by the architect Richard Morris Hunt and based on the Chateau de Blois (Baker, 1986, pp. 417-421).

Biltmore stands on 13,000 acres and is a mass of chimneys and gables and pinnacles. "In its library he (George Washington Vanderbilt) sat beneath a magnificent ceiling, painted by the ebullient Venetian master, Tiepolo, a work of art that he had acquired in Europe on the condition that he keep secret where he had got it and what it had cost him. Around him (he was a studious young man) were twenty thousand richly bound volumes on his favorite subjects - forestry, art, and ancient and modern languages. In his banqueting hall, whose ceiling was seventy-five feet above its highly polished floor, he dined with friends surrounded by Gobelin tapestries and warmed by a triple fireplace. In his print room he examined his collection of Durer engravings or a chess set that had once belonged to Napoleon I. There were forty masters' bedrooms in the house and the steep roof

that covered it was the largest, whether for a public or private building, anywhere in the country" (Lynes, 1980, p.122). This clearly illustrates the hold the Italian Renaissance had on the American imagination and shows the link between collecting and social status.

The American Renaissance art and architecture, whether private or public, was inextricably tied to capitalism. The artists of this period designed the Italian palazzos in which the new Medici would spend their time. They designed the great public buildings and cultural institutions that were generally funded by wealthy patrons or philanthropic organizations. This period did witness the founding of America's libraries, orchestras, operas, universities, and of course, America's museums. "The large European Old Master holdings of many art museums were tied directly to both a vision of America equaling the Old World in artistic property and to the pillaging activities of Bernard Berenson, Stanford White, and others." (Wilson, 1979, p.21).

Appropriately, the artists also designed the currency of capitalism. Saint-Gaudens designed both the ten and the twenty dollar gold piece; Adolph Weinman designed the Liberty dime; James Frazer, the Buffalo nickel; Victor Brenner, the Lincoln penny.

As we look to Burke's third motive for collecting,

we find that Americans take great delight in the fine arts and the decorative arts as well. The new rich sought exotic and beautiful furnishings from all parts of the world and were quick to commission American artists to paint, sculpt, and otherwise enhance their surroundings. The pleasure motive taken with things beautiful was also tied to the prestige derived from the wealth and knowledge required to choose and purchase art. It was somewhat nationalistic too in that art was seen as an index of civilization.

There was also for American patrons, the notion of art giving pleasure by uplifting the spirit. This was the didactic notion that elevated aesthetics would produce elevated morals (Adam, 1929, p.53). It was connected to the motive of patriotism in that the superiority of the morals of the American nation were at stake. Better art would make better citizens.

The similar motivating factors in the collection of art speak to the way in which Americans adopted the symbolism of art collecting as established in the Italian Renaissance. For the American people, art collecting symbolized the establishment of, on the North American continent, an advanced culture enlightened and ready to assume a leadership role among world powers (Dobson, 1978, p.124). It meant we were a nation rich in treasures, money, culture, and learning. For the

individuals who amassed large numbers of paintings and sculptures, millionaires like the Astors, Whitneys, and Fricks, the art collection stood as a symbol of wealth, power and prestige. They viewed themselves as the new Medici and took great pride in the role of patron. These patrons represented the leading edge of the sense of confidence and intellectual prowess that characterized America's coming of age.

Conclusion

Bernard Berenson, art scholar and advisor on art collecting, wrote in 1894 "We ourselves...are instinctively in sympathy with the Renaissance...the spirit which animates us was anticipated by the spirit of the Renaissance, and more than anticipated. That spirit seems like the small rough model after which ours is being fashioned." (Berenson, 1894, p.111).

The European model as defined here was first classical and second, individual. The classical art and architecture of Greece and Rome furnished the styles considered best adapted to American needs. Since it was the custom of the day for artists to study in Europe, there was established in Rome the American Academy where the standards of Classic and Renaissance art would be taught.

In architecture, a variety of buildings with reference to the past were designed. Temple fronts were

a common theme as were great domes and triumphal arches, and the classical orders were found everywhere. Sculpture was used to enhance the buildings and the human figure idealized was the most frequent form. Usually, these figures were abstract allegories representing Justice, Truth, or Beauty.

The generation of American artists that returned home from various European academies in the 1870's and 1880's, returned with a new knowledge. They had learned about the Renaissance through art schools in Munich and Paris as well as in Rome. They had learned that the fountainhead of modern art was the Florence and Rome of the Renaissance and they used the icons of the past in their American works. "We want to belong somewhere and to something, not to be entirely cut off by ourselves as stray atoms." (Dow, 1979, p.19). Thus the concrete symbols of American civilization, the art and architecture, were modeled after the Old World.

One example is Augustus Saint-Gaudens' statue of Admiral Farragut in Madison Square Park, New York City (1877-81). A first-hand observation reveals that the naturalism is attributable to fifteenth century Florentine sculpture. The posture and expression of the Admiral transcends the moment and he stands as a symbol of heroism and commitment. The pedestal, which was designed by Saint-Gaudens, refers explicitly to the

Renaissance in the calligraphy, the emblems, and the twin semireclining figures personifying Courage and Loyalty (Wilson, 1979, p.43).

The second aspect of the Renaissance model was that of individualism. As it found form in American art it often rebelled against its very roots and produced an eclecticism evoking different styles and periods. Charles McKim expressed this attitude in a letter to Edith Wharton: "The designer should not be too slavish, whether in the composition of a building or a room, in his adherence to the letter of tradition. By conscientious study of the best examples of classic periods, including those of antiquity, it is possible to conceive a perfect result suggestive of a particular period but inspired by the study of them all." (McKim, 1897, Library of Congress). McKim's design for the Boston Public Library draws on a number of sources and can "hold its own beside any of the great works of the great architects of the Renaissance" according to Samuel A.E. Abbott, patron and then President of the Library Board of Trustees (Abbott, 1889, Library of Congress).

A study of John La Farge's mural in the Church of the Ascension in New York reveals an unmistakable reference to Raphael's Vatican mural entitled "Transfiguration". According to Richard Guy Wilson, however, it draws upon several other works as well: "the

figures of the apostles are derived from Palma Vecchio's 'Assumption of the Virgin' (Venice, Accademia), the background is indebted to Japanese landscape, and the painting style comes from Titian and Delacroix." (Wilson, 1979, p.129). Wilson goes on to point out that the mural is located in a Gothic Revival church (Upjohn) with decoration by Stanford White after Bramante, flying angels by Saint-Gaudens after Donatello, and kneeling angels by Armstrong after Giotto. The entire composition expresses the contrary attitude of individualism inherited from the Renaissance while honoring the Renaissance as the primary stylist inspiration. John La Farge himself expressed the feelings of the period when he wrote regarding his European contemporaries: "We are not as they are...fixed in some tradition; and we can go where we choose...to the greatest influences, if we wish, and still be free for our future." (La Farge, 1900, p.254).

In conclusion, it was the collection of art, the commissioning of art, both privately and publicly, that elevated the sights of nineteenth century America. It said that America was no longer only a frontier society of great natural resources but also rich in cultural things. America's art collecting proclaimed a new society based on the success of industry, commerce, democracy and capitalism, a society in which the new

Medici could flaunt that success by the accumulation of art. An understanding of the motives behind the collection of art in nineteenth century America, (patriotism, prestige, and pleasure through moral elevation) provides an understanding of the nation's need to establish the art museum. Patriotism could be demonstrated in the art and in the architecture of public buildings. The triumphal arches outfitted with statues representing civic virtues would in turn inspire patriotism. The pleasure these works provided was believed to be morally uplifting for the masses and therefore would create better citizens. The prestige provided by the art would touch both the individual and the nation and would solidify the vision of America as a great civilization, the new bearer of the torch of western culture. The American Renaissance therefore, was the perfect climate for the establishment of America's first art museums.

CHAPTER 2

The American Art Museum,
A Symbol of Democracy

Introduction

The origins of the symbolic meaning of the American art museum can be found in eighteenth century Paris, in the evolution of the Louvre Museum and its connections to the French Revolution. Nineteenth century Americans viewed the Louvre as a symbol of the triumph of democracy and adopted it as a model for the development of an American art museum (Tompkins, 1970, p.31). Just as the collection of art was seen as a symbol of prosperity, power, and prestige by both the American people and their leaders (see Chapter 1), the collection of art within the museum context would confer that status on the American nation and establish it as an advanced culture whose system of democracy had succeeded. The seeds of the paradox of the American art museum can be found in the choice of the Louvre as a model.

The idea of the museum as a symbol will be explored first followed by an overview of the museum as an educational system, education being at the core of the democratic purpose. The Louvre as a model for the American museum includes its architectural image, its collections, and its place as a symbol in French culture. These will be reviewed and connected to America's

counterpart, the Metropolitan.

The Museum As Symbol

There are images that reside in the mind's eye of the American people that, because of their persistence and universality, come to stand for and express feelings and beliefs about the American nation. These images range from the majestic Statue of Liberty and the American eagle to the pop icons of cowboy hats and Chevrolets. What they have in common is the desire of their creators to be the people and live in the society the symbols represent.

Generally speaking, symbols may be defined as "things which stand for or express something else." Symbols are substituted for all known real and imaginary actions and objects and the relations among them. For our purposes, a sociologically based definition will serve the discussion.

"The essential components of a symbol are the sign and its meaning, the former usually being the outward perceptible form which is culturally identifiable and recognizable, the latter being the interpretation of the sign, usually composed of concepts of what is being interpreted and the positive and negative values and

feelings which 'cluster about' the sign. The sign's meaning may refer to other objects or express and evoke feelings. The values and feelings may relate to the inner world of the person or be projected outward on the social and natural worlds beyond." (Warner, 1959, p.4).

The American flag with its stars and stripes is a prime American symbol. Like all symbols it is comprised of a sign and its meaning. The sign is the red, white, and blue stars and stripes in that specific configuration that is known across the land and around the world. The meaning or interpretation of the sign, as stated earlier, can be either referential or evocative or both. In the case of the American flag, the thirteen stripes refer to the nation's beginnings in the thirteen original colonies and the fifty stars symbolize the unity and equality of the fifty states. The flag also symbolizes the sacrifices of our forefathers through the color red; the purity of their intentions through the color white; and their bravery through the color blue. These are specifically designated meanings but the flag also refers generally to more abstract concepts that the American people associate with their nation, such as liberty, equality, and justice. The flag, or any symbol, might

also inspire feelings such as love of country and loyalty, or negative feelings such as anger and fear.

The creation of a symbol involves the attribution of meaning as a result of experiences that are visible, perceptible, and available to the group. The meaning of the American flag within the American culture is generally unanimous because that culture, though large and diverse, maintains a common core of understanding. The flag states symbolically what the nation collectively believes, how it perceives its history, and what it wants to be.

The American art museum is a national symbol as well because, not only does it represent the wealth of a great nation and that nation's belief in the preservation of culture, but it also symbolizes the triumph of American democracy for it stands with its doors open, its treasures gathered for the benefit of all the people (Adam, 1939, p.49). In other words, it projects an image of what we want to believe and what we want to be. The concept of the American art museum along with most of what it symbolizes can be traced to France and to the Louvre Museum.

The originating concept and call for an American art

museum was sounded, not in Washington, New York or Boston, but in Paris. This may be viewed as prophetic when one considers the connections and competitions between American and French art and museums that have continued through the twentieth century.

John Jay, an American lawyer and grandson of the first chief justice, addressed, at a 4th of July, 1866 dinner party, a group of wealthy Americans vacationing in Paris. Jay stated that it was "time for the American people to lay the foundations of a National Institution and Gallery of Art." (Lerman, 1969, p.12). A desire for culture (no doubt fueled at that moment by French wine, as well as by French art and architecture) stirred in the hearts of these men and they pledged to support the goal. The vehicle for support would be New York's Union League Club of which these men were members, and the object of their support would be the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

It would take about four years for the Union League's art committee to present a full report and recommendations and to organize the solicitation of sponsors. At the end of 1869, a meeting attended by the city's business and cultural leaders confirmed that America would have a great encyclopedic art museum in New

York City.

A key speaker at this meeting was Princeton's George Fiske Comfort who laid out the various educational aspects of the art museum. According to Calvin Tomkins, Metropolitan Museum historian, "Comfort's ideas were really rooted in the revolutionary origins of Europe's museums. Art museums as we know them today are recent developments in Western society. They appeared at the same historical moment as the first encyclopedias, toward the end of the eighteenth century, and like the encyclopedias they were strongly influenced by the radical currents of French thought that helped to bring on the French Revolution. The first public museum was born in 1793, when the Louvre Palace, with all its treasures, confiscated by the republican regime, was declared open to the people". (Tomkins, 1970, p.31).

So from its inception, the American art museum in the form of the Metropolitan had as its model the European museum born of revolution. In order to understand the originating concept of the American museum one must understand the originating concept of the Louvre and its place in French culture and in Western culture in general. We will look first at the Enlightenment and its

impact on eighteenth and nineteenth century thought.

The Museum As Educational System

The period preceding the French Revolution was one in which great emphasis was placed on rational thought and education. It was no coincidence that the concept of the public museum of art would arise during this period considering the values of the day (Veysey, 1979, p.80). New discoveries in science, such as Newton's law of gravity, led people to believe that progress was the product of a judicious use of reason and that this "product" could alter humanity through education. Humanity was perceived as capable of progress in science, progress in the arts, progress even in moral values. The belief in both the possibility and the necessity of progress was pervasive, as was the belief that humanity could be improved intellectually and morally through proper education (Gay, 1984, p.14).

Proper education meant education through observation and through experience, both guided by reason. According to the seventeenth century philosopher John Locke, whose influence was still strongly felt at this time, knowledge was not innate but was gained through education. He regarded the mind of a person at birth as a tabula rasa,

a blank slate upon which knowledge would be imprinted by experience (Sahakian, 1968, p.154). Locke also held that all persons are born good, independent, and equal. His Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690) was very important to the period that gave birth to the French Revolution and American Democracy and in fact his philosophy was incorporated into the United States Constitution.

Locke's concept of education through observation matches perfectly with the museum format where objects are set out and one may study and compare several or focus on one specifically. For Americans, the educational opportunities presented by the museum enhanced it as a symbol of democracy. (For a discussion of the museum as an educational institution, see Chapter 6.) In addition, the desire at this time for the display of rational thought processes was well satisfied with the museum's systematic presentations of art (Alexander, 1979, p.36). (For an analysis of the impact of modernism on exhibition design, see Chapter 5.)

What had previously governed the arrangement of paintings in private galleries was the desire to achieve a harmonious, decorative effect. Paintings were arranged

according to their size and shape and, no doubt, how well they fit the available wall space. But now a new didactic approach was taken. With the public's access to the art gallery there developed an educational approach to the display of paintings (Alexander, 1979, p.195).

When the Ancien Regime opened the galleries in the Luxembourg Palace to the public at mid-century, the paintings were installed in a way that encouraged comparison. In its desire to create a public museum, the Ancien Regime installed about one hundred paintings in the east wing of the Luxembourg Palace in what Andrew McClellan refers to as an "eclectic" system. This was a system "whereby works by different artists and of different genres were carefully juxtaposed to afford the beholder a continuous contrast of style and subject. Created by members of the Academy as a part of a wide-ranging program of artistic reforms...the gallery was to provide artist and amateur alike with a visual lesson in the art of painting through direct comparison of representative examples of the three schools: the Italian, Northern and French." (McClellan, 1988, p.300).

This system was derived from a theory developed by Roger de Piles in 1708 which held that a painting

contained the four elements of color, design, composition, and expression and that one could best study painting by comparing each individual element. This would best be achieved by the juxtaposition of artists, styles, and subjects, thus allowing the viewer continuous contrast (Crow, 1988, p.36).

This system was later abandoned in favor of a more progressive order. Paintings were hung chronologically and according to school. Works at the Imperial Gallery in Vienna were classified by region and then arranged to illustrate art historical developments within each school. When the plans for the Grand Gallery of the Louvre were set in motion in 1779, there is evidence that they included the installation of art in the new progressive order (McClellan, 1988, p.302). This system of display was in keeping with the Vasarian, or Renaissance canon, which was enthusiastically embraced by nineteenth century Americans. (See Chapter 1) Therefore, the galleries of both the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum would welcome art exhibited in a progressive historical order.

The Louvre And Its Architectural Influence

The Louvre Palace was to be the first great museum, an encyclopedic collection housed in a palace and opened to the public for the purpose of enlightenment and inspiration. It's beginnings can be traced as far back as the reign of Charles V who employed an army of architects and artists to enlarge and "modernize" the then one-hundred and fifty year old buildings which had functioned mainly as arsenal and prison. In about 1400 Charles V established the Louvre as his palace and, in addition to the royal treasures housed there, established also a library rich in illuminated manuscripts, the nucleus of the present day Bibliotheque Nationale (Bazin, 1979, p.9).

During the reign of Charles VI, the English conquered the French and occupied Paris. For more than a century the Louvre was neglected, becoming again a prison and arsenal. But with the rise of Francis I, the Louvre once again became a royal court and the symbol of the wealth and culture of the French nation.

Francis I began a collection of contemporary Renaissance paintings and also began the additions to the palace which would eventually lead to a complex of unprecedented magnificence and monumental size. Every

sovereign that followed Francis and each administration since the Revolution left a mark on the evolution of the Louvre, making it a palace, a seat of government, and a repository of the nation's treasures (Laclotte, 1989, p.25).

The entire architectural tradition of this great palace was an inspiration to America whose first museums, the Metropolitan and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, would be designed to look like palaces. When the Metropolitan's Fifth Avenue facade was completed in 1892, New York City's Evening Post praised it as "the only public building in recent years which approaches in dignity and grandeur the museum of the old world." (Anonymous, 1902, n.p. Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives).

The Louvre continued to grow with the erecting of the Petite Galerie and part of the Palace of the Tuileries by Catherine de Medicis. Henry IV completed the work begun by the queen-mother, and spanned the distance from the Petite Galerie to the Palace of the Tuileries with the Grande Galerie (Laclotte, 1989, p.V).

On the lower floors of this structure which is more than a quarter of a mile long, hundreds of artists lived and

worked as guests of the King. (This tradition continued until Napoleon I.)

Succeeding Henry, Louis XIII planned the present court to be four times the size of Henry's. Louis XIV, sparing no expense, took both architecture and art as the symbols of a great and glorious reign. New wings were built for the Palace of the Tuileries which became home to Louis XIV. Other additions included the north, east, and south buildings of the old Louvre quadrangle, the Gallery of Apollo to replace the Gallery of the Kings, and the enlargement of the Petite Galerie (Bazin, 1979, p.34).

The Academy of Painting was founded in Paris in 1648 and held bi-annual exhibitions which were installed in the Louvre beginning in 1673. Beginning in 1681, many of Louis' paintings were exhibited to a semi-public audience in the Louvre. Thus there was established early on a tradition of both the creation of art and the exhibition of art in the Louvre.

However, when Louis XIV built Versailles he moved his court to this luxurious estate outside Paris. During the eighteenth century, as Versailles continued as the seat of power, the Louvre fell into disrepair. The

artists continued living and working there and were joined by shop owners and private tenants. There were also still some government offices, but the building deteriorated, due to the absence of real power.

The Ancien Regime talked of renovation and the creation of a great public museum, but plans continued slowly. With the fall of the Bastille in 1789, the monarchy came into jeopardy. The concept of a public museum may have originated with the Crown, but it was realized in the end through the efforts of the Revolution (Bazin, 1979, p.54). It is said with a smile that one of the reasons the Revolution was so popular was because it got things done.

The day the Bourbon monarchy finally collapsed (August 10, 1792) and the king's art collection was declared national property was the true beginning of the Louvre Museum. Louis XVI was taken prisoner and the National Assembly declared its interest in the museum and assigned responsibility for its completion to the Girondin Jean-Marie Roland, Minister of the Interior. Roland appointed a committee of six men headed by the artist Jacques-Louis David. Their assignment was to refurbish the Grand Gallery for exhibition and to select

the various paintings and decorative arts to be exhibited. By February, 1793, arrangements for the first display in the Louvre were complete. When the Republic celebrated its first birthday on August 10, 1793, it celebrated also the inauguration of the museum.

A Palace in New York City

When the Metropolitan Museum of Art opened almost one hundred years later, (see Chapter 3) its home in Central Park was a newly built Gothic palace. This first building, designed by Calvert Vaux and Jacob Wrey Mould, was part of a larger architectural plan to be executed over the years. The final Fifth Avenue facade would be designed by the first American to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris (Baker, 1986, p.443). Richard Morris Hunt was famous for his facility with historical styles and created for America's art museum a monumental, neoclassical, limestone building with a look of elegance and greatness emulating a European museum.

The new building was strictly symmetrical and clearly articulated in its advancing and receding planes. The coupled columns are a common feature of Beaux-Arts Classicism as are the arched and linteled openings between the columns and the sculptural elements that

enliven the skyline. The monumental flight of steps (which was further expanded in 1970) was also characteristic. (For the influence of modern architecture on the museum see Chapter 5.)

The interior of the Metropolitan was just as grand with the great hall and its mighty staircase designed to awe the visitor. The enormous scale was intended to impress the public and let them know the importance of the museum in the American culture.

The museum developed its collections and its facility and in 1909 approved the plans presented by the prestigious New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White. The Fifth Avenue wing would be extended north, a new library would be built, and a wing for the decorative arts would be added (Lerman, 1969, p.124).

McKim, Mead and White, like Richard Morris Hunt before them, had been trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and were well prepared to revive styles from the European past (Wilson, 1983, p.30). This firm spearheaded the Second Renaissance Revival with the Villard Houses in New York City and produced what is considered the most famous example of that style in the Boston Public Library.

They set the pace for Neo-Classical Revival,

according to Richard Guy Wilson (1983) and designed the largest and one of the finest Neo-Classical Revival buildings: Pennsylvania Station in New York City. They were experienced and highly respected in the practice of adapting historical styles to modern purposes and the wings they designed for the Metropolitan Museum served the art they held and also served the public.

Having established the primary symbol of the palace for the people, the Metropolitan Museum could begin to collect artifacts of historical and aesthetic significance. A country with no aristocracy and only a very recent history looked again to the European model for inspiration. Just as the American museum had transplanted the Old World palace onto the isle of Manhattan, so would it also appropriate treasures similar to those held in Europe's great houses.

The Louvre Collection

The collection of fine art and decorative art held in the Louvre grew with each new sovereign, sometimes fed by the collections of disposed nobles from around Europe. With the rise to power of Napoleon Bonaparte, and the establishment of the Louvre as a museum, the treasures held there would mount rapidly.

General Napoleon Bonaparte, in his various military campaigns and conquests, set about to systematically confiscate the best paintings, sculptures, and other cultural treasures from invaded lands and store them in the Louvre Museum. Belgium was the first victim in 1794 giving up many paintings by Rubens and Van Dyke. Italy's confiscated treasures included paintings by Correggio and Titian. Napoleon employed official art experts who, upon entering the invaded territories, would examine, catalog, pack and ship everything worthwhile back to Paris. (Alexander, 1983, p.89).

Following his conquest of Italy (1797), Bonaparte, with the help of his art experts, returned to Paris with one hundred paintings, five hundred manuscripts, and seventy-three sculptures including the Apollo Belvedere, the Laocoon, and the Lion of St. Mark. "The arrival in Paris of the largest convoy of the confiscated art works from Italy in July, 1798 led to a great two-day-long 'fete de la liberte'. The triumphal parade worked its way from the Jardin des Plantes to the Champ de Mars, where it formed a triple circle around the Altar to Liberty. Enormous wagons pulled the four bronze horses from St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, the carefully packed

statues, huge crates labeled in large letters, 'Transfiguration by Raphael' or 'Christ by Titian', and cages of bears and lions followed by plodding camels. There was a band, there were marching artists, scholars, and prominent statesmen, speeches, patriotic songs, and wild applause resounded from a huge crowd." (Alexander, 1983, p.89),

Most of these masterpieces would be returned to their rightful owners following Napoleon's defeat, but the reputation of the Louvre as the great encyclopedic museum was firmly established during this period. Napoleon understood the symbolic significance of the possession of these works of art and the far-reaching impact of the parade through the streets. The Louvre became the depository for the spoils of war, but was also established, by both the Revolutionary government and later by Napoleon as emperor, as an educational institution for the common people.

Napoleon had little, if any, aesthetic appreciation for art but he clearly understood its function as a symbol of glory and, as his power increased, saw how the museum could bring attention and splendor to his reign (Dowd, 1969, p.42). The man who helped guide Napoleon in

this direction was Dominique Vivant Denon (1747-1825), an aristocrat from Burgundy. Denon came to Napoleon with a thorough knowledge of Europe and its art, a knowledge of art history, and an ambitious, hard-working personality.

In 1798 Vivant Denon joined Napoleon's army of 38,000 men and 328 vessels to sail for Alexandria. The expedition resulted in many notes and drawings that went into his monumental book on Egypt, Voyage dans la Haute et al Basse Egypte, which he dedicated to Napoleon (Denon, 1973 n.p.). This publication no doubt influenced Napoleon's decision to appoint Denon chief administrator of the Louvre Museum.

Denon and Bonaparte agreed that the Louvre must be the most beautiful, most important museum in the world. Denon began renovation plans immediately and, to guarantee Napoleon's continued support, suggested a change in the name of the museum, calling it Musee Napoleon (Alexander, 1983, p.90).

Denon accompanied Napoleon on his campaigns in order to secure the conquered land's best art for his beloved Musee Napoleon. Denon was by nature an avid collector of art, so in his position as museum director and chief collector for the empire he truly excelled.

The Grande Gallerie of the Louvre was twelve hundred feet long and contained nine bays which, by 1811, held almost twelve hundred paintings. Denon had arranged the bays according to schools. Four bays were devoted to Italian schools and showed twenty-five paintings by Raphael, twenty-four by Titian, fifteen by Veronese, ten by Tintoretto and seven by Leonardo da Vinci to name a few. The Northern school was given four bays to show the six hundred Dutch, Flemish, and German paintings including fifty-four by Rubens, thirty-three by Rembrandt, fifteen by Holbein, and fourteen by Van Dyck. (Bazin, 1979, p.63). It was assumed that providing the opportunity for comparison within each school made it possible for visitors to perceive the historic course of art. The clustering of works by a single artist within the school allowed for comparison and an understanding of that artist's concerns and development.

The Louvre continued to grow in size and importance under the directorship of Denon and the illustrious reign of Napoleon. Following the unsuccessful Russian campaign of 1812, however, Napoleon was defeated in a series of battles and abdicated in 1814. Louis XVIII was restored to the throne and, wishing not to disturb the French

people, the allies postponed the restitution of art works to former owners. But when Napoleon escaped from Elba in 1815 and was finally defeated at Waterloo, the allies changed their policy. Deciding that the French people needed to be punished, and understanding the symbolic meaning of the museum and its treasures, the allies began restitution procedures (Bazin, 1979, p.69). The despoiling of the Louvre took only six months but was a bitter and humiliating experience for the French people who were deeply angered and openly displayed their feelings. The removal of treasures from the Louvre symbolized the loss of the nation's greatness.

The Louvre had become such a precious symbol however, that it could not be abandoned. Louis XVIII and those who followed him, attempted to imitate Napoleon's cultural policies while the French people allowed for their tax monies to support the museum. Today, the Louvre is no doubt a greater museum in many ways than it was in 1814 and its life as a symbol is still vital. The symbol of the Louvre, of the palace filled with world treasures and opened to the public for the purpose of education and gratification, was adopted by the American art museum.

From The Louvre To The Metropolitan

The influence of the Louvre was felt across Europe and across the Atlantic Ocean to the shores of America. It was seen as a symbol of the triumph of democracy, equality, and freedom: the world's first great public museum, a palace filled with the world's art treasures, open to all the people. The architecture and the encyclopedic contents were powerful symbols of intellectual and democratic progress and inspired the patrons of the Metropolitan Museum to strive to build a collection of similar status.

The main exhibition hall of the Metropolitan when the museum first opened, was filled with large stone sculptures from Golgoi and smaller objects from Cyprus, all part of the Cesnola Collection. The "Old Masters" were located in the painting galleries on the floor above. These were mainly seventeenth century Dutch and Flemish paintings and sixteenth to nineteenth century Italian, French, Spanish and English works from the collections obtained for the museum by William T. Blodgett. Two galleries were set aside for temporary exhibitions, opening with nineteenth century canvases borrowed from the William H. Vanderbilt collection

(Lerman, 1969, p.66).

It soon became very fashionable to give works of art to the Metropolitan and in short order the museum's collections reached world status. One early gift of paintings that pushed the museum forward was from the collection of Henry Gurdon Marquand and included works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Van Dyck, Franz Hals, Turner, and Gainsborough. The European masters were now in New York. (Chapter 3 provides a more in-depth look at the development of the Metropolitan's collection.)

The fascination with the European masters obscured for some time the idea of collecting American art. To Americans of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, only European art was real art and carried the proper symbolism needed for the great and prosperous American nation. (This attitude influenced exhibits at the Museum of Modern Art well past 1950. See Chapter 8) This love affair with European art, and especially the art held by the Louvre Museum, continued well into the twentieth century and was demonstrated by the stir surrounding the arrival at the Metropolitan in 1969, of the famed "Mona Lisa".

As referred to earlier, Francis I began a collection

of contemporary Renaissance paintings during his reign. This included the work of Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci and four works by da Vinci remain in the Louvre to this day. The most famous of those, the "Mona Lisa", was placed by the Louvre on loan to the Metropolitan Museum in 1969. Surrounded by elaborate security measures including twenty-four hour surveillance by secret service agents and bullet proof glass, the "Mona Lisa" was viewed by more than a million people during its one-month stay in New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Annual Report, 1969, Museum Archives). This is an example of how the American people and the American art museum hoped to assume symbolic meanings by way of association.

The painting of the "Mona Lisa" represents many things including wealth, history, and high culture. The possession of such a treasure suggests power and its presence at the Metropolitan worked to transfer all of these attributes to that institution and, by further association, to the people viewing it. Day after day, lines formed before the museum opened. Once in motion, they stretched from the medieval hall where the painting was displayed, through the early Christian gallery, across the great hall, out the front doors and down Fifth

Avenue for several blocks. The lines demonstrated the American admiration for the masterpiece and demonstrated also the American desire to achieve a museum of status similar to that of the Louvre.

The "Mona Lisa" was exhibited also at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. and there too attracted large numbers of visitors. It is said that a general agreement on signs and symbols results in legitimacy. The American people recognized and agreed on the meaning of the "Mona Lisa" and turned out in record numbers to demonstrate that. The fact that this important and valuable painting was made available to the masses confirmed in the American culture the strength of democracy and the importance of art and the art museum as a symbol of democracy.

Conclusion

It was in eighteenth century France, perhaps more than any other country at the time, that social currents found accurate reflection in the visual arts. The changes brought about by the Revolution were clearly articulated in the shift from the Rococo to the Neo-classical. The exuberant and decorative gave way to the austere; straight lines and simple forms replaced the

undulating, curling shapes; the subjects of flirtatious and frivolous ladies of the court found in the paintings of Jean-Honore Fragonard (1732-1806), were replaced by stoic characters of tough moral fiber exemplified in paintings by Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825). The new art had as its desire the objective analysis of history, art, human nature, and the forces of destiny. The Neo-classical gave contemporary themes classical dignity and thus gave the people a needed sense of history and the historic. The paintings by David gave artistic expression to the ideals and ambitions of the Revolutionaries and idealized patriotic virtue. The Americans, as well as the French, found a voice in the moral tone of these works which demonstrated the educational, if not the propagandistic, potential of art.

David was also largely responsible for the creation of the Louvre Museum as a symbol of the triumph of democracy. The rich historical associations of the Louvre as palace, and its position, not only in the history of Paris, but also its physical position in the city, made it a powerful symbol of the triumph of the people. There stood the most conspicuous royal building, overflowing with treasures representing wealth and

knowledge, now flung open to the public, welcoming the "rightful" owners.

The Museum Commission, according to Andrew McClellan, had deliberately planned the museum to dazzle the public with the spectacle of the nation's great treasures. "It would be appropriate to bring together ... everything that will enhance our precious collection of treasures to impress upon those who are coming to Paris ... that our present political problems have in no way diminished the cultivation of the arts among us." (McClellan, 1988, p.306).

But while the museum would stand for stability and the greatness of the nation, it would also stand for education. "The Museum is not supposed to be a vain assemblage of frivolous luxury objects that serve only to satisfy idle curiosity", wrote David, "What it must be is an imposing school." (McClellan, 1988, p.308). This dual symbolic role was adopted by the founders of the Metropolitan thereby establishing the objectives for all American art museums and setting the paradoxical stage. The palace was meant to serve the people, its treasures offered for educational purposes.

So it was that the symbolic meanings of art and the

art museum, described and defined in Paris during the period of the French Revolution, were appropriated by the American nation and made concrete first in the form of the Metropolitan Museum. The American palace on Central Park, filled with the world's treasures, continues to flourish and serve ever increasing numbers of visitors. The Metropolitan, along with America's other art museums, stands in part, because of the desire of the American people to live in a great society, a powerful society that can gather together world treasures; a good society that believes in the preservation of history, knowledge, and culture; a democratic society that provides educational opportunities to all its citizens. The American art museum stands because Americans want to be the people and live in the society represented by this symbol.

CHAPTER 3

America's First Museums

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts

Introduction

Art, by its nature, is not democratic. The whole of what we call Western Art was created by superior craftsmen of high intelligence and astute sensibilities. This art was often created for the wealthy rulers, well-educated leaders, the merchants, industrialists, and bankers of refined taste. To complicate this matter further, Modern Western Art has been based primarily on the artist's personal vision and the personal expression of that vision. The modern artist has been highly educated and highly trained and his intention has been to communicate on his level, not to enlighten the masses.

The art museum in America has come to stand for, among other things, the triumph of American democracy. Museums supported by private funds and money from the United States government, have flourished in a fashion unprecedented in history. Their growth in this strange shadow of paradox is a tribute to the fertility of the democratic, capitalistic, American soil. A soil so vast and with such variety of life would prohibit the homogeneity of the American art museum. However, the establishment of the first art museums did set the standards for all that followed. They formed, in a

sense, the skeletal structure on which could be fashioned a variety of museums which would satisfy the complex American culture.

The first museums, the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, shared much in common. They were incorporated in the same year - 1870 - and were founded by private citizens with private funds as educational institutions. (Chapter 4 will address the art museums funded by the government.) Their constitutions and by-laws dictated the course of the American art museum for the next century and for this reason their foundations deserve examination.

There were three main objectives perceived by the founders of these first museums: the museum would be an educational institution, it would have a moral mission, and it would foster national pride and prestige. (The origins of these three objectives is the subject of Chapter 1.) Education was the most important objective because it could merge with democratic principles and provide possibilities for the masses. But art could also be used toward moral betterment since, the founders reasoned, art had a moral dimension. The third objective of fostering patriotism and increasing the nation's

prestige could be accomplished both through the perception of the museum institution and its holdings as symbols of greatness and also through the eventual acquisition and exhibition of American works of art.

We will look at the beginnings of these two museums, trace their developments and the paths they took toward the fulfillment of their objectives and then make note of the legacy which impacts on the American art museum today.

The Metropolitan Museum

The first public meeting where the idea of an institution for New York City was presented was held at New York's Union League Club on November 23, 1869. The Union League Club was primarily a political organization established in 1863 to provide support for Lincoln and the Union during the Civil War. Its members were prominent businessmen, bankers, and lawyers, as well as cultural and educational leaders. The November 23rd meeting was attended by more than three hundred people, including most of the artist community, and presided over by New York's cultural giant, William Cullen Bryant.

Bryant's speech reverberated with national pride and pride in America's great city, New York. "Our city is

the third greatest city of the civilized world, our republic has already taken its place among the great powers of the earth; it is great in extent, great in population, great in the activity and enterprise of its people. It is the richest nation in the world. And yet," Bryant went on, "we are without a museum." (Bryant, 1869 Speech, n.p., Archives of American Art). Convincing arguments presented by Bryant included a comparison to European countries and their museums of art and the sad fact that should treasures be bequeathed to the public by private collectors there would be no place to exhibit them or store them. Also, American artists, though growing in number and respectability, still had to study in Europe and exhibit there, so poor was our cultural provision.

On this day the speakers established not only the need for the Metropolitan Museum, but also some basic principles of purpose including the education of the general population. George Fiske Comfort of Princeton University described in his speech (Comfort, 1869 Speech, n.p., Archives of American Art) a museum offering educational outings for school children and gallery lectures for adult visitors. It was clear from the

beginning that the museum would be an instrument for educating the proletariat. One could also sense the museum's role in satisfying the social needs of New York's moneyed class.

Approximately two months after this meeting, in January 1870, the first board of trustees was elected and the twenty-seven man committee (twenty-one elective and six ex-officio members including the mayor and the governor) was a good mix of money and art expertise and included Frederick Church, Eastman Johnson, and John F. Kensett. Princeton's George Comfort and the publisher George P. Putnam were also on board for the selection of John Taylor Johnston as the Metropolitan's first president. (Lerman, 1969, p.14).

By April of that year the New York Legislature voted the incorporation of the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the purpose of "encouraging and developing the study of the fine arts, and the application of the arts to manufacture, of advancing the general knowledge of kindred subjects, and, to that end, of furnishing popular instruction and recreation." (Metropolitan Museum Charter, Museum Archives).

Johnston and the board then launched a public

membership campaign, devising different classes and rates, in the hope of raising \$250,000. toward the purchase of the paintings that would be the nucleus of the collection. At the same time they began negotiations with the City of New York to acquire municipal funding for property and construction of a museum building.

At this point two very different men became extremely important in the development of the museum. The first was William T. Blodgett, a real estate magnate with a keen interest in art and a passion for collecting. Blodgett's poor health had resulted in a prolonged residence in France during the Franco-Prussian War. While there he retained the services of an art expert from the Royal Museum of Belgium, who advised him in the purchase of three private collections totaling one hundred and seventy-four paintings. The cost was in slight excess of the \$110,000 so far raised in the subscription campaign of the Metropolitan. In March of 1871, the museum trustees voted to purchase these works of art, and the Metropolitan thus acquired its first collections. John Taylor Johnston wrote to Blodgett on the receipt of the first shipment: "The quality of the collection as a whole is superior to anything I had dared

to hope while the number of masterpieces is very great...the Metropolitan Museum will make a splendid start in life." (Johnston, 1871 Letter, Metropolitan Museum Archives).

During this same period options for a museum building were being explored. The man most responsible for the Metropolitan being located in Central Park was Andrew Haswell Green, the president of the Central Park Commission. Green was influential in the passage of a bill by the city legislature authorizing the Park Commission to "erect, establish, conduct and maintain in Central Park...a gallery of art, and the buildings therefore, and to provide the necessary instruments, furniture, and equipments for the same." (N.Y.C. Park Commission, 1871, Metropolitan Museum Archives). The next step was a legal petition asking for \$500,000 to erect a building which would be owned by the city but whose contents, the art collections, would be owned and controlled by the museum trustees.

In 1874, three years after the financial foundations for a building and the nucleus of a collection had been established, ground was broken in Central Park for a red brick Gothic structure designed by Calvert Vaux and Jacob

Wrey Mould. This first building, completed in 1880, was part of a larger architectural plan that allowed for further expansion (Vaux, 1879 architectural plan, Museum Archives).

These were lean years for the Metropolitan due to several factors not least among them the Wall Street Panic of 1873 which was followed by a depression that lasted until 1878. The temporary quarters for the museum required \$9,000 per year for rent and the entire budget from the city government was only \$15,000 a year. There was very little support from the citizens of New York, so according to museum records, the trustees who were still solvent following the Panic paid the deficits out of their own pockets.

The annual reports from those years reveal a refreshing optimism and clarity of principles. (Museum Archives) The reports continually voice the conviction that the Metropolitan Museum was first among its kind and steadfast in its goal of "the education of the public and the cultivation in our country of a high standard of artistic taste. The Museum today is not surpassed as an educational power among the people by any university, college, or seminary of learning in the metropolis."

(Metropolitan Museum of Art Annual Report, 1876, p.44, Museum Archives). Yet there was also expressed the frustration resulting from lack of support from the private sector.

By the end of the Depression in 1878, and with the return of confidence in New York's financial center, there came a renewed interest in the support for the Metropolitan. The museum hired in 1879, its first paid director and shortly thereafter moved its small cache of treasures into its new home in Central Park. These events marked the beginning of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The Metropolitan Museum is today counted among the world's greatest while the Boston Museum of Fine Arts reached and maintained the status of a great city museum, never moving into world class. There is evidence that it was the elitist and puritanical attitudes of the Boston Museum's founders that ultimately stunted the growth of the BMFA. We will now review the founding of the Boston Museum and explore those issues which may have restricted the museum's growth.

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts

At the opening ceremony of the Museum of Fine Arts,

Boston's mayor described the city's museum as "The crown of our educational system." (Burt, 1977, p.49). There is some question as to who this educational system was designed to serve. The city of Boston had no role, financial or philosophical, in either the establishment or maintenance of the museum. Unlike the founders of the Metropolitan who worked a happy arrangement with the New York City government, the founders of the Museum of Fine Arts were suspicious of municipal authorities and feared that their standards might somehow be compromised by any city involvement. So with the exception of the city land on which the museum was erected, the funding for the Museum of Fine Arts, its collections, building and operations, was raised by private subscription. These subscriptions came mainly from Old Boston, from those associated with the Athenaeum, the private library whose art gallery was both seed and garden bed for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts until 1876. The \$260,000 raised for the construction of the Museum's first building was donated by one thousand private citizens (Museum of Fine Arts Report, 1877, n.p., Museum Archives).

Nathaniel Burt in his social history of the American art museum, Palaces for the People, (1977) discusses the

backgrounds of the creators of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. While the Metropolitan's founders were self-made men, the men in Boston were men of family. "The Boston Museum of Fine Arts inherited a collection, prestige, the backing of Boston's Best and its best institutions, everything but public assistance and cash...Boston from the beginning was scholarly, intense, serious but poor. Neither surprises nor disasters were characteristic." (Burt, 1977, p.106).

The Museum of Fine Arts had healthy subscriptions but, unlike the Metropolitan, no major benefactors in the early years. The strength of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts was its close ties to Harvard University which provided expert curators and trustees with a keen knowledge of and interest in the fine arts. Both Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology had four representatives each on the museum board (Museum of Fine Arts Report, 1888, p.10, Museum Archives). In spite of the limited budget, the Museum of Fine Arts managed to purchase remarkable artifacts due, in large part, to the Harvard people. The Egyptian collection and the collection of classical art were build by Harvard men and are the major strengths of the Boston Museum of Fine

Arts.

The majority of the Egyptian collection was donated by John Lowell, collector of Egyptian antiquities and founder of Boston's Lowell Institute. (Museum of Fine Arts Report, 1902, p.3, Museum Archives). The first curator of the Egyptian collection was Albert Lythgoe who was responsible for its growth and its unmatched quality. Lythgoe had the proper connections in Egypt and built the Boston Museum's Department of Egyptian Art to be the finest in America and then deserted Boston for New York and the Metropolitan where he would repeat his performance as superb acquirer.

The collection of Greek art held by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts is truly a museum marvel. It is superior in quality to the Metropolitan or any other American Museum due to another Harvard man, Edward Robinson, and to a Bostonian in exile, Edward Perry Warren.

Edward Robinson was educated at Harvard and studied classical archaeology abroad for several years, excavating in Greece. He also worked in German museums, where he acquired a knowledge of and respect for German methods of organization. Robinson served first as

curator of Classical Antiquities at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and in 1902 assumed the directorship (Museum of Fine Arts Report, 1902, p.3).

Edward Warren was educated in England and upon graduation from Oxford University decided to dedicate his time and fortune to the collecting of Greek Art. Acting on his own behalf and also on behalf of the Boston Museum he launched a large-scale purchasing operation. At this time many of the classical collections that had been acquired in Europe during the nineteenth century were appearing on the market. Warren kept in touch with dealers and collectors, attended all the classical sales and consistently outbid his competitors. His activity in the field on behalf of the Museum of Fine Arts was triggered, according to National Burt, by the puritanical attitude prevalent in Boston. Because Edward Warren was a homosexual, he felt at odds with Boston society (Burt, 1977, p.120). He chose to live in Europe to escape the puritanism which was also the thrust of the philosophy of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. That philosophy held that art was not for the purpose of pleasure but rather for moral enrichment. In his acquisitions for the museum, Edward Warren set out to challenge that concept

of art. "I have always said and believed that it was hate of Boston that made me work for Boston. The collection was my plea against that in Boston which contradicted my pagan love." (Burt, 1977, p.121).

It is an ironic historical note that the Boston Museum's crowning glory, its classical collection, was achieved because of these opposing views. The trustees, those proper Brahmins, thought they were nourishing the moral character of the citizenry with these perfect Grecian forms, while Edward Warren supposed he was spurring the society to question its set definition of morality. In the end, the museum board, just to guarantee its mission as virtuous, procured and applied fig leaves to Warren's gods of beauty (Burt, 1977, p.122).

In any case, and with whatever motivation, it was the dedication of Robinson and Warren that built the Boston Museum of Fine Art's collection of classical antiquities. Later a series of peculiar circumstances would take these men along with Lythgoe, to the Metropolitan Museum of New York.

In the summer of 1905 Edward Robinson resigned as director of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Museum of

Fine Arts Report, 1905, n.p., Museum Archives). Robinson felt strongly that the Boston Museum's plan to move from Copley Square in downtown Boston to a new building in the Fenway was a mistake (Burt, 1977, p.124). Robinson's main interest was of course, classical antiquities and the move to Fenway would deplete the funds for acquisition. Robinson also believed in the educational value of casts which had fallen from favor with the board. Robinson was furious upon learning that the design of the new building did not allow for the display of casts. He felt his authority had been undermined and his time at Boston had come to an end (Burt, 1977, p.126).

Hearing of his resignation, the Metropolitan trustees immediately offered Robinson the position of assistant director under Sir Purdon Clarke. Robinson instituted his professional museum methods at the Metropolitan, reorganizing various departments and assuming the classical curatorship in addition to his administrative duties of building a competent staff (Metropolitan of Art Annual Report, 1906, p.8, Museum Archives).

At the same time Edward Warren transferred his allegiance from Boston to New York and began purchasing

Greek and Roman art for the Metropolitan. His reasons for leaving the Boston Museum were similar to Robinson's. Warren was interested mainly in the classical collection and knew the move to Fenway would dry up those funds. He argued strenuously that the opportunity to purchase classical art would be shortlived and that the new building could wait, but the trustees ignored his plea (Burt, 1977, p.129).

It is interesting to note that the allegiance of both Robinson and Warren was not so much to the Boston Museum as it was to classical art. The Boston Museum's righteous philosophy did not inspire loyalty in these men and so the conflicts caused by Boston's "moral mission" were in part responsible for the rift. Responsible also was the attitude of the board of trustees toward the museum's educational policies in general and the use of casts in particular. The Boston Museum held the notion that museum education was for the educated and this was illustrated in their rejection of casts. While Robinson believed in the educational value of casts, the advocates of the anticast point of view insisted that only original objects should be shown, that those base reproductions had no place in a museum of quality (Museum of Fine Arts

Report, 1906, p.4, Museum Archives).

At this time Edward Warren's brother Samuel was the president of the Boston Museum and was a strong backer of both the anticast move and the Fenway move. His position no doubt added to the alienation felt by Edward Warren and Edward Robinson since he had previously been supportive of their endeavors. In the 1904 President's report, Samuel Warren stated bluntly that "The purchases of classical antiquities, begun in the year 1895, have come to an end." (Museum of Fine Arts Report, 1904, p.2, Museum Archives).

The end at Boston, however, meant a bright beginning in New York. Metropolitan director Sir Purdon Clark confided proudly in a letter "...I have been able to transfer to the Metropolitan Museum the men and the methods by which the collection of Greek and Roman antiquities in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts have been so successfully built up since 1895." (Clark, 1906 Letter, Museum Archives). Robinson and Warren began promptly to build the collection of Greek and Roman art with full support from the board of trustees.

Building The Met's Collections

The men who made up the board of trustees of the

Metropolitan Museum at this time were men who possessed a love of art, and a vision of the art museum as a force for good in a democratic society. They were not all men of great wealth. Though some were privileged and willing to lend financial support to the dream, others gave of their time and talents. One such man was Louis Palma di Cesnola, the Metropolitan's first director.

Louis Palma di Cesnola (1832-1904), was an Italian military man who also served in the Eleventh New York Cavalry Regiment and received from President Lincoln the rank of brigadier general following his valiant efforts in the Civil War. Following the war Cesnola was assigned the post of United States consul at Cyprus where for the next eleven years he would engage his passion for archaeology. During this time he amassed a huge collection of artifacts, his major discovery coming in 1870 at a site near the ancient town of Golgoi, where several monumental stone sculptures and assorted smaller objects were discovered. These findings and others, a total of six thousand objects, were sold as a collection to the Metropolitan Museum for the sum of \$60,000 in 1872 (Metropolitan Museum, 1872, Annual Report, n.p., Museum Archives).

Four years later, in 1876, the second major Cesnola Collection known as the "Treasure of Curium" was sold to the Metropolitan Museum for \$60,000 (Metropolitan Museum, 1876, Annual Report, n.p., Museum Archives).

Cesnola returned to New York with the collection in 1877 and was invited to become a member of the board of the Metropolitan Museum. To this task he gave his full energy and was rewarded with the directorship of the museum in 1879. It was at this time that the new museum building in Central Park was completed and Cesnola began to ready the collections for the move.

Once settled in the new quarters, Cesnola launched a membership drive as a means of gathering popular support for the museum as well as a steady cash flow. Over the next ten years the museum memberships reached one thousand annual members at \$10.00 a year plus the members in categories of Fellow and Patron (Metropolitan Museum, 1890 Annual Report, p.10, Museum Archives). The members' dues helped maintain the institution's debt-free status and the security of its holdings, thus providing the right atmosphere for the donation of art treasures.

These years would set certain gift trends, see certain problems of conditional bequests and move the

Metropolitan Museum to a position of affluence. Three bequests during this period are of special interest, the first being the collection of Catherine Lorillard Wolfe which was donated to the Metropolitan with an endowment of \$200,000. The endowment was to be used for the maintenance and expansion of the collection (Metropolitan Museum, 1887 Annual Report, p.3, Museum Archives). This was the first donation of both paintings and funds, thus the first donation to be self-sufficient.

The second bequest was made by Henry Gurdon Marquand, trustee and later president of the Metropolitan Museum board. Marquand set the painting department on track when he donated thirty-seven truly excellent European paintings including Rembrandt's "Portrait of a Man", and Vermeer's "Young Woman With Water Jug", the first Vermeer to be held by an American museum (Metropolitan Museum, 1889 Annual Report, p.3, Museum Archives).

By far the strangest and in some ways most important story is of Jacob Rogers, the seemingly obnoxious and surely eccentric manufacturer of locomotives, from Paterson, New Jersey. Rogers never married, had few friends and consistently refused to donate any money to

charitable causes. He had no interest in art, no collection, and was simply a ten-dollar-a-year member of the Metropolitan Museum. But when Jacob Rogers died the summer of 1901, he left to the museum his fortune of \$5,000,000. "for the purchase of rare and desirable art objects, and for the purchase of books for the Library of said Museum, and for such purposes exclusively." (Lerman, 1969, p.121). The settlement yielded at that time an annual income of about \$200,000. When one considers that the museum's annual operating budget was about \$180,000, the importance of Rogers' bequest in catapulting the museum to a place of power in the art world becomes exceedingly clear. It was the Rogers Fund that Robinson and Warren used to build the Metropolitan's collection of classical antiquities.

The Metropolitan Museum would have many generous benefactors, Jacob Rogers being among the first and J.P. Morgan being among the greatest. When Joseph H. Choate, lawyer and member of the Metropolitan Museum Board, gave his speech at the inauguration of the Metropolitan's building, he rallied the new millionaires with talk of the glory they could share with the museum if they would "convert pork to porcelain, grain and produce into

priceless pottery, the rude ores of commerce into sculptured marble, and railroad shares and mining stocks...things which perish without the using, and which in the next financial panic shall surely shrivel like parched scrolls into the glorified canvas of the world's masters, that shall adorn these walls for centuries." (Choate, 1879 Speech, Museum Archives).

Very important to the "conversion of pork to porcelain and produce to priceless pottery" is the American tax law known as the charitable deduction. The Congress of the United States, beginning with the Federal Revenue Act of 1917, has allowed a tax deduction for all contributions to non-profit organizations. The giving of paintings and other works of art to American museums is therefore made a more profitable deal for the donor than passing works on to descendants or putting works on the auction block. A simple analysis of this donation incentive is put forth by New York attorney, Jerome S. Rubin.

"A gift of tangible property, such as a work of art, is deductible in the amount of the fair market value of the property at the time of the gift, irrespective of how much the donor may have paid for the property. Moreover,

the donor is not taxed on any increase in value. The post war bull market in the art world, itself feeding on the tax laws, has thus opened up extraordinary opportunities for the high-bracket taxpayer. A gift to a museum of a Degas drawing bought before World War II for \$1,000 and worth \$20,000 in 1963, would have netted the eighty percent tax-payer a deduction of \$20,000 and therefore a tax saving of \$16,000 whereas the sale of the same drawing to another collector at a price of \$20,000 would have resulted in a capital gains tax of \$4,750 and cash in hand of only \$15,260. (These figures reflect Federal taxes only; State income taxes would also have taken their toll, thus making the charitable gift still more attractive.)

"Clearly, under these circumstances, it is more rewarding to give than to sell; in responding to his sense of altruism and high purpose, the astute collector has been able to benefit not only his soul but his bank account." (Rubin, 1966, p.12).

The other important fiscal measure was the Payne-Aldrich Tariff of 1909 which allowed for the duty-free importation of works of art more than twenty years old. This was altered in 1913 to include all works of art,

even those less than twenty years old. The United States Congress was actively encouraging American collectors in their foreign purchases and as shown above in their donations to American museums. This legislation is clearly and directly related to the growth of art museums in the United States. The Metropolitan benefitted immensely from these acts of Congress and it is safe to say that the Metropolitan's ascent to a position of world prominence would not have occurred without them.

The Payne-Aldrich Tariff was the solution to the import tax problem of the Metropolitan's president and kind donor John Pierpont Morgan (Canfield, 1974, p.158). J.P. Morgan held a mansion in Hyde Park, London, which he had inherited from his father, and in which he accumulated most of his art collections. The stiff duty on imported art prior to 1909, prohibited the transfer of these works to the American shore and the Metropolitan Museum. Legend has it that Senator Nelson Aldrich dined with J.P. Morgan in the Hyde Park Estate and while being escorted through the collection he was assured that if the tariff law were altered, the paintings would go to the Metropolitan.

With the new Payne-Aldrich law in effect, Morgan

began the giant year-long chore of packing for shipment the Hyde Park collections. The cases of art which numbered three hundred and fifty were taken upon arrival in the United States to the storerooms of the Metropolitan Museum (Saarinen, 1958, p.84). However, upon the death of J.P. Morgan the following year, circumstances would reduce the number of objects accessioned by the Metropolitan to less than half. What the trustees and staff of the Metropolitan Museum did not know was that J.P. Morgan spent everything he earned and spent half of it on art. After inheritance taxes and the other obligations of his estate had been satisfied, the remaining works of art were given, as he had requested, "for the instruction and pleasure of the American people." (Canfield, 1974, p.161).

J.P. Morgan: The Formative Influence

John Pierpont Morgan's involvement with the Metropolitan began in earnest in 1901 and he directed great energy and attention to the museum until his death in 1913. Morgan was a founding patron of the Metropolitan, but did not serve on the board of trustees until 1889. In 1882, he was elected to the executive committee but served only two years in that capacity due

to other obligations.

Morgan became notorious for purchasing art in huge quantities, usually other peoples' entire collections. He had great confidence in his own eye for quality and saw no reason why he should not possess the whole lot if he so desired (Canfield, 1974, p.122). The stories of his acquisitions are legendary as was his generosity to the Metropolitan Museum.

The first major gift from J.P. Morgan to the Metropolitan occurred in 1902 (Metropolitan Museum, 1902 Annual Report, n.p., Museum Archives) and was also his first purchase of an entire art collection. The collection, which belonged to the banker, James A. Garland, consisted of about two thousand Chinese porcelains which were on loan to the Metropolitan. The curators hoped Garland would leave the collection to the Museum but learned that, upon his death, it had been purchased by an art dealer for one-half of one million dollars. J.P. Morgan went immediately to the art dealer, purchased the two thousand porcelains, changed the name to the Morgan Collection and presented it to the Metropolitan.

When Edward Steichen photographed Morgan in 1906, he

captured the giant financier as most Americans imagined him: large, fierce, arrogant, and intense - with eyes (as Steichen described them) like the headlights of a freight train bearing down on you. Steichen captured the light on the arm of the chair in such a way so as to confuse the image with that of a dagger and confuse, or perhaps confirm, the viewer's response. The public generally was suspicious of Morgan and the means by which he acquired his wealth. His achievements in the world of finance, (such as the formation of United States Steel Corporation, the world's largest business enterprise, or the consolidation of most of America's railroads) were not properly comprehended outside that world, but his importance was clearly communicated.

Morgan was the son of a successful Boston banker who was headquartered in London. For this reason Morgan received much of his education in Europe. Early on he showed an ability for mathematics and an interest in collecting although he did not begin seriously to acquire art until about 1902 (Allen, 1965, p.15). The first collections Morgan compiled were collections of books and manuscripts. He moved on to collect tapestries, armor, bronzes, and carved ivory as well as paintings and

perhaps most importantly, furniture and other decorative arts.

The Metropolitan's Department of Decorative Arts was formed in 1907 when J.P. Morgan presented, as a gift to the museum, the Hoentschel Collection (Metropolitan Museum, 1907 Annual Report, p.2, Museum Archives). George Hoentschel was a French architect and designer who had built two major collections. One was a collection of Gothic sculpture, tapestries and architectural elements such as columns, mantels and chair stalls. The other was a collection of French eighteenth century decorative arts which Morgan intended "should be made the nucleus of a great collection of decorative art." (Metropolitan, 1907 Annual Report, p.2, Museum Archives).

The organization of the Metropolitan at this point was three-fold. There was the Department of Greek and Roman Art, the Department of Egyptian Antiquities and the Department of Paintings. With the formation of a Department of Decorative Arts, there was a place to put everything in the museum that did not fall under the three existing departments. For this reason, the Department of Decorative Arts would give birth to new divisions throughout the coming years. According to

Museum Reports held in the Archives, in 1915 the Department of Far Eastern Art was born; Near Eastern Art came into existence in 1932, 1933 witnessed the birth of three new departments: Renaissance, Medieval, and American.

J.P. Morgan determined that the Department of Decorative Arts should have its own wing and commissioned the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White to submit the design. The wing was completed in 1909 and William R. Valentiner became its first curator (Saarinen, 1958, p.82).

Morgan was responsible, directly and indirectly, for the rapid growth of the Metropolitan Museum. When Morgan assumed the presidency in 1904, the museum's annual operating budget was \$185,000 of which \$150,000 was supplied by the City of New York (Metropolitan Museum, 1904 Annual Report, p.11, Museum Archives). When Morgan died in 1913, the annual budget was \$363,000, almost double the figure of just nine years earlier (Metropolitan Museum, 1913 Annual Report, p.15, Museum Archives). The museum operated with a huge deficit. Morgan's solution was to fill the slots on the board of trustees with millionaires such as Henry Clay Frick and

George Baker in order to insure the needed funds. "His usual procedure was to announce the figure at a meeting of the board, and then go around the table, his express-train eyes interrogating each trustee in turn, until the deficit had been erased. Morgan's own check was invariably the largest." (Tomkins, 1970, p.100).

It was under Morgan's presidency that the Metropolitan gained the Robinson-Warren team for the building of the Department of Greek and Roman Art. Morgan also made great contributions to the Painting Department and, as we have seen, was fully responsible for the founding of the Department of Decorative Arts. Morgan was also the instigator for the founding of the Egyptian Department.

The year was 1905 and the Egyptians were still allowing foreign archaeologists to excavate under an agreement that fifty percent of the artifacts discovered would go to the Egyptian government. The Metropolitan had been participating in a subscription plan with England's Egyptian Exploration Fund and therefore received some antiquities for its collection every year. J.P. Morgan decided it was time for the Metropolitan to begin its own archaeological expeditions in Egypt so as

to supply an Egyptian Department that would "rank permanently as the best in America." (Tomkins, 1970, p.88).

The Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts expedition had made the Egyptian collection at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts the best on the North American continent. Knowing this, Morgan visited the site of the Harvard-Boston dig and offered Albert Lythgoe, founder of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts' Egyptian Department, the curatorship of Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan (Tompkins, 1970, p.89). The offer must have been a very attractive one because Lythgoe resigned from the Boston Museum and from Harvard, where he taught a course in Egyptology, and became the Metropolitan's first curator of Egyptian Art.

Lythgoe would go on to fulfill J.P. Morgan's dream by building a brilliant staff and establishing the expedition's base at the site of the ancient city of Thebes. Thebes had been the seat of the XI Dynasty which reunited upper and lower Egypt. This period was one of peace and prosperity and saw the production of much beautiful and delicate art. The Metropolitan's collection became rich in works from this period.

J.P. Morgan saw to the building of a large,

comfortable base headquarters for the expedition. Known as Metropolitan House, the base overlooked the fertile plain on one side and the desert hills on the other. It was spacious and civilized and welcomed many trustees (Tomkins, 1970, p.89). In this way, Morgan guaranteed not only the health and morale of the staff, but also the continued support of the board.

The Painting Department of the Metropolitan also grew under Morgan's presidency. Bryson Burroughs, curator of the Painting Department from 1906 until 1934, had been trained as an artist. Perhaps it was his artist's eye that allowed the acceptance of art forms of an advanced nature, many of which had been rejected by his contemporaries. Burroughs ignored fads and fashion and purchased well for the Metropolitan. Burroughs was responsible for the acquisition of the first Cezanne painting to enter a public American collection (Metropolitan Museum, 1913 Annual Report, p.17, Museum Archives) as well as several paintings by the French Impressionists (Metropolitan Museum, 1910 Annual Report, n.p., Museum Archives).

Two collections would be acquired by the Painting Department that would move its status to the ranks of the

world's greatest museums: The Altman Collection in 1913 and the Havemeyer Collection in 1929 (Metropolitan Museum Reports, Museum Archives).

Benjamin Altman, the New York department store owner, was the son of Jewish immigrants from Germany. Altman never married, had few friends and no interests aside from his business and his art collection. He studied the art he collected, reading books and traveling, and developed a keen aesthetic sense. Altman's painting collection included Rembrandt, Holbein, Vermeer, Durer and Velasquez among others. All were of the highest quality (Metropolitan Museum, 1913 Annual Report, p.7, Museum Archives).

Altman was planning to establish the "Altman Museum of Art" as a way to keep his collections together and available to the public. It was through the complex negotiations initiated by President J.P. Morgan, that the Metropolitan reached an agreement with Altman. The bequest, which totaled nearly one thousand objects and was valued at \$15,000,000, was said to put the Metropolitan Museum in the forefront of the world's treasure houses (Metropolitan Museum, 1913 Annual Report, p.7, Museum Archives).

If any major gaps remained in the museum's collection of paintings, they would certainly be filled by the second, truly significant bequest, the Havemeyer Collection. Henry Osborne Havemeyer made his fortune with the American Sugar Refining Company. He was said to be a difficult personality, overbearing and aggressive, which, no doubt, contributed to the development of his collection (Saarinen, 1958, p.147). He pursued his paintings like prey and was willing to pay any price to acquire them.

Havemeyer had an intelligent and knowledgeable wife, Louisine. Louisine Havemeyer's dear childhood friend and later art consultant was the painter Mary Cassatt (Saarinen, 1958, p.144). Under the guidance of Cassatt, the Havemeyers purchased the works of Courbet, Manet, Degas and Cezanne. Advised again by Mary Cassatt, they bought Spanish paintings including works by El Greco and Goya.

After H.O. Havemeyer's death in 1907, Louisine Havemeyer continued to add to the collection. When she died in 1929, she left one hundred and forty-two paintings to the Metropolitan and instructions for her children to add to this gift as they pleased

(Metropolitan Museum, 1929 Annual Report, p.3, Museum Archives). The children consulted with the Metropolitan's curators to insure that the works given were wanted and would be on permanent display. The children then added an additional 1,972 works of art to the Havemeyer bequest.

Under the presidency of J.P. Morgan, therefore, the Metropolitan Museum moved forward, leaving the Boston Museum of Fine Arts to its provincialism, and emerged as first among American museums and on a par with the great museums of the world.

When J.P. Morgan died on March 31, 1913, he left a legacy not only to the Metropolitan but to the entire museum world. His influence would be a dynamic force for years to come and would be most strongly felt in two areas: the profile of the board of trustees and the attitude toward the acquisition of master works.

Conclusion

As we have seen, both the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, had early boards composed of a mix of old families, the landed gentry and professional men. These were not necessarily people of great wealth but were men with a strong interest in art

who were willing to contribute their time and talents to the museum. The Metropolitan was blessed early on with an abundance of artists and men of culture such as William Cullen Bryant. The Boston Museum had the intellectual backing of Harvard and M.I.T. When J.P. Morgan assumed the presidency of the Metropolitan he began to fill the slots on the board with millionaires and those seats have continued to be filled with wealthy patrons. For example, upon J.P. Morgan's death, his son, J.P. Morgan, Jr. assumed a position on the Metropolitan's board. Morgan's grandson, Henry Sturgis Morgan followed his father and presently that seat is occupied by Robert Morgan Pennoyer, the great-grandson of J.P. Morgan, Sr. The Rockefellers, the Whitneys, and the Sulzbergers have similarly held positions on the Met's board from one generation to another. (Board members listed in Annual Reports, Museum Archives)

Wealthy board members now dominate in American art museums and have replaced professionals, artists and intellectuals whose careers do not generate large incomes. The American Association of Museums estimates that there are in the United States today approximately 9,000 trustees serving art museums. An analysis of the

backgrounds of 170 art museum trustees reveals that 70% are graduates of Ivy League schools and are occupied mainly as bankers (40%), or lawyers (33-1/3%) (O'Doherty, 1972, p.117). There are no artists or art historians or people dedicated primarily to culture or scholarship on the board of the Metropolitan Museum today.

One reason why the American art museum has continued to move toward the wealthy board membership is the always growing need for financial support from the private sector. An international comparative study of the income sources of 32 arts institutions, for example, revealed that while museums in Italy and France are totally supported by the government, and while museums in Great Britain obtain 90% of their income from the government, museums in the United States rely on government support for only 15% of their budgets and on earned and private income for 85% (Decker, 1988, p.32).

"The museum is not the quaint little repository it was even 20 or 30 years ago. It's a hustle-bustle business. Boards are increasingly composed of businessmen who encourage top heavy administrations in museums, often wanting to establish organizational tables

like those of banks." (Decker, 1988, p.33). So we have the situation being perpetuated by the board members in power, and necessitated by the museum's financial needs, and perhaps further guaranteed by the development of a bureaucratic structure.

In general, American art museums tend to follow the Morgan board member profile. The American Association of Museums' publication Museum Trusteeship by Alan D. Ullberg recommends that trustees be elected by the board itself and that the primary criteria be "an individual's sense of social responsibility and his desire and ability to render service to the museum" (Ullberg, 1980, p.36). The trustee's "ability" in most cases is directly related to his bank account.

While there have been recorded in recent years, board appointments that, "yielding to both public criticism and the need for government aid, have elected to membership a handful of blacks, 'ethnics', and community leaders" (Meyer, 1979, p.225), this attempt at democratization rarely carries any impact.

The second legacy of J.P. Morgan concerns the acquisition of masterpieces for the museum. Calvin Tomkins, in his book "Merchants and Masterpieces"

contends that when J.P. Morgan assumed the presidency of the Metropolitan, the concept of the museum underwent a fundamental change.

"No longer would the Metropolitan defer to European institutions, or limit itself to the utilitarian and educational...casts, reproductions, and second rate works of art might still retain some usefulness for artisans and students, but the emphasis had shifted unmistakably to the great and original masterpieces, the treasures that old Europe proved only too willing, after all, to relinquish." (Tomkins, 1970, p.99).

With J.P. Morgan the purchase of art took on an excitement that is still conveyed. When the fierce and influential Morgan turned his energy to art, the concept of collecting changed from something effeminate and suspect to something fascinating and powerful.

The American art museum has become a superlative collecting machine. There is not at this moment any historical parallel for what we have built. One person who has understood and articulated this passion for acquisition is no doubt Thomas Hoving. (See also, "Hoving and the Corporate-Museum Partnership," Chapter 7)

Hoving, who served as director of the Metropolitan

Museum from 1967 until 1977, was known for his ability to capture not only masterpieces, but also the public's imagination. "The chase and the capture of a great work of art is one of the most exciting endeavors in life"...he wrote, "as dramatic, emotional, and fulfilling as a love affair." (Hoving, 1975, p.1). Hoving also expressed an aggressiveness that may very well be part of the Morgan legacy but, in any case, seems also to express the ambitious temperament of the new American elite, the kind art museum directors want on their boards.

Remarking in 1967, on the acquisition by the National Gallery in Washington of a portrait by Leonardo DaVinci, Thomas Hoving lamented: "When I learned the other day that the National Gallery had bought that Leonardo for six million dollars, I couldn't sleep all night. We should have reached for it. The reputation of the Metropolitan has always been based on its power to acquire things without reserve...If you lose that one day of going for the great thing, you can lose a decade." (McPhee, 1977, p.129).

Hoving also reinforced the shift in profile of the board member from the man of family and genteel culture to the man of business and great wealth when he added:

"Any trustee should be able to write a check for at least three million dollars and not even feel it." (McPhee, 1977, p.129),

This business of elite boards and the acquisition of masterworks seems quite undemocratic. The Morgans who served on boards and set this course for America's art museums did not consider fully the role of democracy in the art museum, rather, they made autocratic decisions which resulted in procedures still followed today. These procedures became in time traditions which were adopted throughout the country, throughout the century, simply, because they worked. One person might call this American pragmatism; another might attribute it to capitalist know-how. The motivations and continuations of these "traditions" will be explored in Chapter 7.

The original mission of the Metropolitan and the Boston Museum of fostering pride and prestige in American society, of moral betterment and education for all, that mission, as defined in 1870, continues to be pursued as is fitting the ever-changing American democratic culture. It is a pursuit full of contradictions, for although America's first museums were based on the Louvre, they were founded and administered by private citizens with

private dollars. America debated the European aristocratic ideals of connoisseurship even while American patrons poured millions of dollars into acquisitions. Curators celebrated the rare, the enigmatic, the profound object, while educators dreamed of making the American art museum truly accessible to the general public. America's first museums set the paradoxical stage for all to follow.

CHAPTER 4

The Role of the Federal Government;
The National Gallery, Washington, D.C. and
The National Endowment for the Arts

Introduction: The Smithsonian Umbrella

In examining the impact of democracy on America's art museums, that is, looking at the conflicts which naturally arise when an elitist activity is set down in the people's park, one area that is most revealing is that of federally funded art museums. One can be sure that where there is money awarded, there is influence exercised. If the money belongs to the taxpayers of the United States of America, the influence may very well reflect democratic concerns.

The national museums are gathered under the umbrella of the Smithsonian Institution which is funded by federal dollars. There also exists a federal agency which disperses federal funds to independent art museums and other non-profit art institutions, that is the National Endowment for the Arts. We must now consider these two government institutions, their policies, practices and influences. We will begin with an overview of the Smithsonian, then focus on The National Gallery as the major art museum within that structure. Through the museum archives, the record of acquisitions and exhibitions will be analyzed. The record of The National Endowment, established to "foster the arts and to broaden their availability", and the influence of the congress will then be examined.

The Smithsonian Institution administers thirteen

museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and a number of research facilities around the country and in Panama. Ten of the thirteen museums are concerned with art. The Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York exhibits architecture, design and the decorative arts. The other nine institutions are located in Washington, D.C.: The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Freer Gallery specialize in Asian and Near Eastern art; the Anacostia Museum and the National Museum of African Art specialize in black culture and African art; the American museums include the National Portrait Gallery, the National Museum of American Art and the Renwick Gallery (American crafts); the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden exhibits 19th and 20th century sculpture and painting and finally, the National Gallery of Art, a collection of American and European paintings, sculpture, and the graphic arts, which will be the focus of this study.

The Smithsonian Institution is the world's largest museum complex and has an annual budget of \$320 million of which \$269 million come from the Federal Government. The remaining \$51 million is raised from private sources. (The National Gallery's share of the budget is about \$50 million. By way of contrast, the Metropolitan Museum of Art has an annual budget of \$75 million; the Museum of Modern Art in New York has a budget of \$36 million.)

The Smithsonian was founded by an act of Congress in

1846 with a bill officially designating a National Cabinet of Curiosities and the Smithsonian Museum, a marriage which would result in the National Museum of the United States. This situation resulted following years of debate over the proper use of the generous gift designated to be used for "the increase and diffusion of knowledge", a vague directive to be sure (Goode, 1901, p.93, Smithsonian Archives).

In 1835, it became known that the Englishman James Smithson, who had died six years earlier in Genova, had bequeathed his whole estate to the United States of America "to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." (Goode, 1901, p.91, Smithsonian Archives).

This information was given to the Congress of the United States by then President Van Buren in December and the gift was accepted through an act of Congress in July, 1836. In 1842, following numerous proposals and long debates, Congress approved an act to incorporate the National Institution to "promote science and the useful arts" and to entrust the entire management of the Smithsonian fund to the National Institution (Bill to incorporate National Institution, 1841, pp.388-92, Smithsonian Archives). The two institutions would occupy buildings erected at the cost of the Smithson bequest and

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all collections of art and natural history owned by the United States would be deposited in these buildings. In this act is the germ of the National Museum idea including a proposition for an appropriation from the National Treasury to pay for those things not covered by the Smithsonian fund.

Then, by 1846, it was resolved "that it is the intention of the act of Congress and in accordance with the design of Mr. Smithson, as expressed in his will, that one of the principal modes of executing the act and the trust is the accumulation of collections of specimens and objects of natural history and of elegant art, and the gradual formation of a library of valuable works pertaining to all departments of human knowledge, to the end that a copious storehouse of materials of science, literature, and art, may be provided, which shall excite and diffuse the love of learning among men, and shall assist the original investigations and efforts of those who may devote themselves to the pursuit of any branch of knowledge." (Smithsonian Regents, 1946, p.20, Smithsonian Archives).

This "copious storehouse" which, by the terms of this charter, the Smithsonian Regents were requested to erect and pay for, was then filled with the national collections and the care of those collections was transferred to the Smithsonian Institution.

None of this was reached by way of a smooth road and the power of the Smithsonian Regents would continue to be questioned and tested for years to come. This is important to mention since the role of Congress in such matters can change the role of the art museum in the American culture and the relationship established between the Congress and the Smithsonian impacts on the government's role with all museums. (The relationship between the Congress and the Smithsonian Regents in the 1840's and 1850's might be compared to the present dilemma facing the National Endowment for the Arts which will be addressed later.)

Congressional members did continue to interfere with the authority of the Board of Regents suggesting how the act of Congress should be interpreted. This included lobbying for the bulk of the income to be devoted to a library; endeavoring to overthrow what had been established and substitute a Washington University; and returning the entire Smithsonian legacy to England to be given to anyone who could legally take it (Goode, 1901, p.145-47, Smithsonian Archives).

The Regents boldly asserted through Senator Jefferson Davis that it was "improper for Congress to interfere with the administration of a fund which it has confided to a Board of Regents not entirely formed of members of Congress and not responsible to it." (Davis,

1850 Statement, p.505, Smithsonian Archives). The conflict culminated in 1856 with a Congressional investigation. The Smithsonian Board was successful in maintaining the position that they were not amenable to the advice or instructions of Congress and were the only authorities qualified to interpret the act of incorporation and the intentions of James Smithson (Smithsonian Report, 1855, p.15, Smithsonian Archives).

The various art museums and galleries referred to earlier are considered units or bureaus of the Smithsonian Institution and most were adopted during this century as generous gifts from American financiers and industrialists. The Cooper-Hewitt Museum, for example, was administered by the Cooper Union until 1968 and is housed in the Carnegie Mansion in New York City. The Freer Gallery was a gift of Charles Long Freer (1856-1919) and the Hirshhorn Museum was donated by the American financier John H. Hirshhorn (1899-1981). For the purpose of understanding the place of a government funded art museum among all the art museums in America, the focus here will be on the National Gallery of Art, the gift made to the American people in the middle of this century by Andrew W. Mellon.

The National Gallery

Andrew W. Mellon (1855-1937) was a financier, an industrialist, a statesman, and a collector of fine art.

He began his career in his father's banking firm in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and later became president of the Mellon National Bank. He was involved in several industries including coal, iron, steel, and oil, and was director of many industrial and financial corporations.

Mellon arrived in Washington, D.C. in 1921 as Secretary of the Treasury in President Warren Harding's Cabinet. He stayed to serve in this position for President Calvin Coolidge and President Herbert Hoover. It was during this period that the art collection Mellon had begun in Pittsburgh under the guidance of a young Henry Clay Frick, would grow to become the nucleus of a national collection (Finley, 1973, p.9).

With the assistance of the art dealer C.R. Henschel of M. Knoedler and Company, Mellon acquired Botticelli's "Adoration of the Magi", Jan Van Eyck's "Annunciation", Perugino's "Crucifixion", Raphael's "Alba Madonna" and his "St. George and the Dragon", Titian's "Venus with a Mirror", Velazquez' study for his portrait of Pope Innocent X, and several paintings by Rembrandt, Van Dyck, and Frans Hals (Finley, 1973, p.22). He purchased the famed Dreyfus Collection of Renaissance sculpture in 1936 which included works by Donatello and Verrocchio, and a number of Renaissance paintings including works by Antonello da Messina, Lippo Memmi, Pisanello, and others (Finley, 1973, p.37).

It was clear that Andrew Mellon was building a collection of master works and that his vision of a national art museum was influenced by the great museums of Europe: the Louvre Museum and the National Gallery in London. One problem, as Mellon saw it, was that America's National Gallery of Art at this point consisted of a collection that could not measure up to his standards. Mellon did not want his collection associated with the inferior works in the National Gallery. What he wanted from that institution was its name. The Regents of the Smithsonian Institution therefore agreed that the existing National Gallery of Art would hence forth be known as "The National Collection of Fine Arts" and the Andrew Mellon Collection would be called the "National Gallery of Art " .

On December 22, 1936, Andrew Mellon made his offer to the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt. "Over a period of many years I have been acquiring important and rare paintings and sculpture with the idea that ultimately they would become the property of the people of the United States and be made available to them in a national art gallery to be maintained in the city of Washington for the purpose of encouraging and developing a study of the fine arts." (Mellon, 1936 letter, n.p., Archives of American Art) .

Mellon goes on to explain that a Board of Trustees

has been formed to carry out this purpose and that this Board has full power and authority to deed these works to a national gallery. In addition, these trustees have been given "securities ample to erect a gallery building of sufficient size to house these works of art and to permit the indefinite growth of the collection under a conservative policy regulating acquisitions."

Other regulations, restrictions, and conditions were also put in place. The letter discusses the architect Mellon employed (John Russell Pope of New York), the location of the gallery (the desired site had been promised as a George Washington memorial and excavations had begun, but funds were insufficient and Mellon was able to convince the Washington Memorial Association to evacuate the site), and the additional gift of an endowment fund, the income from which was designated to pay certain salaries (director and curators) and to provide funds for future acquisitions.

It is stated that future acquisitions be limited to "objects of the highest standard of quality, so that the collections to be housed in the proposed building shall not be marred by the introduction of art that is not the best of its type."

Mellon goes on to propose that the administration of the gallery be managed by a separate board of trustees and that they be empowered to make bylaws and regulations

governing its operations. This request, along with the others, was granted, so that, although the National Gallery is in fact an integral part of the Smithsonian Institution, it is administered by a separate board of trustees patterned after a private corporation.

"If this plan meets with your approval," the letter continues, "I will submit a formal offer of gift stating specifically the terms thereof, and the erection of the building may proceed immediately upon the acceptance of such offer and the passage of necessary legislation by Congress."

A bill was therefore prepared and introduced to Congress as "House Joint Resolution #217". It stated that "the faith of the United States is pledged that, on the completion of the National Gallery of Art by the donor in accordance with the terms of this Act and the acquisition from the donor of the Collection of works of art, the United States will provide such funds as may be necessary for the upkeep of the National Gallery of Art and the administrative expenses and costs of operation thereof." (Bill to establish the National Gallery, 1937, p.6, Smithsonian Archives). The bill was passed by both houses with all the provisions Andrew Mellon desired and signed into law by President Roosevelt on March 24, 1937. The National Gallery formally opened on the evening of March 17, 1941. By this time, two other important

collections had been assimilated and a third collection was under negotiation.

The first collection was that of Samuel H. Kress of New York. Kress had created a huge mercantile business and with the fortune gained thus was able to build a collection of paintings and sculpture of the Italian school from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Some of the early examples included the "Madonna and Child" by Giotto and "The Calling of Peter and Andrew" by Duccio. There were also paintings by Fra Angelico, Filippo and Filippino Lippi, Piero di Cosimo, and Perugino. Well-known paintings by Raphael, Titian, Tintoretto, Tiepolo, and Giovanni Bellini were also part of the Kress Collection (National Gallery, 1986, Catalogue of the Collection, Museum Archives).

Later, Samuel Kress would broaden the scope of the collection given to the National Gallery to include French, German, Flemish, and Spanish art. He purchased the French works first: a distinguished group of paintings by Fragonard, Poussin, Chardin, Boucher, and others. Following this he bought others in the French School, the most famous being "Napoleon in His Study" by Jacques-Louis David (National Gallery, 1986, Catalogue of the Collection, Museum Archives).

The German collection was developed next and included paintings by Holbein and Durer and the famous

"The Small Crucifixion" by Grunewald. The Flemish paintings included works by Peter Paul Rubens, Van Dyck, and Hieronymus Bosch's "Death and the Miser". Finally, there was the collection of Spanish paintings, paintings by Goya and Zurbaran and several canvases by El Greco, among them the "Laocoon". Kress donated sculpture as well: groups of Italian Gothic and Renaissance, a group of 1,300 Renaissance bronzes, Hellenistic marbles, and important French works (National Gallery, 1986 Catalogue of the Collection, Museum Archives).

When the National Gallery opened in 1941 it contained an exhibition of American paintings donated by Chester Dale. Chester Dale was also interested in French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings and assembled one of the most important collections of that genre which he then donated to the National Gallery. The Chester Dale collection illustrates the development of French painting from David to Cezanne and includes works by Monet, Renoir, and Cassatt (National Gallery, 1986 Catalogue of the Collection, Museum Archives). With these paintings comes the introduction of Modernist ideas to the National Gallery and the first twentieth century paintings by modernists such as Picasso and Matisse. It is important to note that these paintings were recognized as master works and incorporated into the permanent collection at the very beginning.

Modern art is also part of the Widener Collection which the National Gallery was awarded in August of 1942. The remarkable "Dead Toreador" by Monet hangs with paintings by Corot, Degas, Renoir and other artists who signaled this major shift (National Gallery 1986 Catalogue of the Collection, Museum Archives).

The collection also contains fourteen Rembrandts, two Vermeers, and works by Raphael, Bellini, El Greco, Titian and the great English artists, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Turner, and Constable. But what is noteworthy is the fact that the National Gallery, dedicated to "collecting, preserving, and exhibiting the finest works of art obtainable" included modern art as part of its foundation. What might be questioned now is the second part of the National Gallery's mission: "to make those works of art known and enjoyed by the people of this country and, indeed, by people everywhere to whom, in the larger sense, these and all works of art belong." (Finley, 1973, p.180). How is the National Gallery fulfilling its promise? A comparison of acquisition records and exhibition records beginning in 1984 and moving through 1988 is very revealing.

Acquisitions, Exhibitions and Public Demands

In 1984 the National Gallery acquired a total of sixteen paintings, ten of which were by twentieth century artists including the American abstract expressionists,

Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner. (All statistics compiled from the National Gallery annual reports, Museum Archives. See Figure 1) In 1985 the total number of painting acquisitions was fifteen, six of which were works by another member of the New York School, Mark Rothko. In 1986, the National Gallery scored a major win as it was awarded one hundred and seventy-four paintings by The Mark Rothko Foundation. The gift would eventually total two-hundred, eighty-five paintings and works on paper and more than five hundred additional reference and study works, as the Mark Rothko Foundation designated the National Gallery the chief repository of its collection. That same year other painting acquisitions totaled fifty-two, eighteen of which were twentieth century, and twenty of which were late nineteenth century modern works.

In 1987, fifty of the fifty-five painting acquisitions were twentieth century with the New York School still dominating. That year saw a gain of fifteen paintings by Barnett Newman. In 1988 eleven paintings were acquired and ten of them were of the twentieth century. (Figure 1). (All numbers are taken from the National Gallery's annual reports, Museum Archives)

Certainly the availability of works of art explains in part the high percentage of twentieth century acquisitions. There are simply more Jackson Pollock paintings in the market place than there are works by

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART WASHINGTON, D.C.

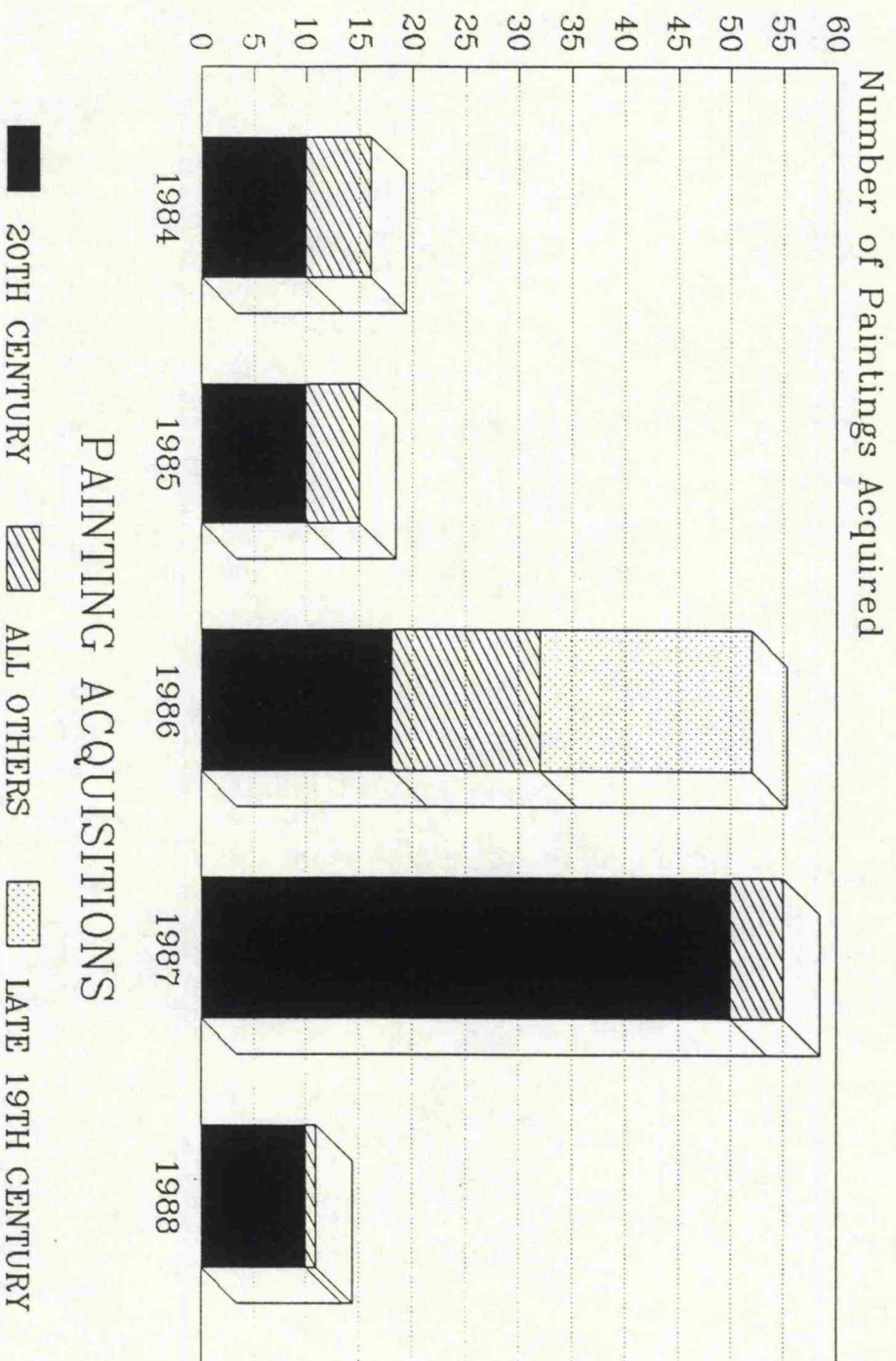


Figure 1

Giotto. The point is, however, that the National Gallery is actively engaged in gathering the art of this century and since modernism has been the dominant force of that art, it's safe to assume the National Gallery is actively engaged in preserving modernist objects and ideas.

The National Gallery is dedicated to "collecting, preserving, and exhibiting the finest works of art". Let us now examine the exhibition program during this same period and compare it to the acquisition record. (All information is compiled from the National Gallery annual reports, Museum Archives. See Figure 2.)

In 1984 the National Gallery mounted nine special exhibitions of painting and drawing (not considered here are print exhibits). Some were curated from the museum's holdings and some borrowed from other institutions. Among these there were two exhibits of the work of abstract artists, Mark Tobey and Mark Rothko.

In 1985, fourteen special exhibits were launched, none of which addressed concepts of abstraction. The 1986 schedule was similar in that the twelve exhibits presented included only one exhibit on modernism. This was called "Seven American Masters" and featured the paintings of Al Held, Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Barnett Newman, Robert Rauschenberg, and Mark Rothko.

In 1987 modernism fared a little better as four of

the twelve special exhibits contained work of some modernist tendencies. Two of the four exhibits were one person shows of very popular artists: Henri Matisse (loved for his vibrant colors) and Berthe Morisot (soft, impressionistic oils, watercolors and colored pencil drawings of children). The other two exhibits were survey shows in which modernist ideas were couched among the more traditional. "Selected Drawings from the Whitney Museum of American Art" contained eighty drawings which traced American draftsmanship from the early twentieth century to the present. It contained traditional, figurative, surreal, and abstract renderings. The second survey was twentieth century sculpture from the Patsy and Raymond Nasher Collection. This exhibit was divided into three sections: the figurative tradition (Rodin and Moore) the constructionist tradition (Picasso, Calder, Smith), and then pop and post-modernist sculpture.

Of the twelve special exhibits organized in 1988, only the art of Paul Gauguin would fall into the category of modernism. But Gauguin is exceptional since he is an artist made famous through film and television dramatizations of his life. (He has been portrayed by both Anthony Quinn and Richard Chamberlain.) We should not be surprised to learn that this exhibit drew 600,000 visitors. That was a higher average number of visits per

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART WASHINGTON, D.C.

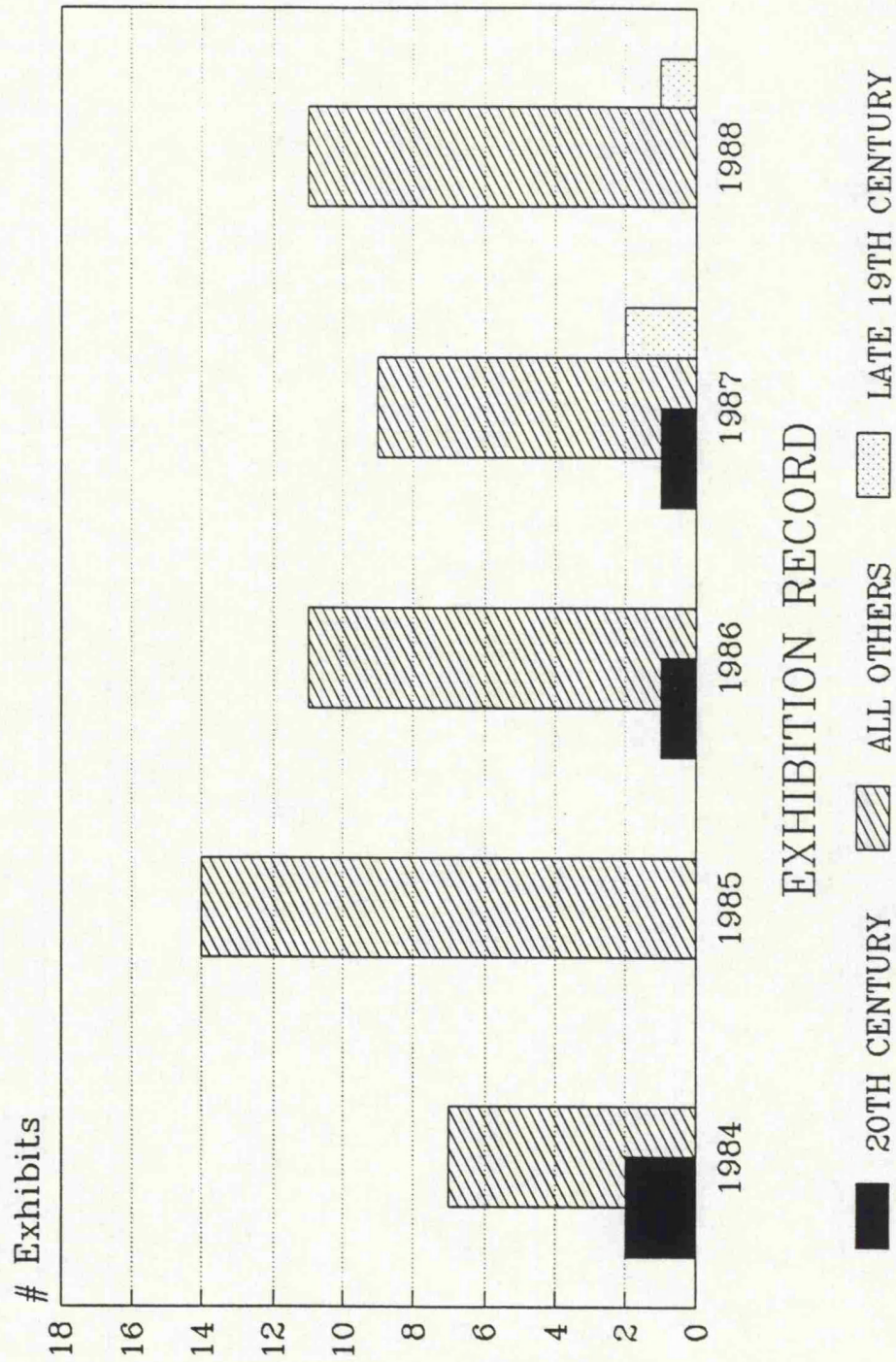


Figure 2

day than any exhibit in the history of the National Gallery. (Figure 2) (All figures are taken from the National Gallery's annual reports, Museum Archives)

In summary, of the three hundred, twenty three painting acquisitions in this five year period, two hundred, ninety-three, or in excess of 90%, were twentieth century works. By contrast, of the fifty-nine special exhibitions during that same period, only eight exhibits, or 13.5% dealt with modern art. Why does the National Gallery dedicate such a relatively small percentage of exhibits to the art of this century? Part of the answer may be found in attendance figures.

Two events seem to signify the Gallery's awareness of the growing importance of attendance figures. The first was a sudden and striking increase in visitors for the 1986 season. Prior to 1986, attendance growth was generally consistent showing small, healthy increases no doubt tied to increased leisure time and increased travel. In 1986, two of the special exhibits offered, proved to be highly popular. "The Treasure Houses of Britain" and "The New Painting: Impressionism" were responsible for increasing the number of visitors by 3,623,197 over the 1985 fiscal year record of 5,079,858 for a total of 8,703,055. (Attendance figures taken from the annual reports, Museum Archives) The Gallery had not calculated the unprecedented numbers and was forced to

quickly hire and train more than forty temporary employees to assist the education department in their responsibility of crowd control (National Gallery, 1986 Report, p.70, Museum Archives).

How temporary that new staff was is not clear since the attendance figures have remained quite high: almost seven million visitors in 1987 and slightly more than seven million in 1988.

The second indicator of the growing importance to the National Gallery of the attendance figures came in 1988 with a change in the reporting of such figures. Prior to this and according to the museum's annual reports, attendance was under the Division of Building Maintenance and Security and was issued as a single number for the entire fiscal year. In 1988, attendance became the business of the Gallery Administrator and was broken down according to special exhibits (National Gallery, 1988 Report, p.58, Museum Archives).

While the National Gallery is celebrated for its scholarly research, exhibits, and publications, the obviously powerful concern for drawing large numbers of the population may be diluting the Gallery's mission to define a standard of excellence. The schedule of popular exhibits, of exhibits of realism as opposed to abstraction, greatly outnumber the art generally considered to be less popular, more difficult for the

untrained eye to appreciate. No one will dispute the level of the special exhibits, which is certainly very high, but one must question the neglect of a huge body, an entire century, of international art production.

A government funded museum has an obligation, some would argue, to address the common denominator and satisfy democratic taste. However, having assumed a position of authority from which it defines the standard by which all art can be judged, the National Gallery also assumes a responsibility to provide a basis for informed judgement. This can only happen through exhibits.

The National Gallery, funded primarily by taxpayers' dollars, is free and open to the public every day of the year, except December 25. Since revenue from admissions is not an incentive as it is in other museums, is democratic service the sole impetus? Two other considerations should be noted.

The first is the importance of private funds and the role of corporations in Gallery financing. A review of financial records (Museum Archives), shows that most of the Gallery's operating budget (83%) comes from the Federal Government. The remaining 17% is supplied by endowments and corporations. More than 70% of the costs for special exhibitions are contributed by corporations. (Figures compiled from annual reports, Museum Archives) Private companies also provide for opening receptions,

brochures, films and other events related to special exhibits. It is generally accepted, even with museums such as the Museum of Modern Art and The Metropolitan, that corporations fund exhibits for the purpose of establishing a positive public image and good public relations. (The Corporate/Museum partnership is explored in Chapter 7.) The continuation of funding therefore depends greatly on the numbers of people reached by the museum. Corporations appreciate high attendance figures and wide dissemination of the brochures they fund.

The second factor impacted by attendance records is income from museum shop sales. According to financial reports (Museum Archives), in 1988, revenues from sales of art books, posters, and prints reached \$12.3 million, a 40% increase over the 1987 income. The sale of special exhibition catalogs increased 75% over the previous year for a total of 200,000 Gallery catalogs. A new medium for the arts is the video cassette. The sale of these Gallery productions increased 75% in the course of one year (National Gallery, 1988, p.121, Museum Archives). A recent survey published by the American Council for the Arts, conducted by the National Research Center for the Arts, and sponsored by Philip Morris Companies, reports video cassettes as the most promising medium of growth for the arts, a potential market of \$2 billion a year.

Examining the National Gallery figures for these

three areas (corporate contributions for special exhibits, annual attendance figures, and income from museum shop sales) shows a close correlation between the three. (Figure 3)

In 1984, annual attendance exceeded four million visitors and corporate contributions for special exhibits was about \$3 million. When, in 1986, corporate sponsorship moved to \$8.5 million, attendance figures broke all records at almost nine million visitors. Museum shop sales rose proportionately from \$3.5 million in 1984 to \$10.5 million in 1986. The correlation between dollars expended by corporate sponsors of special exhibits and numbers of museum visitors remains constant.

Museum shop sales shot up to an unprecedented \$12 million in 1988 due, in part, to a re-organization of the museum store. "During the year the publications service made changes in the West Building sales shop. Two seating areas and one area of under-used selling space were converted to efficient self-service selling areas, with video cassettes, note cards, posters, and calendars." (National Gallery, 1988, p.121, Museum Archives).

The museum shop in fact sold more than 2.3 million post cards, prints, note cards, greeting cards, and posters. The sale of items such as calendars and address books exceeded 220,000 units. The National Gallery now

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, D.C.

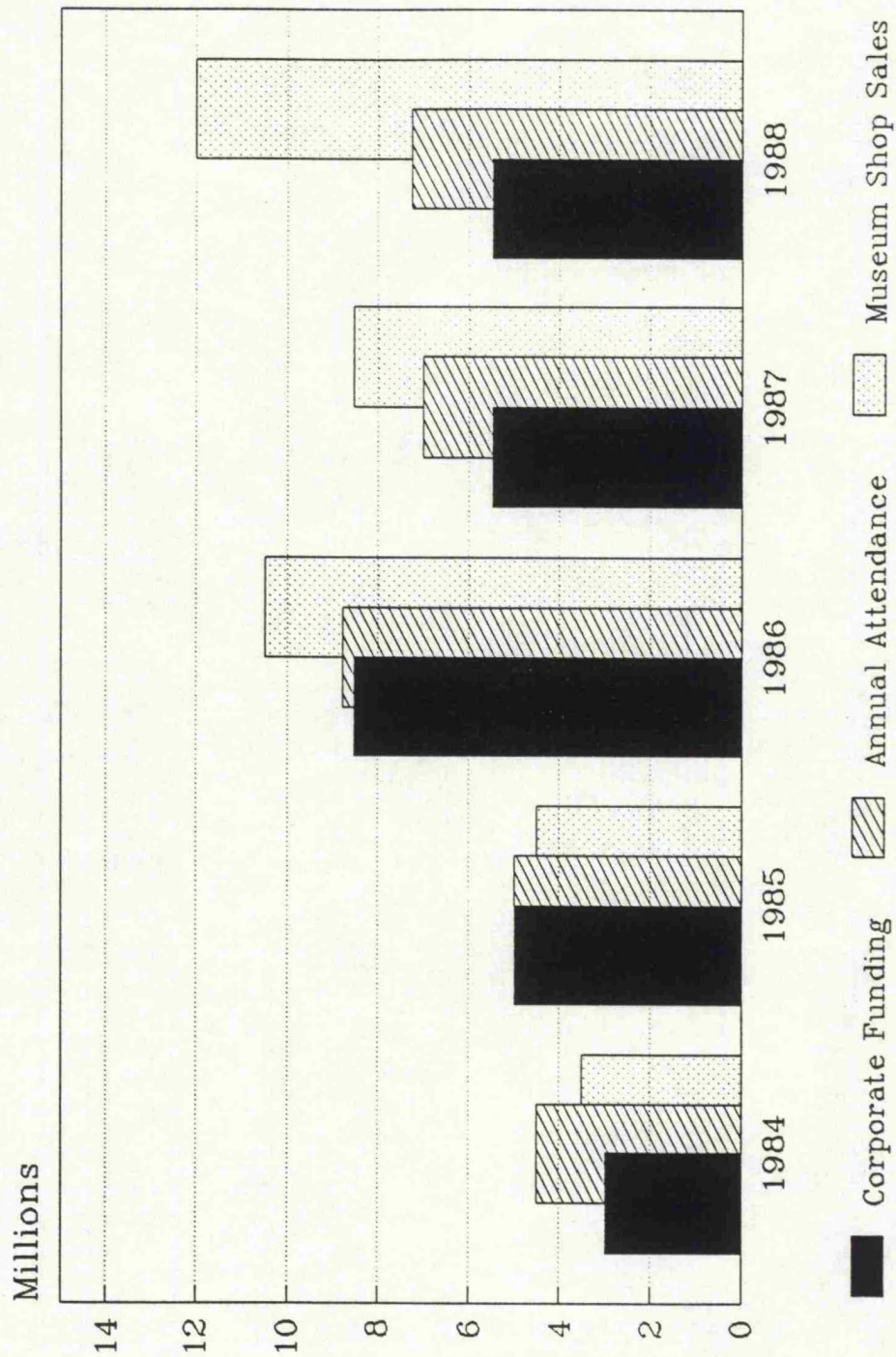


Figure 3
Attendance and Sales Figures Relative to Corporate Contributions

has plans to expand its mail order market. The museum has adopted the corporation's marketing techniques and the result is a great sales success. Museum attendance, stimulated by popular special exhibits, boosts museum shop business and also generates income from corporations wishing a broad audience for programs they sponsor.

What at first glance appears to be a situation where a guaranteed, secure income provided by Congress allows the freedom to pursue scholarly research and exhibitions may have complications resulting in a down side. Is the special exhibition schedule determined, not by research on the collection and the charge "to make those works of art known and enjoyed by the people of this country", but rather by populist pressures? Has the corporate underwriting of special exhibits exerted influence on curatorial decisions? (Note: Chapter 7) Has the museum, through the corporate presence and influence, developed a marketing strategy that is commercial rather than educational? Have the very recent developments such as the populous events of 1988, altered museum practice and policy in a way that is in conflict with the museum's mission?

While the Smithsonian Institution contains the nation's federally funded art museums, other American museums and art institutions are touched by the Federal Government because they receive federal funding through

the National Endowment for the Arts.

The N.E.A.: Control and Controversy

The National Endowment for the Arts is "an independent agency of the Federal Government, created in 1965 to encourage and assist the nations' cultural resources. The Endowment is advised by the National Council on the Arts, a presidentially appointed body composed of the Chairman of the Endowment and 26 distinguished private citizens who are widely recognized for their expertise or interest in the arts. The Council advises the Endowment on policies, procedures, and programs, in addition to making recommendations on grant applications." (National Endowment Act, 1965, p.1, Archives of American Art).

The statement of mission for the Endowment as described in the literature speaks in lofty language of man's desire to create and his need to express his perception of the world. "It is through art that we can understand ourselves and our potential and while the arts in America have always been supported directly by the people, it is also an appropriate matter of concern for the Federal Government. The government recognizes that man's need to make, experience, and comprehend art is as profound as his need to speak and thus wishes to foster the arts and to broaden their availability." (National Endowment for the Arts, 1989, p.1).

The potential for government support to slip into government interference was addressed from the beginning, and all N.E.A. materials have references to this. America's governance is based on freedom, freedom of thought, freedom of action, freedom of expression. In setting up the National Endowment, a commitment to these freedoms was reinforced. "In implementing its mission the Endowment must exercise care to preserve and improve the environment in which the arts have flourished. It must not, under any circumstances, impose a single aesthetic standard or attempt to direct artistic content." (National Endowment Act, 1965, p.2, Archives of American Art).

In July of 1989, twenty-five years after the founding of the National Endowment, the United States Senate voted to restrict N.E.A. funds from use "to promote, disseminate, or produce obscene or indecent materials, including but not limited to depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts, or material which denigrates the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or nonreligion." The bill, sponsored by Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, also bars grants for art work that "denigrates, debases or reviles a person, group or class of citizens on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, age or national origin."

Senator Helms said: "The N.E.A. needs to be put on notice that the Congress of the United States will not tolerate this kind of activity." (Glueck, July 9, 1989, Section 2, p.1).

The events that brought this bill to Congress and the potential restrictions it imposes on the N.E.A. raise issues about artistic freedom and censorship in America and the influence of government on art museums.

The controversy began in June, 1989 when, at the prospect of congressional disapproval, Christina Orr-Cahall, Director of the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. canceled a touring show of photographs by the late Robert Mapplethorpe. (Mapplethorpe died of AIDS in March of 1989.) The exhibition was a retrospective of the artist's work that contained images depicting homosexual and heterosexual erotic acts and explicit sadomasochistic practices involving black and white, naked or leather-clad men and women. Along with these photographs there were photographs of elegant floral arrangements, portraits of the rich and famous, and pictures of naked children. These last images would not ordinarily be considered provocative, but in this context, they took on a different meaning, especially the photographs of the children.

The touring show, organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, was funded by a grant

from the National Endowment for the Arts. The show was seen in Philadelphia; at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, and at the Whitney Museum in New York without incident. It's viewing in Washington, D.C., however, was to coincide with a congressional review of the N.E.A. budget.

"We had the institutional responsibility to decide if this was the right environment in which to present the show." said Dr. Orr-Cahall in a New York Times interview in July." There would have been a lot of folderol about it, with attention directed away from substantive issues, such as the effort in Congress to emasculate the Endowment. It would be a three-ring circus in which Mapplethorpe's work would never be looked at in its own right. We knew that certain Congressmen were just waiting for us to open the show, and we felt we shouldn't bow to that pressure. It was a no-win situation. We decided we wouldn't be anyone's political platform." (Glueck, July 9, 1989, Section 2, p.1).

Dr. Jacob Neusner, Brown University Professor and Reagan-appointed member of the National Endowment's advisory council, the National Council on the Arts, disagreed with Dr. Orr-Cahall in another Times interview that same month. He felt the cancellation of the Mapplethorpe exhibit "set a dangerous precedent." "It was pusillanimous and dishonest in the extreme." Said

Dr. Neusner. "There was absolutely no pressure on them from the Endowment, and to say they were defending us is ridiculous. It is our job to take the heat, and our process knows how to deal with controversy. But they betrayed the process by acting as censors. In doing so they raised the stakes. Had they not, the whole thing would have gone away. A Congressman or two might have visited the show and complained, and that would have been the end of it. Now it will never go away." (Glueck, July 14, 1989, Section 2, p.8).

On July 12, the House of Representatives administered a carefully designed punitive message to the National Endowment when they voted 361 to 65 in favor of an amendment that reduced the Endowment's budget by \$45,000. Although that \$45,000 was a small part of the Endowment's \$171.4 million appropriation for the 1990 fiscal year, it represented the exact amount of Endowment-related funding for the Mapplethorpe exhibit and one other controversial show. It was a clear message and followed hours of congressional debate over the art projects and the proper use of taxpayers' money (Ross, 1989, p.62).

Both the cancellation of the exhibit at the Corcoran Gallery and the move on the part of Congress were viewed by artists, museums, and arts advocates as a threat to the arts and to the first amendment guarantee of free

speech. The Corcoran's cancellation was viewed by many as censorship. It seemed a direct challenge to the symbolic role of artists and museums in our culture. Artists are important to a culture, among other reasons, because of their ability to express what is deep or hidden in human consciousness, what other individuals cannot or will not express themselves. Museums have traditionally been the neutral sanctuary for this expression and are entered voluntarily by the public. It is understood that what the public encounters in the museum may not always please, but that is the license the museum gives to art. For a museum to censor cuts this license and alters the understanding.

While the majority of the Corcoran's board supported the decision to cancel, some viewed it as wrong. Robert Lehrman, a Corcoran board member, expressed his disappointment to the New York Times when he said that external pressures should not impact on the museum's judgement. "We have relinquished our responsibility to be, as is carved in stone over the entrance. 'Dedicated to Art'." (Glueck, July 9, 1989, Section 2, p.1).

Lehrman's view of the role of the museum was affirmed when, in September, following two months of protests by artists and art advocates, the Corcoran issued a statement of regret for the cancellation. "By withdrawing from the Mapplethorpe exhibition, we, the

board of trustees and the director, have inadvertently offended many members of the arts community, which we deeply regret. Our course in the future will be to support art, artists and freedom of artistic expression." (Corcoran Gallery, September 8, 1989 Statement, Museum Archives).

The apology was not enough to mend the broken ties to the art community and artists who had canceled their exhibits in protest refused to reinstate them. The boycott continued, making contemporary exhibits and programs impossible. The boycott was accompanied by staff resignations and outcries for the director's resignation.

The resignation of Christina Orr-Cahall came in December, six months after the controversy began. "The last several months have been extraordinarily difficult for us all", wrote the director in her letter of resignation, "we are caught in issues which reach far beyond the Corcoran in their importance to the American public. I think we all agree that the time has arrived for the Corcoran to turn its eyes to the future and to make every effort to assure that it is not consumed by the kind of contention that distracts the institution from achieving its goals." (Orr-Cahall, Christina, letter, December 18, 1989, Museum Archives).

As Tom Armstrong, then director of the Whitney

Museum observed, "When an art museum reverses a decision based on professional judgement because of outside pressures, the integrity of the museum is severely impaired." (Kimmelman, December 13, 1989, Section C, p.1).

According to J. Carter Brown, then director of the National Gallery, "There's a principle involved here which is at the heart of what it means to be an American, and that is freedom. All of us in this country emigrated here, and a great number for a reason, which was to achieve the kind of freedom denied under other systems. And as we watch other systems and historically look at them, the degenerate art show Hitler had, or what the Soviets did to suppress their artists, and what is happening in capitals in the Far East, we have to recognize how fragile our freedoms are and how important it is to defend the process and to keep a sense of our First Amendment." (Brown, Press Interview, June, 1989, Archives of American Art).

Several arts advocates, beginning with the American Association of Museums, expressed their views on the role of government in subsidizing the arts. The American Association of Museums issued a background paper for members of Congress which stated that "while some works of art or ideas seeking public funding may be offensive, the greater risk is a restriction of freedom of expression and individual judgement that would compromise

the necessary openness of a democratic society. The test of a democracy is not that the majority gets its way, but that the minority's free access to the full choice of ideas is protected along with its ability to express those ideas." (American Association of Museums, September, 1989).

The American Council for the Arts released a position paper that declared: "The American people have no need for the government to screen or edit art for them. Each adult American has an inalienable right to choose ... which art to view ... In a society that is as broad and as free as ours, a society with so many differing voices and opinions, we are not only tolerant of various artistic and political expression, we take great pride in that tolerance ... There will always be art that offends some taxpaying Americans some of the time. Censorship, however, offends Americans all of the time. Traditional American values are opposed to a society speaking with one government-authorized voice." (American Council for the Arts, July, 1989).

The College Art Association provided guidelines for members concerned with the issues. "Art must not be equated with entertainment. Society assigns to art an important purpose: to keep our citizens in touch with their past, to define the present, and to consider the future. Serious art explores new frontiers, celebrates

individuality, and mirrors the diverse ideas and values that characterize American society. Art can be controversial and confrontational, and can reflect elements of our society that are offensive to some. Art, by its very nature, involves risk if it is to succeed and grow. The climate of freedom prescribed by the Endowment's authorizing legislation must continue." (College Art Association, October, 1989).

Compromise Legislation and Political Fallout

After months of debate, a House-Senate conference committee reached a compromise agreement on the amendment that would severely restrict projects eligible for N.E.A. grants. The agreement retained a portion of the Senator Jesse Helms amendment "to prohibit the use of N.E.A. funds to promote, disseminate or produce materials which in the judgement of the Endowment may be considered obscene." What was struck from the amendment was the provision banning funds for "indecent" material that denigrates a religion, a person, or a group or class of citizens on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, or national origin. The conferees also borrowed language from a Supreme Court decision on obscenity standards (Miller Vs. U.S., 1973) and tacked that to the amendment prohibiting funding of materials which may be considered obscene and "which do not have serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."

Following the adoption of the revised legislation by Congress came an incident that stunned the arts community. "We could see immediately that the compromise arts funding bill passed by Congress was a hunting-license for the ultra-conservatives", said Ted Potter, director of the Center for Contemporary Art in Winston Salem, "but we didn't expect the first shot to be fired by the N.E.A." (Honan, November 10, 1989, Section A, p.1).

The National Endowment for the Arts withdrew its sponsorship of an exhibition about AIDS to be held at a non-profit gallery in New York City. On November 8, John E. Frohnmayer, the newly appointed chairman of the Endowment, announced that he had suspended a \$10,000 federal grant which had been approved by an Endowment panel in May, and asked that the Endowment not be listed as a sponsor. Mr. Frohnmayer said he took the action against the exhibition, "Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing" because of derogatory references in the show's catalog to political and religious figures. "I think it's essential that we remove politics from grants and must do so if the Endowment is to remain credible to the American people and to Congress." (Frohnmayer, Press Statement, November 8, 1989, Archives of American Art).

"The catalog to this show is a very angry protest against the specific events and individuals involved over the last eight months in the most recent arts legislation

in Congress. It's very inflammatory. Because of the recent criticism the Endowment has come under, and the seriousness of Congress's directive, we must all work together to insure that projects funded by the Endowment do not violate either the spirit or the letter of the law. The message has been clearly and strongly conveyed to us that Congress means business. On this basis, I believe the Endowment's funds may not be used to exhibit or publish this material." (Frohnmayr, Press Statement, November 8, 1989, Archives of American Art).

The host of the exhibit, a non-profit gallery called Artists Space located in the Tri-Beca section of Manhattan, has an excellent reputation as an alternative museum devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1973, the organization had a 1989 annual budget of \$725,000. Roughly forty percent of that came from public grants by the National Endowment, the New York State Council on the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the Institute of Museum Services (another federal agency). A small membership program provided about \$20,000 each year. About \$85,000 was raised from a benefit party at which some art works donated by artists were sold. Less than \$30,000 in 1989 came from corporate sponsorship. The remainder of the budget was supported by foundations and private individuals (Artists Space, Financial Report, 1989, Museum Archives).

Artists Space is the kind of program that could not exist without public money, because it does not interest enough of the private sector. Yet, it has proven its value over the years. Artists Space has provided first showings to unknown artists now prominent. Among them are Scott Burton, Jonathan Borofsky, Jeff Koons, and Barbara Kruger. It has organized group shows that signaled major trends. "Persons" for example, was a 1974 series that introduced a generation of performance artists, including Laurie Anderson. In short, Artists' Space is highly respected and has built and maintained an excellent relationship over the years with government groups that support art, including the National Endowment.

As the N.E.A. withdrew its sponsorship of "AIDS: Against Our Vanishing", Susan Wyatt, director of Artists Space denied that the exhibit was political, saying it was an attempt to depict the emotions and spirituality felt by AIDS patients and their friends. She said she notified the Endowment in advance about the contents of the AIDS exhibit because "I was concerned that the N.E.A. not be blindsided and that Artists Space not be blindsided. I never anticipated all this would happen. Artists Space is a cultural organization, not an activist organization. I have nothing against activism, but that is not our goal. It's important to point out that I

don't consider the N.E.A. an adversary. I've always considered it a part of the art world, at least until now." (Kimmelman, November 10, 1989, Section C, p.33).

The protests against the action taken by the National Endowment were immediate and strong and included the American Arts Alliance, PEN American Center, the College Art Association, and many prominent individuals. Joseph Papp, producer of the New York Shakespeare Festival, called the action "an assault on the principles we think of as fundamental in our society." Leonard Bernstein, nominated for the prestigious National Medal of Arts, declined to accept the award in protest. In Washington, the Endowment's visual arts panel, the panel which decides on Endowment grants, expressed their "disappointment and distress" over Mr. Frohnmayer's decision and urged him to "make public your commitment to the peer panel process and the Endowment's original mandate to foster the excellence, diversity, and vitality of the arts in this country." (Honan, November 10, 1989, Section C, p.33).

It was all more than Frohnmayer anticipated or could stand against. On November 15 he flew to New York City to visit Artists Space and to announce the restoration of the grant. "After consulting with members of the National Council on the Arts, several of whom have seen the show, I have agreed to approve the request of Artists

Space to amend the fiscal '89 grant and will release the grant." (Honan, November 17, 1989, Section A, p.1).

"We are feeling our way along in a situation which none of us really wanted, under a law which none of us think is necessary." (Honan, November 16, 1989, Section C, p.26).

"Not necessary" and also "ambiguous" were the terms used by many. Representative Pat Williams of Montana, when addressing the House subcommittee that oversees the National Endowment, asserted "It may well be that in responding to recent Congressional language the N.E.A. has begun to have a chilling effect on art in the United States and it may be entering the quicksand of censorship. This committee must thoughtfully consider whether the Federal Government can maintain an environment necessary for artistic creativity to flourish while fulfilling the recent Congressional mandate that bans assistance to certain art based on content, not quality. Congressional pressure has placed N.E.A. on a slippery slope. The Endowment's authorizing language prohibits it from interfering with the content of the art it subsidizes but Congress is demanding more restrictions on the Endowment's grant making." (Gamarekian, November 16, 1989, Section C, p.26).

Looking back on the Congressional interference with the Smithsonian Institution of one hundred and fifty

years ago, one recognizes that the autonomy of the museum system was saved by the Smithsonian Regents. The conflict today with Congress over N.E.A. funding of controversial art has been deepened by the actions of the Corcoran Gallery and the Endowment itself. The rescue of the National Endowment and the restoration of its original mission statement which demands that the Endowment "must not, under any circumstances, impose a single aesthetic standard or attempt to direct artistic content" has been left to independent arts advocacy groups.

The National Endowment of the Arts is given life every five years through Congressional legislation and 1990 was one of those years. The debate over the restrictive language introduced and the debate over the very existence of federal funding for the arts became intense during this period.

Arts advocacy groups rallied for insurance that no form of censorship or restriction of content be allowed to become part of the reauthorization legislation under which the life of the Endowment is extended.

Representative Pat Williams referred to this as "a critical time in the history of federal support of the nation's cultural life. A small minority who oppose Federal support of the arts are on a war footing and are intent on killing or crippling the arts endowment."

Gallery of Art are institutions founded by an Act of Congress and financially supported by American taxpayers, yet designed to be independent of congressional influence. The founders of these institutions sought to insure the institutions' autonomy in order to insure the institutions' standards. The National Endowment confirms its belief that "man's need to make, experience, and comprehend art is as profound as his need to speak," while guaranteeing that Congress will never "under any circumstances, impose a single aesthetic standard or attempt to direct artistic content." (National Endowment for the Arts, 1989, p.2). Such judgements were to be left to the panel of art experts.

The National Gallery, which is the property of the people of the United States and is supported by their tax dollars, exists for the "purpose of encouraging and developing a study of the fine arts...art of the highest standard of quality." (Mellon, 1936 Letter, n.p., Archives of American Art). When Andrew Mellon first proposed the idea of a National Gallery to the President of the United States, he stated clearly his wish to have the gallery administered by a "competent and separate board of trustees" in order to safeguard that the "highest standard of quality will always be maintained in the art to be displayed in the gallery." (Mellon, 1936 Letter, n.p., Archives of American Art).

While the founders sought to control the democratic influences on these two institutions, the safeguards established early on have proven vulnerable in both cases. The blatant disciplinary actions by the Congress against the National Endowment are efforts to impose aesthetic standards and to direct content. The Congressional and corporate influences on exhibition programs at the National Gallery are more subtle but no less intrusive. A schedule of popular exhibits draws large crowds which pleases Congress and the corporate sponsors who fund 70% of the special exhibits, but apparently ignores the huge body of abstract, more difficult art produced in this century and held in the Gallery's collection. Government funding of these art institutions appears to bring with it democratic influences that are in conflict with the higher institutional goals. These influences have the potential to change the role of the art museum in the American culture in ways our forefathers tried to guard against.

SECTION TWO

CHAPTER 5

The Development of American Modernism and
Its Influence on The American Art Museum

Introduction

The Museum of Modern Art in New York City opened its new building at 11 West 53rd Street in November, 1939. This modern structure designed by Philip Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone is considered to be the first truly modern museum. What is meant by the concept of modernism as it applies to art and architecture and how modernism has impacted on the American art museum are the issues to be examined in this chapter.

The term "modern" generally refers to a particular period and a particular use of formal elements. (For a discussion of the formal elements of art, see Meyer Schapiro's Modern Art, 1982, p.185-212) When coupled with art and architecture it refers to a multiplicity of styles and schools of thought which parallel changes in the technical, economic and social conditions of the twentieth century. Modernism developed in Europe and was first introduced to the American art world through the Armory Show, the exhibition of modern European art held in a New York City armory in 1913. This exhibit had a major impact on working artists of the period (Arnason, 1969, p.414).

At that point, a few American artists were

experimenting with variations of cubism which resulted in the development of American abstraction. Artists focused on the expressive potential of the elements of art such as rhythmic lines and vibrant colors (Canaday, 1959, p.442). Even much of the realism of the day emphasized abstract composition. Alfred Stieglitz exhibited the work of John Marin, Georgia O'Keefe, Arthur Dove and other innovative painters in his New York City gallery early on (Geldzahler, 1965, p.48). It was, however, the influx of European artists and architects during World War II that etched the lasting mark of modernism on American art and architect and allowed the development of the first truly American art movements.

The artists fleeing Paris for New York in the wake of the Nazi's rise to power transmitted the principles of modernism through America's system of higher education as well as in New York's cafes (Tomkins, 1984, pp 42-68). At the same time American collectors began to establish museums dedicated to modern art. (The development of the first Museum of Modern Art is covered in Chapter 8) All of this resulted in the creation of a New York avant-garde which quickly began to replace Paris as the dominant center for art.

We will examine first the informal means of influence on the American culture exerted by European artists through personal contact with American artists in New York City cafes and through public exhibitions, in particular by the artists affiliated with the Surrealist movement. Secondly, we will look at the formal means of influence exerted through the American system of higher education especially by transplanted Bauhaus faculty. These two influences, the philosophy of Surrealism and the Bauhaus philosophy, can be viewed as the two parallel yet opposing approaches to the making of American art and architecture that would dominate and define the American modernist movement. American modernism would in turn determine the architecture of the American museum, an architecture that would provide the practical, systematic, instructional space demanded by a democratic society (Davis, 1983, p.34).

Surrealism made its impact first while the Bauhaus influence would be somewhat delayed. Coming through the educational system, the Bauhaus philosophy was felt in the next artistic generation and was felt most profoundly by architects of the day. The Surrealists' contact was directly with young working artists hungry for new ideas

from Paris and so its impact was immediate.

The Influence of Surrealism

Surrealism was recognized as the most widely influential aesthetic movement between the First and Second World Wars. Its' impact was due in part to the movement of artists as a result of the war and also to the attitude that held Surrealism to be not just an art movement, but a philosophy of life. Basically Surrealism looked to the subconscious, dream world as a means to discover and express truth. It depended on intuition and instinct rather than rational, logical thought processes. Andre Breton, the poet and Father of Surrealism, defined it as the "belief in the higher reality of specific forms of associations, previously neglected, in the omnipotence of dreams, and in the disinterested play of thinking." (Chipp, 1968, p.412).

The Surrealist artists settling in New York City included Marcel Duchamp, Yves Tanguy, Roberto Matta Echaurren, Andre Masson, Max Ernst and Man Ray. For the most part they were a congenial group willing to share their ideas and methods within the Parisian mode of the cafe' or the salon.

One very important meeting ground was Peggy

Guggenheim's gallery, Art of This Century. Peggy Guggenheim described the gallery as "a center where all the artists were welcome and so they treated it as a sort of club." (Guggenheim, 1979, p.317). It was in this gallery that the first American Abstract Expressionists exhibited their work. One person shows of the paintings of Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, William Baziotes, Hans Hoffman, Mark Rothko, Clifford Still and David Hare were presented. Another important salon was Roberto Matta Echaurren's Ninth Street studio where a number of artists, Europeans and Americans, gathered weekly to view each other's work and analyze the images.

One of the first exhibits to bring Europeans and Americans together was the "First Papers of Surrealism" held in 1942 at the Whitelaw Reid Mansion on Madison Avenue. The exhibit included works by Masson, Matta and Ernst along with the young Americans Baziotes, Gorky and Motherwell (Jean, 1967, p.313). Organized with the assistance of the French artist Marcel Duchamp, the exhibit succeeded in closing the gap of colonial modernism and rooting Surrealist concepts in American soil.

Duchamp installed at this exhibit his "Mile of

String". The string crisscrossed the gallery space, looped over the exhibition panels and clustered in knots in front of the paintings. Photos in the Museum of Modern Art Archives show that the string kept the visitor from entering the gallery and made viewing the works of art impossible but it also defined the gallery space in a way in which it had never before been defined and ultimately transformed it into a work of art (Museum of Modern Art, photo archives, New York).

Duchamp addressed the modernist sensibility in the literal use of the material and the simplicity of the gesture. He also, in a direct and clever way, commented on the effect of context on art. The "Mile of String" brings to mind a web that joins the paintings on the gallery walls in a like time frame and in a space unused, perhaps antique. Duchamp was commenting on art exhibitions and on the context in which we view art. The context within which we view the work of art can alter, diminish or intensify the meaning the object carries.

Duchamp was born on the outskirts of Rouen to a cultured bourgeois family who loved chess and music and art, Duchamp attended the Academie Julian. Early on he worked as a printer and also did cartoons for the

Courrier Francois and Le Rire. His early work seems influenced by Cezanne but he quickly came to know and imitate Fauvism and by 1911, at the age of twenty-four, the influence of Cubism can be seen (Arnason, 1969, p.210).

Duchamp was known for his tendency to take a very detached view of things (including the professional art world) and he was a master of irony (Breton, 1972, p.86). He had the ability to deliberately exploit the absurd while appearing completely serious. These traits can be seen as contributing to the development of Dada, and later to Surrealism.

"Nude Descending a Staircase" (Collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art) was painted in 1912 and exhibited the following year in the Armory Show. It aroused immense curiosity and outrage and placed Duchamp in a position of influence among American painters (Canaday, 1959, p.469). When the artist arrived in New York in 1914, fleeing from the war in Europe, he found that he was already famous and reporters came to interview him. Duchamp returned to New York, again to escape war, in 1942. It was at this time that he helped organize, along with Andre Breton, the First Papers of

Surrealism exhibit (Jean, 1980, pp. 403-404).

Another important art hypotheses was instigated by Duchamp with the invention of the "readymade". The "readymade" was a manufactured object assigned the dignity of an art object through the context in which it was placed (Lynton, 1980, p.132). Duchamp appropriated a urinal and, placing it atop a pedestal, assigned it the title "Fountain" (Collection of The Museum of Modern Art, NYC). With this gesture he asserted the belief that art can be created through the power of context. A bicycle wheel mounted upside-down on a wooden stool is another example of a Duchamp readymade (Collection of The Museum of Modern Art, NYC). He was in many ways the ultimate Surrealist, maintaining his freedom, holding nothing sacred. His readymades call into question our ideas concerning value in art as a way to exalt the very private choices we make, choices which are accountable to no one. Duchamp's influence was wide-ranging because he did not hold to a particular style but connected the making of art to the living of life, (Kramer, 1973, pp. 247-249) a philosophy essential to the formation of American modernism.

This philosophy would be adopted by the young

Americans and would include an intense interest in psychology and psychoanalysis, especially an interest in the role of the unconscious in the making of art (Wechsler, 1976, p.51). Seeking a means to express certain universal truths, the American artists employed symbols and signs and myths, in methods similar to those of the Europeans. What evolved at this point was a new process for the making of art, a process that was based on personal expression and personal experience voiced within a universal concept.

Surrealism and Jackson Pollock

The artist who best exemplifies this aesthetic impulse is the American Abstract Expressionist, Jackson Pollock. Pollock's painting had a strong emotional content from the start. Although he began his career under the influence of the American scene painters, in particular Thomas Hart Benton, Pollock's work was never a commonplace interpretation. (See Pollock's works on paper, Circa 1935, Collection of The Museum of Modern Art) He quickly discovered the Mexican muralists Orozco and Siqueiros whose expressionism touched him. By the late 1930's Pollock was ripe for the Surrealist aesthetic and connected with both the symbolic imagery and with the

methods of automatism (Naifeh, 1989, p.341, 357). He, along with the other New York painters Rothko, Motherwell, Baziotes, used the automatic painting techniques of the Surrealists to reveal what they believed to be universal symbols that inhabited the inner mind.

Pollock took the Surrealists' automatic techniques to an extreme and by 1947 was producing his "drip" paintings. Pollock would place the unstretched, often unsized, canvas on the floor of his studio and, with paint in hand, he would move around and even across the canvas dripping, flinging, spotting the pigment in great gestures that involved his entire body (Film and photo documentation by Hans Namuth, Archives of American Art).

"When I am in my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It is only after a sort of 'get acquainted' period that I see what I have been about. I have no fears about making changes, destroying the image, etc., because the painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through. It is only when I lose contact with the painting that the result is a mess. Otherwise there is pure harmony, an easy give and take, and the painting comes out well." (Pollock, 1947-48, p.79),

The images were therefore produced by the movements and gestures of his entire body, not just his wrist and elbow. This method emphasized the process of painting as opposed to the finished product (Sandler, 1970, p.102). It registered the energy, drama, passion of the moment and forced the viewer to respond actively rather than as a passive observer. These paintings appeared revolutionary to the art public of the day for not only were they completely non-objective but they seemingly defied even the formal elements of art since there was no focal point, no apparent structure, and no planned composition (Example: "Autumn Rhythm", 1950, Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art). They required the viewer to possess information about and understanding of the painting process.

Pollock's interest in myth stemmed from the Surrealist aesthetic also and, like the emphasis on process, required the viewer to approach the painting informed. Pollock said in an interview (1944) "I accept the fact that the important painting of the last hundred years was done in France ... the fact that good European moderns are now here is very important, for they bring with them an understanding of the problems of modern

painting. I am particularly impressed with their concept of the source of art being the unconscious." (Pollock, 1944, p.14).

Pollock's friend John Graham, while exploring the role of the unconscious in art, identified two factors in primitive art: first, "the degree of freedom of access to one's unconscious mind in regard to observed phenomenon", and second, "an understanding of the possibilities of the plain operating space" which would permit "a spontaneous exercise of design and composition as opposed to the deliberate which is valueless." (Graham, 1943, p.236-37). Clearly, Jackson Pollock's methodology related to both of these factors. Pollock's ideas about primitive art and mythology were influenced also by Karl Jung and in fact Pollock was in therapy with a Jungian analyst from 1939 on (Naifeh, 1989, pp. 332-335).

Pollock and the other Americans differed from the European Surrealists in their orientation to Jung rather than Freud. Jung's publication, Symbols of Transformation (1956) for example, described close parallels between ancient myths and psychotic fantasies. Jung developed his theories through the use of history and mythology especially the history and mythology of

primitive cultures. He made the distinction between the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious which he defined as being those thoughts, feelings and memories shared by the group and which manifest themselves symbolically in myths. Jung explained human motivation in terms of a larger creative energy.

Aware of these ideas, Pollock used psychotherapy toward the invention of a new visual language (Schimmel, 1986, p.26). He lifted symbols and signs from other cultures and employed myths as a means to enter into deeper preconscious realms. Eventually the references became less specific and he came to depend on the act of painting rather than on the iconography to express these ideas. Painting became for Pollock a ritualistic act so that he illustrated, interpreted, and symbolized myths through the process rather than the image (Sandler, 1970, p.62). The content was mythic in spirit and intended to provoke in the viewer either ecstasy or anxiety. Pollock conceived the content of a painting as being action, free and dramatic.

These factors, the technical and poetic information contained in pure painting and the use of psychology, mythology, and history in the making of art, resulted in

work that was very difficult for the public to understand. (The role of museum education in American modernism is addressed in Chapter 6.) The new art often demanded specific knowledge such as a knowledge of Freudian or Jungian concepts as they were applied to visual art, a knowledge of mythology, an understanding of the poetry inherent in the painting process, an understanding of the basic elements of art and how they might be interpreted within the visual language.

In sum, American modernism required the viewer to be intellectually, sensually and emotionally cognitive of visual language. The new art forms being produced were not accessible on other levels, not accessible without specific knowledge and therefore potentially selective in audience. The regionalism that had dominated American art thus far in the century provided, through its narrative element, a point of entry for the man on the street, and provided also, through the realist style, a basis for judgement for even the untrained eye (i.e. Does the cornfield look like a cornfield?). Now Americans were faced with unrecognizable images executed in a fashion that had no relation to ordinary experience and were expected to respond, if not intellectually, at least on

a gut level. The reaction of the average American to modern art was often imbued with suspicion and, in some instances, with hostility (Life, August, 1949, pp. 42, 43).

While the new art posed problems amidst the American democratic culture because of its inaccessibility, it also satisfied certain democratic longings. This kind of painting focused on the individual, on the emotions and ideas of the maker. It was a celebration of American individualism and its practitioners became culture heroes (Naifeh, 1989, p. 595).

Again, Jackson Pollock is an excellent example of this phenomenon. Pollock had come out of Wyoming, he was strong and tough and projected the spirit of an American cowboy. His paintings referred to the rituals of American Indians and he compared himself to the sand painters of the West. The process he employed was athletic, it was far from any effeminate image Americans held about easel painting but appeared, on the contrary, quite masculine, vigorous, even wild.

Jackson Pollock's technique of painting was recorded both in still photographs and on moving film and was presented to the American people through the popular

press. Pollock became one of the most famous personalities of the day, a culture hero, a great American success story. Millions of Americans who would never actually see his paintings nor understand fully their history or inspiration, were nevertheless moved by the activity of this rebel Time magazine labeled "Jack the Dripper" (Eliot, December 26, 1949, p.29).

The photographs taken by the artist Hans Namuth capture Pollock in his studio (Photographs courtesy of Hans Namuth, Archives of American Art). We see the artist holding not a palette but a can of house paint in one hand while with a brush or stick in the other he applies the paint. The canvas is spread on the floor in front of him and he moves around it and across it in an aggressive manner. He is fully absorbed in the activity, not as a contemplative artist but as a man of action. In another Namuth photograph we see Pollock alone, a huge canvas serves as backdrop. He is dwarfed by his own creation and appears alienated.

These images succeeded in conjuring up in the American imagination a poignant vision of the artist as existential hero. "It seems to me", said Pollock "that the modern painter cannot express this age, the airplane,

the atom bomb, the radio, in the old forms of the Renaissance or of any other past culture ... the modern artist, it seems to me, is working and expressing an inner world ..." (Pollock/Wright, 1950, taped interview, Archives of American Art).

Pollock as offered up by the media satisfied the yearnings of a post-war generation who sought spontaneity and rebellion in a repressed, gray flannel world. The media had discovered the world of high art and had found the means of digesting it and converting reality into myth. By focusing on the activity of painting, the press avoided serious analysis of the finished product, they avoided addressing the role of the objects in the history of Western art. Furthermore, the photographs emphasized the artist more so than the art. Since the paintings reveal so little through reproduction, losing the qualities of color and texture, the personality of the artist was allowed to dominate. Pollock became a media hero, his image took on a dimension greater than that of his work and the first lessons in the business of marketing art were learned.

The Influence of The German Bauhaus

The second influence on the development of American

modernism was exerted by those transplanted artists, designers and architects from the German Bauhaus. During World War II the Nazis forced the closing of the Bauhaus School of Design and key faculty emigrated to the United States. This period of emigration is, in general, considered to be the most significant because, unlike the mass emigrations of the 19th century, it did not consist of representatives of politics, business or unskilled labor. Those entering the United States during the thirties were the representatives of cultural life - humanists, scientists and artists.

It was in 1937, that Walter Gropius, Herbert Bayer, Josef Albers, Marcel Breuer, Mies van der Rohe and others from the Bauhaus arrived in New York City. Walter Gropius was made head of the school of architecture at Harvard University and Marcel Breuer joined him there. Josef Albers began teaching at Black Mountain College in North Carolina and later moved to Yale University where he became chairman of the department of art. Mies van der Rohe accepted the position of dean of architecture at the Armour Institute in Chicago, which merged with the Lewis Institute to become the Illinois Institute of Technology (Arnason, 1969, p.437).

Within a short period of time the course of architecture and design in the United States would change due, in part to the buildings these men designed, but mainly to the educational impact they exerted. In his introductory essay to the catalog of the Bauhaus collection at the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University, Charles Kuhn writes: "For a brief time there were plans to devote a section of the collection to the influence of Bauhaus instruction concepts on American institutions. It was soon realized that Bauhaus influence was so widespread that it would be out of the question to document it completely." (Kuhn, 1971, p.8).

The influence of the Bauhaus on American design began with Walter Gropius, the architect, influencing other architects. Gropius came from a family of artists and architects and stands as a leader in the modern movement. He brought architecture into the twentieth century through the use of industrial materials and techniques. This influence produced designs that were austere, rational and intelligent (Whitford, 1988, p.33).

Gropius also wished to see architecture play a part in resolving social needs and to this end he designed numerous working class housing complexes (Gropius, 1984,

p.126). He promoted standardization and prefabrication and the adaptation of modern materials to modern social needs.

Gropius called for a unity of the visual arts, crafts and design under the primacy of architecture (Gropius, 1984, p.125). Painters, weavers, ceramicists, graphic designers, all artists and craftsmen alike were taught to face the problems of architecture. Architecture was for Gropius "the ultimate art form in which beauty and utility, design and structure could be combined. Buildings were conceived not merely as functional necessities but as experimental answers serving psychologically based needs." (Kuhn, 1971, p.14). The idea of controlling an environment through an understanding of the psychological impact of color, light, form, space, and integrating that environment through the implementation of those simple elements is the essence of Bauhaus design.

As the founder and director of the Bauhaus School of Design Gropius made his influence felt on the broad scale. Architects Louis Skidmore, Louis Kahn and Edward Durell Stone all made the pilgrimage to Germany early on as did Museum of Modern Art director, Alfred Barr (see

pp. 304-309). The Museum of Modern Art's 1932 "International Exhibit of Modern Architecture" featured photographs and models of the work of Walter Gropius (Hitchcock, 1932 exhibit catalog, Museum Archives). Before World War I, Gropius executed two key works in which skeleton and skin were separated into the curtain wall formulation and aesthetically exploited for the first time (Gropius, 1984, pp. 20, 21). The Bauhaus building at Dessau was designed in 1925 and was a classic with rectangular forms, flat roof, steel and glass, the pure expression of modernist thought (Gropius' drawings and models, photographs, 1984, pp. 398-408). Gropius wielded influence as an educator and a man of ideas. Because the Bauhaus was a philosophy and not simply a building, an institute, an art school, it could be transported to American soil and planted in American minds. As Ludwig Mies van der Rohe said: "The Bauhaus was not an institution with a clear program ... it was an idea and Gropius formulated the idea with great precision ... the fact that it was an idea, I think, is the cause of this enormous influence the Bauhaus had on every progressive school around the globe. You cannot do that with organization, you cannot do that with propaganda.

Only an idea spreads so far." (Wingler, 1984, p.572).

Because the Bauhaus philosophy emphasized the design of the total environment, the building, the interior space and all the objects, both functional and aesthetic, it touched many aspects of American design. Philip Johnson who studied with Gropius at Harvard University stated that the discipline of modern architecture had become so broad that there were no longer sub-categories such as decorative arts (Johnson, 1933, n.p.). He also believed that all design should follow the principles of modern architecture, that it should be objective and logical, that it should employ geometric simplicity in line and form and that the materials used should be appropriate and true to their nature. Surfaces should be smooth, ornamentation should be avoided, form should be determined by the function (Johnson, 1933, n.p.).

The principles of modernism were taught by the Bauhaus faculty now in residence in America's art schools and universities. At Yale University, Josef Albers continued his Vorkurs (preliminary course). Albers conducted experiments with various materials. "We have first to investigate what a material can do ... economy of form depends on the material we are working with ...

notice that you will often have more by doing less." (Kuhn, 1971, p.30). Reduce and simplify and let the material reveal itself and preserve its inherent qualities.

An understanding of the nature of materials was coupled with an understanding of the form they might assume and economy was stressed all around. Clean lines, no frills and appropriate materials would provide the best design. Perhaps the most obvious example of this is the now classic Breuer chair (Collection of The Museum of Modern Art, NYC). Marcel Breuer epitomized Bauhaus design by re-thinking the common chair in the light of new materials and technology (Whitford, 1988, p.173). Breuer's chair is practical, comfortable and light with an economy of material and line. A salute to the Gropius slogan "Art and Technology - A New Unity."

Gropius himself stated shortly before his death that the importance of the Bauhaus could be found in the "attitude intended to provide the art forms of our environment with an objective method of work and thought developed from elementary roots ..." (Kuhn, 1971, p.25). Elementary roots: art and design reduced to their basic elements of line, form and color and these elements then

analyzed and categorized. Albers' color theory is an excellent example of the reductive, analytical process. In his own paintings, "Homage to the Square" series in particular, we see rigid geometric compositions investigating color relationships. The structure is composed of three or four squares superimposed upon one another with the bottom, side and top margins in a 1:2:3 ratio (ie: Homage to the Square: Apparition, 1959, Collection of the Guggenheim Museum). Each color reacts with the others affecting spatial relationships, hues and sizes. Albers' color theory is still the predominant method of instruction today in American art schools.

The Reductive Trend in American Art

The principles of Bauhaus modernism became pervasive in the American art world, in the classrooms and in the artists' studios; in the galleries and the museums. Bauhaus faculty and their disciples dominated the sixties' art world inside and out. On the "outside", Marcel Breuer designed the new Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. The exterior design is not in the International Style, but in keeping with modernist taste, Breuer's design provides a vertical stack of loft-like

spaces, pure white and unobstructed, ideal for viewing works of art. This was the perfect gallery, the pristine space that shut out worldly distractions.

On the "inside" or private world where the individual artist resides and resolves the problems of personal concepts, expressions, and aesthetics, the principles of Bauhaus modernism began to shape the forms of painting and sculpture. Considering the major art "movements" of the period (geometric and "hard edge" painting, minimalist sculpture and Pop Art) we can see the trend toward the reductive, the "truth in materials" dictum, and the logical, objective approach to creating art.

American painter, Frank Stella, is said to have been influenced early in his career by the Abstract Expressionist Hans Hoffman. In 1958, however, Stella turned from Abstract Expressionism to a drastically reduced and severely ordered style that remained at the forefront of American painting through the 1960's (Lucie-Smith, 1980, p.22). Adopting an uncompromising approach to abstraction, he first painted concentric rectangles of white line that echoed the frame of the canvas against a black background (Example: "Die Fahne

Hoch", 1959, enamel on canvas, Collection of The Whitney Museum of American Art). When questioned about this shift by Bruce Glaser in a WBAI-FM, New York broadcast in February, 1964, Stella replied: "There's always been a trend toward simpler painting and it was bound to happen one way or another. When painting gets complicated, like Abstract Expressionism, or Surrealism, there's going to be someone who's not painting complicated paintings, someone who's trying to simplify ... You're always related to something and I'm related to geometric, simpler painting." (Battcock, 1968, p.149).

Fellow artist and friend, Donald Judd, participated in the same radio interview. While his art took a sculptural form and fell neatly into the newly defined category called "Minimalism", Judd shared with Stella the same concern with simple, geometric forms and reductive tendencies. "We're getting rid of the things that people used to think were essential to art." (Battcock, 1968, p.159).

Minimalism was the first sculptural movement to exclude all excess and redundancy creating some of the most austere work in the history of art. The Minimalists used industrial materials and processes (art and

technology) and paid special attention to the physical properties of materials and the materials' expressive, inherent qualities (Smagula, 1983, p.135). This emphasis on industrial materials and techniques produced an art that was objective, logical and intellectual, an art that responded to the urban industrial environment.

Donald Judd, who wrote art criticism prior to devoting himself completely to the making of art, composed a widely circulated essay on "Specific Objects" in which he expressed his preference for a literal use of materials, space and concepts (Judd, 1967, Archives of American Art). Judd's forms were concepts such as "cube"; his materials were industrial steel and aluminum and were machined to perfection leaving no indication of the human hand; his art occupied real space deliberately dividing and compartmentalizing the exhibition room (Example: "Untitled", 1965, galvanized iron and aluminum, Collection of The Whitney Museum of American Art). This literalism was clearly influenced by the Bauhaus philosophy which demanded truth and pragmatism.

The greater emphasis on the intellectual content of art can also be viewed as a Bauhaus influence since the new generation of American artists were trained, not in

technical art schools, but in universities. Many of these artists were both writing and talking about their work and collaborating with critics who could articulate the new ideas. (Carl Andre, Mel Bochner, Dan Flavin, Brian O'Doherty, Robert Smithson, Robert Morris, and Sol Lewitt are a few artists who published their ideas.) Attempting to force the art audience to an awareness beyond the particular art object and to obliterate confusion and misunderstanding about their work, the Minimalists wrote at length about their ideas, their influences and the forms they found. Here was a difficult, highly intellectual, not particularly charming form of art.

Minimalism proved to be even less accessible than Abstract Expressionism even with the volumes of essays published regarding it. These obscure references to Gestalt psychology and the writings of the German philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein were lost on the average American. Furthermore, unlike Abstract Expressionist paintings, Minimalist sculpture did not translate well to the popular press. Even heroes like Jackson Pollock were hard to find since most of the work was conceived by the artist and then fabricated by a hired craftsman.

The Literal Trend in American Art

Another art movement coming at about the same time satisfied the needs of the mass media and in fact mirrored the images created by and for that culture. Pop Art held as its main protagonist the media manipulator and star personality, Andy Warhol. Working in both painting and sculpture, Warhol lifted his images from the commercial world of newspapers, magazines, advertizing. There is in the imagery of Pop Art a simplicity necessary for the quick communication required by the commercial world. Warhol was a master of the quick fix, applying the techniques of the advertizing industry to the making of high art. He related to Marcel Duchamp's readymades as he appropriated the images of Campbell's soup cans and Brillo boxes to make paintings and sculpture (Collection of The Whitney Museum of American Art). He well understood the success Jackson Pollock achieved as an art celebrity in the popular journals, and therefore orchestrated for himself a public life akin to that of a movie star seen at all the "right" parties and openings (Rosenberg, 1975, pp. 98-108). If Americans viewed his art with suspicion and stood convinced that he was exploiting the galleries, museums and collectors, that

was, in the end, acceptable. It made Warhol one of the people and they smiled while he took the money from the rich, from the fools who praised the emperor's new clothes.

What ties the work of Warhol to that of Stella and Judd is first of all the objective approach and secondly the need for an art context. The paintings of readymade images and machinelike reality were appropriated from mass culture and produced by commercial silk screening techniques. These depersonalized works needed to be removed from the commercial world in order to convey their full impact. It was in that white walled haven for art exhibition that Campbell's soup cans became art.

The literal qualities shared by Pop Art, Minimalism and the "new" geometric painting caused this art to require a segregated space, away from the urban environment that produced it. "The ideal gallery subtracts from the art work all cues that interfere with the fact that it is 'art'. The work is isolated from everything that would detract from its own evaluation of itself. This gives the space a presence possessed by other spaces where conventions are preserved through the repetition of a closed system of values. Some of the

sanctity of the church, the formality of the courtroom, the mystique of the experimental laboratory joins with chic design to produce a unique chamber of aesthetics. So powerful are the perceptual fields of force within this chamber that, once outside it, art can lapse into secular status." (O'Doherty, 1986, p.14).

Minimalism, Pop Art and sixties' geometric painting were vulnerable to a decline to worldly or secular status once removed from the gallery space because of the literal qualities they shared. In the case of Pop Art the imagery was literally that of the world of commerce and advertising. Geometric painting addressed the literal qualities of abstraction and in particular, Stella's shaped canvases ("Conway", 1966, fluorescent alkyd and epoxy paint, Collection of The Whitney Museum of American Art) bent or cut the painting's edge according to the internal logic of the composition, making the viewer keenly aware of the painting as a real object with no illusion of space or depth. Minimalist sculpture was exactly what it appeared to be and made no reference to anything outside itself. Judd's aluminum cubes were actual aluminum cubes, containing no illusion or metaphor. Placed in a secular environment they would

easily have been absorbed by that world.

Conclusion

So it would be that the art propagated by modernism would require a museum designed by modernists. The philosophy of modernism produced in high art work that was visually difficult, intellectually demanding and for the general public, inaccessible. That same philosophy, when applied to solving the problems of exhibiting this art, found solutions that aided the population. The same demands of truth and pragmatism that removed the art from the public realm provided, when applied to architecture and design, democratic solutions (Gay, 1976, p.169). In other words, while modern art was elitist, modern architecture was really democratic. Modernist architecture and design as it was applied to the American art museum was meant to provide a setting for the art and to provide a practical, systematic, instructional space that would, according to Bauhaus law, fulfill its' function. (For the development of the first Museum of Modern Art building, see "Barr As Modernist", Chapter 8.)

The result was a building that considered practical

issues such as traffic flow and lighting; considered human requirements such as restaurants and rest rooms; considered what had become the principal concern, the principal function of the American art museum: the education of the masses. Modernism's architects, teachers and artists, through an analysis of form, material and structure, had altered the art America produced and altered also the context in which it was viewed.

The exhibitions of modernist art strove to be informative and interesting and were frequently coupled with publications explaining the work and its historical precedents. (For example, see "Barr As Populist", Chapter 8.) Designers tried to attract and hold the attention of the general public through the pre-exhibition publicity as well as the actual installation. The museum hoped to sustain that interest by way of related lectures and tours and related publications available in the museum shop. (See also "Barr As Capitalist", Chapter 8.) They also hoped to sustain the visit by supplying the comforts afforded by restaurants and members' lounges. All this grew from the conviction that the art museum was not intended for the few but for the enlightenment and

education of the masses.

In America, where democratic ideals were held high and education was not only every person's right but also a necessity for the country's cultural and technological advance, the potential of the museum as a center for public enlightenment was finally being recognized (Vonier, 1988, p.26). The American art museum began to adopt service to the community as a goal and modernist design could provide a logical, instructional focus for the entry of the public into the esoteric world of modern art. (Arnason, 1969, p.481).

Edward Larrabee Barnes, the architect of numerous American art museums including the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts spoke to this issue as he discussed his design for the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis: "The problem in museum design, I feel, is to focus on the art, and on the way people go through the museum, and not on making an architectural monument. I am dedicated to the idea of anonymous white spaces. Usually you think of museums like the Metropolitan, with an enormous Grand Central Station hall, with no art in it, and then galleries beyond it. At the Walker, you are immediately caught up in a

succession of white rooms ... The idea is to get people involved immediately with whatever the museum has ... you're immediately caught up in it, and are thinking of the art.

"I feel definitely that the rooms themselves have to represent calm, well-proportioned spaces. The sequence and the sense of flow must work, and the way you move through it must be graceful. I think its a very difficult thing to explain how you can do architecture with a strong central idea, with just as self-centered an idea as any building, and at the same time have that idea opt for this function of bringing out these various shows which go through it. It's not just an anonymous building." (Diamonstein, 1980, p.18).

In conclusion, we see that the modern art museum and the modern art object came to exist in a symbiotic relationship. Most of American modernist art is dependent on the context of the gallery space to fully realize its meaning. Growing out of the philosophies of European Surrealism and the German Bauhaus, much of the art produced since World War II required the viewer to possess information about psychology, mythology, art history, and a specific knowledge of visual language

(Larson, 1979, n.p.). Because of its literal quality, its reductive tendencies and its basic abstract nature, it also required the modern gallery space for exhibition. The exhibition space as designed by the modern architect is, in turn, dependent on the art to fulfill its function. The modern art museum cannot stand like a palace of culture, aloof and passive, but rather is charged with a very specific task. The modern art museum in a democratic society is charged with the pragmatic presentation of the enigmatic object.

CHAPTER 6

Art For The Masses

A Study of Educational Practices in American
Art Museums

Introduction

Education, as viewed by Americans, is a pillar of democracy, the means to opportunity and advancement for the general population, advancement on intellectual, economic, and social levels. American museums have long been involved in educational pursuits and many were established with the education of the public as a main mission. (For the historical overview, See Chapter 2.) Art museums in particular were viewed as a means to better citizens: uplifting morals, communicating history, and teaching aesthetics (Hoving, 1984, p.50). Key people in key museums wrote and taught their ideas regarding the educational mission of American art museums. John Cotton Dana, director of The Newark Museum in New Jersey from 1909 to 1929, was a firm believer in the museum as an institution of learning, an institution with exhibits and programs made available to all the people. His ideas were widely published, studied, and practiced (Alexander, 1983, p.379). Benjamin Ives Gilman is generally considered to have invented the gallery talk at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, a method now standard in art museums (Gilman, 1918, p.40). Thomas Munro, Curator of Education at the Cleveland Museum of Art

during the 1930's, 40's, and 50's, conducted research regarding learning in museums and was known for his concern for teaching the general population while maintaining high standards (Munro, 1952, p.2).

Whether by chance or design, American art museums took the lead in educational theory and techniques (Wittlin, 1970, p.151). Whole departments for education sprang up in museums across the country. Perhaps more than any other internal force in museum administration, the growth of educational programming reflected the democratic concerns of the museum staff. Education was seen as necessary for the fulfillment of the art museum's democratic mission (Lilla, 1985, p.90). As a way to understand the role of education in the art museum in the American democratic culture, we will look first to the general art museum and then examine one educational program for modern art.

We will begin with a brief history of education at the Cleveland Museum, considered the leader in this field, and then look to a recent survey of four general art museums in the North-East. The comparative survey includes a questionnaire, site visits, interviews, and a review of museum records, including budgets. Education

at the general art museum can then be compared to education at the modern art museum by a close look at one contemporary art exhibit at New York's Museum of Modern Art and the educational effort which accompanied it.

Model: The Cleveland Museum

The Cleveland Museum of Art has long been recognized for its educational programs which are considered a benchmark for American art museums. From the time of its founding in 1916, the Cleveland Museum, reviewing the art of all ages and cultures, had an educational department and a method for reaching the community (Munro, 1952, p.18).

The collections of the Cleveland Museum include one of the finest oriental collections in the western world; a medieval collection that ranks with the leading museums of Germany, France, and England; an excellent assemblage of European and American paintings from the Middle Ages to the present including outstanding collections of Renaissance, Baroque, and 17th century Dutch painting, 19th century American landscape, and Impressionist and Post-impressionist works.

Today the Cleveland Museum offers studio and art history classes for young people and adults and lectures for the public by museum curators and visiting scholars. The museum also offers advanced placement courses to Cleveland area high school students and, in conjunction with Case Western Reserve University, undergraduate and graduate courses in art history. The outreach division of the museum designs and installs exhibits drawn from the museum collections in schools and libraries throughout greater Cleveland, and also in galleries in the inner city and in the suburbs. (Unless otherwise noted, all data is compiled from the Cleveland Museum Annual Reports, Museum Archives.) All of this is in addition to the regularly scheduled gallery talks and tours. The museum also publishes many books and catalogs, slides and reproductions, and a scholarly bulletin ten times a year, available by subscription.

The Cleveland Museum set down a plan of action beginning with the children and moving on to various educational levels (secondary school, university, graduate) and to adults seeking a serious study of art or a casual "cultural experience".

In a 1952 publication on the museum's educational

programs, Thomas Munro, Curator of Education, wrote: "The department of education is charged with carrying on a complex program of instruction and guidance throughout the year. This includes work with children and adults; with schools, organized groups, and individuals. Some of it is on a popular, elementary level, to convey the fundamentals of art appreciation to a large public; some is on a level of more advanced study, research, and scholarship through post-graduate courses and publication. A constant effort is made to preserve high standards, even while reaching a large audience, and thus to show that mass education does not have to involve a lowering of quality." (Munro, 1952, p.5). The museum's conscious desire to make art available to a large public; and its concrete commitment to this principle through the development of programs early on, resulted in a highly developed education department by 1950, including twenty-three full-time staff members, thirty part-time, and eleven volunteers. (Cleveland Museum, Annual Report, 1950, Museum Archives).

It is important to note that the education department was aware, from the very beginning, of the possible pit falls inherent in a program geared toward a

wide and diverse audience. The danger in developing a program so democratic in its scope was that the content would be reduced to the lowest common denominator. One way Thomas Munro found to help insure a maintenance of high standards, was the two-track system of the popular program (the fundamentals of art appreciation) and the scholarly program (advanced research and publication) (Munro, 1952, p.6). This was based on the belief, or at least the hope, that the staff would constantly be reminded of the true mission of the education department, which was to educate, not entertain the public and always strive to raise the level of understanding of art.

Munro acknowledged that a visit to the Cleveland Museum was, for most people, a "leisure activity", but one, he maintained, which could be rendered permanently valuable. "In learning to perceive a great variety of complex forms and subtle qualities of line, shape, and color, one acquires visual powers which carry over into daily life. They intensify awareness and enjoyment, not only of art itself, but of nature and of life." (Munro, 1952, p.8). And on a broader historical note he added: "A study of the visual arts contributes greatly to the general education of the student. They are one of our

principal means of understanding the civilizations of the past and the cultural trends of our own day. It is well known that art expresses its age as well as the personality of the individual artist. But it is not an easy task to interpret the different attitudes, beliefs, and interests which are thus expressed - those, for example, which distinguish the Greek or Chinese culture from our own." (Munro, 1952, p.8). The task of interpretation would be aided by the education department because, as Munro pointed out, the casual observer could not grasp the complex, subtle, or deeper meanings of art without guidance.

Track two, the scholarship within the museum, mainly involved the curatorial staff. According to Munro's plan the curators and librarians would communicate their knowledge and judgement to the education department which would, in turn, communicate with the public. The curatorial research might also result in publications which would reach a wide audience.

In addition to this, the Cleveland Museum established a relationship with Case Western Reserve University and its art department which allowed for university students to conduct research within the museum

and provided classrooms for courses conducted by the university (Newsom et al, 1978, p.547). Also, some members of the museum staff served as members of the university faculty. Munro urged the further development of joint publications on art: "through articles, monographs, and books of discussion and scholarship on the highest level, of a permanent value commensurate with that of the museum's tangible possessions." (Munro, 1952, p.16).

Another noteworthy development was the affiliation of the Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism with the Cleveland Museum. Although the publication was owned by the American Society for Aesthetics, and the museum had no legal or financial connection to the publisher, the Journal was edited at the museum (Museum Archives).

All of this, plus a flow of visiting scholars invited to use the collections in research and present their findings in public lectures, contributed to the image of an institution filled with great cultural wealth in the form of objects and knowledge (Lee, 1984, p.58). Combined with the more popular programs of the education department, the image of the Cleveland Museum was that of a dynamic and beneficial agency in the cultural life of

the community, reaching out to engage the use and enjoyment of the whole public (Lee, 1983, p. 73).

The Cleveland Museum's reputation as a leader in art museum education is founded on a strong philosophical base and implemented by a large staff generously endowed. The Cleveland Museum recognized the importance of education from the beginning, articulated it better than any other museum by mid-century, and thus became the benchmark by which other programs were measured. With this brief history in mind, let us now consider current educational efforts at other art museums.

Education in the General Art Museum: A Comparative Survey

Four general art museums located in the North-East were surveyed in an effort to determine the developments in public education programs over a twenty year period, including the relationship between these programs and the size of museum staff and budget. The Worcester Art Museum in Worcester, Massachusetts, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City were selected to represent a broad range in size, staff, holdings, budget, and public served.

The survey commenced with a questionnaire (Appendix V) mailed in January, 1990. This was followed by a visit to each site to review budgets and interview staff regarding related policies. The following analysis is based on information gathered on site through observation, interviews, and research of the museums' records, including their budgets.

Worcester Art Museum, the collections of which span 50 centuries of art, was established in 1896 as a private non-profit institution. Egyptian, classical, Far Eastern, and the art of the Renaissance are represented. European paintings range from 14th century Italian to 17th century Dutch to 20th century Cubism. There are pre-Columbian and American collections and about 3,000 Japanese prints. The collection of contemporary works of art is growing steadily.

In 1970, a major addition to the museum, the Higgins Education wing, was built to house studios for students of all ages including a three year professional school. (Museum Archives). Recently, another addition has provided 20,000 sq. ft. of space for the museum. Since 1970 the museum staff has grown from thirty-five to sixty, more than half of whom are professional staff.

MUSEUM SURVEY

COMPARATIVE GROWTH PATTERNS IN BUDGET AND STAFF 1970 - 1980 - 1990

	1970	1980	1990
Worcester Art Museum			
Budget	\$ 677,850.	\$1,356,000.	\$ 4,000,000.
Staff (Full/Part Time)	66	102	135
Volunteers	175	N/A	500
Philadelphia Museum			
Budget	\$3,300,000.	\$7,000,000.	\$16,000,000.
Staff (Full/Part Time)	N/A	181	211
Volunteers	150	180	410
Whitney Museum			
Budget	\$1,377,392.	\$4,868,512.	\$11,087,102.
Staff (Full/Part Time)	114	135	179
Volunteers	N/A	39	81
Herbert F. Johnson Museum			
Budget	\$ 300,000.	\$ 750,000.	\$1,500,000.
Staff (Full/Part Time)	22	45	41
Volunteers	0	1	2

Figure 4

The museum reports 25 full-time employees holding B.A. degrees, eight with M.A. degrees, and three with Ph.D. degrees. Personnel are reported to belong to all professional organizations, to attend professional conferences and to continue professional training through workshops and courses since, as the Deputy Director says, the museum "continues to provide and maintain a commitment to professionalism." (Questionnaire, Appendix V).

One striking statistic at the Worcester Art Museum is the dramatic increase in volunteers. (Figure 4) The museum reports a volunteer force of 175 in 1970 and 500 in 1990, an increase of 188%. The museum budget leaped from \$677,850 in 1970 to \$4,000,000 in 1990. With the increase in staff, space, volunteers and budget, it is surprising to note the decrease in the public served. (Figure 5) Attendance declined from 150,000 in 1970, to 120,000 in 1980, to 110,000 in 1990. While much of the budget, space and staff increases go toward the support of the museum school, the volunteer force is within the museum itself. The museum now has an outreach program servicing local schools which is largely volunteer and also offers more tours of the museum guided by

MUSEUM SURVEY

COMPARATIVE GROWTH PATTERNS IN EXHIBITION SPACE, BUDGET, ATTENDANCE

	1970	1980	1990
Worcester Art Museum			
Space	70,000 sq ft	70,000 sq ft	90,000 sq ft
Budget	\$677,850.	\$1.3 Million	\$4 Million
Attendance	150,000	120,000	110,000
Philadelphia Museum			
Space	259,000 sq ft	268,000 sq ft	268,000 sq ft
Budget	\$3.3 Million	\$7 Million	\$16 Million
Attendance	783,562*	405,691	667,997
Whitney Museum			
Space	23,100 sq ft	23,100 + 5,000 (branch)	23,100 + 19,100 (4 branches)
Budget	\$1.4 Million	\$4.9 Million	\$11 Million
Attendance	N/A	514,413	983,997
Herbert F. Johnson Museum			
Space	N/A	22,000 sq ft	22,000 sq ft
Budget	\$300,000	\$750,000	\$1.5 Million
Attendance	23,757	80,086	77,656

*Figure reflects attendance at Van Gogh exhibit:
410,000 visitors, highest attendance ever recorded.

Figure 5

volunteers. While the number of tours increased, however, the total number of people remained substantially the same. In other words, the tours contained fewer participants. For example, the number of school groups increased 152% from 254 in 1970 to 640 in 1990, but the number of school children serviced within those groups increased by less than 2,000 over the same period, just 2% of the total attendance. The number of adult groups being served increased by 138%, going from 99 groups in 1970 to 236 groups in 1990, but the actual number of individuals in those groups increased by less than 700.

Another dramatic increase in the number of volunteers occurred at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Like Worcester, the Philadelphia Museum's treasures come from all parts of the world and range in time from the 1st century to the 20th. Its collections of Far Eastern art and Italian Renaissance are particularly strong. Medieval European art occupies the second floor and there is an Armory of 15th and 16th century German, Italian and English arms and armor. The museum is rich in modern works, thanks in part to the Arensberg collection, which includes the largest group of Brancusi sculpture in

America and galleries of master works by Marcel Duchamp. Philadelphia is a large museum with 250,000 sq. ft. and a budget of \$16 million (up from \$3.3 million in 1970). Philadelphia's exhibition space, personnel and annual attendance figures reflect a slow, steady growth over the past twenty years as might be expected. The extreme increase in the budget should therefore be explained. In 1986, the Philadelphia Museum undertook a major capital campaign, the Landmark Renewal Fund, with the ambitious goal of raising \$50 million in private support over a five year period (Philadelphia, Annual Report, 1986, Museum Archives). Of this amount, \$30 million will be allocated for endowment, to build a capital base capable of generating income for operations. Another \$15 million will go toward building repairs and improvements and the remaining \$5 million will assist with "increasing operating costs during the campaign period." In other words, it costs money to raise money. A review of the annual report shows increases in gifts, endowment and trust fund income and an increase in revenue from the sale of art objects amounting to \$1,393,928 in 1989 over the \$47,496 gained two years earlier (Philadelphia, Annual Report, 1989, Museum Archives).

The dramatic increase in volunteers at Philadelphia can be compared to Worcester (Figure 4) and, like Worcester, these new forces are used in educational programs. The number of volunteers is recorded as 150 in 1970, 180 in 1980, then more than doubling to 410 by 1990. This dramatic increase of 173% is comparable to Worcester's 188% increase. And, like Worcester, the volunteer force provides lectures and tours of museum exhibits. Over the twenty year period examined, lectures increased 900%, tours increased 79%. Also, like Worcester, the number of individuals being served is not in proportion to the phenomenal increase in lectures and tours. (Figure 5) The Philadelphia Museum reports the number of individuals being served by these services as increasing from 8,181 in 1970 to 9,680 in 1990. The numbers reported by both the Worcester Museum and the Philadelphia Museum indicate more and more volunteers presenting more and more lectures and tours for basically the same size audience. This curious development will be further addressed later.

These two museums, Philadelphia and Worcester, can be seen in sharp contrast to two other large museums in the North-East, The Whitney Museum of American Art in New

York City and the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

The Herbert F. Johnson Museum records only two volunteers assisting a paid staff of 41 (Figure 4). The museum, named for its prime supporter Herbert Johnson of Johnson's Wax, was designed by I.M. Pei and is a bold concept of rectangular shapes placed high on a rise overlooking Lake Cayuga. The poured-in-place concrete building houses a broad collection particularly strong in 19th and 20th century American painting and Asian ceramics from China, Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia. The museum exists primarily as a cultural resource for the Cornell University students but does offer lectures and tours for visitors from the community. These are limited, as one might guess, knowing there is virtually no use of volunteers. The lack of a volunteer force is a significant indicator because, as we have seen at both Philadelphia and Worcester, volunteers are synonymous with educational programs.

Educational programs at Cornell's museum are in the hands of the professional staff and it is reasonable to assume that at a university museum the staff's focus is mainly on research. The museum is, however, a cultural

center for Ithaca, an upper New York State town containing no other art museum and with no art resources in the greater region. The annual attendance at the Johnson Museum is reported at a healthy 77,656 for the 1989-90 season (Figure 5). This raises the question of why there is no attempt to develop an educational program through the engagement of volunteers. At this point, let us note that the Herbert F. Johnson Museum, alone among the four large museums being discussed, does not charge admission.

The Whitney Museum of American Art is comparable in size at 23,100 sq.ft. to the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of 22,000 sq. ft. Designed by the renowned Bauhaus architect, Marcel Breuer, the Whitney is located on a prime corner in Manhattan, Madison Avenue at 75th Street. One should not be deceived by its diminutive size, for the Whitney Museum is a powerhouse of influence on and beyond the world of American art. Although its physical size is comparable to the Herbert F. Johnson Museum, its budget is almost ten times that museum's amount. Compared to the Philadelphia Museum, the Whitney building is less than 10% the size of Philadelphia but its budget is 67% that of Philadelphia and its staff is almost 75%

of the number of personnel at Philadelphia. (Figure 5)

The Whitney was founded in 1930 by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, the daughter of the railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt. It has been at its present location since 1966. Dedicated to American art of all periods and in all media, the Whitney pays special attention to contemporary American art as its Biennial Exhibition and Lobby Gallery shows attest. It also runs an active film and video program.

As a way of expanding its exhibitions and influence, the Whitney moved beyond its walls to "branch" museums set up in the lobbies of corporations. A plan for the expansion of the Madison Avenue facility is in the works but, in the meantime, branch museums serve the purpose. The first branch was established by 1980 and by 1990, the Whitney could boast four branches funded by corporations for a total of 19,100 additional sq. feet: The Whitney Downtown at Federal Reserve Plaza (funded by IBM and Park Tower Realty); The Whitney at Equitable Center (funded by Equitable Insurance Co.); The Whitney at Philip Morris (funded by Philip Morris); The Whitney at Fairfield (headquarters of Champion International).

These four branches, while expanding the exhibition

space by 19,100 sq.ft., resulted in a meager show of increase in personnel, from 135 in 1980 to 140 in 1990. (Figure 4) This is explained in part by the fact that the corporations supply the maintenance and security for these spaces, and also by the museum's use of graduate student interns in curatorial roles. It should also be noted here that the educational programs at the branch museum sites are not comparable to the usual museum offerings.

The Whitney Downtown, for example, which houses a program of changing exhibitions, provides a gallery talk only on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 12:30. The same is true of the Whitney Museum at Philip Morris which presents changing exhibits in both its indoor sculpture court and adjacent gallery, and the Whitney in Fairfield County which also presents changing exhibits. The Whitney Museum at Equitable Center has two galleries, one for long-term installations of works from the permanent collection, the other for temporary exhibits. Equitable offers a gallery talk each weekday at 12:30. All four branches with their mid-day lectures, seem to be providing a service for the host corporation employees rather than an aggressive outreach program to educate the

community. The role of the corporation in the American museum will be examined in Chapter 7.

As a means of surveying the educational relationships of art museums to their public and assessing the meaning and motivation of such relationships, two indicators have been identified. The first indicator is the number of people served by a museum. Is the museum fulfilling its democratic mission to provide educational opportunities to the general population? (Garfield, 1990, p.92). The second indicator is the number and role of the volunteers in the museum because the strength of the volunteer staff is indicative of the strength of the educational program.

The research conducted in the four museums profiled indicated a steady attendance or a slight increase in attendance in three of the four museums. Only the Whitney Museum indicated a dramatic increase in attendance, (from about one-half million visitors to almost one million visitors per year over a ten year period) and this is clearly due to the development of four branch museums housed at four corporate sites. What is of importance, or at least interest, is the unprecedented increase in educational program offerings

at both the Worcester Museum and the Philadelphia Museum. While Philadelphia reported a 75% increase in tours, and Worcester reported more than doubling its number from 353 tours to 876, neither museum showed an increase in the number of visitors served. So while the research showed increases in the museums' budget, staff, and educational programs, no remarkable increase in the number of public served by these programs can be documented.

The second indicator selected is the number of volunteers. Volunteers are traditionally employed within educational programs and, in fact, the numbers cited here reflect increases in educational staff. Of the four museums profiled in this report, two use volunteer docents extensively. Philadelphia and Worcester reported increases by 173% and 188% respectively in the number of volunteers over a twenty year period (1970-1990). These figures reflect the increase in programs, lectures, and tours, while underscoring the question of numbers of visitors served. What we see connected to the increase in volunteer and paid staff, is a growth in educational programs, and overall operating budget.

The prime motive for educational programming must be viewed as a didactic, democratic impulse set in motion by

MUSEUM SURVEY

COMPARISON OF INCOME FROM ADMISSION AND VOLUNTEER STAFF - 1990

	Percent of Budget From Admissions	Percent of Volunteers Within Total Staff
Worcester Art Museum	Approximately 25%	89.2%
Philadelphia Museum	Approximately 25%	66%
Whitney Museum	Approximately 25%	31.1%
Herbert F. Johnson Museum	0%	4.6%

Figure 6

museums were surveyed and each of these reported few volunteers, feeble educational endeavors, and budgets not dependent on earned income. University museums, generally subsidized by the university, exist for the cultural enrichment of their students and as a teaching resource for the faculty. In a sense, they are a single track in the Cleveland two-track system. They provide a place for scholarship but have no need for the more popular approach.

Another indication that there is a relationship between educational programs and admission charges can be found in a comparison between the Whitney Museum and both Philadelphia and Worcester Museums. The fact that the educational programs at the Whitney Museum branches are so limited may be because those branches are underwritten by the corporations and do not charge for admission. Like the university museums, there is no incentive for drawing large crowds nor for cultivating a steady audience.

The second ulterior motive for the development of a museum's educational program is the involvement of the volunteers. We can look at the volunteer as being an individual interested in the museum and knowledgeable

MUSEUM SURVEY

COMPARISON OF INCOME FROM ADMISSION AND VOLUNTEER STAFF - 1990

	Percent of Budget From Admissions	Percent of Volunteers Within Total Staff
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Philadelphia Museum	Approximately 25%	66%
Whitney Museum	Approximately 25%	31.1%
Herbert F. Johnson Museum	0%	4.6%

Figure 6

about art who donates a few hours each week in service to the museum. The volunteer might also be a huge multinational corporation donating money and services to the museum for a complex set of reasons ranging from a desire to improve the corporate image in the community, to the fulfillment of a plan for investment in a corporate art collection.

Individuals who volunteer in art museums proceed through a comprehensive training program that includes research, reading, lectures, discussions, and hours of observation of practicing docents. All this is no doubt preceded by several months, or perhaps years, on a waiting list. Upon completion of the training program, a docent must usually commit to at least two hours service per week for a minimum of two years. Since money is not an incentive, these people^{are} clearly dedicated to art and to the museum (Hayes, 1968, p.52). (Part of the incentive is the status attached to the art museum.)

A typical profile of the individual who volunteers in the art museum reveals a white female, well-educated, and wealthy, with a broad circle of friends within the same affluent class structure. It is possible that the volunteer's sphere of influence is as valuable as her

contributions of time and money.

If we consider the corporation as volunteer, we may recognize that it too has a sphere of influence. The corporation's role will be examined more thoroughly in Chapter 7, but let us note here the corporate relationship to the Whitney Museum. The Whitney Museum was limited to 23,100 sq.ft. and an annual attendance of 514,413 people in 1980. The size of the building precluded any substantial increase in attendance. When the corporations volunteered their 19,100 sq.ft. for Whitney Museum exhibits, they also volunteered their sphere of influence and immediately doubled annual attendance figures.

What this study, limited though it is, indicates is that a museum's educational outreach may be dictated by the financial needs of the institution. Those needs are satisfied in part by the hundreds of thousands of \$7.00 admission charges collected from individuals, itself a good argument for the democratization of the art museum. The survey also poses the possibility that art museums may reach a visitor saturation point. The increase in volunteers and programs serving basically the same visitor pool will probably result in a very well informed

audience for art. The danger here is that an art museum may enjoy talking to itself so as to forget the mission of education for the masses.

The museums surveyed, all general art museums, have educational programs which are also general and follow the traditions established by leaders in the field, such as the Cleveland Museum. Methods for teaching art history, art techniques, interpretation, were tried and agreed upon over the years. Modern art however, posed a different set of problems and the nation's premier modern art museum would face the challenge of how to lead a nation to an understanding of and appreciation for the new art forms.

Education in the Museum of Modern Art

Modern art in the modern art museum: art without recognizable imagery or with imagery distorted; art inspired by mythology or psychology and dependent on a knowledge of the field of inspiration for understanding; art resulting from process and demanding knowledge of the elements of visual language for comprehension. (The development of American modern art is examined in Chapter 5.) Modern art in the modern art museum is not

democratic. It requires the viewer to be intellectually, sensually, and emotionally cognitive of visual language, information the average person does not possess (Smagula, 1983, p. 1). Americans were faced with this new art form, with unrecognizable images executed in a fashion that held no relation to ordinary experience, and the response was generally negative. This was the challenge faced by the new art museum, The Museum of Modern Art.

When The Museum of Modern Art opened its doors in 1929, the established American art museums rarely showed any late nineteenth or twentieth century art. As Paul J. Sachs observed: "We were all, as a matter of course, reading modern literature; we were listening to modern music; but in spite of the excitement engendered by the Armory Show of 1913, our country was, on the whole, antagonistic to modern art." (Sachs, 1939 Address, Museum Archives). As a matter of fact, at this time not one museum in the City of New York owned a single canvas by Van Gogh, Gauguin, Picasso, Miro, or Klee.

The Museum of Modern Art was chartered "for the purpose of encouraging and developing the study of modern arts," so its educational purpose was established at the

outset. Exactly how the study of modern art would be conducted resulted in a course quite different from that of the Cleveland Museum, a course set down by the Modern's first director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (See Chapter 8, "Alfred Barr, Founding Director")

As an undergraduate at Princeton University, Alfred Barr studied with Charles Rufus Morey, who taught medieval visual arts as a record of that civilization, combining painting and sculpture with architecture, murals, illuminated manuscripts, and crafts. Barr used Morey's idea as a model when he developed, at Wellesley College, the first undergraduate course in modern art offered in American higher education. The course included painting and sculpture and also architecture, film, photography, industrial design, music and theatre. This concept was reinforced by a visit to the Bauhaus at Dessau, Germany, where Barr discovered "a fabulous institution ... painting, graphic arts, architecture, the crafts, typography, theatre, cinema, photography, industrial design for mass production ... all were studied and taught together in a large new modern building." (Hunter, 1984, p.11).

Upon his acceptance of the directorship of the

Modern, Barr proposed the museum be organized according to a multidepartmental plan based on his Wellesley course in modern art. It was a radical plan for it included, not just the fine arts, but the practical, commercial, and popular arts as well. The fine arts, of course, would lead the way, and the museum opened with an exhibit of paintings by the modern masters, Cezanne, Gauguin, Seurat, and Van Gogh. The show was accompanied by a catalog which marked the beginning of the Museum's publication program, a program envisioned as a way to spread the modernist message. (See Chapter 8, "Barr As Populist".)

Barr moved on the implementation of the departmental plan and established the Department of Architecture in 1932 with the exhibit Modern Architecture: International Exhibition curated by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson. There was also established at this time a Department of Circulating Exhibitions, and the international architecture show traveled throughout the United States.

In 1934, the Machine Art show initiated the Design Collection and in 1935 the Film Library was established, the first department in any museum in the world devoted

to this 20th century art form. The Department of Photography was founded in 1940, the first curatorial department dedicated to photography. The Museum of Modern Art was the first museum to present photography as art when, in 1932, it presented the exhibit called Murals by American Painters and Photographers. It was also the Museum of Modern Art which organized the first comprehensive photography exhibition in 1937 called Photography 1839-1937.

So, in a little more than a decade after its founding, the Museum of Modern Art had reached the goal of being a multi-departmental arts museum. As the critic John Russell described it recently: "The Museum of Modern Art covers not only painting and drawings, but photography, prints and drawings, architecture, design, the decorative arts, typography, stage design, and artists' books. It has its own publishing house, its own movie house, and its own department of film and video. It has a shop in which everyday objects of every kind may be on sale, provided they pass the Museum's standard of design. It is a palace of pleasure, but it is also an unstructured university. You don't get grades for going there, but in a mysterious, unquantifiable way, you

become alert to the energies of modern art." (Hunter, 1984, p.11).

The structure Alfred Barr had devised for the museum fostered education by its very nature, it was part school and part entertainment. People would visit to study architecture and then look at paintings; stop to examine a toaster design and stay for a film preview. Somehow the magic combination worked to draw the public in and Barr worked to keep them intrigued. "If you dislike modern art, the Museum welcomes you", he wrote on a handbill, "we believe our collections and special exhibitions, explanatory labels and sympathetic gallery guides will interest you and convince you that the art of our time ... your time ... is worth your attention even if some of it puzzles you at first. (But watch out! With some unprejudiced study you may even come to enjoy it!)" (Barr, 1932, n.p.).

Barr's methods for converting the skeptics included a brochure published in 1943 called "What is Modern Painting?" Ostensibly designed for high school students, the forty-eight page, generously illustrated booklet appealed to all ages. While Barr said he wrote it for people who had little experience looking at paintings,

especially modern paintings, it was scooped up by the most sophisticated art connoisseurs. Barr took the reader from familiar, recognizable imagery to more abstract paintings, all the while suggesting meanings and emotions which might be attached to the work. He declared his booklet was "intended to undermine prejudice, disturb indifference, and awaken interest so that some greater understanding and love of the more adventurous painting of our day may follow." (Barr, 1943, p.2). It was clear, concise, to the point, and, as Barr called it, "propaganda in the original and best sense of the word." (Marquis, 1989, p.215).

This little booklet is considered to be the most important tract for modern art ever written. Up to this point, no one in the museums or in education had considered converting the masses to modern art. The huge new audience touched by Alfred Barr's persuasive prose, learned the correct pronunciation of artist's names (Matisse, Say-zann) and came to accept that "in the end what makes a great work of art great is always something of a mystery." (Barr, 1943, p.40).

Barr believed that the painting collection was the museum's principal collection and also the most

frequently misunderstood. Painting was to be placed in a broader context, was to be viewed with period architecture and design, and with music and poetry, in order to be understood. This special context supplemented by educational material such as "What is Modern Painting?" would be the path to enlightened seeing. Alfred Barr understood that to the untrained eye, modern painting appeared "puzzling, difficult, incompetent, or crazy." He understood that, among things modern, painting was "the medium subject to the most serious misunderstanding on the part of the public and this misunderstanding involves the most sinister implications." (Marquis, 1989, p.216).

So the Museum of Modern Art differed fundamentally in its approach to education from general American art museums in that, education was viewed as a curatorial function rather than, as we saw at the Cleveland Museum, a separate endeavor. Education was built into the structure of the museum by Alfred Barr, and was viewed as a natural outcome of exhibits supplemented by publications and gallery talks (Postman, 1990, p.56). This approach was a result of the multi-departmental structure of the museum which was a result of modernism

being the subject of the museum, not only art as we think of it in the context of the general art museum.

As the Museum of Modern Art developed its Department of Education, it did so as a separate enterprise with separate goals and objectives. The Department of Education began as a pilot project in 1937 for the purpose of providing visual teaching materials to high schools in New York City. This was accomplished by one part-time employee (Annual Report, 1937, Museum Archives).

By 1950, the program had expanded from supplying ten high schools with materials to supplying fifty high schools. There was also established a People's Art Center, where children and adults could attend classes in painting, ceramics, jewelry, and woodworking. By this time the staff included a full time director, five assistants and twenty-three full and part-time instructors, still a small department compared to Cleveland. But the purpose of the Museum of Modern Art's Education Department was quite separate from exhibitions. It provided "creative opportunities to help in the general growth of the child and to satisfy the leisure time interests of the adult", objectives which could be

accomplished independent of the museum (Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art, 1950).

The 1988 Annual Report described the Education Department's efforts to enrich the cultural curriculum of New York City Schools, and to pursue research in the use of interactive video technology and museum teaching. An interview conducted by the author with the Director of Education (February, 1990) revealed a three-part structure. There is the Division of School Programs which is the present-day descendant of the 1937 pilot project. There is also the Educational Center, the outgrowth of the 1950 People's Art Center. The third area is Public Programs which offers special lectures and gallery talks given by 17 paid professionals. The Museum of Modern Art employs no volunteer docents. All lecturers are visiting scholars, a different twist to the two track approach at Cleveland.

The 1988 Annual Report (Museum of Modern Art Archives) lists a staff of twelve, including the Director, coordinating seven lectures and nine educational exhibits in the Education Center. In addition, gallery talks are presented three times each weekday and twice daily on Saturday and Sunday. Compared

to the Cleveland Museum of Art Education Department which lists a staff of eighteen plus six in the Extension Division, the Museum of Modern Art's program is small. Cleveland also utilizes volunteers (307 total for the entire museum) and managed to schedule twenty-four lectures by visiting scholars.

Considering the total operating budget of both museums (\$17 million at Cleveland and almost twice that, \$33.6 million, at the Modern) it is surprising to see that Cleveland reported serving 67,810 students last year while the Museum of Modern Art served 5,000 students. The Modern's Education Center reported 22,000 visitors while Cleveland reported 140,374 for education programs. In addition, Cleveland's Extension Division designed and installed more than 300 exhibitions for 75 schools and libraries throughout northeastern Ohio.

Clearly these two museums have different priorities and different approaches. The Museum of Modern Art, continuing in the tradition of Alfred Barr, assumes a role in directing the public's interaction with the art which is different from "the benchmark" and will now be examined more closely.

Vito Acconci at the Museum of Modern Art: A Study

A major exhibition of the work of Vito Acconci was held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1988. Curated by Linda Shearer, the show contained sculptural works which are as difficult as any art created in this century. A close look at the ways and means of presenting this art to the public will provide insight into the Modern's philosophy of education. This will be achieved through an interview with the artist in his studio (Appendix I), an analysis of his work in the studio and in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art and an analysis of the exhibition catalog essay by curator Linda Shearer.

Vito Acconci has been a controversial artist since the beginning of his career in 1969. Trained as a poet, Acconci first combined photographs with words and then used video and film in more ambitious works in which he manipulated his body as a performance artist (Studio Archives). By 1971, at the age of thirty-one, sculptural elements were combined in installations with audio and video tapes. The notorious 1972 installation called "Seedbed" at the Sonnabend Gallery in New York City is an example of his method, materials, and message. A huge ramp, occupying most of the gallery space, was constructed so that the viewer would ascend automatically

upon entering the space. The artist lay, unseen, under the ramp and carried on a monologue while masturbating (Appendix I).

Art audiences were shocked and angered by the content of this and other pieces by Acconci and also confused by the forms the artist invented. Deprived of the familiar categories of painting or sculpture, viewers had no frame of reference for the work and thus felt uncomfortable with it. The artist has continued in this vein, attempting always to involve the viewer but at the same time resisting categorization and analysis (Weinland, 1984, p.40). He has strong democratic tendencies which are invoked in the work, yet the references resulting from his education and intellect are obscure for the average person (Appendix I). Work filled with paradoxes and contradictions presents a great challenge to a curator with an educational mission. We will look first at what is perceived as the problem, that is, the inaccessible nature of the work, and then at the attempted solution, that is, the democratization of the objects. This analysis, like the artist, the art, and the American modern art museum, will no doubt be paradoxical.

Vito Acconci says his work is more about culture than it is about art. "As soon as something is called 'art', people who aren't involved in the art world feel very very very left out. They immediately feel this is part of a realm they don't understand." (Interview with Nancy Einreinhofer, January 9, 1990. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of Vito Acconci are from this interview. Appendix I). This is why Acconci incorporates in his art images and conventions he considers familiar to the average person. The images are constructed with materials which are readily available and are constructed in an ordinary manner with ordinary tools. Acconci acknowledges that not everyone will understand all the elements of a piece, but hopes they will at least know the meaning of the prime images and therefore feel familiar with the work and willing to explore it.

One example of such an effort is the sculpture entitled "Instant House" (Studio Archives). Built in 1980, the piece consists of four wood panels, lying on the floor, one on each of the four sides of a swing. Acconci invites the viewer to participate in the piece by sitting on the swing. Pulleys attached to the swing then

raise the panels, which become walls that enclose the individual in a house-like structure. The interiors of the walls are plastered with American flags, but the person operating the work cannot see that the sign of the hammer and sickle has also been raised, pasted on the exterior of the sculpture. Seduced by a seemingly innocent piece of playground equipment, participants become, on the one hand, stooges in the home they have essentially built, unaware of their complicity in spreading propaganda. On the other hand, Acconci renders the national symbols of the USSR and the USA interchangeable, neutralizing the symbolic language of political institutions.

The piece indicates Acconci's reluctance to adopt an ideological orthodoxy. It also points to the contradictions the artist attaches to the house image. The house is private on the inside, public on the outside. The flags may represent an "us" and "them" mentality. The house means security, shelter, protection, but it is also restrictive. As long as the participant sits on the swing, he is closed off from the rest of the world.

Linda Shearer, curator of the exhibit, believes

"Instant House" manifests the acknowledged influence of the architect Robert Venturi, who "favors signage of modernist forms because it is 'explicit, denotive communication'. Venturi observes that, in Las Vegas, architecture and signs are often combined, with the facade of a casino acting as one big sign." (Shearer, 1988, p.5).

So we have in "Instant House" the ordinary images of a swing, a house, and flags, the images Acconci believes "anybody in a particular culture knows. They might not know what it all leads up to, the way things shift or collide, but they know what a house is, they know what a window is, they know all the elements, so at least they're on familiar ground." We also have the everyday materials the artist feels so strongly about. "I admit this is real important to me. It's important that the materials used are conventionally available." Available and able to be assembled by an average carpenter. Acconci detests the notion of the artist as priest, a special person removed from the crowd, chosen to perform a special task. "I think that's why it is important to me not to emphasize the artist's hand. The artist's hand means that this object is something particularly

valuable, something that separates the artist from the non-artist. I believe the artist is simply a person who decides to organize certain things." (Interview, Appendix I). Acconci, in fact, does not actually build any of his art works. Everything is fabricated by workers.

"I'm more interested in popular art, popular music, popular movies, than I am interested in high art. High art is about something hidden. I really want everything to be accessible. When museums say 'Do not touch', they place the viewer in a lower position. The function of 'Do not touch' is to make you feel that you don't own this and somebody else does. If you can only look at something, you're in the position of mere desire. You can never have it in your hands, you can only stand apart and wish for it. You are never quite good enough for originals. I think for me those 'Do not touch' signs in the museum were a major reason why I started making art. I want my stuff to be touched." (Interview, Appendix I). Finally, we have in "Instant House" the participatory factor. The sculpture actually needs the viewer's interaction to be what it was meant to be.

Vito Acconci thinks through the issues of contemporary art, its content, materials, and

presentation. He is, in his heart, a democrat and strives to engage the public. At the same time, the message he sends is not straight forward nor easily explained. He thrives on ambiguity and is willing to undercut social and political conventions as quickly as artistic ones. Faced with a gallery full of works by Vito Acconci, the public is likely to feel angry, challenged, insulted, entertained, or some other mix of confused emotions. As the artist himself admits "I really don't know how to be interested in any relationship that doesn't cause trouble for me and potentially for another person." (Shearer, 1988, p.5).

Linda Shearer, in the catalog which accompanied the exhibition, takes up the difficult task of guiding the audience toward a more complete understanding of the artist and his work. She confirms that Acconci's work is subjective, and subversive: "In his attempt to rid himself, and us, of the constraints of social and aesthetic conventions, he remains an antagonist, an outsider, an eternal wanderer." Then cleverly adds that "The resulting sense of alienation is essential to the experience of his work." (Shearer, 1988, p.5).

Throughout the catalog essay, Shearer refers to

things outside the world of visual art. There is not a single reference to an art historical influence nor to any visual artist past or present. The influences, comparisons, references are all to be found elsewhere. Politics, architecture, history, philosophy, religion and sports, all find a place in the essay. Influential people range from the French philosophers, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, to the American filmmaker John Ford, and the comic Lenny Bruce.

"Of interest to Acconci has been the theorist Michel Foucault's identification of the body as a primary metaphor for power. Foucault cited the physical presence of the king's body in the seventeenth century, and the idea of a social body constituted through a university of wills in the nineteenth century, as indicating the significance of this concept." (Shearer, 1988, p.8).

"Humor has been a persistent element in Acconci's work. His early monologues recall the blunt, aggressive wit of the late standup comic Lenny Bruce, as does Acconci's choosing to behave as transgressor; as with Bruce, what some saw as obscene was meant as social satire. Few of Acconci's recent works attempt the sheer preposterousness of such earlier pieces as 'Trappings',

wherein he talked to his penis, which was dressed in doll clothes, and 'Gang Bang', in which huge inflated penises mounted on the roofs of cars chased an inflated breast through Spoleto, Italy." (Shearer, 1988, p.7).

Virtually every theme developed in a work by Acconci finds a reference outside the art world. Game-playing, for example, is "according to Jacques Derrida, associated with anxiety, since it implies that the world does not have a stable, fixed structure. Acconci toys with shifts in meaning and the sense of instability and tension they generate." (Shearer, 1988, p.8).

When Acconci uses, in an installation piece, mirrors in the shape of body parts, Shearer explains that, according to Jacques Lacan, the mirror stage "represents the child's first articulation of the concept 'I'. At this stage the child, frustrated with its limited motor capacities, believes its likeness to be more perfect than itself. So begins the life long struggle between image and self-image; and the early fight for control over oneself also foreshadows a later struggle for power over one's environment. The mirrors in the forms of body parts of dismembered bodies serve as reminders of the underlying violence of these struggles." (Shearer, 1988,

p.9).

There is no doubt that Vito Acconci would approve of this attempt to elucidate his art work. "There is this notion that art is pulled out of nowhere. In fact, if you trace the history of an artist you see that the artist exists in a particular time, in a particular place. I might be influenced by something from a movie and then maybe I'll play around with it. I take ideas from lots of places. Electronics, for example, has something to do with television, something to do with light, something to do with past cultures. So that might be research but its' still research based on a particular, historically determined, material condition. It's not pure abstraction." (Interview, Appendix I).

For Acconci, a large part of the problem with museums and education is the fact that the museum system is built on the idea of the supremacy of the artist. "It seems that there has to be the notion of the artist as some kind of specialized being to allow for the passage from one artist to another and from one group of artists at one time to a group of artists in another world. If the artist was just ordinary, then why is the museum preserving all this work?" (Interview, Appendix I).

It is this elevated position of the artist and the art that intimidates people and triggers in them certain expectations. "People's taste in music might be much more adventurous than their taste in art. Why is that? It's because they're not afraid of music, they don't see it as something that's supposedly above them. As soon as they think of something as art, we're in trouble. Then they want it to be this way instead of that way." (Interview, Appendix I).

Acconci looks forward to a time when art might be considered "not as a separate category, in its own arena and with its own products, but as an atmosphere instilled, almost secretly, within other categories of life." (Shearer, 1988, p.20).

In the meantime he says, "A real educational system in a museum should talk about the art of a certain time in relation to the architecture of a certain time, the music of a certain time, the theatre of a certain time. There should be a mix of categories. It seems that art history should be culture history." (Interview, Appendix I). Alfred Barr would have agreed.

Conclusion

The education of the public has always been the

democratic mission of the American museum, regardless of its discipline. The general art museum led the way in educational theory and practice as demonstrated in the profile of the educational programs at the Cleveland Museum. The Museum of Modern Art, under the direction of Alfred Barr, developed a very different approach to informing its visitors, (Richardson, 1968, p.18), alerting them to modernism in all its forms through a cross-referencing of painting to cinema and sculpture to architecture.

Through a comparative examination of four general art museums over a twenty year period, growth patterns and economic trends in educational programming were revealed. Huge increases in budgets and staff were not matched with comparable increases in visitors served. Likewise, increases in the number of programs offered did not result in increases in the number of total participants. This points to the danger that the museum may be hampered on its present course in fulfilling its mission of education for the masses. If a primary mission of the American art museum is education in a democracy, critical dialogue and alternative views must be offered.

The alternative path taken by the Museum of Modern Art and demonstrated here in the review of the exhibition and catalog of the work of Vito Acconci, offers new possibilities to the general art museum and to museums in general.

CHAPTER 7

Capitalism and The American Art Museum:
An Analysis of the Corporate Influence

Introduction

The American art museum born in the nineteenth century was the child of capitalists. (See Chapter 3.) This historical fact may account for the ease with which the American art museum of the twentieth century adopted corporate tactics (Lilla, 1988, p.34). America's first museums were founded with private money and their boards, composed mainly of wealthy capitalists, were modeled after corporate boards. Museums founded in the twentieth century would follow what was by then, an American tradition. Even Andrew Mellon, with his great gift to the nation of a National Gallery of Art to function under the umbrella of the Smithsonian Institution, a Federal agency, prescribed a private board for his museum, modeled after the private corporate board and different from the organization of the other national museums. (See Chapter 4.)

The corporate/museum relationship manifests itself, not only in the profile of the museum board of trustees, but also in the sponsorship of special exhibitions, in the commercialization of those exhibitions and in the production and marketing of their related materials such as books, posters, catalogs, videos (Zurofsky, 1989,

p.45).

An examination of the corporate influence will begin with the Metropolitan Museum under the directorship of Thomas Hoving whose revolutionary adoption of corporate money-generating methods came to be known in the museum world as "Hovingism". This will be followed by an analysis of the work of artist Hans Haacke (Appendix II) who is considered by art professionals to be the conscience of the American art museum in its corporate dealings. Case studies of the two American art museums most closely associated with corporate tactics, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Guggenheim Museum, will be reviewed as a way to identify the benefits and possible pitfalls in the museum/corporate partnership.

Thomas Hoving and The Corporate/Museum Partnership

The peak post-war year for the American economy, relative to the rest of the world, was 1968, when American industrial production was more than one-third of the world total. It was also the year that marked the beginning of serious spending by American corporations on the arts, spending that has since grown prodigiously. Thomas Hoving, as director of the Metropolitan Museum of

Art, began to thrust that museum into the age of corporate sponsorship, sponsorship which would result in the museum's subsequent adoption of certain corporate policies, techniques and procedures. Beginning at the Metropolitan with Hoving, the corporate/museum partnership soon spread to other museums. In order to begin to understand this relationship and its implications, we must understand its genesis.

Thomas Hoving, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1967 to 1977, adopted the ways of the corporate world and instituted programs with a keen eye toward the art museum visitor as consumer (George, 1984, p.77). More than any other director in the history of American museums, Hoving revolutionized museum operations and the public's perception of the museum and turned the Metropolitan into New York City's premier tourist attraction. Under Hoving, the Metropolitan developed a master plan (Metropolitan Museum, 1969 Report, Museum Archives) which included building five new wings, enlarging exhibition areas by one third; planning special exhibitions promoted among the masses through popular appeal devices; hosting gala parties attended by movie stars and rock stars along with the more usual

celebrities, another publicity ploy to catch the national headlines. This new director soon became a household name, no small feat for a museum director, and "Hovingism" came to be identified with a specific set of operational policies.

Thomas Hoving was the son of the Swedish immigrant Walter Hoving, chairman of Tiffany's. A graduate of Princeton University, Hoving specialized in medieval studies and wrote his graduate thesis on Carolinian ivories. In 1959, at a symposium on art history held at the Frick Collection, Hoving met James J. Rorimer, then director of the Metropolitan. Rorimer recruited Hoving as an assistant curator, and in time Hoving became his protege, succeeding to Rorimer's former position as chief curator of the Cloisters. In 1965, Hoving's good friend, John V. Lindsay was elected mayor of New York City. Hoving had prepared Lindsay's campaign paper on city park policies and so the mayor-elect invited him to assume the position of parks commissioner. Surprising most people and disappointing his mentor Rorimer, Hoving accepted the appointment (Tompkins, 1970, p.346-350).

Hoving served as commissioner of parks for only one year but during that brief time his populist approach

delighted the media. Hoving closed off Central Park to automobiles on weekends and staged "happenings" which filled the park with exuberant crowds, with cyclists, food fairs, music festivals, sporting events, and public "paint-ins" on a mile-long roll of paper. Hoving, as park commissioner, generated more excitement and publicity than anyone else in the Lindsay administration.

As park commissioner, Hoving served as an ex-officio trustee on the Metropolitan's board. He did attend board meetings and understood therefore, the workings, problems, and plans of the museum. When James Rorimer died suddenly in 1966, Thomas Hoving was prepared to present to the trustee's search committee, something no other candidate for the job had: a long range plan for the Metropolitan Museum and an outline of solutions to the museum's immediate problems (Tompkins, 1970, p.351). On December 20, 1966, at the age of thirty-six, Thomas Hoving became the director of the Metropolitan Museum.

Hoving's influence on exhibition policy became immediately apparent. Special exhibitions were events to be promoted in the press thus increasing museum attendance. The more exhibitions the museum could mount, the better. By 1972, Hoving had tripled the number of

exhibits presented under the directorship of James Rorimer, to a grand total of sixty shows for that year (Metropolitan Museum, 1972 Report, Museum Archives). The pace was frantic, with short lead-times resulting, by some accounts, in sloppy scholarship. The cost was unprecedented, but so were the revenues generated. For example, the 1965 annual report (Museum Archives) cites two major sources of income for the museum: the New York City contribution of \$1,528,000 (25%), and the income from the museum's endowment, \$4,101,000; which constituted 67 percent of the total. By 1976, "Hovingism", taking the form of admission charges, museum shop sales, restaurant and parking charges, and membership dues, had generated \$16,334,000, or 59 percent of the operating budget (Metropolitan Museum, 1976 Report, Museum Archives). Only \$2,678,000, or 10 percent, was contributed by the city and \$5,725,000, or 20.6 percent came from the endowment.

This \$16,334,000 annually was dependent on the blockbuster shows which were the centerpiece of Hovingism. They were the grand and brilliant invention of Hoving because, not only did they generate this huge income by attracting hordes of people to the museum, but

they were also substantially self-supporting ventures because they attracted support from corporations, foundations, and arts councils. The museum's 1976 annual financial report (Museum Archives) indicates that every special exhibit was supported by Endowment grants or corporate money, usually corporate money.

The corporate sponsors wanted the world to know about their good deeds and inserted their publicity methods into the museum. Hoving, of course, adopted them happily, referring to his middle initials, P.F. (Thomas Pearsall Field Hoving) as standing for "Publicity Forever".

The hectic pace, the changing exhibits, the crowds and commercialism, disturbed more than a few people. Hilton Kramer, art critic for the New York Times, wrote that a Hoving exhibit "... belongs more to the history of publicity than to that of art." (Kramer, 1985, p.256). Dissent grew within the museum as well and finally became public in 1975 when the head of the department of European paintings, Anthony M. Clark, resigned his post. His letter of resignation charges that Hoving's exhibition policies and "frantic loans" placed the museum's permanent collection at risk. Clark refers to

Hoving's regime as one of poor reputation, big on "hucksterism" and lacking in honesty, simplicity, professional grace and skill (Meyer, 1989, p.166).

In the professional museum world there was also great concern and endless debates at professional meetings and in professional journals regarding the role of the art museum in society (Wheeler, 1989, p.48). Sherman E. Lee, director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, expressed his concern in a 1972 issue of Museum News. He warned that art museums may be compromised or adulterated by their eagerness to please the public. In an obvious reference to Hoving and the Metropolitan, Lee writes: "If an 1870 charter, written with solid Victorian moral uplift, mentions the elevation of public taste, it does not necessarily follow that abortive, yet symbolic, attempts at mass education in 1970 can be really achieved by an art museum rather than other, larger and more pervasive institutions or processes. Playing at education may well be worse than no education at all." (Lee, 1972, p.97).

In spite of debate, dissent, and criticism, Thomas Hoving and his "corporate tactics" changed forever the public face of the American art museum. Thomas Hoving

and the Metropolitan were perhaps the first to travel the corporate route, but that move quickly became a trend pursued by museums across the country (Zolberg, 1981, p.116). American art museums founded by America's wealthy industrialists, merchants, and bankers, were amenable to that world and willingly assumed the corporate mantle. The influence resulted in profound changes in both the organization of the museum and in its function.

The seventies witnessed major changes in board profiles and in the character of museum directorships. The apparent ease with which the shifts occurred can perhaps be attributed to the capitalistic mark left by the likes of Morgan, Frick, Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Guggenheim. American capitalists fashioned their museums, to some extent, after a corporate structure.

An examination of the corporate influence will demonstrate how that influence can manifest itself in the profile of the museum board of trustees, as well as in the corporate sponsorship of special exhibitions and also the more recent development of corporate headquarters as museum outposts. The close working relationship between corporate people and museum personnel in all of the above designations has caused the transfer of corporate

management techniques and corporate thinking to the museum staff. This is surely a mixed blessing for while, on the one hand, it seems to provide balanced budgets and fiscal responsibility, it may also threaten the integrity of the art museum.

Hans Haacke and the Corporate/Museum Partnership

The museum and the corporation, two very important institutions in the world of art, institutions wielding significant social, political, and economic influence, captured the attention of the artist Hans Haacke twenty years ago and have provided the grist for his mill ever since. No discussion of the relationship between the American art museum and the corporation will have credibility without the input of Haacke. An interview with the artist was conducted in his studio on February 11, 1991. (Appendix II) Haacke's art work functions as a critique of these institutions and hopefully, as a catalyst for change. The analysis of Haacke's art work and related documentation used here was made possible by free access to the artist's studio in February, 1991.

Haacke, a recipient of fellowships from the Fulbright and Guggenheim foundations and from the National Endowment for the Arts, has been an exhibiting

artist for almost thirty years. His early work focused on processes, situations, and open systems which communicated with their environment (Studio Archives). He expanded his interest to social and political systems because of a belief in his artistic responsibility to engage the world as a whole. His early work in systems theory provided a theoretical base for this new direction. The work explores the relationship between the art world and the larger economic and political community because Haacke believes the social atmosphere, mental and emotional climate is affected by what people hear, see, or take in by osmosis from the art world (Interview, Appendix II).

Hans Haacke's art work incorporates the traditional mediums of painting and sculpture with language, photographs, found objects, invented objects and any other media necessary to communicate his ideas which are steeped in history and politics and which reflect on social systems (Studio Archives). In 1968, when the American economy had seemingly peaked, Haacke's reputation as an artist was also high. That year his work could be viewed in museums across the United States: the Museum of Modern Art in New York; the Milwaukee Art

Center; the Museum of Modern Art, Chicago; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. Hans Haacke was invited for a one-person exhibit at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the exhibition to take place in 1971. A few weeks before its planned opening, the exhibit was canceled because of the extremely controversial issues raised by the work. Chief among those art works was Haacke's now famous Manhattan project: Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, A Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971 (Collection of The Artist, New York City, Studio Archives). The proposed piece consisted of a wall-size chart itemizing the buildings controlled by one major Manhattan landlord. Haacke charted the holdings through the use of maps, architectural photographs and typed data sheets. The 142 buildings included a generous number of slums and social conditions with which The Guggenheim did not wish to be associated because, not only might the piece precipitate an inspection of Shapolsky's real estate maneuvers, but also call to mind the museum's physical space, social position, and ideological tenets. Haacke believed the museum feared it would emerge as a place occupying a position of material privilege in

relation to other terrains (Interview, Appendix II).

As Haacke clarified in his notes accompanying the presentation, the Shapolsky group were the largest real estate holders in Harlem and the Lower East Side, investing in housing in impoverished neighborhoods and gaining huge profits through frequent sales and exchanges. Shapolsky emerged, as Haacke researched public records, to be the key figure in a group of about seventy different corporations (Studio Archives). Haacke recorded not only the information on the property, but also information on the corporations holding titles. Charting the business transactions, Haacke listed the corporations in columns and traced the exchange of mortgages and properties. What is revealed is a system of family ties and dummy corporations, a myriad of financial exchanges and the mechanics of investment by which profits are made by slumlords. The system is an open one and radiates out to include rental agencies, city agencies, religious and church groups.

Following the cancellation of the show, newspapers, art journals, television and radio programs discussed the event in the light of censorship. Thomas Messer, then director of the Guggenheim Museum, acknowledged that

Haacke's work "posed a direct threat to the museum's functioning within its stated and accepted premises." (Messer, 1971, p.4). Those accepted premises then came to be questioned. What of the role of the museum as sanctuary, as separate, protected place? When the curator of the exhibit, Edward F. Fry, defended the works publicly, he was fired by the museum. Demonstrations protesting the cancellation of the show and the dismissal of the curator followed, and commentaries included speculations on linkage between museum trustees and the Shapolsky real estate group.

No such linkage was ever proven, but the event spotlighted the museum board and its corporate connections and marked the beginning of Haacke's portrayals of the corporate/museum relationship. "There is a direct link between the museum board and the corporate world," asserts Haacke, "Invariably, more and more corporate representatives come on to the boards, not necessarily because their corporations have been putting in more money, but because they can easily grease the wheels of their peers." (Nancy Einreinhofer interview with Hans Haacke, February 11, 1991. All quotations of Haacke are from this interview unless otherwise noted.

See Appendix II)

In 1974, Haacke created a work of art entitled Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Board of Trustees in which he traced the interconnections among members of the Guggenheim family, other museum trustees, and various corporations frequently sharing the same addresses and offices. For example, a Guggenheim family member and two trustees are listed on the board of directors of the Kennecott Copper Corporation. The Guggenheim family is represented on the board by Peter O. Lawson-Johnston (president of the board), the son of Barbara Guggenheim; his daughter, Wendy L.J. McNeil, (vice-president of the board); Michael F. Wettach, another son of Barbara Guggenheim; and the Earl Castle Stewart, son of Elenor Guggenheim. Barbara and Elenor Guggenheim, daughters of the founder, also served on the board at the time (Studio Archives).

What the Haacke Guggenheim Board piece reinforces is the fact that the Guggenheim Museum and many other American museums are what Haacke calls "family museums" and they are funded primarily by family money and corporate money. "Key positions in those museums are held by members of the family of the founders. They are

. The regents may have to O.K. but only if there are flagrant trust is there any interference So in many ways, they can do as talk of finances also comes from corporate contributions started the corporations very often have urds, so there's a direct link (Interview, Appendix II). 's examination of the museum the corporation culminated in Social Grease, exhibited at the York City. The installation um plaques engraved with public trustees and others regarding museum to business. David as serving at the time as both n Bank Corporation and as the Museum of Modern Art. ted from the New York times, ndpoint, such involvement in nd tangible benefits:

extensive publicity reputation, and an elations, a readier superior appraisal rove the morale of personnel." (David Hans Haacke, 1975, ives.). politan Museum, C. n article in the gle reason for the orporations in the ' of projects which d to a company's i dividends far out it required." (C. ase, Hans Haacke, o Archives.). es is that those

corporate people serving on museum boards, can and do articulate the benefits of sponsorship to their colleagues in the corporate world. There is a shared language and cultural context the multinational corporations understand and are teaching to museums through the museum's board members.

This situation is aptly described in the remarkably candid text of the brochure distributed to corporations by the Metropolitan Museum: "Many public relations opportunities are available through sponsorship of programs, special exhibitions and services. These can often provide a creative and cost effective answer to a specific marketing objective, particularly where international, governmental or consumer relations may be a fundamental concern." (Metropolitan Museum, brochure, n.d., n.p.).

The flyer contained a page of quotes from business executives telling their colleagues why they are sponsors of the Metropolitan. It is apparent that the Metropolitan Museum is presenting itself to the corporation as a stage on which the corporation's interests can be promoted. According to Hans Haacke the museum is presenting itself also as an "agent to

influence public policy." Haacke asserts that the museum is telling the corporation that it can be used for a political campaign, to influence legislation. "These tax exempt institutions become lobbying enterprises. The art they show is instrumentalized to push a corporate interest." (Interview, Appendix II).

In the case of the oil companies, for example, Haacke believes that both Mobil and Exxon, the two giants of the oil industry, are interested in easing environmental legislation. This can be achieved, in part, by what Mobil calls "a good will umbrella." Even the fact that museum visitor profiles reveal the majority of art museum-goers to consider themselves politically liberal, fits into the corporate strategy. "It is the liberals in particular who need to be greased," says Haacke, "because they are the most likely and sophisticated critics of corporations and they are often in positions of influence." (Interview, Appendix II). Corporations now understand says Haacke that the association with the high prestige of art can function as a subtle but effective means for lobbying in the corridors of government. "It can open doors, facilitate passage of favorable legislation, and serve as a shield

against scrutinizing and criticism of corporate conduct." (Haacke, quoted in Wallis, 1986, p.69).

Haacke details this corporate strategy and titles the piece "The Good Will Umbrella " (Haacke, 1976, Studio Archives). First exhibited at the Max Protetch Gallery, Washington, D.C., in May of 1976, the work consists of six large panels on which the familiar red and blue Mobil logo has been silkscreened. Under each logo are facsimiles of pages from a speech delivered by Herb Schmertz, Mobil's vice president for public affairs, to the Eastern Annual Conference of the American Association of Advertising Agencies. The rationale for Mobil's sponsorship of cultural programs is explained in phrases such as: "cultural excellence suggests corporate excellence." These programs project the company's executives as "corporate statesmen" who are therefore entitled to be "listened to on vital public policy issues." They also "provide the opportunity to form useful alliances and valuable contacts" with government leaders.

The importance of good relations with those who control legislation was underlined again by Sandra Ruch, the manager of Mobil's division of Cultural Programs and

Promotion. "I need to rethink everything I present to my management in a completely different way, with a different vocabulary, because there is a new form of management. At Mobil, we have people who want to justify corporate support in two areas, and they are specific: What can it do for the company in marketing terms, and what can it do for the company in terms of political or governmental relations. My job, as a person trying to mediate between the corporate world and the museum world, is to justify that reliance in very specific business terms. Everything we do is specifically oriented to the fact that we are a multinational company. We do things which are totally related to our operations." (Morfogon, 1988, p.47).

It should be noted that Sandra Ruch was addressing the museum community, telling potential applicants what is expected from them and their proposals. Haacke believes the corporate sponsors "set the tone" for exhibits. "The museum director and the curator can anticipate what would fit into the corporate picture, they know what would attract corporate funding. Accordingly, the show is styled or the topic chosen."

Corporate public relations officers know that the

greatest publicity benefits can be derived from high-visibility event, those art exhibits that draw large crowds and are covered extensively by the media: the blockbuster exhibit. As charitable agendas go, museum underwriting of special exhibitions has been a sure bet for corporations because of the visibility factor. "When we sponsor an exhibit that runs eight or ten weeks, our corporate name is advertised longer than with most other philanthropic causes," says a spokesman for United Technologies (Morfogan, 1988, p.47).

The special exhibit, in other words, gives the corporation more bang for the buck, a situation smiled on by shareholders. "It's their money" says the CEO of Philip Morris Corporation, "and we're trying to use it in a way that helps our business. We can't be totally altruistic without being irresponsible with somebody else's money." (Morfogan, 1988, p.48).

Chase Manhattan Bank, the third largest bank in the United States, has its headquarters in the art capital, New York City, and had as its chief executive until his retirement in 1981, David Rockefeller. We have seen briefly Rockefeller's ties to art and his sympathies regarding corporate sponsorship of museum programs, and

will now look more closely at the Chase involvement with one special exhibition and the "visibility" it provided.

The special exhibit held at the Guggenheim Museum in 1988 featured works of art drawn from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation collections in the Guggenheim Museum and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice. "Fifty Years of Collecting" celebrated the anniversary of the Guggenheim Foundation. A huge promotional campaign was mounted by Chase to benefit the museum's outreach but mainly to provide public awareness of the bank's services. The usual vehicles of exhibition catalogs, posters, newspaper and magazine advertisements and radio spots were employed, but the Chase marketing division invented new and remarkable additions to this campaign (Louer, 1989, p.44). For example, the bank's automatic teller machines were programmed to display and then print an announcement of the exhibit. In the one month of the exhibit, the message accompanied two million transactions, distinguishing the Chase A.T.M.'s from the competition, one of the objectives of the campaign. In addition, news of the exhibit was slipped into 750,000 bank statements and 5.5 million credit card statements. Chase cardholders were offered free admission to the

exhibit, a service not provided by any other credit card company, The benefits of the campaign were clear to the museum as well when a comparison of the one month duration of this exhibit to the same time period of the previous year revealed an increase in museum attendance of twenty-two percent (Guggenheim Museum, Annual report, 1988, Museum Archives). As Haacke says, "The corporate blanket is so warm."

What has evolved from the museum/corporate partnership, Haacke describes as a form of addiction. "The museums have taught the lay public to look for excitement. They have dressed up the notion of art and now the public at large expects something sexy. So the museum has to create extravaganzas, which are expensive. They're under pressure to deliver in order to attract the people. It's like an addiction. You start small then you need more, you need bigger doses. In order to attract the crowds and also to attract the corporate support, blockbusters have become necessary." (Interview, Appendix II).

No museum has ever accused a corporate sponsor of censorship, but indeed, censorship is the prime concern among those who consider the museum/corporate

partnership. The risk involved in museum dependence on corporate donations is that the museum will, in trying to please the corporation and guarantee future funding, propose only attractive, popular shows. This form of self-censorship could threaten the very heart of museum scholarship as esoteric projects are set aside in favor of those with wide appeal. This risk is well understood by museum directors.

J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, considers his museum to be "very lucky" in receiving corporate funding and hopes to "enlarge the circle." "Museums have to understand how to make their approach and have to realize they have to put it in terms that will help their people sell that concept further up the line. Just sitting around expecting everyone to realize how significant their project is in cultural terms may not do it." Brown also sees clearly that the selection of projects that can be easily "sold" eliminates projects which might prove more difficult. "Even if the corporations are not involved in any kind of interference in curatorial decisions, like which objects to put in a show they are sponsoring, there is always the threat of the subtle kind of censorship that follows the

decision the museum makes as to what to do. If financial backing to do a project is needed, and if from the beginning the museum people realize that it is the kind of project that nobody is going to want to back, this lack of any interference with a curatorial decision is subtly, by default, interfering with a curatorial decision." (Morfogon, 1988, p.148).

In a more adamant analysis of the situation, Philippe de Montebello, Director of the Metropolitan Museum, describes corporate funding as "an inherent, insidious, hidden form of censorship." (de Montebello, 1984, p.42).

Perhaps not always hidden. In 1984 Mobil Corporation succeeded in pressuring the Tate Gallery to suspend the distribution of the catalog of Hans Haacke's one person show at that museum. The corporation took issue with Haacke's art work and an interview with the artist which appeared in the publication and threatened that the Tate Gallery "will make further distribution of the offending material at their risk and peril." (Copy of letter in Haacke Studio Archives). Mobil had sponsored an exhibit at the Tate which closed the day before the Haacke exhibit opened. After almost one year, the Tate

Gallery released the Haacke catalog. The Mobil/Tate incident was documented by Haacke in a collage, 47-1/4 x 72-1/2", dated 1985 (Haacke, Studio Archives).

Richard Berglund, head of cultural affairs at IBM Corporation, states that his company wants to know exactly what will be in an exhibit before they agree to sponsor it. "We want to see a checklist. If there's the possibility that something is going to go off in areas that the company could not live with, then we stay away from it." (Morfogon, 1988, p.48).

Case Study I: The Whitney Museum

Perhaps no other art museum has so completely cast its lot with the corporation as has the Whitney Museum of American Art. Over the past ten years the Whitney has established branch museums on the premises of four corporations: The Whitney Downtown at Federal Reserve Plaza (funded by IBM and Park Tower Realty); The Whitney at Equitable Center (funded by Equitable Insurance Co.); The Whitney at Philip Morris (funded by Philip Morris Corp.); The Whitney at Fairfield (funded by and located in the headquarters of Champion International). The arrangement has provided a total of 19,000 square feet of additional exhibition space for the museum, all operating

expenses paid by the host corporation, a tremendous amount of publicity for the museum plus exposure of the museum's collections, and generous donations annually from the corporations to the "mother" museum. The arrangement appears on the surface to be a good thing for the Whitney Museum, but a deeper examination is warranted. Two serious threats to museums posed by corporate involvement have thus far been identified: the self censorship of curators proposing exhibitions for corporate underwriting in an attempt to please the corporation, and the danger of cost-effective procedures interfering with quality curatorial time and undermining scholarship. The Whitney Museum's programs can be viewed in light of these threats.

Tom Armstrong served as the director of the Whitney Museum for sixteen years (1974-1990) and during that period of time took the museum to its present, highly influential position in the art world. Originally dedicated to American art of all periods and mediums, the Whitney, under Armstrong, changed its mandate to focus on the presentation of contemporary American art and built a collection of the American avant-garde. Under Armstrong's direction also, the museum merged with four

corporations to establish the branch museums. Contemporary art and the corporation are related in the eyes of Tom Armstrong. "The Whitney Museum has a product that most museums don't have." he said in a 1986 interview published in Museum News. "We represent contemporary art." (Keens, 1986, p.26).

In explaining how the Whitney markets its product to and through corporations, Armstrong's language echos that of the sponsors. "If Philip Morris went to McCann Erickson and said, 'We want our name in the newspaper for ten times each month', McCann Erickson might say, 'That will cost you \$150,000 a month'. Well, we do that, we put that corporation in a context that their product can't, in the editorial content of the press. We're also allying them with a situation that is noncommercial, beneficial, all of the things that a product-oriented company can't really achieve. The prestige that we bring to them is significant, and we want to be compensated for that." (Keens, 1986, p.26).

The most ambitious of the branch projects was the deal struck with the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States. The director of Equitable's real-estate, Ben Holloway, initiated the Whitney Branch

project because "we think it will attract and hold tenants, and that they'll pay us the rents we are looking for." (Glennon, 1988, p.40). In other words, contemporary art serves to make this Seventh Avenue business address even more fashionable.

"We were courted by Equitable" brags Armstrong. "We're being courted all over the country. We've got a winner here. If someone calls me and says, 'Mr. Armstrong, I'm developing a building and I want a branch,' then I say 'Have you got \$400,000 a year to spend, plus start-up costs?' Either you play the game or it doesn't work." (Keens, 1986, p.26).

The Whitney won't release figures in regard to its corporate branches and the branches are not a part of the museum's annual financial report but it is confirmed that the arrangement includes direct expenses, reimbursement of overhead, and a generous contribution to the museum, above and beyond branch related expenses. For an additional fee, the museum's curators will advise the corporation on the purchase of art for its collection. Whitney curators, for example, arranged for the purchase of \$8 million worth of art in public spaces at the Equitable Center.

In an era of heightened consciousness regarding public relations, image building has become the incentive for patronage and the Whitney's director understands this. "We represent decision-making about quality and creativity in our culture." (Keens, 1986, p.26). Exactly how successfully the image of quality and creativity is conjured up by the exhibits mounted, and subsequently transferred to the sponsoring corporation is definitely in the eye of the beholder. An informal survey (Appendix VI) conducted in the lobby of the Equitable Center revealed that passers-by were generally enthusiastic about the Roy Lichtenstein giant "Mural With Blue Brushstroke" which hangs there. Comments included approval of the "upbeat, with-it image" it lent to the building and the fact that it identified the building. (No need to give visitors the formal address.) However, of the thirty pedestrians randomly surveyed, none were able to identify the mural's maker by name and only three had ever ventured into the adjacent gallery to see the shows provided by the Whitney Museum.

A second informal survey conducted among people who regularly visit museums and galleries, revealed that, of the thirty people questioned, only four had ever been to

a Whitney branch museum (Appendix VI). Those four had visited the Equitable Center both to see the Lichtenstein mural and to satisfy a curiosity regarding the corporate/museum relationship. None of the thirty considered the exhibits mounted at the branch museums to be of interest. The consensus reached after reading the title of the exhibit and the list of participating artists was that neither the objects nor their context was new. Quality works and stimulating ideas are offered all over New York City, creating a competitive market for art exhibits.

An objective accounting of the activities at the branch museums for the 1988-1989 season reveals that each branch presented five exhibits that year except for Philip Morris, which presented four shows. (The following statistics are compiled from the Whitney Museum's financial records, Whitney Museum Archives) The Whitney Museum Downtown at Federal Reserve Plaza is unique among the branches in that exhibits presented there are curated by Helena Rubinstein Fellows participating in the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. (The program is supported by the Helena Rubinstein Foundation) Under the supervision of Whitney Museum staff, ten Fellows,

undergraduate and graduate students from universities throughout the world, develop and implement exhibition proposals. Working in teams of four, the Fellows select the work to be exhibited, design the installation, write the essay for the accompanying brochure, and coordinate publicity. Four of the five exhibits presented at the Federal Reserve Plaza branch were organized by Rubinstein Fellows. All were thematic exhibits, exploring some aspect of American art in a broader art historical context. Convulsive Beauty: The Impact of Surrealism on American Art, for example, explored the influence of European Surrealism through the ideas of automatism, biomorphism, dream imagery, and the unconscious. Thirty-eight artists were represented by 67 paintings, sculptures, drawings, and photographs. Both the theme and the works presented indicate an in-depth research project.

Exhibits at the other three branches were curated by the directors of those branches or were traveling exhibits. At Equitable Center, the director curated two exhibits and borrowed three. At Fairfield, the director curated one exhibit and borrowed four. At Philip Morris, three shows were curated by the director and the forth

show was borrowed (Whitney Museum Archives).

An overview of the exhibits at these three branches indicates that the total of fourteen shows were composed of five painting exhibits, three photography exhibits, two drawing exhibits, and one exhibit containing a mix of media. This is a good representation of artists' mediums.

Thematically, the fourteen shows provide a look at social history (six exhibits) and formal art issues (two exhibits). Four exhibits cover portraiture and/or the human figure and one exhibit takes nocturne as its theme. Only one of the fourteen shows is based in art history and involves serious research and that one was developed at the Federal Reserve Plaza branch by Rubenstein Fellows and subsequently traveled to Fairfield.

Nine of the fourteen shows are composed of works of art with representational imagery and the remaining five contain a mix of realism and abstraction (Whitney Museum Archives). The issue of abstraction, the dominant theme in twentieth century art, clearly is not being addressed in any of the three branch museum programs in any coherent way. With the exception of the work of the Rubenstein Fellows at Federal Reserve Plaza, the programs

are not concerned with scholarship but rather, serve as outreach for the museum. The nature of the exhibits may very well indicate self-censorship. The shows are non-confrontational, not controversial, easily digested along with lunch, easily accessible for the average person, and present a contemporary, up-beat image for the corporate sponsor.

A comparison of these branch programs and the program of exhibitions at the main site on Madison Avenue should provide further insight. Eleven exhibits were presented at the Whitney Museum during the 1988-89 season. Of the eleven, eight were originated by Whitney curators, one by Whitney Fellows, and two were borrowed from other institutions. According to media, the shows divide to: three painting, three sculpture, one photography, two architecture, an exhibit of folk art paintings and assorted objects, and the "Biennial" which includes all fine art media. Eight of the eleven exhibits were one person shows. Of the nine exhibits of fine art, four were exhibits of abstract work, three shows dealt with figuration, and two were a mix of recognizable and abstract imagery, predominantly abstract (Whitney Museum Archives).

The Whitney Museum program consists of major exhibitions which occupy a full floor of the museum and are accompanied by a publication, and small undocumented exhibits held in the Lobby Gallery. The mix from this perspective was seven major shows, four shows in the Lobby Gallery. Of the seven major shows, four were organized by the four Whitney curators (one each), two were borrowed, and the seventh, the Biennial, was a joint effort of four curators (Whitney Museum Archives). So the main museum program has a good mix of mediums, a solid representation of the more difficult art, and an even distribution of curatorial responsibility. One glaring hole in the program, is the absence of comparative art historical themes, a situation which calls into question the scholarship of Whitney curators.

Art critic for the New York Times, Michael Brenson, zeros in on the problem when he objects to the museum's policy of hiring "young curators who have little art historical experience and represent only one generation." Brenson profiles the four curators - the youngest is 33 years old, the oldest is 42 - and discovers that none of them hold an advanced degree in art history. No wonder then that, as Brenson says, "In the Whitney's catalogs

and installations, independent critical and scholarly perspective is absent." (Brenson, January 1, 1989, p.27).

Commenting on exhibits at the Whitney, Brenson writes: "The Whitney should present contemporary art in a way that is unmistakably independent of dealer and collector interference. It should present contemporary art in a way that is measured and searching, offering a perspective that galleries, auction houses and corporations cannot provide. But how is perspective possible in a museum that is so uneasy with history?

"No New York museum seems more trendy, and none is more at sea. Who can remember the last Whitney exhibition that seemed finished - in other words, thoroughly conceived, considered and installed? Who can remember a Whitney exhibition that generated confidence in the museum's capacity to deal with either the achievements of the old or the challenges of the new?" (Brenson, January 1, 1989, p.27).

In reviewing some of the exhibits under discussion (1988-89 season), Brenson criticizes the Richard Armstrong catalog of the David Park exhibit, for example, as "hurried". He also calls to question the totally American perspective: "This point of view cannot do

justice to the achievement of an artist for whom European art remained a lantern and European subject matter a guide." (Brenson, November 7, 1988, p.19).

Of the Donald Judd exhibit curated by Barbara Haskell, Brenson writes: "...the catalogue provides little insight into the artist's formative years, and the show does not include the figurative works from the 1950's that could have shed light on the absoluteness of Judd's abstract style." (Brenson, October 27, 1988, p.23).

Returning to the survey of thirty people who regularly visit museums and galleries (Appendix VI), we find that all thirty people had been to the Whitney Museum at least once during the 1988-89 season and that twenty-six of them had seen the Biennial, the Whitney's famous blockbuster exhibit that fills the entire museum with paintings, sculpture, photographs, films and videotapes produced within the previous two years. Described by Tom Armstrong as "an overview of what we think is interesting at the present moment, what we think stands out, what makes you think and makes you look," the Biennial is the product of the four Whitney curators and is the museum's flagship exhibition.

Some typical comments coming from the people

surveyed included "It's about who's cool, who's in." and "The prestige of being chosen for the Biennial is enormous and it impacts on the artist's prices." and "For the artist it means you're alive and well. People want to buy your work." and "It's who's hot and who's not."

Brenson calls the Biennial the "foundation" of the museum's program and notes how, "with relish", it is allowed to overrun the entire museum. And yet he says this is where "judgements are ambiguous" and further, "it is unclear from the catalogue essay just what Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Marshall and Ms. Phillips think. There was talk that this Biennial catalogue would include a real essay. But the painting, sculpture and photography text, although graduating from 'preface' to 'introduction', is still far short of what is needed. Its style is curt, suggesting the essay was written out of obligation. Key ideas remain unclear." (Brenson, April 10, 1989, p.24).

It seems the Biennial is more about fashion and money than about a critical, thoughtful presentation of art. The lack of scholarship, even in this, the museum's single most important exhibit, has caused savage criticism by respected art historians in the Times and elsewhere.

Is there a corporate connection? Some think so. Hans Haacke's perception of the problem alludes to the fact that the museum curators are charged with fund raising, spending time with corporate executives, to insure funding for the museum. "They're told to fund-raise instead of doing their curatorial work. But the curators need to rethink their job, and should be allowed and given time to think. Financial constraints could force museums to rely on their own collections. This would be good because it could lead, if we're lucky, to genuine scholarship. It could lead curators to learn more about the collections." (Interview, Appendix II).

Philippe de Montebello sees how the courting of corporate support undermines scholarship. "Traditional values are upset." he writes, "Basic museum work - conservation, research, cataloging, scholarly publications - gives way to the effort that goes into realizing special events with their quantifiable results." And these quantifiable results tend to obscure the depth of quality of programs, and quality is soon perceived as a "burden on the bottom line," rather than a necessity.

"Aren't museums in danger of creating a whole

generation of curators who, because these other duties have denied them sufficient unstructured time for studying and looking, will not have sufficient knowledge or experience so they can later perform with intelligence and discrimination in more important positions?" (de Montebello, 1984, p.48).

The criticism of Whitney Museum programs is believed to be what spurred the dismissal of the director. Tom Armstrong was forced out in March, 1990 after several months of art world rumors that the board president, William S. Woodside, had asked for his resignation. "Several trustees have complained privately about the quality of some Whitney shows." Wrote Grace Glueck in the New York Times, "They attribute that in part to Mr. Armstrong's unwillingness to hire a strong chief curator to run the museum's collecting and exhibition programs." (Glueck, December 12, 1989, p.21).

In June of 1990, Connoisseur magazine reported that the decisive factor in Armstrong's dismissal was a "ponderous broadside in the New York Times about the lack of tradition and serious scholarship at the Whitney." (Kaylon, June, 1990, p.102). In what many viewed as an appropriate close to the fashionable and scholarless

Armstrong tenure, the dismissed director threw a huge party for himself at the museum. The tee-shirts said, "Fuck Art, Let's Dance."

The museum and the corporation, a relationship developed in earnest by Thomas Hoving, further evolved with Tom Armstrong. While both of these directors departed their posts with mixed reviews, they also broadened the corporate/museum relationship in irreversible ways.

It is what Philippe de Montebello calls the business-administration mentality and he sees this mentality as dominating museums even at the policy-making level. "This means that all museum activities, all projects, all work will soon be cost-accounted and that the right questions may no longer be asked." (de Montebello, 1984, p.48).

The "right" questions concern the quality and importance of a project, the "wrong" questions concern the revenues a project might generate. "A museum's exhibition program now tends to be viewed by the administration as being in the service of the museum's budget - instead of the other way around. Exhibitions are exploited by a formidable business machine ... the

whole critical mass of staff and services employed to generate, shape and execute exhibitions" is exploited "to the detriment of the staff's custodial as well as creative functions." (de Montebello, 1984, p.47).

Warnings from within the profession cite the potential dangers to museums which operate like corporations and to directors who operate like C.E.O.'s, but the benefits of the business-administration mentality present a strong draw.

Case Study II: The Guggenheim Museum

The Guggenheim Museum Board of Trustees decided on the corporate approach for its museum when, in 1988, it hired Thomas Krens as its director. With an undergraduate degree in economics and a master's degree in public and private management from the Yale School of Management (1984), Krens' knowledge of art and art history seems to be self-taught. He became the director of the Williams College Museum of Art in 1980 where he stayed until he took up his appointment at the Guggenheim in 1988. Krens is overseeing the present, and controversial, addition to the Frank Lloyd Wright building in New York as well as the expansion of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice. He is also

managing another major construction project - a megamuseum specializing in contemporary art, The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams. Thomas Krens is converting a complex of abandoned factories into the world's largest museum of contemporary art and the support facilities it will require, hotel, restaurants, shops, condominiums. The factories contain 720,000 square feet of space and occupy 20 acres of land. The museum will be 500,000 sq. ft., 25 times the size of the Guggenheim.

Krens is an entrepreneur whose business is museums. He talks about art as a commodity and museums as an industry. "What I want is to build an arena to make exhibitions, and to write about and interpret 20th century art." says Krens "And I want to do it globally." (Weisgall, 1989, p.57).

He also wants to transform the "industry", to change how institutions operate, how they acquire art, how they show it, how they think about it. He believes museums are in a crisis, they need to explore "mergers and acquisitions" and understand "asset management." According to Krens a museum's assets are its collections. Its exhibitions and programs are its "product."

(Weisgall, 1989, p.58).

Recently, the Guggenheim sold off some of its "assets" to purchase a huge collection of contemporary art. Art world watchdogs were outraged at the deaccessioning of several major paintings by modern masters including Chagall and Kandinsky. How does the Krens' decision to deaccession objects from the Guggenheim collection reflect the influence of the corporation? A look at museum deaccessioning policy will begin to answer this question.

At the height of Hovingism, the Metropolitan Museum secretly sold important paintings from its collection and was subsequently investigated by the New York State attorney general. The Hoving scandal did bring some museums to develop more rigorous deaccession policies and the American Association of Museums Committee for Professional Practices in Art Museums revised and strengthened its deaccession guidelines, but deaccessions have continued to increase in volume and value. The Metropolitan's policy now, in keeping with the A.A.M., is simply to keep deaccession decisions completely independent of purchasing decisions. This is not to say that the income from the sale of art should not be used

for new acquisitions, but rather that the decision to sell a work be based on a policy decision that the museum no longer projects any need for that object. The A.A.M. also recommends that all funds from the sale of art work from the collections be used to replenish the collection. These two policies are generally accepted by American art museums but, in the case of the Guggenheim, there are doubts in regard to both.

First is the question of the importance of the paintings to the collection. Several art historians acknowledged the importance of the paintings, especially the Kandinsky, and the magnitude of the loss to the museum's collection. "They could have sold almost anything but that," said Gert Schiff of New York University, "It really was a centerpiece of the collection." (Brenson, 1990, Cp.1). Defending the sale, Diane Waldman, deputy director of the Guggenheim, described the works as "very important, but relative to our collection, they are paintings we felt we could deaccession." (Brown, 1990, p.40).

Within the museum world there was criticism. Kirk Varnedoe, director of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art said the sale "seems to me to set a

dangerous precedent." (Brown, 1990, p.32). "The notion that you can have too many Kandinsky's strikes me as amusing," commented Freudenheim of the Smithsonian (Brown, 1990, p.33). Even Thomas Messer, retired director of the Guggenheim is on record as noting that "the selling of old modern masters for the purpose of the acquisition of contemporary works adds to the problematics of the situation." (Brenson, 1990, Cp.1).

The modern master's paintings were sold precisely for that reason. The paintings were sold in order to finance the acquisition of Count Giuseppe Panza di Biumo's collection of over 200 works of Minimal and Conceptual art. In the process, the Guggenheim set auction records for Chagall (\$14.85 million), Modigliani (\$11.55 million) and Kandinsky (\$20.9 million) for a total of \$47.3 million.

So, in disregard of the A.A.M. recommendations the deaccessioning was directly linked to the purchase of the Panza Collection, and further the works were sold, not because the museum no longer needed them, but for the purpose of generating money. The revenues from the sale of the paintings will be used to purchase the Panza Collection to be housed in the Massachusetts Museum of

Contemporary Art, a museum that at the moment does not exist and whose legal connections to the Guggenheim are cloudy.

The idea for the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art began when Krens was director of the gallery at Williams College and is basically an economic re-development project. Krens negotiated with the state to set up a commission, with Krens as chairman. They passed a \$35 million bond issue to finance half of the project and enable the commission to acquire the mill complex. If the museum is not built, the mills will remain empty and the State of Massachusetts will take the loss. Key now to the success of the project is the commitment of the Guggenheim. Krens needs to use the "assets" of that museum, that is, its collection, as the power base from which to launch the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.

Krens talks about art quantitatively, in economic and strategic terms. He envisions huge exhibitions that will travel to satellite museums which are a part of his multinational museum - an idea that calls into question the role of the museum in the issues of conservation and care of objects. And he foresees computer-generated

research enabling his staff to turn out six or seven major exhibitions and catalogues a year (Weisgall, 1989, p.60). The deaccession of some of the Guggenheim's prize paintings equates art with money, and Thomas Krens' attitude toward exhibitions and publications equates research with production, production of more goods to be marketed.

Effective management of any sort requires an understanding of the nature and purpose of the thing to be managed. Art museum management requires a clear sense of aesthetic standards and sound artistic judgement. As the museum director and art scholar Sherman Lee wrote: "An art museum is not the same kind of institution as a corporation. I don't think many business assumptions are valid for the art museum. We must not think in terms of a balance sheet. I think many museums have been put in financial jeopardy and have been mismanaged by the misapplication of business principles." (Lee, -1972, p.78).

Conclusion

Art and the art museum are considered beneficial to the society. A visit to an art museum may provide an aesthetic experience or an educational opportunity. It may be spiritually, intellectually, or morally uplifting.

Art and the art museum are considered to exist outside the realm of commerce yet have the potential for high popular appeal. All of these elements and conditions make the sponsorship of the art museum very appealing to American corporations. A corporation can improve its public image by association with the art museum. Through sponsorship of special exhibits, a corporation may gain wide public awareness of its product or service and better customer relations. It may even be able to influence government legislation in favor of the corporation.

The benefits to the museum in this relationship are obviously monetary but what are the dangers? This study indicates, through the analysis of the corporate presence at the Metropolitan Museum, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum, that the museum and its staff may be compromised. The corporation, when underwriting an exhibition, will apply its usual cost-accounting procedures and will expect some predetermined return for each dollar expended. This raises questions about how curatorial decisions might be influenced and how administrative policy might be determined. What may be at risk is nothing less than the very heart of museum

scholarship.

SECTION THREE

CHAPTER 8

The Scholar and The Capitalist,
The Common Goals of Alfred H. Barr and
Nelson Rockefeller in Building the
Museum of Modern Art

Introduction

The Museum of Modern Art in New York began as "an experiment to determine whether sufficient public interest exists to justify the establishment of a permanent institution devoted to collecting, exhibiting, and studying modern art." It was the first American museum devoted to modern art and it expanded quickly to include in its definition of art, modern architecture, design, film and photography. It was, from its beginnings, the premier American authority of things modern including the concept of the modern museum. The Museum of Modern Art instituted museum practices previously unheard of, adopting marketing methods, for example, from the American corporation. The fact that it was new, was modern, was considered experimental, allowed the Museum of Modern Art great latitude in developing policies and programs. It was modern, established by capitalists, for the purpose of educating the populace. Thus the three influences on the American art museum being examined here (modernism, capitalism, democracy) are present in full force in the Museum of Modern Art and their implications may be clarified through an in-depth look at this one museum.

The Museum of Modern Art has, as an advocate of modernism, influenced museum architecture, supplanting the palace in the park with a modern, climate controlled structure designed to move large crowds through exhibitions and into a restaurant or retail shop. Attitudes toward exhibition design and the presentation of individual works of art have been altered as a result of the practices of the Museum of Modern Art.

In its mission to collect, exhibit and study modern art, the museum has shown a strong democratic tendency. The collection includes not only the rather difficult paintings of the high modernists but also the well-designed yet mundane objects of everyday life. Exhibits at the Museum of Modern Art have, of course, come from every department and have ranged from, for example, the scholarly Cubist painting shows to the exhibition of "Useful Objects of American Design Under \$10." In its mission to provide for the study of modern art, the Museum of Modern Art has shed light on alternative educational methods which, while distinctly connected to the Museum of Modern Art, have nonetheless provided insights for other museums. Even the refinement of wall labels for the purpose of instruction for all is

considered by many to be part of the legacy of Alfred Barr.

The Museum of Modern Art has also had, from its inception and throughout its history, close ties to capitalism. A member of the Rockefeller family, America's foremost capitalists, was present at the birth of the Museum and the family has continuously been represented on the Museum's Board of Trustees and has instituted, as we shall see, corporate tactics into the Museum's operations.

The three influences of modernism, democracy, and capitalism were intertwined from the beginning and have grown together through the years. The protagonists in this development were the founding director, Alfred Barr, and the founding family, The Rockefellers, in particular, Nelson Rockefeller. Alfred Barr, in his position of founding director, proved to be not only a modernist, but a populist, and in time, a capitalist. The Rockefeller legacy brought forth the Museum and set it on a self-supporting course with the help of what Nelson Rockefeller called "enlightened capitalism". The roles of these key people were critical in the development of the Museum and have continued as major influences to the

present day. The common goals of the scholar and the capitalist came together to build a democratic, consumer-oriented museum without sacrificing excellence. The beginnings of that collaboration will be examined in this chapter.

Alfred H. Barr, Founding Director

Alfred H. Barr, Jr. was born in Detroit in 1902, son of a Presbyterian minister, and raised in Baltimore from the age of nine (Marquis, 1989, p.3). In 1918 he entered Princeton University and soon after enrolled in Charles Rufus Morey's course in medieval art, a course which would forever influence Barr's thinking. Taught as a record of that civilization, combining painting and sculpture with architecture, murals, illuminated manuscripts, and crafts, the medieval art course became Alfred Barr's education model.

Following graduation from Princeton in 1922, Barr was awarded a Master of Arts degree (1923) in art and archaeology and assumed a teaching assistantship at Harvard University's department of fine arts. Barr completed his coursework toward the Ph.D. and in the Fall of 1926 was appointed to the position of Associate Professor of Art History, Wellesley College (Marquis,

1989, p.36). At this time he also enrolled in Paul Sach's museum course at the Fogg Museum, Harvard University. Sachs arranged for a twelve month traveling scholarship for Barr which enabled the young scholar extended time in England, Holland, Germany, Russia, and France. Most significant among these travels was a visit to the Bauhaus at Dessau where he met the architect Walter Gropius, and artists Paul Klee, Herbert Bayer, Oscar Schlemmer, Josef Albers, Lyonel Feininger and Lazslo Maholy-Nagy (Marquis, 1989, p.40). The influence of this school where all the arts were taught (painting, sculpture, textile design, graphic design, photography, industrial design) under the umbrella of architecture, reinforced and expanded on Morey's educational methods. Barr called the Bauhaus building designed by Gropius "the most important structure of its decade". He wrote that the Bauhaus was "the one school in the world where modern problems of design were approached realistically in a modern atmosphere." (Bayer, et al, 1938, p.7, Museum of Modern Art Archives, catalog).

This first-hand exposure to a modern art school where all the modern arts, crafts, materials, techniques, and ideas were taught in concert seemed a variation of

Morey's medieval art course at Princeton. Barr developed a course at Wellesley, the first of its scope at any college in America, which covered modern painting, sculpture, architecture, music, film, photography and design (Barr, 1927, Museum of Modern Art Archives). He also developed a course of lectures on modern art which included "The Bauhaus at Dessau: Walter Gropius the visionary, executive, architect. The painters Kandinsky, Feininger and Klee. The curriculum: material, technique and form, (Albers) furniture and decorative arts; photography, (Moholy-Nagy); theater and ballet, (Schlemmer); typography and posters, (Bayer). The Bauhaus as a national and international influence" (Barr, 1929 a, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives, Course Outline).

When the founders of the Museum of Modern Art, upon the recommendation of Paul Sachs, offered the position of director to the then twenty-six year old Alfred Barr, the young scholar proposed the organization of the new museum be based on his course at Wellesly. The Museum, he wrote, would begin with exhibitions of painting and sculpture and then would "expand beyond those limits in order to include departments devoted to drawings, prints,

and photography, typography, the arts of design in commerce and industry, architecture, stage designing, furniture and the decorative arts. Not the least important collection might be a library of films..." (Barr, 1929 b, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives, Essay).

Barr succeeded, in time, in introducing the practical, commercial, and popular arts along with the traditional fine art mediums. (See pp. 214-217) In 1932, he established a Department of Architecture and a Department of Circulating Exhibitions and a reference library of 2,000 volumes. In 1934 he initiated the Design Collection and in 1935 the Museum of Modern Art Film Library (now called the Department of Film) was established, the first department in any museum in the world devoted to this 20th century art form. The Department of Photography was founded in 1940, the first curatorial department dedicated to photography.

In retrospect, it seems extraordinary that this man of twenty-six years, at a time when few Americans knew anything of modern art, was able to thoroughly grasp the central impulses of modern art forms and project their ultimate manifestations. He conceived of them from an

art-historical point of view, amassed a storehouse of ideas and images, organized them in some thematic way, and made them available to the general populace.

Barr As Populist

When he wrote the essay announcing the opening of the Museum, Alfred Barr outlined the history of the public's relationship to advanced art, the history of the formation of museums and their responsibilities, and the cultural necessity of The Museum of Modern Art (Barr, 1929 c, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives, Essay). While noting that the "ultimate purpose will be to acquire...a collection of the best modern works of art", he also put forth the more immediate purpose "to hold, in a gallery on Fifth Avenue, some twenty exhibitions during the next two years...six or seven major and perhaps a dozen minor exhibitions" (Barr, 1929 c, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Essay). Barr recognized from the onset the necessity of engaging and educating the broad public. (For more information on Barr's museum education philosophy, see Chapter 6, "Education in the Museum of Modern Art".)

The first exhibition opened November 7 on the twelfth floor of the Heckscher Building at Fifth Avenue

indicating a clear interest in modern art.

The choice of Cezanne, Gauguin, Seurat and Van Gogh to introduce modernist ideas to New York was a success as indicated by attendance but also because it constituted an intelligent art historical lesson. Barr called the exhibit "a declaration of faith in the greatness of these men as artists and in their importance as the nineteenth century ancestors of the progressive art of our own time." (Barr, 1929 d, n.p, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Catalog, p.12).

The second exhibit of "Nineteen Living Americans" was organized at the insistence of the Board in an effort to demonstrate that the Museum would champion American artists as well as Europeans. Unfortunately, it lacked real focus, was poorly reviewed, and poorly attended.

The third exhibit, called "Painting in Paris" contained works by Picasso, Matisse, Derain, Bonnard, Braque, and Rouault. An instructional catalog authored by Barr to enlighten visitors regarding modern painting was well received and attendance was recorded at 58, 575. Clearly, there was an enthusiastic audience for European modern art, the art Alfred Barr believed to be central to Modernism. When, in the future, Barr would be criticized

for not showing more American art, he would defend his European preference by pointing to the Whitney Museum as the caretaker of things American and by insisting that The Museum of Modern Art had special responsibility to Modernists of all nationalities and European Modernists in particular as the leaders and innovators of the movement (Barr, 1930, p.14).

The success of these first exhibits and catalogs insured the continued support of the Board for Barr's vision of the Museum as expressed in 1929. "It is not unreasonable to suppose that within ten years New York, with its vast wealth, its already magnificent private collections and its enthusiastic but not yet organized interest in modern art, could achieve perhaps the greatest modern museum in the world." (Barr, 1929 c, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives, Essay). Exactly ten years later, on May 10, 1939, the Museum of Modern Art's new modern museum building at 11 West 53 Street would be dedicated by the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt. The events leading to the construction of the first modern museum building and to the development of the collection it housed, already the most distinguished of its kind in the world, are inextricably

tied to the exacting intellectual tenacity of Alfred Barr and to his comprehension of how populist support could produce capital.

Barr As Capitalist

The scholarly exhibits he organized and the informative catalogs he authored combined with lively social events to keep the press reporting and the public coming. Barr aided the public relations endeavor by hiring, in 1930, an expert in the field to develop a strategy for a membership drive and a fund-raising drive. [The idea of selling memberships in a museum was a Museum of Modern Art innovation which would eventually be adopted by virtually all of America's museums. (See also Hoving/Corporate Partnership, Chapter 7) The Museum of Modern Art was also the first museum to organize, in August of 1933, an in-house Publicity Department.] In the course of the next ten years 1,600,000 people would view 125 special exhibitions and the Museum's Bulletin (Museum Archives) would report more than 4,000 members. Through the generosity of the Museum Board, a collection of modern art would be built consisting of 271 paintings, 97 sculptures, 308 watercolors, six pastels, 149 prints, and an unrecorded number of drawings. (Compiled from

records in the Bulletin, Museum Archives.)

The heart of the Museum's collection was the gift of one of the founders, Miss Lillie Bliss. Bequeathed at her death in 1931, the collection was transferred to the Museum in 1934 when the condition of a sufficient endowment had been met. It was recorded in the Bulletin that, to fulfill the terms of the Bliss bequest, "the Museum, by a quiet six weeks' campaign among its friends, raised a \$600,000 Endowment Fund" (Bulletin, April 1934, p.3, Museum of Modern Art Archives). The collection contained paintings by Renoir, Degas, Pissarro, Gauguin, Seurat, Toulouse-Lautrec, Matisse, Modigliani, and Picasso and scores of drawings and prints. Perhaps most important of all was the collection of 21 paintings by Cezanne (10 watercolors and 11 oils). "With the Bliss collection", wrote Alfred Barr in the Bulletin, "New York can look London, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, Chicago in the face so far as public collections of modern art are concerned." (Bulletin, April, 1934, p.3, Museum of Modern Art Archives).

Between August, 1929 and January 1930 Barr wrote two editions of a fund-raising brochure and three articles for popular magazines, all of which followed the same

financial reasoning.

"In the history of art, as in more materialistic matters, money talks vividly. Let us not be ashamed to listen. When two of the greatest modern painters, Cezanne and Van Gogh, died, the accumulated income from the sale of their pictures would scarcely have paid for adequate funerals. Today, twenty-five or thirty years later, a good Cezanne or a good Van Gogh brings fifty thousand dollars. During Seurat's lifetime, his pictures wanted purchasers. Thirty years after his death, the American collector, John Quinn, paid seven thousand dollars for "Le Cirque". Today, only ten years later, this same picture would probably bring one hundred and fifty thousand dollars...But far more significant are the prices paid for the work of living artists." Barr goes on to describe the "luxurious incomes" of Picasso, Matisse, Jean Miro and other modernists and concludes that attitudes toward the advanced artist have changed astonishingly and that the artist's position is better than at any time since the French Revolution (Barr, 1929 c, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives, Essay).

Although Barr was reserved and scholarly he clearly was not above appealing to potential donors on the basis

of financial gain through investment in modern paintings. He acknowledged that private patronage was necessary for the health of the arts and the success of his museum. This was, in part, the legacy of his teacher Paul J. Sachs who trained his student-curators to court collectors, woo donations, and be prepared to acquire entire estates when necessary. Sachs was responsible, through his museum course at Harvard University, for training the administrators of Americas largest and most important museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery in Washington, and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. His influence is worth noting because of its breadth and because it helped shape the Museum of Modern Art.

Paul J. Sachs arrived at the Fogg Museum at Harvard University directly from a family-owned Wall Street brokerage house in 1914 at the age of 36. His background in finance played a critical part in his expansion of the Fogg and influenced the content of his instruction. Sachs developed a year long graduate museum course in which he taught his students, not only the appreciation of art, but the administrative skills he believed America's curators should have. Sachs provided guest

lecturers, most of whom would be the future employers of his students. He also took his students on tours of private collections, collections of potential donors to America's museums. These connections served to lend prestige to the course and success to the students. According to statistics kept by Sachs, 388 students enrolled in the course between 1921 and 1956. Of those 388, 160 graduates ended up holding "responsible positions in 85 of the 100 best museums in the land". Specifically, of those 160, 42 were museum directors or administrative officers (Sachs, 1956, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives).

Some of Sachs' central tenets were: the acknowledgement of European influence on American culture, the role of education in appreciating artistic efforts, and the need for an elite to guide the populace (Sachs, 1954, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives, Address). He viewed his students as this elite. They were expected to return to the populace and instruct it. They should "understand that in twentieth-century America a museum should not only be a treasure house, but also an educational system." (Sachs, 1954, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives, Address). Sachs thought of the curator as

artistic interpreter. He trained his elite core to determine both the cultural and monetary value of a work of art and to convey the cultural value to the museum visitor while figuring out how to raise the money to acquire the object for the museum's collection. His students were first of all administrators trained in a market economy that favored a distinctly American consumption of art. (See Chapter 7)

The Museum of Modern Art under the direction of Sach's most famous student, Alfred Barr, would be the first testing ground for Sachs' ideas about the museum profession. The Museum of Modern Art, at its inception, operated like no other museum of that time for Alfred Barr served, not only as director, but also curated all the exhibits, wrote the catalogs, and determined what the museum should purchase. As the museum grew and these functions became more complex, the museum operated more and more along the lines of a private American corporation and Alfred Barr's role changed. But initially, his position was what Sachs prescribed to create a museum operating on the highest level of scholarship and reaching the populace as well.

The educational structure, based on the Wellesly

modern art course, was in place. This structure, combined with catalogs, wall labels and lectures, provided the means of instructing the masses brought into the museum through the prodding of the popular press. The pragmatic stance of viewing art as investment was also taken and, although Alfred Barr may not have realized it at the time, his constantly changing exhibitions created for the museum, a consumer constituency.

Barr As Modernist

It seems a most appropriate notion that a modern museum would be in constant flux, reflecting, in its tempo, modern society. It is said that our modern culture and the economy on which it is based, annihilates everything that it creates - physical environments, social institutions, metaphysical ideas, artistic visions, moral values - in order to create more, to endlessly create the world anew. This disposable, consumer culture forces us to grapple with the question of what is essential, what is important, what is meaningful. That is the question most often addressed by modern artists. (See Chapter 5)

Historians trace the beginnings of modernism to

discoveries in the physical sciences which changed our ideas about the universe and caused a reinterpretation of religious doctrine. Scientific discoveries also transformed production and industrialization was born. Modernization created new human environments and destroyed old ones, the tempo of life speeded up and immense demographic upheavals resulted in rapid urban growth. Mass communication and new forms of corporate power created an ever-expanding capitalist world market. Modernism nourished an amazing variety of visions and ideas which found form in the art and architecture of the twentieth century. The Museum of Modern Art was created to embody the ideas and visions and forms of modern culture and would do so, in large part, through its architecture.

The sleek new building that opened in 1939 to house the world's greatest collection of modern art in all its manifestations, was the result of architectural ideas discovered and promoted by Alfred Barr years earlier. Barr visited the Bauhaus in Dessau, Germany in 1927 and was inspired by its comprehensive approach to the visual arts. Just as the Bauhaus mix of fine arts, commercial arts and industrial arts constituted the basis of Barr's

departmental structure of the Museum of Modern Art, so would its architecture influence the design of the Museum's building.

Shortly after the Museum of Modern Art was founded, Barr invited two like-minded scholars to organize an exhibition of Bauhaus style architecture. Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson curated Modern Architecture: International Exhibition which was accompanied by a catalog detailing the new architecture Barr himself labeled the "International Style" (Hitchcock et al, 1932, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Catalog).

"A number of progressive architects have converged to form a genuinely new style which is rapidly spreading throughout the world," Barr wrote in the catalog essay. "Both in appearance and structure this style is peculiar to the twentieth century and is as fundamentally original as the Greek or Byzantine or Gothic...The aesthetic principles of the International Style are based primarily upon the nature of modern materials and structure and upon modern requirements in planning. Slender steel posts and beams, and concrete reinforced by steel have made possible structures of skeleton-like strength and lightness. The external surfacing materials are of

painted stucco or tile, or, in more expensive buildings, of aluminum or thin slabs of marble or granite and of glass both opaque and transparent. Planning, liberated from the necessity for symmetry so frequently required by tradition is, in the new style, flexibly dependent upon convenience."

"These technical and utilitarian factors in the hands of designers who understand inherent aesthetic possibilities have resulted in an architecture comparable in integrity and even in beauty to the styles of the past." (Hitchcock, 1932, p.12)

Barr, always the educator, edges the reader toward an understanding of the architects' plight: "...just as the modern architect has had to adjust himself to modern problems of design and structure so the modern public, in order to appreciate his achievements, must make parallel adjustments to what seems new and strange." (Hitchcock, 1932, p.12). He then goes on to instruct the reader/museum visitor, in a definition of International Style architecture, a definition that holds true to this day.

Barr sets down four principles of architectural design he calls the 1) principle of volume; 2) regularity

and 3) flexibility, and 4) the "comprehensive principle of positive and negative" (Hickcock, 1932, p.13).

The principle of volume is clear: "The modern architect...conceives of his building not as a structure of brick or masonry with thick columns and supporting walls resting heavily upon the earth but rather as a skeleton enclosed by a thin light shell. He thinks in terms of volume - of space enclosed by planes or surfaces - as opposed to mass and solidity" (Hitchcock et al, 1932, p.14).

The principles of regularity and flexibility are related in Barr's definition. He refers to the historic use of bilateral symmetry, that is, balanced masses on either side of a central axis, and to the horizontal division of the facade. This is compared to the modern building which reveals its structure through both horizontal and vertical division which may very well be asymmetrical, depending on the function of the building, ergo: flexibility.

Barr also makes reference to the lack of decoration when he writes: "He (the architect) permits the horizontal floors of his skyscraper and the rows of windows in his school to repeat themselves boldly without

artificial accents or terminations." (Hitchcock, 1932, p.15). The structure revealing itself and its function constitutes the aesthetics of the building.

The fourth "comprehensive principle of positive and negative" refers to the positive use of materials, technically appropriate, applied in delicate proportions, and the elimination (therefore negative) of any kind of ornament or artificial pattern. In his essay, Barr acknowledges that the "lack of ornament is one of the most difficult elements of the style for the layman to accept" and goes on to explain that "Intrinsically there is no reason why ornament should not be used, but modern ornament, usually crass in design and machine-manufactured, would seem to mar rather than adorn the clean perfection of surface and proportion." (Hitchcock, 1932, p.15).

The exhibition accompanied by its two-hundred page catalog toured the United States, in different versions, for over seven years spreading the new architectural message. By praising the architecture's modernity, originality, and, most important, its aesthetic qualities, Barr focused on architecture as art. By using the Bauhaus building at Dessau, designed by Walter

Gropius, as the best illustration of the principles of modern design, Barr demonstrated how a modern institution might propagate the faith. (See pp. 170-176) And when, in 1936, the Museum of Modern Art initiated plans to build a new building, Alfred Barr proposed that it should be designed by one of the "obviously superior Europeans." (Barr, 1936, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives, Letter)

Philip Goodwin was an architect and a trustee of the Museum and was selected by his fellow trustees to be architect for the new Museum of Modern Art. He appointed a young American, Edward Durrell Stone, as his associate for the project. Barr protested. "Since 1930 a whole generation of young American architects has tried to master modern principles (in spite of their anachronistic school) but they have not had time...or experience enough to prove their mastery." He wrote in a letter to Goodwin. "The Museum, as a patron of modern architecture, cannot afford to run the risk of mediocrity in the design of its new building. It must have the superlatively best." (Barr, 1936, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Letter)

Edward Durrell Stone had been the codesigner of the Rockefeller's Radio City Music Hall and had the backing

of Nelson Rockefeller. Barr resigned from the Building Committee in defeat, an act which might be viewed as the symbolic end of one period and beginning of another. Alfred Barr no longer held the directorship prescribed by Paul Sachs. Alfred Barr's scholarship and expertise, as evidenced in exhibits and catalogs, had established the Museum's credibility, and his efforts in spreading the modernist message had taken the form of modern marketing techniques. The groundwork was complete for the Museum to move toward a truly capitalistic structure, one that would be initiated by Nelson Rockefeller.

The new Museum of Modern Art building designed by Trustee Philip Goodwin and associate Edward Durrell Stone received a warm welcome when it opened just three years later in 1939. It was in fact the first International Style building in America and was praised in Architectural Forum for its "efficient and flexible plan, superlative use of materials, color, furnishings...a thoroughly distinguished addition to the best modern architecture has produced." (Anonymous, 1939, n.p. Museum of Modern Art Archives, clipping).

Nelson Rockefeller presided at the opening of the new building, presided in his new post of President of

the Board of Trustees. Alfred Barr, while respected as a scholar, was no longer idealized as the all-knowing cultural administrator. The power had shifted and the future and the character of the Museum of Modern Art now lay with its Board.

The Rockefeller Charitable Legacy

Nelson Rockefeller, son of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and Abbey Aldrich Rockefeller, was first appointed to the Museum Board in 1932. The importance of Nelson Rockefeller's role in the development of the Museum of Modern Art is the result, in part, of his presence during the Museum's formative years. (In contrast, by the time his younger brother David came of age the character of the Museum and the direction in which it would move were well established.) Nelson played an important part in establishing the physical plant, the collections, and the financial operation of the Museum. He had a sincere interest in modern art, an interest stimulated no doubt by his mother. This combined with his unfaltering faith in capitalism, inherited perhaps from his father and grandfather.

The Rockefeller legacy began with Nelson's

grandfather, John D., a Cleveland, Ohio bookkeeper who, at the age of 23 went into business with Samuel Andrews, the inventor of an inexpensive process for the refinement of crude petroleum. At the age of 30, John D. formed the Standard Oil Company and within six years had gained control of 90 percent of the oil refineries in the U.S. with a virtual monopoly on their marketing facilities as well.

Rockefeller's business dealings were questioned by individual Americans, newspapers and popular journals, and the United States Supreme Court which, by an anti trust decision in 1911, broke Standard Oil into smaller companies. Although his philanthropic tendencies were present even prior to his financial success and grew as his earnings grew, Rockefeller's generosity was regarded with suspicion (Collier, 1976, p.87). Not until John D. Rockefeller had earned almost \$1 billion and given away \$550 million (the largest sum ever donated by an individual) did the public become satisfied that the scale of his good works matched that of his wealth.

John D. Rockefeller established large philanthropic institutions with the guidance of Frederick T. Gates, a Baptist minister and fund raiser. Gates established

guidelines for "legally incorporated endowment funds under competent management...which shall be specifically devoted to the promotion of human well-being" (Collier, 1976, p.99). His list of funds included one for the "promotion of higher education in the United States; a fund for the promotion of medical research throughout the world; a fund for the promotion of fine arts and the refinement of taste in the United States; a fund for the promotion of scientific agriculture and the enrichment of rural life; a fund for the promotion of Christian ethics and Christian civic virtue in the United States." (Collier, 1976, p.100). These funds would be administered by the Rockefeller Foundation; the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research and the General Education Board.

By the time John D. Rockefeller, Jr., came of age, presiding over the family's philanthropic institutions was a full time job. Junior, as he was called, was president of the Foundation and on the board of the Institute for Medical Research while Gates held the chairmanships of both foundations. In 1917 Gates stepped down and Junior assumed full control of both chairs. With his wife, Abbey Aldrich, Junior extended the

family's interests beyond the initial activities of the Rockefeller-Gates philanthropic institution. Rockefeller Jr. contributed to the establishment and maintenance of National Parks from Maine to California. In 1925 he supplied the Metropolitan Museum of Art with a collection of medieval art objects and later constructed the Cloisters Museum as a branch of the Metropolitan Museum to house the collection. In 1927 he began the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, one of several restorations he financed in the United States and Europe. In 1928 he began construction of his most ambitious project, Rockefeller Center (Collier, 1976, p.187).

Abbey Aldrich Rockefeller like her husband, was interested in art. She had been educated in the prominent European art movements as was the custom of her class in that time, and upon her marriage to John D., Jr., she began to collect the art a wealthy family was expected to own: Old Masters.

Abbey Aldrich Rockefeller was also a woman with an adventurous spirit. She maintained a gallery of modern art housed on the top floor of the family's New York City mansion. Much to the chagrin of her rather conservative husband, Abbey studied the new art, invited the art

intellectuals of the day to her gallery (including Alfred Barr), and instilled in her children an appreciation for modern art (Chase, 1950, p.123).

Her love of modern art was so strong that in 1929 Abbey Rockefeller, along with two other wealthy socialites, Mrs. Cornelius Sullivan and Miss Lillie P. Bliss, founded the Museum of Modern Art. These women, and a handful of recruited founding fathers, had access to the intellectual and material wealth necessary to successfully launch the new endeavor during a period of national catastrophe, the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression. In retrospect, it seems an unlikely time to begin such a daring adventure, but, as Mrs. Rockefeller wrote to her sister the same year the museum idea was formed: "To me art is one of the great resources of my life. I believe that it not only enriches the spiritual life, but that it makes one more sane and sympathetic, more observant and understanding, regardless of whatever age it springs from, whatever subjects it represents." (Rockefeller, 1929, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Letter). Surely this period in American history had need of an enriched spirituality.

The Rockefeller influence on the Museum of Modern

Art was not only present at the museum's inception but has stretched across the years directing its growth and defining its mission. A Rockefeller, as we have seen, conceived the idea of the museum; a Rockefeller gave the land for the museum; the building resulted from Rockefeller donations, and the collection was built in large part with Rockefeller support. There has always been a Rockefeller on the Museum of Modern Art board and the Rockefeller philosophy of expansionism has prevailed.

At the time of her death in 1948, the Museum of Modern Art Bulletin stated Abbey Rockefeller's enthusiasm for the Museum "She served as a Trustee continuously since November 1929, was its first Treasurer, has held the offices of 1st Vice-President and 1st Vice-Chairman, and has worked unfailingly on countless committees." (Bulletin, 1948, p.20, Museum of Modern Art Archives). "It was to modern art that she gave her heart", wrote the New York Herald-Tribune, "and the city should long be grateful to her for her discerning eye and her generous, modest leadership. To say that she was a leading spirit in the foundation of the Museum of Modern Art is to understate the case." (Bulletin, 1948, p.23, Museum of Modern Art Archives)

Her love of modern art and dedication to the Museum would have a profound influence on the lives of two of her sons, Nelson and David, and on her daughter-in-law, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III (Blanchette). All three would serve Abbey Rockefeller's Museum of Modern Art in many capacities, giving generously of their time and money.

Nelson Rockefeller would be the first. During his Freshman year at Dartmouth College, Abbey took Nelson on a Christmas vacation excursion to the studios of some modern artists including Arthur B. Davies, one of the initiators of the Armory Show of 1913. When Nelson wrote to his mother regarding the experience, she answered: "If you start to cultivate your taste and eye so young, you ought to be very good at it by the time you can afford to collect..."(Rockefeller, 1928, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Letter)

Nelson Rockefeller, Enlightened Capitalist

Nelson Rockefeller edited a journal called Fine Arts while a student at Dartmouth and practiced on his own the art of photography. Upon graduation from college his mother arranged for him to serve with her on the Museum's Board of Trustees. Nelson was twenty-three years old.

Within two years he was made chairman of the Finance Committee and five years later he was elected President of the Museum. (Information compiled from records in the Bulletin, Museum of Modern Art Archives).

In a 1941 CBS radio interview, Nelson, then President of the Museum, spoke. "How did my interest in art begin? Well, my family has always been interested in art, and I more or less grew up with it. We have always had discussions and plans about art at home.

"I am interested in art that relates to the life of our own day, expresses the spirit of our time; that isn't cloistered and set apart; that includes the house and the motor car and the rest of the things we live with, as well as painting and sculpture. To my mind, that is the way art can be made to mean something to the individual: to be part of the materials of living.

"The true enjoyment of art is more than a vague and dutiful respect paid to the traditions of the past. At home, when we put a picture on the wall, I am not so much interested in its historical value, as in the pleasure it gives; the contribution it makes to the room and to the house. But what attracts me most to the art of our time is its vitality - the way it explores new possibilities

and makes use of new materials.

"That is what I like best about the Museum. It is trying to make the art of today useful and enjoyable to the public of today. Our contemporary arts need not wait fifty or a hundred years before they are widely appreciated." (Rockefeller, 1941, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives, Transcript). Mrs. John D. Jr. certainly was interested in having her son assume a position of influence in the Museum, but she was not only ambitious for Nelson, she was ambitious for her museum and recognized that he would serve it well.

When Nelson assumed the presidency of the Museum in 1939 he was thirty years old and the Museum of Modern Art was just ten. It was the beginning of a new era because the Museum was moving into its new home, a modern building designed to be a modern museum. It was an era of new ideas in museum administration including the application of the methods of what Nelson referred to as "enlightened capitalism".

Nelson Rockefeller knew the Museum well for he had served as its Treasurer, Chairman of the Advisory Committee, member of the Executive Committee and of the Building Committee. (Information compiled from the

Bulletin, Museum of Modern Art Archives). Although he was only thirty years old, he was already the President of Rockefeller Center and a director of Creole Petroleum Corp., a subsidiary of Standard Oil. Nelson Rockefeller understood corporate management and was quick to apply capitalist principles to the operation of the Museum. His plan was to cut expenses by operating more efficiently and increase income by marketing the product, modern art, in a variety of forms including books and posters. He also looked to the continued expansion of the Museum and its programs.

It is said the desire to always enlarge, making things more visible, more monumental, was a part of the Rockefeller character. Evidence of this can be seen throughout the City and the State of New York. Some of the trustees believed the Museum should strive to live within its means and one trustee, Henry Allen Moe, wrote a memo to this effect and presented it to Nelson. Rockefeller responded to Moe: "I'm not used to this down operation, I'm used to expanding operations, and if this report is adopted by the board I would have to resign the presidency". The memorandum was withdrawn and Nelson proceeded with his plans (Lynes, 1973, p.392).

The Museum of Modern Art had, almost from its inception, a method and a means for publicity. It issued its first Bulletin in 1933, and this became the means of communication between the Museum and its members. When Alfred Barr established a Publicity Department, it was a first for an American museum.

For the opening of the new museum building, however, Nelson Rockefeller, completely at his own expense, hired an expert public relations person to coordinate publicity. Julian Street, Jr., the new man, engaged CBS for a radio broadcast covering the formal opening. He arranged for Lowell Thomas to host the radio show and guests included Edsel Ford and John Hay Whitney in New York; Walt Disney talking about the importance of film from Hollywood; Robert Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago, asserting that "Perception is understanding", and direct from the White House in Washington, D.C., Franklin Delano Roosevelt stated that "The standards of American taste will inevitably be raised by this bringing into far-flung communities results of the latest and finest achievements in all the arts. In encouraging the creation and enjoyment of beautiful things we are furthering democracy itself.

That is why this museum is a citadel of civilization...Because it has been conceived as a national institution...The opportunity before the Museum of Modern Art is as broad as the whole United States." (Anonymous, 1939, Museum of Modern Art Archives, News clipping) The broad reach and influence of the Museum was both illustrated and acknowledged.

Publicity would bring to the museum an increase in attendance, in membership dollars, and in financial support through increased sales of printed matter. All this was intended to help keep the annual deficit from getting out of hand and to eventually, put the Museum on a self-supporting basis. (See change in Metropolitan Museum budget under Thomas Hoving, p.238).

In 1940, for example, earned income from sales of publications, memberships, and so on, furnished about one-third of the Museum's budget. The other two-thirds were donated, principally by the Trustees. Abbey Aldrich Rockefeller donated \$55,000 to the general budget in 1940, an additional \$55,000 to the building fund, and \$5,000 to the film library. She also gave the Museum seventeen paintings that year, 1,423 prints, one photograph and fifty-nine posters (Annual Report, 1940,

Museum of Modern Art Archives).

The following year's budget showed Nelson's financial management strategy was working since a full half of the Museum's funds were earned. Abbey Rockefeller donated again more than one hundred thousand dollars (Annual Report, 1941, Museum of Modern Art Archives).

Monroe Wheeler, who had been a publisher and a publicist, was selected by Rockefeller to take over the position of Director of Publications. With this change, the operation became more professional. The quality of the content and design of museum publications, always outstanding, was maintained or improved and the Museum of Modern Art's books won many awards. Simon and Schuster were retained to handle the distribution of museum catalogs to book stores, libraries, and so forth, and foreign language editions were introduced and distributed internationally. The market was therefore broadened and the publications department began to turn a profit. The 1945 Annual Report indicates that the Museum sold 50,000 books, 22,000 color reproductions, and 70,000 post cards. (Museum of Modern Art Archives)

Nelson Rockefeller wanted the entire operation to

run as efficiently as the publications department and hired efficiency experts to examine the problem and recommend where staff might be cut or at least used more effectively. The reorganization started at the top with the dismissal of Tom Mabrey, the Executive Director. The budget for the Department of Architecture and Design was greatly reduced.

Alfred Barr in 1946 foreshadowed the concerns that would be voiced regarding the Metropolitan under Hoving (pp. 238-246), the Whitney under Armstrong (pp. 263-279), and the Guggenheim under Krens (pp. 279-285). (See also Interview with Haacke, Appendix II). Barr was concerned about staff morale and about the standards of excellence he perceived to be slipping. He wrote of these fears to his mentor and friend Paul Sachs, saying the trustees behaved "as if organization were an end in itself." (Barr, 1946, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Letter).

Nelson Rockefeller believed in Darwin's concept of the survival of the fittest and applied this to American corporate capitalism. Survivors are those who can "adapt to their environment...if we are as smart and intelligent as I think we are...and if we can get rid of the emotional things...I'm very optimistic about the future."

(Scheer, 1975, p.185). In Rockefeller's view, the Museum was too dependent on donations from Trustees, and he was determined to correct that. In 1939 the Museum's budget was five hundred thousand dollars and three hundred thousand of that was supplied directly by the Trustees (Annual Report, 1959, Museum of Modern Art Archives). By 1948 donations from Trustees appeared relatively constant at \$320,296, however, the Museum budget had more than doubled to \$1,131,413. Therefore, the Museum's dependency on the generosity of the Trustees was adjusted from sixty percent down to twenty-nine percent. Income came from memberships (\$163,397), admissions (\$91,811), publications (\$124,929), traveling exhibits (\$69,643), and assorted other money makers such as the restaurant, film showings and art instruction. Income from investments totaled almost \$50,000. (Annual Report, 1948, Museum of Modern Art Archives).

Nelson Rockefeller's reputation for prudent financial management was established prior to assuming the position of President. In 1939, Time magazine reported on the opening of the new building. "The Rockefeller-sited Museum also acquired, for its tenth anniversary, a Rockefeller president: brisk, hefty, sunny

Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller, 30 year old second son of John D. Jr. As Treasurer of the Museum since 1937, Nelson raised the funds for the new building, on which only \$200,000 of \$2,000,000 remained last week unpaid." (Anonymous, May 23, 1939, News clipping, Museum of Modern Art Archives).

The fact that a museum budget could be in excess of \$1 million and two-thirds of that be earned through services was an astonishing accomplishment for a privately endowed institution. The Museum of Modern Art, born on the edge of the Great Depression, grew rapidly in spite of hard economic times through the generosity of the Trustees. With the application of corporate management techniques, the Museum could count on earned income, thus insuring its survival.

The Museum of Modern Art's exhibits, catalogs and collections reflected the scholarship of Alfred Barr while the management of those "assets" reflected Nelson Rockefeller's application of the principles of "enlightened capitalism". Without sacrificing quality, The Museum of Modern Art launched a program geared to instruct the masses, as was its mission.

Conclusion

Alfred Barr defined the work of art as an "infinitely complex focus of human experience." He went on. "The mystery of its creation, its history, the rise and fall of its esthetics, documentary, sentimental, and commercial values, the endless variety of its relationships to other works of art, its physical condition, the meaning of its subject, the technique of its production, the purpose of the man who made it - all these factors lie behind a work of art, converge upon it, and challenge our powers of analysis and publication. And they should be made accessible to other scholars and intelligible to the man off the street." (Barr, 1944, n.p., Museum of Modern Art, Address). This democratic commitment to assisting in the appreciation of art by non-scholars was to a great extent what allowed the Rockefeller marketing plan to function successfully. Alfred Barr broadened the terms "research" and "publish" to include in the audience, not only scholars but all interested laymen. "By publication I mean not only the scholarly treatise but also the popular article or book, the classroom or public lecture, the gallery talk, publicity releases, various kinds of reproductions, the film, the museum label, the broadcast and the telecast.

Whatever means of publication we may use, all are based on research if the publication is to be sound and true and at the same time effective - effective, that is, upon the museum public." (Barr, 1944, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives, Address). Barr recognized the museum public even in 1944, as "consumers, aged four to four score years, from every class and calling and in every state of mind from passionate and erudite interest to the most casual indifference." (Barr, 1944, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives, Address). Knowing the audience is the first lesson of knowing how to market a product.

The early educational democratic nature of the museum propelled it toward a consumer-oriented role. Because the early emphasis was not so much on collecting as on changing exhibits it lent itself to a consumer mind-set. Even as the collection was built, so too was constructed a myriad of activities around it and all those materials which would serve to educate (books, posters, etc.) could be sold in the museum store.

The presence of Nelson Rockefeller's philosophy of enlightened capitalism formed the financial and operational policies of the museum. The Museum of Modern Art's Board of Trustees included like-minded capitalists,

(Ford, Guggenheim, Whitney, Paley) who were also art lovers who built the Museum's collection and the building to house it. The Museum of Modern Art's trustees always had an important role in the affairs of the Museum and are no doubt responsible for the notion, strange in the museum world, that the collections were capital on which the management had to earn a dividend.

The Museum of Modern Art developed as a center for design, film, photography, all the modern arts, and arranged for its collections to tell the story of modern life. The Museum was now on a wide and fast track of building what would soon be the largest and most important collection of modern art in the world as well as a program to market it for a profit thus sustaining its operations. This early success brought with it new questions and new problems.

CHAPTER 9

Transformations:

A Developmental Examination of
the Museum of Modern Art

Introduction

"To be modern", wrote Marshall Berman, "is to experience personal and social life as a maelstrom, to find ones' world and oneself in perpetual disintegration and renewal, trouble and anguish, ambiguity and contradiction: to be part of a universe in which all that is solid melts into air. To be a modernist is to make oneself somehow at home in the maelstrom, to make its rhythms one's own, to move within its currents in search of freedom, of justice, that its fervid and perilous flow allows" (Berman, 1982, p.345).

The museum of Modern Art possesses the power in its collections and exhibits and programs and publications to convert its constituency into modernists, making them at home in the maelstrom. That constituency numbers more than one million visitors per year to the Museum plus the untold millions who read the publications and view the traveling exhibitions. In the little more than sixty years of its existence, The Museum of Modern Art has institutionalized what was a radical art idea. Modernism as a revolutionary art movement lies frozen in the art objects which document its history and explain its tradition.

The success of modernism in our culture seems complete. When we consider the shape of the chair on which we sit, the design of the room, house, building we inhabit, the look of our utensils, cars, magazines, we know that our world, the world beyond the museum, has been shaped by the grammar of modernism. Modernism as ideology still wields power and influence through the institution of the Museum of Modern Art and no other institution has played a greater part in effecting the historic transformation of our culture, our cultural institutions, and even the art they hold.

The Museum of Modern Art, the first and greatest of America's museums to be devoted exclusively to this field, has changed with the frequency and in ways befitting a modernist institution. This chapter will examine the two major transformations, the capital campaigns of 1959 and 1980, both of which were driven by the desire to serve a wider constituency and generate more income. Both resulted in building expansion and program and policy changes that reverberated throughout the museum world. To set the stage, let us first look to the early days of the enlightened capitalists who drove the transformation and to the war years that presented an

early threat to the Museum.

Background of The First Museum of Modern Art Building

When the first modern museum building opened on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Museum of Modern Art, it was the museum's first permanent home, the land and much of the building were gifts from the Rockefeller family. (See pp. 310-317) Time magazine described the new site: "Just off Fifth Avenue on 54th Street, touched by the midday shadow of Rockefeller Center's enormous slab, stood the old four-story and nine-story mansions of the Rockefeller family. Town dwellings of the elder and younger John D. Rockefeller for, respectively, 40 and 25 years, the houses were abandoned two years ago to wreckers. Last week the site became part of a long garden. In the garden were evergreens, arbors, trees, wattle screens, and sculpture by Lachaise, Despian, Zorach, Lipchitz. One fair spring night it was filled with hundreds of men with starched white bosoms and hundreds of rustling ladies. Back of them stood a new, long, spacious building faced with marble and glass; inside it other crowds could be seen, swishing past its plate-glass panels like frilly fish in a bright aquarium" (Time, 1939, p.84).

It was a million dollar property and a million dollar building. Virtually all the donations to the building fund came through the solicitation of Nelson Rockefeller, according to then president, A. Conger Goodyear. "As a member of the Building Committee, Treasurer of the Museum, Chairman of the Finance Committee, Member of the Executive Committee, First Chairman of the Advisory Committee, his finger has been usefully employed in practically every one of our pies". (Goodyear, 1939, speech, Bulletin, Museum of Modern Art Archives).

It was at this time that Nelson Rockefeller assumed the position of President of the Museum of Modern Art. He served in that position until called to public service because of World War II. In 1946, Rockefeller returned to New York and to the presidency of the Museum and continued in that post until 1953.

In his years away from the Museum he assured Rockefeller support through special funding from both the Rockefeller Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. (Information compiled from Annual Reports, Museum of Modern Art Archives.) He also, along with his brother David, encouraged Blanchette Rockefeller (Mrs. John

D.Rockefeller 3rd) to assume what was by then considered a Rockefeller responsibility, an active and supportive role in the Museum. Blanchette served the Museum of Modern Art in many capacities including that of President of the Museum. The Rockefeller brothers viewed her as perpetuating their mothers' enthusiasm for modern art and the establishment that housed it.

At Nelson's request Blanchette Rockefeller established in 1954 the Museum's Junior Council, a group of early-middle-aged men and women of wealth who would support the museum through work and monetary donations and from whose ranks the Museum trustees would rise. Blanchette also served on the Executive Committee, the Collections Committee, the Exhibitions Committee and the International Council. In 1959 she was named President of the Museum, served through 1964 and assumed that responsibility again in 1972. Blanchette Rockefeller was therefore President through the two major transformations. (Information compiled from the Bulletin, Museum of Modern Art Archives). David Rockefeller also assumed positions of responsibility. But Nelson was the first to champion his mother's dream.

The first edition of the Bulletin (Museum of Modern

Art Archives) to be published following Nelson Rockefeller's ascendancy to President in many ways reveals the conflicts the new Museum of Modern Art would face. On the cover is pictured the sleek new modernist building first of its kind in America, and immediately inside is this announcement to members: "For the first time the Museum is now able to provide commodious club rooms for the exclusive use of its members. The penthouse of the new building is entirely devoted to their uses, and tea is served daily..." In light of this sort of promotion it's not surprising that the Museum of Modern Art came to be known affectionately as "The Museum of Modern Lunch" (Appendix III, Interview with Zara Cohan).

Within the same edition of the Bulletin was printed the speech delivered by Professor Paul J. Sachs of Harvard University to the Trustees of the Museum on the occasion of the opening of the new building. The talk, divided into two parts, addressed in a serious tone the problems facing American museums and the specific problems of the Museum of Modern Art. This speech emphasized the possible dangers awaiting an art museum so broadly marketing its products and services. While

focused on the need for scholarship, severe discipline, and higher standards, Paul Sachs warned against the "pressure to vulgarize and cheapen our work through the mistaken idea that in such a fashion a broad public may be reached effectively. That is an especially tempting error because of the intense competition for public attention in American life." (Sachs, 1939, Address, Bulletin, Museum of Modern Art Archives).

The War Years

One of the greatest threats to the integrity of the Museum came with America's entry into World War II. It is easy to imagine that the war would make loan exhibits from Europe impossible but surprising to realize that the exhibits mounted during this period were very much concerned, not with modern art, but with reaching a wide audience and supporting the war effort.

A review of the Museum's programs during the early forties, reveals that the Museum mounted a number of war related exhibits such as "Army Illustrators", a collection of drawings by soldier-artists depicting army life. "Image of Freedom" was a photography show meant to interpret the abstract ideal America was fighting for in concrete photographic terms. "Wartime Housing" was co-

sponsored by the National Committee on the Housing Emergency and won praise from the President of the United States. "Such an exhibition will, I am sure, serve to bring forcibly to public attention some of the problems involved in providing adequate housing for war workers and their families..." (Roosevelt, 1942, Bulletin, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Address)

"The Road to Victory" was a massive undertaking curated by the Museum's Director of Photography, Edward Steichen and given a large play in the Bulletin. The show, which occupied the entire second floor, was lauded by the press as "poignantly memorable", "a genuine contribution to the war effort", "a declaration of power and an affirmation of our will to win the war". Steichen is referred to in all notes on the exhibition as "Lieutenant Commander Edward Steichen, U.S.N.R." and ninety percent of the photographs were supplied by departments and agencies of the United States government (Bulletin, June, 1942, Museum of Modern Art Archives).

The October-November, 1942 Museum Bulletin was dedicated to "The Museum and the War" (Museum of Modern Art Archives). It listed the government agencies the Museum had served by preparing and circulating exhibits

and films or acting in an advisory capacity. The Museum itself was used as a social club for enlisted men, providing refreshments in the garden, dancing in the galleries. The Museum established an Armed Services Program which contributed to a rehabilitation program for veterans through art therapy: physical therapy, occupational therapy, educational therapy, creative therapy, and psychotherapy.

Through the war years, the Museum addressed what was on the minds of Americans while forwarding, to a lesser degree, the peaceful arts. During this period of national crisis, the Museum's role in advancing modern art had been diminished and because of this the influence and importance of Alfred Barr was also lessened. On October 15, 1943, Stephen Clark, President of the Board of Trustees, demanded the resignation of Alfred Barr. The man who just four years earlier had been called by A. Conger Goodyear, "the pituitary gland" of the Museum because of his "profound influence" on its growth was being forced out. "The skeleton cannot prosper without it" Goodyear had warned, "and when its activity is diminished, this leads to obesity and mental defects." (Goodyear, 1939, p.3).

The firing of Alfred Barr is a legend in the art world. One version of the story has Barr relegated to a corner of the museum library to conduct his research and writing. Another version has Barr holding up in the library, refusing to abandon his beloved museum. The reason for his dismissal usually casts Stephen Clark as the villain, jealous of Barr's understanding of modern art and angry at Barr's less than expert managerial skills.

What Stephen Clark offered as explanation for the dismissal was Barr's failure to produce a book on modern art. He accused Barr of devoting his time to unimportant matters and concluded that his salary of \$12,800 was not justified (Clark, 1943 letter, Museum of Modern Art Archives). The previous April, however, The Museum of Modern Art had published Alfred Barr's 84 page catalog of the collection: Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art (Museum of Modern Art Archives). This summary of the Museum's acquisition history, policy, and accomplishment contained over 700 works by more than 300 artists and was designed as another educational tool, defining schools and movements. This fact serves to cast doubt on Clark's explanation for the dismissal. It is

not unreasonable to consider Alfred Barr a victim of the war. The war had after all taken its toll on the Museum. Even though attendance was up (The Museum of Modern Art was voted the fourth favorite place to visit in N.Y.C., ranked after the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building and Rockefeller Center), income was down because military personnel were not charged admission. The Museum was operating at a deficit (Annual Report, 1943, Museum of Modern Art Archives). Since the Museum's operations were mainly in the service of a government at war, producing documentary films and various propaganda, there was at this moment no need for a modern art scholar. This is important to note because it demonstrates what can happen when a museum loses sight of its essential purpose, in this case, the curatorship of art.

Nelson Rockefeller was in Washington, D.C., fully withdrawn from any managerial role in the museum. Neither Blanchette nor David Rockefeller had yet come of age. Mrs. John D. Jr. alone represented the Rockefellers. Barr's mentor Paul Sachs and other founding trustees such as Frank Crowninshield and Duncan Phillips now served only in honorary positions. Other

Barr supporters such as Philip Johnson and Eddie Warburg were in the armed services.

In the February-March, 1944 edition of the Bulletin, Stephen Clark announced that "Alfred Barr Jr. has retired as Director of the Museum in order to devote his full time to writing the works on modern art which he had in preparation and which his heavy directorial duties have made impossible for him to undertake. Mr. Barr's curatorial duties have been taken over by James Thrall Soby." (Museum of Modern Art Archives).

By November, 1944, Alfred Barr had been appointed Chair of Modern Painting and Sculpture, a position created for him in May, 1944. "Mr. Barr's duties will be to carry on research and publication in modern painting and sculpture with particular reference to the Museum's collection. He will have no curatorial responsibilities..." reads the contradictory announcement, "but beginning with the summer of 1945 he will be in charge of exhibiting the collection of Painting and Sculpture. He will be available also for consultation and advice." (Bulletin, Nov. 1944, p. 12, Museum of Modern Art Archives). The ending of World War II saved Alfred Barr's connection to the Museum.

In January, 1945, yet another re-organization was announced as James Johnson Sweeney was made Director of the Museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture. "In a reorganization of the Department of Painting and Sculpture there has been a considerable revision of duties, making the Department head in the future fully responsible for the activities of the Department." Mr. Soby reportedly resigned to devote his entire time to writing (Bulletin, Jan., 1945, n.p., Museum of Modern Art Archives).

Now the war was over, Nelson Rockefeller was back on the Board as the 1st Vice President and Chairman of a special Fund Raising Committee. In the financial report for that year, it was resolved by the Board that the Museum, operating at a \$70,000 deficit, should balance the budget as soon as possible and broaden the base of financial support. Nelson Rockefeller was charged with designing a plan of action. (Museum of Modern Art Archives, 1945) Through the remaining 1940's the museum struggled to recover from the war years, continued to expand its educational programs with special offerings for veterans, and published several major books including Alfred Barr's Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art.

The First Expansion

In 1953 the Museum of Modern Art established a permanent collection. Up until this point the Museum collected works of art with the understanding that they would be transferred to other institutions, mainly the Metropolitan Museum of Art. On February 15, 1953 the Museum of Modern Art terminated its agreement with the Metropolitan and issued the following statement: "The Museum has come to believe that its former policy...did not work out to the benefit of its public. It now believes it essential for the understanding and enjoyment of its entire collection to have permanently on public view masterpieces of the modern movement, beginning with the latter half of the nineteenth century... The creation of a permanent core within the collection constitutes a radically important departure from the Museum's past policy. It must be stressed that this permanent nucleus will be composed only of great masterworks." (Bulletin, 1953, p.3, Museum of Modern Art Archives) With this change in policy the Museum stepped up its acquisitions and filled in the gaps of what was already the world's most representative collection of modern art. Implicit in the commitment to a permanent collection was the

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

GENERAL GROWTH

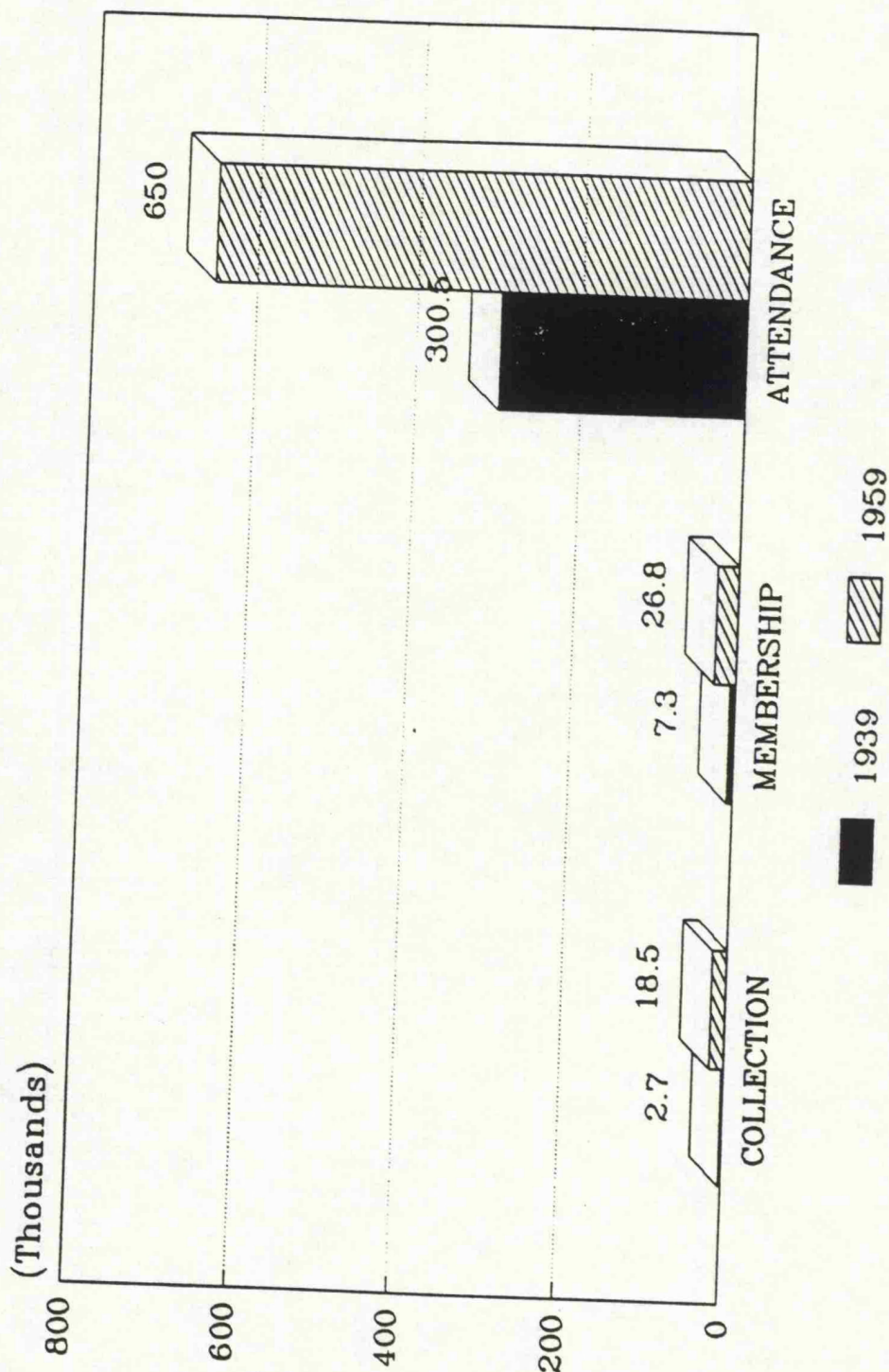


Figure 7

understanding that the Museum's facility would require expansion. Over the next few years the collections grew rapidly until, by 1959, they included 18,510 objects. (Figure 7)

In 1959 with Blanchette Rockefeller as President and Nelson Rockefeller as strong a force as ever as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the Museum launched a major fund raising campaign to again expand its building and its programs. This was the year of the Museum's thirtieth anniversary and the annual budget at this time was two million dollars (Annual Report, 1959, Museum of Modern Art Archives). It was twenty years since Nelson was president for the first time and the original building opened. In those twenty years the annual attendance at the Museum had more than doubled, the membership had quadrupled, and the collection had increased from 2,685 objects to 18,510. (Figure 7) (All figures are compiled from Annual Reports, Museum of Modern Art Archives.)

Nelson Rockefeller, who had been in charge of raising the money to build the 1939 building, again assumed a leadership role to meet the \$25 million goal of the Thirtieth Anniversary Drive, as the new building fund

was called. He officially launched the drive with a dinner at the Four Seasons Restaurant in New York City where he introduced James Hopkins Smith, Jr. as chairman of the drive and announced that almost \$10 million of the \$25 million was already in hand, thanks to the Rockefellers and other trustees. In addition to this, the Rockefeller Foundation gave a grant of \$1.5 million; the Rockefeller Brothers Fund promised to match all gifts up to \$6 million, and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. gave another \$2.5 million. David Rockefeller was named Honorary Chairman of the Thirtieth Anniversary Committee (Anonymous, Museum of Modern Art Archives, 1959, press release).

David Rockefeller, youngest of the five sons of John D. Jr., made his career in banking. Educated at Harvard University and the University of Chicago, David joined Chase Manhattan Bank in 1946 and moved through the ranks to become chairman of the board and chief executive officer. He shared his mother's enthusiasm for modern art and at the time of her death assumed her place on the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art. (Information compiled from the Bulletin, Museum of Modern Art Archives). In his own right, as president of Chase

Manhattan Bank, and with guidance from the Museum of Modern Art, David Rockefeller established what is considered today to be the grandfather of corporate art collections. Begun in 1959, the Chase Manhattan art collection now contains 13,000 objects, 80 percent of which are modern, mostly contemporary (after 1945) (Severinghaus, 1984, p.19). Under David Rockefeller's direction the bank established a professional curatorial staff and an art committee, the first members of which included Alfred Barr and Dorothy Miller plus curators from the Guggenheim Museum, the Metropolitan Museum, and The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Reminiscing in the "Forward" of the 1984 publication on the collection, David Rockefeller explained how controversial were the first commissioned works and how the museum could influence opinion. "Many of the more conservatively minded members of our board and senior management were shocked and displeased by what was acquired ... Nevertheless, it was recognized that we had world-renowned experts on our Art Committee who had made the selection and the bank went forward with the project." (Severinghaus, 1984, p.11).

The Museum of Modern Art's financial situation was

dependent on the consumption of art by a relatively wide public. As Alfred Barr observed: "Other museums didn't have to depend on exhibitions the way we did. They...could put up their permanent collection and let it go at that. But we had to keep the pot boiling." (Marquis, 1989, p.59) Clearly, the more visitors the museum could accommodate the more income could be generated through admissions, membership dues, sales of publications and other services. These accounted for 75% of the total income in 1959 as the Museum announced its Thirtieth Anniversary campaign to raise \$25 million (Annual Report, 1959, Museum of Modern Art Archives). The Museum's public and the demand for its services had spurred the development of the fund which would provide for the expansion of the Museum's facilities, activities, and finances.

That year 650,000 people had visited the Museum, an institution of international influence. Known for its collections and exhibitions of modern art forms, it was however, a much simpler institution than we know today, still finding its way in the world of commerce. Today, the Museum houses an 8,000 square foot retail shop which has a \$4.5 million inventory. In addition, the Museum

runs another store situated across the street. By contrast in 1959 there was a simple counter in the lobby which served as the book store and across from that was located the membership desk. Zara Cohan, a member of the Museum staff from 1956 until 1965 sat at that membership desk and remembers the intimacy and human atmosphere of the place. "I always wanted to work at the Museum of Modern Art because I loved going there and I loved being a member. The whole idea of modern art, that wonderful building, New York City, it was very exciting. This was really before television. People read the New Yorker magazine and it always carried stuff about the Museum. New York had been dubbed the art capital of the world and The Museum of Modern Art was located in mid-town. The arts were no longer just for the rich and you weren't a sissy if you liked the arts. The Museum was a human and civilized place to visit." (Nancy Einreinhofer interview with Zara Cohan, October 12, 1990). (All quotations of Cohan are from this interview, Appendix III)

Zara Cohan describes the Museum as an often quiet place of manageable size: "You saw one, possibly two paintings of each artist and of course lots of Picassos. There was "Guernica" and the sculpture garden. The

sculpture garden was marvelous. It was very small but it was an oasis and in the summer they had a modern jazz quartet perform." (Appendix III).

The Museum's predicament, as perceived by the Board of Trustees, was its physical restriction. The collections and activities, and the demands for services had grown phenomenally, and the museum building could no longer contain the Museum. In 1959 only about 150 paintings were on exhibit, just ten percent of the painting collection. The Museum that boasted the world's finest collection of 20th century prints could exhibit only about a dozen (less than one quarter of one percent). Of the collection of almost 4,000 architecture and design objects none were on display except in an occasional temporary show. (See Figure 8, Compiled from records in Museum Archives).

As a privately supported and administered institution, The Museum of Modern Art received no subsidy from municipal, state or federal government. The public it served contributed substantially to its support through admissions and payment for various services yielding the largest gross earned revenue of any museum in the world. The indicators pointed to the need for an

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

COMPARISON-EXHIBIT AND STORAGE

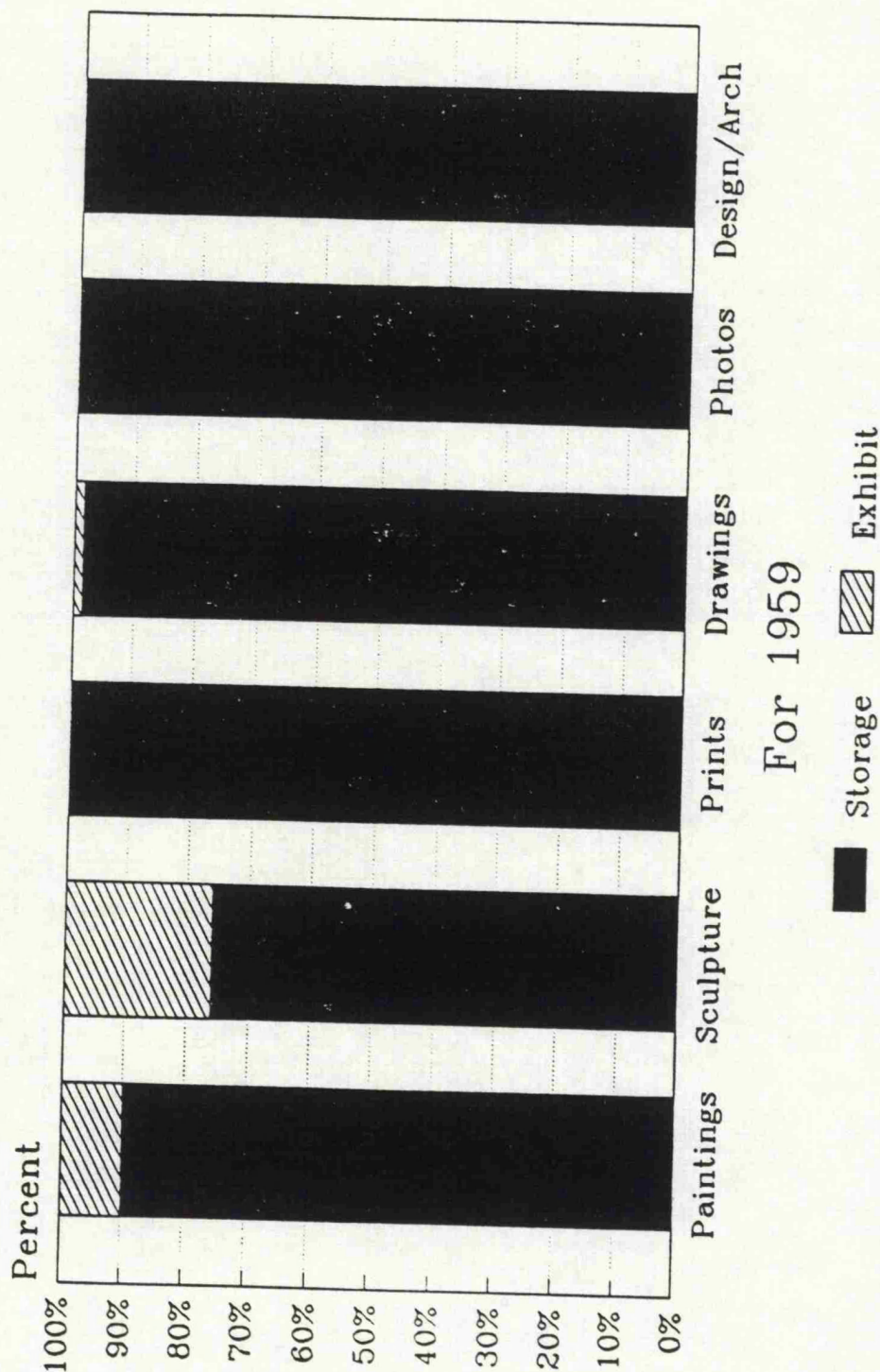


Figure 8

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

COMPARISON—SOURCE OF INCOME

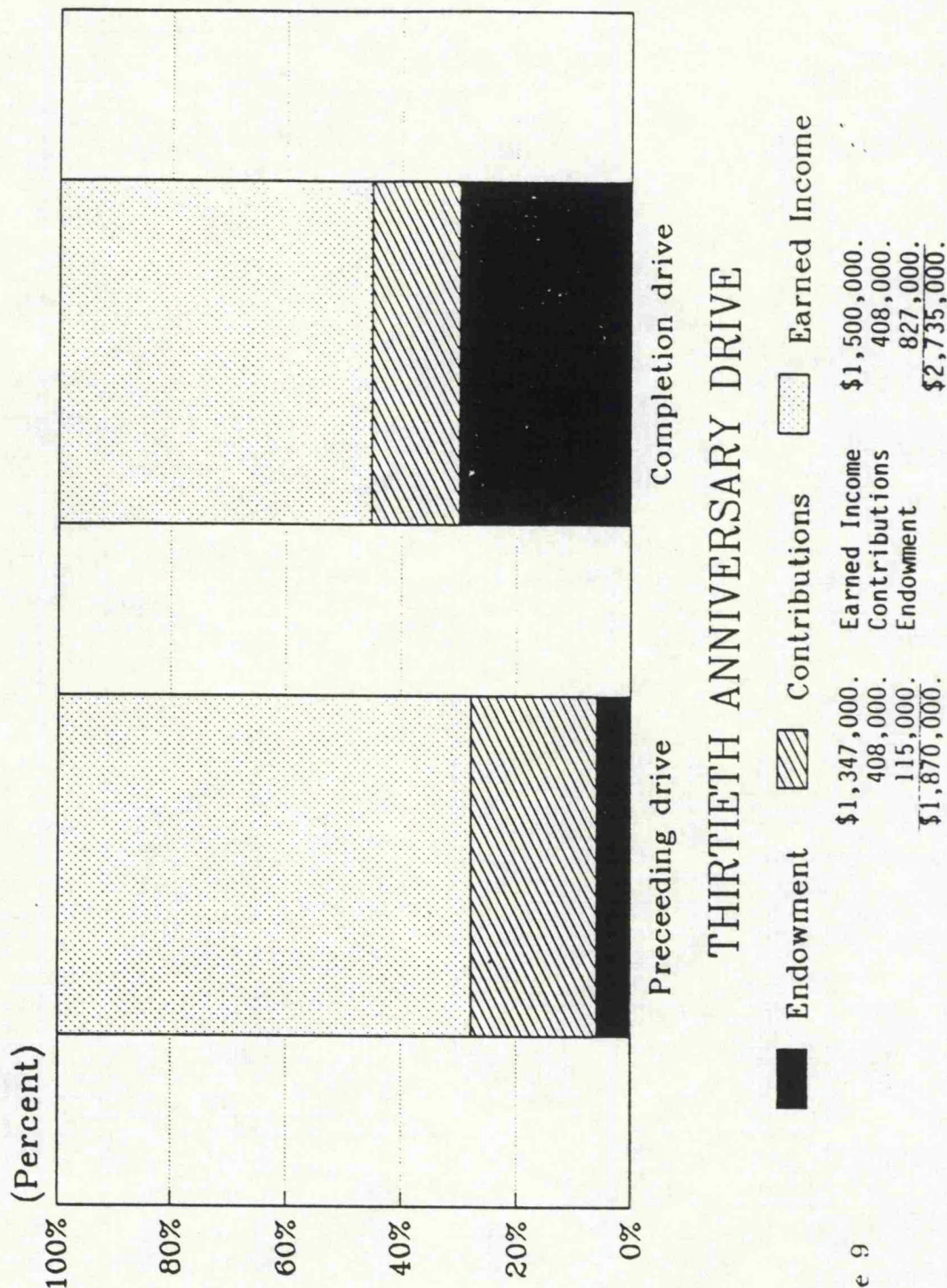


Figure 9

expansion of the physical plant which would result in the expansion of earned income. This became the objective of the Thirtieth Anniversary Campaign along with the goal of enlarging the Museum's endowment to ensure a base income. (See Figure 9, Compiled from records in Museum Archives.) Earned income and annual contributions alone could not furnish the Museum with sufficient funds to give its program flexibility and enable it to meet the growing need for the research, experimentation and educational work essential to the fulfillment of its purposes but producing no direct financial return.

The plan included the construction of the new East Wing to be erected on the unoccupied corner along Fifty-fourth Street. The Museum was also deeded two brownstones adjacent to the main building which would be incorporated into the Museum. The plan for the new Museum called for 43,000 square feet of exhibition space for the collections, instead of the 12,000 in use at that time. (All figures from the Thirtieth Anniversary Campaign Materials, Museum of Modern Art Archives.) The number of paintings on exhibit would be increased to about four hundred. New galleries would allow for the exhibition of at least 150 prints and 50 drawings with

the rest available for study in an enlarged Print Room. Space for the display of 150 photographs would be arranged plus the collection would be accessible by special arrangement in the Photography Room. For the first time the Museum planned space in which to show outstanding examples from its collection of mass-produced utensils, furniture, textiles, posters, architectural drawings and models.

One floor of the new building was designated office space; the Conservation Program would have an enlarged laboratory; committee rooms would provide conference space for outside groups. The main lobby, entered from Fifty-fourth Street and opening onto the Sculpture Garden, would provide space for the Museum's first book store and membership offices. The architect of the new building, Philip Johnson, allowed unhampered circulation between the original building and the new building at both gallery and office levels (Thirtieth Anniversary Campaign Materials, Museum of Modern Art Archives).

Upon the completion of this plan, The Museum of Modern Art became the first and only institution in the world able to show continuously the visual arts of the recent past as manifested in painting, sculpture,

drawings, prints, photography, films, architecture and design. "Centuries of collecting have made the great European museums preeminent in the arts of earlier epochs." reads the Thirtieth Anniversary campaign promotion, "But in contemporary art, our Museum will out rank all others. The new Museum will in fact become the only American art museum which, in its own field, is foremost in the world. Inevitably it will be a magnet attracting to New York from every quarter of the globe all those interested in the visual arts of our time." (Museum of Modern Art Archives, 1959, brochure).

In June of 1964, the new Museum of Modern Art opened to the cheers of its members and the wide-spread publicity it has always generated. "In the museum's new, enlarged quarters, designed by Philip Johnson, there are modern muses all over the place: in the 32,000 square foot sculpture garden that ramps up onto the roof of a new two-story building (beneath which is the monstrous new gallery and an underground art school); in the new six-story glass and steel tower that carries right through onto every floor of the old museum building, from which five gigantic abstract banners will whip on gala occasions," is the description issued by Newsweek

magazine (Anonymous, Newsweek, June, 1964, Museum Archives). Pictured on the cover of this issue are Alfred Barr and Rene' d' Harnoncourt with a Picasso painting as backdrop. Alfred Barr, here 62 years old, is referred to as a scholar and a showman. He is called "the museum's director of collections but he is really its spirit made flesh." Inside is a photograph of a young Nelson Rockefeller and the museum model circa 1938. "It is a unique museum, it is a people's museum," he is quoted as saying and proud of the fact that the museum, with no tax subsidy, is so largely self-supporting. "I went to Jones Beach with Robert Moses when it first opened," Rockefeller tells the reporter. "There was a 25-cent admission, 25 cents for parking, and things like that. 'How do you get away with this?' I asked him. He told me his theory of appreciation - that people appreciate things for which they have to pay a small amount. I went back to the trustees of the museum and told them I thought that something like that might be a good idea. They put it into effect, and it worked." (Newsweek, June, 1964, p.48-52, Museum of Modern Art Archives).

Amidst the success and all the congratulatory

verbiage there lingered a feeling of uneasiness, perhaps fear, that this tremendous expansion involved dangers of vulgarization and impersonalization. "I think the trouble might have come with the fact that they realized how important they had become," reflects Zara Cohan. "The Museum would sneeze and it would be reported in the papers. It made them very cautious. (Barr and d' Harnoncourt) were extremely ethical. They were interested in the objects as art, not in monetary terms and they realized that the price of the art went up when they did something. I think they became frightened of that power." (Appendix III).

Paul Sachs had warned against the dangers the Museum would face as it expanded and against the dangers of timidity. The Museum, he said, "must not stop taking risks: - for the reputation of The Museum of Modern Art will rest upon its successes more than upon its mistakes. In the field of modern art chances must be taken. The Museum should continue to be a pioneer: - bold and uncompromising." (Sachs, 1939, p.11, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Speech).

John Canaday, the art critic for the New York Times, published a series of articles in 1967 on the Museum in

which, while acknowledging the Museum as a powerful and beneficial force in American cultural life, also accused it of "coasting". "...it could coast for a long time before anybody realizes that it is approaching a standstill." Much of the problem, Canaday asserted, was the result of the Museum's popularity. That, he reasoned, was indicative of a cultural backfire. "This may be true in all museums, but it is most distressingly true in a museum where people pass blind before a kind of art that they were never meant to understand and would offer them very little reward if they did. Perhaps we should think only of the one person in a hundred or several hundred who finds the museum something more than an expensively decorated place of entertainment with an impressive cachet. Yet it is difficult to look at these hordes of people of all ages, all economic brackets and all degrees of intelligence above those that require institutional care, and believe that the museum has really taught many of them to make any distinction between the great sculpture in the museum garden and the Alice in Wonderland sculpture in Central Park." (Canaday, 1967, p.1)

Standing in the busy temple of art, it is difficult

to remember how somnolent a place the art museum once was. That loss, the loss of the quiet, contemplative, perhaps spiritual place where a work of art could reveal itself slowly, where the visitor could, in silence and privacy, approach an understanding of the content and meaning of the art, that is the great tragedy of the democratization of the art museum.

"The atmosphere is not that of a place where art is offered for contemplation with the privilege of personal response. There is a goading to accept the offered product as the only acceptable one...the whole place, now grown to great size, is one enormous boutique." (Canaday, 1967, p.25).

"I remember when the Museum put on the exhibition The Responsive Eye, says Zara Cohan. Well, everything, including garbage cans, had optical art on it. Clothes, handbags, you name it. The mass culture took over and made a popular thing out of it...It's hard to believe but the Museum had become a jazzy focal point." (Appendix III).

This was the challenge facing the Museum, to find the correct balance, to measure the quality of the art against its popular appeal, to be brave in presenting new

ideas but not fooled by the sparkle of newness, to fight the danger of timidity warned against by Paul Sachs while fighting also the inclination to slide into the consumer culture by providing one new and improved and even more exciting exhibition after another. It was a delicate balance to be sure.

The Thirtieth Anniversary Campaign provided the expanded building and the financial security of a substantial endowment which would supplement the Museum's earned income. What it also provided for the Museum was a position of centrality in the American culture. The museum of 1956 described by Zara Cohan (Appendix III) as an intimate and delicate and quiet place for art ("And it was true that sometimes you could fall asleep because nobody would come in.") became a memory of the 1964 bustling, expansive, triumphant corporation.

The Second Expansion

Over the next ten years smaller additions were made to the new museum complex but the second major expansion, plans for which were made public in 1976, was of such scope that it stunned the most jaded patrons. The publicity department referred to it as a "combined-use project", which translates as an enormous expansion of

the existing museum building and the construction of a 44-story private residential tower above the new building. (Anonymous, press release, April, 1976, Museum of Modern Art Archives) The Museum expansion, projected to cost \$55 million, would be subsidized by the sale of the Museum's air rights to the developer of the apartment tower. The Museum of Modern Art had entered the real estate business.

The proposal to link the Museum's artistic fortunes to the vagaries of the real-estate market unleashed a storm of protest. Critics were concerned about the impact this involvement would have on the Museum's nobler priorities, concerned about the special privileges of tax breaks secured in Albany through special legislation and concerned about the demolition of adjacent buildings considered to be of historic significance. But this powerful museum and its powerful board marshaled the forces to overcome all objections and moved the project forward. Three years after the initial announcement architectural plans were in place, the funding was arranged and demolition on the site had begun.

After considerable deliberation, the Museum had selected an architect: Cesar Pelli, newly appointed dean

of the Yale School of Architecture. The design he proposed involved substantial changes to the existing museum building and major new construction.

The new construction, known as the West Wing, would provide 46,500 square feet of new gallery space, more than doubling the present space, as well as a new auditorium, service and support areas. The six floors of the new Wing were planned as part of the combined-use structure which would rise to 580 feet above Fifty-fourth Street and contain 263 private residences. A new, four-story, steel and glass Garden Hall (18,000 square feet) on the north side of the Museum overlooking the Sculpture Garden and housing a new system of escalators and circulation areas would connect the Museum's public facilities. An expanded, two-story Garden Wing at the east end of the Sculpture Garden would provide a public Garden Cafe on the ground floor and a Members Dining Room on the floor above. The North Wing, containing the education center, galleries, and conservation and storage facilities would be renovated. Finally, the galleries and service areas in the original 1939 building and the 1964 East Wing would be renovated and the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden would be refurbished.

Summed up, the project called for 170,000 square feet of new space and 200,000 square feet of completely renovated space, providing a total of 370,000 square feet for the expanded museum. (All statistics compiled from the Museum of Modern Art 1984 Expansion Paper, Museum of Modern Art Archives.)

The Museum's participation in the project came under the auspices of The Trust for Cultural Resources of the City of New York, a corporation established by legislation designed specifically for The Museum of Modern Art's needs and passed by New York State in 1976. The legislation provided for the creation of specific Trusts in individual cities throughout the State. These Trusts are empowered to act on behalf of cultural institutions owning property rights to participate with private developers in the construction of combined-use facilities, providing separately for commercial development and for expansion and improvement of a cultural institutions facilities.

The Museum of Modern Art sold its air rights to a private developer through this newly-established Trust. If the Museum were to have negotiated this arrangement directly with the developer, it would have had to pay

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART GENERAL GROWTH

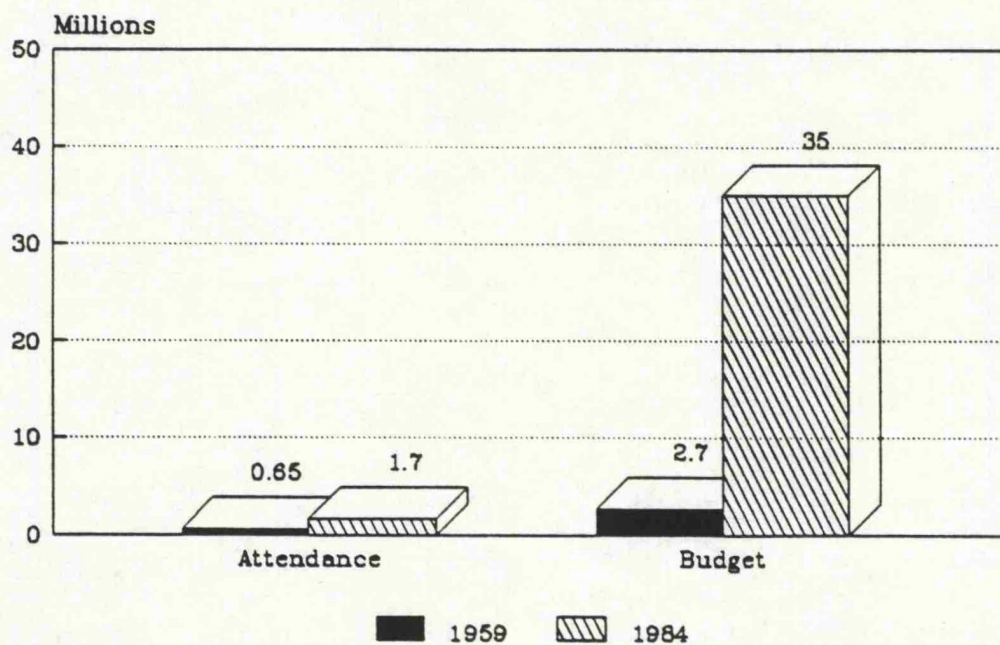
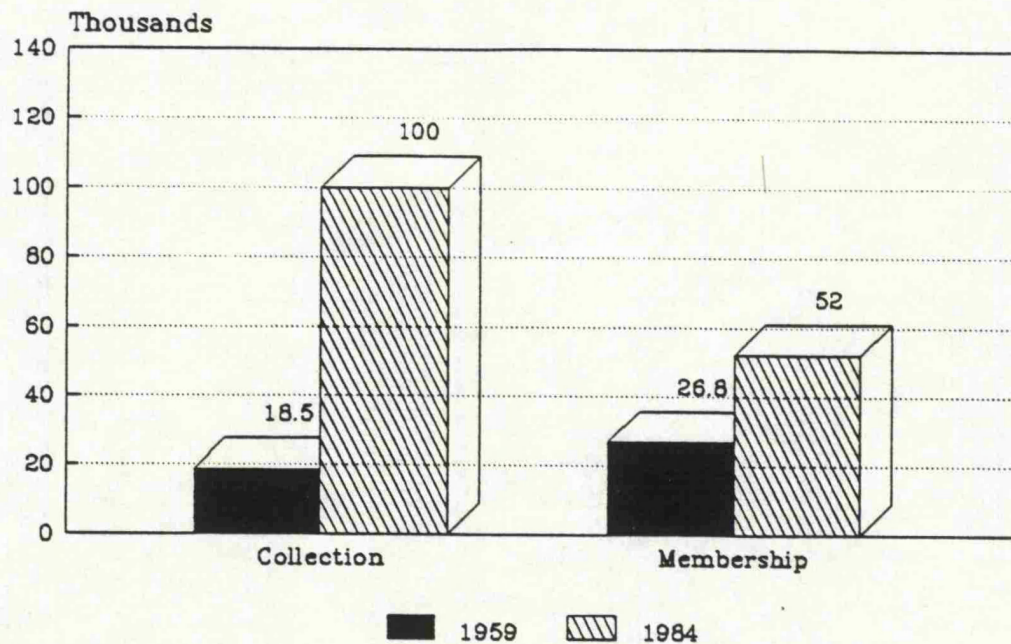


Figure 10

taxes on unrelated business income represented by the income from this development (Curtis, 1983, pp. 68,69).

The development - the condominium tower - produced tax-equivalency payments used by the Trust to repay the cost of the Museum's expansion program over a long period of time. In the meantime, the Trust issued \$40 million in tax-exempt collateralized bonds in January, 1980, and an additional \$20 million in March, 1984. The Museum provided \$49 million of its endowment as collateral to support these bonds. The \$17 million it received from the air rights sale were held in escrow. So, the property owned by the Museum and therefore not subject to taxation was used to generate a source of income for the Museum's expansion costs. This second major expansion of the Museum of Modern Art was, like the 1959 expansion, demanded by the growth of the permanent collection (now numbering over 100,000 works of art) and the necessity to accommodate the ever-increasing number of visitors, estimated at more than one million a year. (See Figure 10 - Compiled from records in Museum Archives)

As the Museum began the construction project, which would span four years, it also opened a major retrospective exhibit of one thousand works by Pablo

Picasso. This exhibit was the first to employ the use of advanced sale admission tickets which designated not only the day but the hour the holder could enter the Museum. In this way, the Museum was able to move more than 7,000 visitors through the galleries each day. The Picasso show signaled the coming of the new Museum of Modern Art with a furthering of the consumer management techniques and new traffic patterns designed to handle the crowds. The new building would contain escalators to move visitors swiftly from floor to floor, and such public areas as a 12,200 square foot main lobby and an 18,000 square foot Garden Hall. There would be 20,700 square feet dedicated to restaurants and 8,000 square feet for the Museum Store (Anonymous, press release, 1984, Museum of Modern Art Archives).

In discussing the design of the Garden Hall, the central public space of the new Museum, the architect, Cesar Pelli explained that he had to try to understand the Museum's new, expanded functions and, in doing this, provoke a topological change. "You see, the Museum was originally designed as a house. You moved from floor to floor and, on each floor, there was a tight-knit group of rooms. The path led from room to room and back to the

stairway and elevators. The 1964 addition of the East Wing added to the number of rooms but did not change the type. The new West Wing is of such magnitude, however, that the circulation type had to be changed. Now, after strolling from gallery to gallery, the visitor will have a more pronounced pause when moving to another floor or another Museum wing via the glass-enclosed Garden Hall.

"The Hall has been designed like a glove, a minimum enclosure, to gather the east-west, horizontal circulation between wings using connecting halls, and the vertical circulation between floors using escalators."

"The gallery type has not been changed much in the expanded Museum. The rooms remain basically apartment size...Designing the galleries agreed well with my attitude toward architecture. You see, I don't believe the architect has any business imposing his preferences, biases, or prejudices about every possible function on earth on people who know well how these functions take place. The Museum of Modern Art has incredibly well developed theories and attitudes about how modern art should be exhibited, and we took advantage of them." (Pelli, 1984, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Transcript).

In fact, the curators of each department were

consulted and exercised much control over the design of their galleries. This policy resulted in the new Museum retaining the feeling of intimacy for which the old Museum was known. The galleries on average retained the scale determined to be proper for the exhibition of modern art. "Through and including the work of Pollock and Rothko", reported Bill Rubin, Director of Painting and Sculpture, "the work should be seen in apartment-sized spaces rather than palazzo - or church-like spaces. Rothko once remarked 'I paint big to be intimate'. He envisioned his pictures in a sense displacing walls, not, as would be the case in a very large space, looking like objects hanging on a wall...The history of modern art up through abstract expressionism needs spaces which are essentially like those we have always had" Rubin also insisted that the floors of these galleries be carpeted to make them quieter and more comfortable and also to enhance the private character of the space. "A museum is a museum, and you can't pretend it's an apartment, but the carpet does tend to minimize the viewer's sense of being in a big public area." (Rubin, 1984, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Transcript).

The doubling of the exhibition space (See Figure 11

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

COMPARISON-EXHIBITION SPACE

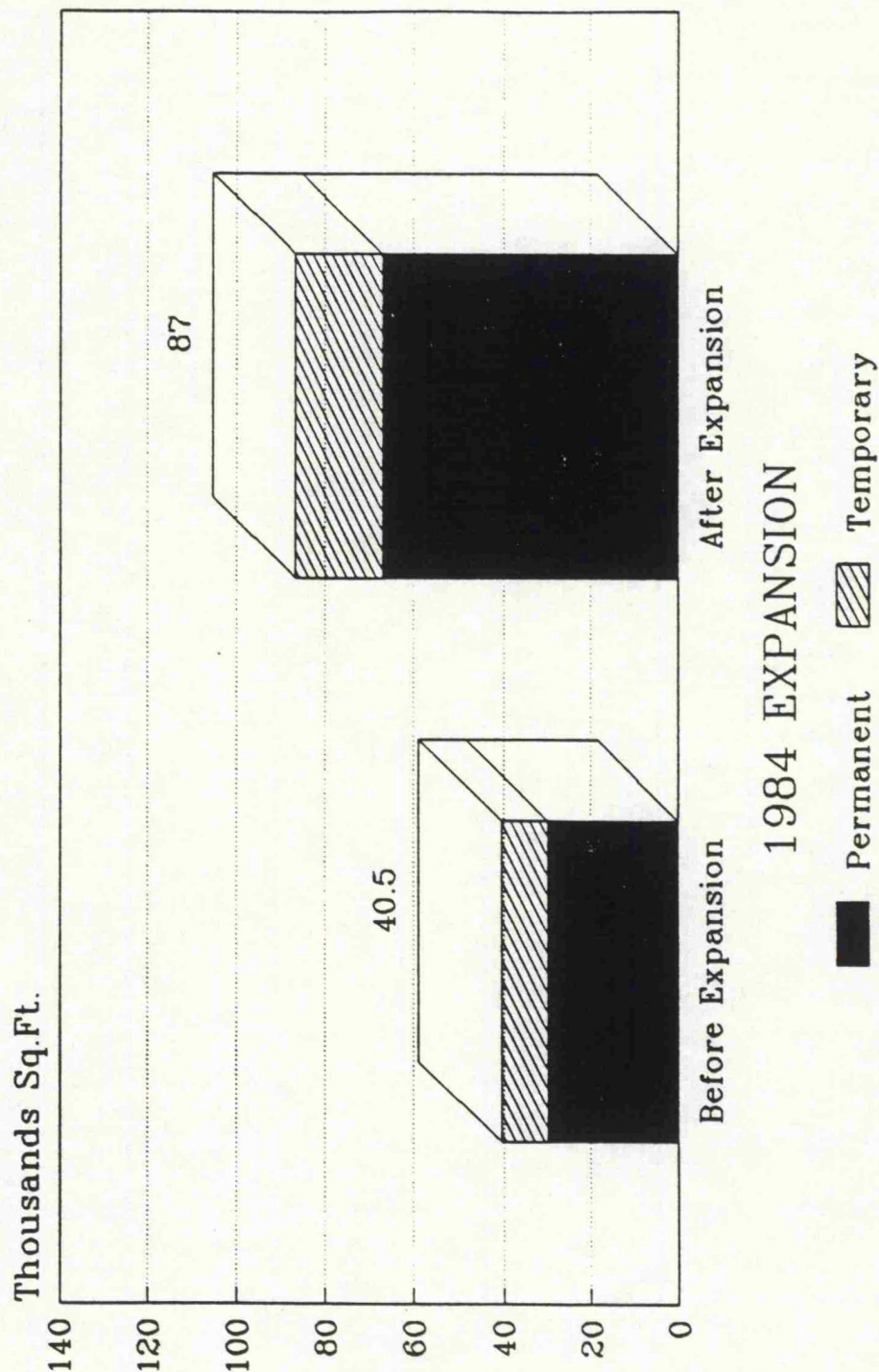


Figure 11

- Compiled from records in museum archives.) allowed for more of the collection to be shown but also allowed for more space between the paintings. The general layout remained chronological, as it had been, with all the national schools represented. "We have tried to keep a kind of ecumenical, art-historical view of the entire modern movement." said Rubin "That was Alfred Barr's idea from the beginning, and we've maintained it throughout." (Rubin, 1984, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Transcript).

The Painting and Sculpture installation is located at the top of the escalator on the second floor of the Garden Hall in the original Museum building. Moving east through Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism (particularly works by Picasso), Futurism, Constructivism and through the stairway lobby into the West Wing, the visitor enters a major Matisse gallery, followed by special galleries for the School of Paris, including more Picasso, Dada and Surrealism, de Chirico and Miro. In the second floor stairwell hangs works from the Russian School by artists such as Malevich, and Lissitzky. On the third floor the visitor moves west through the American art of the 1920's -- Hopper, Wyeth, O'Keeffe, Stuart Davis -- to early

American Surrealism, then Dubuffet, Pollock, and into the late 1940's and early 1950's.

The Matisse cutouts and a special gallery for The Swimming Pool (acquired several years ago by the Museum, and shown only twice) serve as an introduction to a gallery for major works of the New York School, including Pollock and the Abstract Expressionists -- Motherwell, Rothko, Gottlieb, de Kooning and, farther on, works from the later School of Paris. The area beyond is uncarpeted and has movable walls. This flexible area contains works from the 1960's to the 1980's, beginning with Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Pop Art, and the Colorfield artists, Ellsworth Kelly to Kenneth Noland, and on to the Minimalists and the Conceptualists.

In a New York Times article, Michael Brenson reviewed the new galleries now hung with the permanent collection. "Make no mistake about it, the painting and sculpture that is the glory of the museum has been charted by a very particular hand. William Rubin, director of the department of painting and sculpture, has approached his task of installing the foremost collection of modern art in the world with complete responsible conviction. Knowing that the present installation of two

floors and 40 - odd galleries of painting and sculpture may be his legacy to generations of artists, Mr. Rubin has left nothing to chance. He has enmeshed every work in a complex network of correspondences and cross-references. His installation has a density and control that almost oblige the visitor to consider it as a work of art itself." (Brenson, 1984, Section C, p.1).

With the paintings hung, the sculptures installed, the banks of flowers in place and the brass quintet poised to herald the opening of the new and improved Museum of Modern Art, the celebrities gathered to give praise. President Reagan hailed the Museum's "vision and spirit", and added, "With its innovative plan for public and private cooperation, the Museum once again has pioneered in bringing the arts to so many more people." (Bennetts, Section B, p.1). Governor Cuomo said the Museum represented the embodiment of New York's "restless genius". "It's presence here in the heart of the city has been reshaped, expanded, made new - a transformation that adds to its magnificence without detracting from its soul. In the very structure of these changes - in the brick and glass of its new home - the Museum makes us all take a fresh look. A fresh look at the art and

architecture that form the basis of modern culture, at the special blend of change and continuity which is at the heart of this institution and this city". (Bennetts, Section B, p.1). Mayor Koch gave his assessment of the Museum as the "single greatest attraction in New York, for its inhabitants and visitors." (Bennetts, Section B, p.1).

Of course the Rockefellers were present and Blanchette Rockefeller, as President of the Museum, spoke: "We have all worked long and hard to meet the urgent need for additional space for our superb collections and the growing number of visitors who come to see them." Alfred Barr's spirit could be felt and his vision was referred to time and again: "The modern arts are interrelated, and this permits their juxtaposition; Alfred Barr believed that it was very important that all disciplines be represented, because they have clearly influenced each other." said Museum Director Richard Oldenburg, "I think we've succeeded in keeping that intimate feeling in spite of doubling the space." (Bennetts, Section B, p.1).

Generally, the critics agreed with him. "The museum in its new and greatly enlarged premises remains loyal to

the beliefs of those who began it. It is, that is to say, a museum in which the maps of early modern art were charted once and for all by Alfred Barr, the first director, and his colleagues. It is also a museum that, now as 50 years ago, is intensely personal." (Russell, 1984, Section 2, p.1).

"Much that we cherished in the old Museum of Modern Art remains as it was, and at times looks even better than one remembered." Wrote Hilton Kramer. "Certainly a great effort has been made, especially in the galleries devoted to the permanent collection of painting and sculpture, to concentrate (as the museum always has) on quality - to give us the best of the art that the modern era has bequeathed to us, and to confer upon our intercourse with this art that special feeling of intimacy and awe we gratefully recall from years in attendance at the old Museum of Modern Art." (Kramer, 1984, p.2).

The Trustees and staff had done everything possible to retain the aesthetic character of the Museum and had succeeded in this regard, but of course the new Museum, promoted in the popular press as never before, attracted hordes of people who disturbed whatever intimacy the

gallery architecture might have provided. So, on the one hand, the Museum celebrated the success of the new galleries in continuing the spirit of the old Museum of Modern Art, and on the other hand, revealed its new self by announcing its principal purpose through its principal architectural image - the Garden Hall. This dazzling light-filled space with its banks of escalators, spacious halls, busy display of structural detail, and dramatic views serves as both the main traffic artery and also the Museum's identifying image. The image is one in the modernist tradition but with a high-tech look, it is also a high-powered corporate look, and of course, it reveals its important function - moving large numbers of people.

Alfred Barr had set out to create a new kind of museum in America - a museum that would bring together all the many disparate activities of the modern movement and make them available for the education and edification of the people. The Museum of Modern Art, with its expanded facilities, glamorous new image and ever-expanding public still remains the museum that is central to our understanding of the culture of this century.

CHAPTER 10

Conclusion

According to the American Association of Museums' definition, an art museum is "a permanent, non-profit institution; essentially educational and aesthetic in purpose, with professional staff, which acquires or owns works of art, cares for them, interprets them, and exhibits them to the public on some regular schedule." The basic function of the art museum is therefore, threefold: acquisition, preservation, and presentation of works of art. The basic purpose of the art museum is educational and aesthetic. As a means of summarizing the various investigations thus far, and examining the influences of modernism, capitalism and democracy in some cohesive manner, the focus will first be on the function of the art museum as defined by the American Association of Museums, and then on the fulfillment of its basic purpose (educational and aesthetic) in the light of these findings.

The third aspect of the museum's function, that of presentation, involves the collection plus borrowed objects, constitutes the public side of the museum's function, and demonstrates most profoundly, the three influences of modernism, democracy, and capitalism. The first two aspects, that is, acquisition and preservation,

are closely linked, concerned with the museum's collection, and so will be considered first, and in concert.

Functions: Acquisition and Preservation

The Director and the curatorial staff are responsible for identifying objects to be acquired. The Director must submit all recommendations to the Board for approval and the final decision rests legally with the Board. The American Association of Museums points out that, since purchases represent the expenditure of monies committed to public trust for which the Board is responsible, no acquisition should be approved without full knowledge of the Director's opinion and that of the curator concerned. This procedure applies to gifts to the collection as well. The American Association of Museums strongly advises that "gifts and bequests be of a clear and unrestricted nature and that no work be accepted with a guarantee in perpetuity of an attribution or the circumstance of exhibition." (Association of Art Museum Directors, 1981, p.11).

The deaccession of a work of art from the collection is governed by strenuous guidelines from the American Association of Museums. Full justification of the

deaccession should be presented to the Board by the Director and the curator concerned. Decisions should be related to policy and funds obtained through such sales must be used to replenish the collection. "In general", states the American Association of Museums Committee on Ethics, "objects should be kept as long as they retain their physical integrity, authenticity and usefulness for the museum's purposes." Further, the Committee stresses that "In the delicate area of acquisition and disposal of museum objects, the museum must weigh carefully the interests of the public for which it holds the collection in trust, the donor's intent in the broadest sense, the interests of the scholarly and the cultural community, and the institution's own financial well-being."

The preservation of the museum's collection is ultimately the responsibility of the Director in consultation with the appropriate curator. Preservation includes the accurate cataloging of works as well as the care and conservation of their physical condition. The exhibition and lending for exhibition of works of art are also factors in preservation. In exhibition, according to the American Association of Museums guidelines, the safety of the object must take precedence over aesthetic

advantage. In lending works of art, the safety of the object during transit as well as the conditions of its temporary domicile must be considered. Also to be considered is whether the work will be exposed to undue risk by reason of "inherent vice" if loaned (Association of Art Museum Directors, 1981, p.13).

With these guidelines in mind, the practices of art museum directors in this study will be examined to determine how capitalism and American corporate practices might influence the museum's functions of acquisition and preservation.

Since American art museums were founded and built primarily by the wealth and will of Morgan, Rockefeller, Whitney, Guggenheim, Getty, Carnegie and other like-minded industrialists, merchants, and bankers, it is quite likely that their capitalist ideology mixed easily into the makeup of the museum to settle deeply and to surface later when need demanded. The basic structure of the museum was modeled after the corporation with a Board, Officers and a Chief Executive Officer. This structure has been, for the most part, a blessing in that it has provided a system of policy and procedural checks, and balanced budgets, while leaving the expertise in the

museum's specialty to the professional staff.

In New York's Museum of Modern Art the mix of the scholar in the person of Alfred Barr and the capitalist in Nelson Rockefeller produced a museum so successful that it would serve as a model for America. Barr was left to build a collection, curate exhibits, publish catalogs, and educate the masses, while Rockefeller and the other trustees insured the financial stability of the institution. And while Barr introduced into the museum operation, certain practices learned from the worldly corporation (the implementation of a publicity plan is one prime example of this) he was nevertheless tenacious in his pursuit of excellence in aesthetic matters. Never did he allow the capitalist influence to distort museum policy.

In today's museum world, however, instances of capitalism as the dominant ideology abound. One proof of the presence of capitalistic thinking is seen in the language. The museum's collection may be termed "assets", its exhibitions and programs are called its "product". The museum visitor is viewed as the "consumer" of this product and marketing techniques are employed to attract large numbers of consumers while

special exhibitions and programs insure return visits.

The capitalistic influence on the art museum had its genesis with the founding of the Metropolitan (Chapter 3) and realized a happy co-existence with the development of the Museum of Modern Art (Chapter 9) but did not attract the worried eyes of the art world until 1967. Thomas Hoving, as director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, revolutionized museum operations and the public's perception of the museum as he introduced the ways of the corporate world into museum operations in an effort to sell his product for the purpose of generating revenue (p. 238). Under Hoving, the Metropolitan developed a master plan which included building five new wings, enlarging exhibition areas by one third; and planning a program of special exhibitions on a scale never before witnessed. The pace of the exhibition schedule and the "frantic loans" placed the museum's permanent collection at risk, according to Anthony M. Clark, head of the department of European paintings. Clark resigned his position at the Metropolitan in 1975 and charged Hoving's regime with "hucksterism", saying it was lacking in honesty, simplicity, professional grace and skill (p. 243).

In his 1975 publication entitled The Chase, The Capture: Collecting at the Metropolitan, Hoving describes the "capture" of a work of art as "one of the most exciting endeavors in life ... as dramatic, emotional, and fulfilling as a love affair." (Hoving, p.1). The drive to acquire works for the collection, when considered in this atmosphere of corporate tactics, take-overs, and buy-outs, with art as the commodity, can become fierce and ruthless. "I'll tell you a story about when things began to change," reports Zara Cohan "I think one indication was the incident with Thomas Hoving." (Cohan Interview, Appendix III). Ms. Cohan describes Adelaide De Groot as a marvelous woman, collector of Impressionist paintings and patron of the Museum of Modern Art. Within her collection were two or three paintings especially coveted by Thomas Hoving for the Metropolitan Museum collection. Through an arrangement which included the stipulation that the entire collection would stay together, Mrs. DeGroot donated her Impressionist collection to the Metropolitan. As we have seen, the American Association of Museums strongly advises against such arrangements stating that no work should be accepted with a "guarantee in perpetuity of an

attribution or the circumstance of exhibition" (Association of Art Museum Directors, p.11). Regardless of the American Association of Museum's recommendation, Thomas Hoving accepted the paintings with these conditions. "No sooner was she six feet under, he sold most of them." says Ms Cohan. "He had powerful lawyers ... Hoving's behavior indicates a major change in museums. It was an attitude of 'What can I get away with?' This attitude probably peaked in the eighties with the Wall Street scandals." (Cohan, Appendix III).

At the height of "Hovingism", the Metropolitan Museum secretly sold important paintings from its collection and was subsequently investigated by the New York State attorney general. The Attorney General's office and the museum worked out "Procedures for Deaccessioning and Disposal of Works of Art," a complicated arrangement the main points of which consist of notifying the Attorney General in advance (15 days if the work is valued over \$5,000 and 45 days if the work has been on exhibit during the last ten years and valued over \$45,000.). Works must be either exchanged with other museums or sold at public auction. The Hoving scandal resulted in more rigorous deaccession policies being

developed in museums across the country but questions concerning deaccession still arise. Recently, the Guggenheim sold off three important paintings for the purpose of generating money, not because they were no longer meaningful to the museum's collection. The museum received \$47.3 million for these "assets" at auction. This was in blatant disregard of the American Association of Museum's recommendations and was condemned by museum professionals and art critics and historians alike (pp. 281-83).

Thomas Krens, Director of the Guggenheim Museum, arranged for the sale of the paintings to gain the money needed to purchase a collection of contemporary art. Many viewed this deaccession as revealing an attitude that equates art with money, the exhibition of art with product, and product as something to market. Krens envisions huge exhibitions that will travel to satellite museums around the world. This talk of art in quantitative, economic, and strategic terms drew criticism in light of the director's responsibility for the care and conservation of the collection. The American Association of Museums' guidelines indicate that the safety of the object must take precedence even over

aesthetic advantage. Perhaps now it is time to add a clause that states that the safety of the object must take precedence over economic advantage.

Function: Presentation

The presentation of works of art, the third function of the art museum, is carried out by the professional staff although the general program policy is established by the Board and the Director. Program development and implementation, according to the American Association of Museums' guidelines, are the responsibilities of the Director. "The collection should be taken into account in developing the program, to interpret and to enhance its impact on the public." (Association of Art Museum Directors, p.13). Obviously, exhibition is the primary means of presenting works of art, but included also in the definition might be programs such as slide lectures, gallery talks, film and video programs and art classes. Publications, including exhibition catalogs, instructional and historical books and pamphlets, study guides and aids, and other supplementary materials, are essential.

The American Association of Museums recommends both scholarly and popular publications in conjunction

with the collection and special exhibitions. It is the responsibility of the Director to establish and maintain standards of quality for all forms of presentation. "Sound scholarship must be at the source of all information communicated regardless of the degree of popularization. No distortion of facts or presentation of works with dubious attributions should be permitted for any reason whatsoever. It is recognized that there will be innovation in programming; no matter how innovative or unconventional the program, the integrity of the work of art must be respected." (Association of Art Museum Directors, p.15).

It should also be noted that the various means of promoting the museums' programs to the public can influence attitudes toward the museum and its holdings and should therefore be governed by professional standards. Public relations activities, advertizing and promotional campaigns, membership programs, sales of printed matter and reproductions, fund raising endeavors, can all play important parts in the development of the public's perception and should be closely monitored.

It is in the area of presentation that we see the influence of modernism, democracy, and capitalism quite

clearly. The impact of modernism on both the design of the museum and of the exhibition coupled with the influence of democracy and capitalism on museum practices will be explored.

The Impact of Modernism on Presentation

The first American museums were modeled in the ancient architectural styles and the various revivals of those styles. (Chapter 3) This, in the minds of American museum-goers, was the proper repository for art since it represented not only European high architecture but the palaces where culture, wealth, and power resided. Americans would build the European palace on Main Street, fill it with master works, and open it to the people.

The Museum of Modern Art in New York City was the first modern museum building in America. (See Chapter 5) Constructed in 1939, the museum building was designed by Philip Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone to embody the ideas and forms of modernism as it would house the world's greatest collection of modern art. It represented modernism with an architecture known as the International Style, formulated in Germany during the 1920's, packaged and disseminated by Alfred Barr and Philip Johnson in their 1932 exhibition Modern

Architecture: International Exhibition.

"A number of progressive architects have converged to form a genuinely new style which is rapidly spreading throughout the world," Barr wrote in the catalog essay. "Both in appearance and structure this style is peculiar to the twentieth century and is as fundamentally original as the Greek or Byzantine or Gothic ... The aesthetic principles of the International Style are based primarily upon the nature of modern materials and structure and upon modern requirements in planning. Slender steel posts and beams, and concrete reinforced by steel have made possible structures of skeleton-like strength and lightness. The external surfacing materials are of painted stucco or tile, or, in more expensive buildings, of aluminum or thin slabs of marble or granite and of glass both opaque and transparent. Planning, liberated from the necessity for symmetry so frequently required by tradition is, in the new style, flexibly dependent upon convenience." (Hitchcock, 1932, p.7).

The Museum of Modern Art was the first International Style building in America and was designed to be flexible and efficient. It was planned to function as a place to show art and to accommodate the large following the

Museum had attracted. There was a lounge and a film theatre, but most important, the galleries were spacious, white-walled apartments perfect for viewing the European modernist paintings that were the centerpiece of the Museum's collection. It was not until World War II caused the migration of European artists to New York that modernist ideas began to dominate American artistic thought and American modernist art began to develop in its own right. (pp. 155-57).

Surrealism was recognized as the most widely influential aesthetic movement between the First and Second World Wars and it was the Surrealist artists who moved from Paris to New York in the early 1940's (pp. 158-63). Surrealism looked to the subconscious, dream world as a means to discover and express truth. It depended on intuition and instinct rather than rational, logical thought processes. Andre Breton, the poet and Father of Surrealism, defined it as the "belief in the higher reality of specific forms of associations, previously neglected, in the omnipotence of dreams, and in the disinterested play of thinking." The impact of the Surrealists on the New York art world resulted in what is generally considered the first American modern

art movement, Abstract Expressionism.

Abstract Expressionism inherited from Surrealism an intense interest in psychology and psychoanalysis, especially an interest in the role of the unconscious in the making of art. Seeking a means to express in their art certain universal truths, the Abstract Expressionists employed signs and symbols and myths in a method learned from the Surrealists. Jackson Pollock, as an example, connected with the Surrealists in both the use of symbolic imagery and in the methods of automatism (pp. 163-71). The automatic painting method was believed to reveal the universal symbols inhabiting the inner mind but also placed a new emphasis on the process of painting. The process interested all of the Abstract Expressionists who used it to register the energy, drama, and passion of the moment. It was Pollock, however, who took the automatic techniques to the extreme to produce his "drip" paintings. The unstretched, often unsized canvas was placed directly on the studio floor and Pollock, paint in hand, would move around and across the canvas, applying the paint in whole body gestures, producing works, not of the easel size, but rather, great murals. The Abstract Expressionists, fully cognitive of

their moment in time, produced paintings reflecting the age that produced the airplane, the television, and the atomic bomb. Large paintings that could compete with the advertising billboards that had begun to dot the nation's highways. Paintings that would catch the attention of a people on the run and provide, in the hectic atmosphere of post-war New York, a slow, introspective, meditative art with spiritual overtones. These paintings required exhibition spaces with large walls and high ceilings, free from worldly distractions.

In 1959, the Museum of Modern Art launched the Thirtieth Anniversary Campaign which would provide for the construction of a new East Wing on the corner along Fifty-fourth Street (p. 342). Designed by Philip Johnson, the six story glass and steel tower would almost quadruple the Museum's exhibition space and would further expand the modernist architectural ideas developed at the Bauhaus.

The Bauhaus artists, like the Surrealists, immigrated to the United States during the war and, in due course, exerted their influence, first on American architecture and design and then on American art (pp. 171-178). This influence produced work that was

functional, rational, and austere. The modern museum would be designed according to its purpose: a building in which to exhibit modern art and through which would pass large numbers of people. The high priest of Bauhaus philosophy, Walter Gropius, believed that architecture was "the ultimate art form in which beauty and utility, design and structure could be combined. Buildings were conceived not merely as functional necessities but as experimental answers serving psychologically based needs." (Kuhn, p.14). The modern museum therefore, would be designed, not just to guide people, offer refreshments and educational aids, but also to serve as a kind of asylum, a place away from the secular, where the sacred icons of modernity might be contemplated (p. 178). The Bauhaus-influenced architecture produced a museum perfectly suited for the needs of the new art known as the New York School, the "psychologically based" needs of both the exhibitor and the visitor, and the requirements of the enlightened capitalists who would begin the commercialization of the museum.

The Bauhaus artists also influenced fine art philosophy, although this was a delayed impact. Taking positions in some of America's most influential art

schools, they taught the principles of modernism to students who would be the next generation of artists. The standards of simplicity of line, geometric form, truth in materials, the rational, functional, intellectual approach to the creation of art resulted, in the end, in a minimalist aesthetic. The art movements of this period, geometric painting, minimalist sculpture, and even Pop Art, reveal this objective approach to creating art (pp. 179-85).

Donald Judd, a prominent sculptor within the Minimalist movement, wrote an essay called "Specific Objects" in which he expressed his preference for a literal use of materials, space, and concepts. Judd's sculptures were composed of materials of industrial steel and aluminum machined to perfection, creating geometric forms placed in a literal space in an ordered, rational configuration. They were clearly descendants of the Bauhaus philosophy of truth and pragmatism.

What Minimalism required to be fully realized was an exhibition space equally stark and fully removed from the outside world. "The ideal gallery", wrote Brian O'Doherty, "subtracts from the art work all cues that interfere with the fact that it is 'art'. The work is

isolated from everything that would detract from its own evaluation of itself. This gives the space a presence possessed by other spaces where conventions are preserved through the repetition of a closed system of values. Some of the sanctity of the church, the formality of the courtroom, the mystique of the experimental laboratory joins with chic design to produce a unique chamber of aesthetics. So powerful are the perceptual fields of force within this chamber that, once outside it, art can lapse into secular status." (O'Doherty, 1986, p.14). Donald Judd's aluminum cubes were actual aluminum cubes, containing no illusion or metaphor. Removed from the pristine white walled gallery, these sculptures could easily be absorbed by the secular environment (p. 185).

The designing of works of art specifically for the modern gallery space became a common practice throughout the 1970's. The art propagated by Bauhaus philosophy required a gallery influenced by Bauhaus design in order to be seen. The Bauhaus dictum of "form follows function" became routine thought for designers of exhibition spaces. Edward Larrabee Barnes, architect of numerous American art museums, believes museum design should not be about creating an architectural monument,

but should be focused on the art and on the way people move through the museum. "I am dedicated to the idea of anonymous white spaces ... I feel definitely that the rooms themselves have to represent calm, well-proportioned spaces. The sequence and the sense of flow must work, and the way you move through it must be graceful. I think its a very difficult thing to explain how you can do architecture with a strong central idea... and at the same time have that idea opt for this function of bringing out these various shows which go through it." (Diamonstein, 1980, p.18).

The architecture to house the site-specific art of the 1960's and 1970's was, in the beginning, "found architecture", that is, the great iron bound buildings of the Soho district of lower Manhattan. These raw and rough, high ceilinged, lofts were low rent places to which artists and art dealers flocked. The creation of museum architecture mimicking the Soho studio and gallery quickly followed and in 1976 the Museum of Modern Art announced a major expansion plan (pp. 356-69). The new construction, known as the West Wing, would provide 46,500 square feet of new gallery space. Summed up, the expansion planned for a total of 170,000 square feet of

new space and 200,000 square feet of renovated space.

The architect, Cesar Pelli, worked with the curators of the various departments to determine the design which was based on the Museum of Modern Art's "incredibly well developed theories and attitudes about how modern art should be exhibited." (Pelli, 1984, n.p.). The galleries, for the most part, retained the apartment like scale approved for the exhibition of modern art and the carpeted floors recommended by then Director of Painting and Sculpture, Bill Rubin. "A museum is a museum, and you can't pretend it's an apartment", he said, "but the carpet does tend to minimize the viewer's sense of being in a big public area." (Rubin, 1984, n.p.). The galleries for the art produced from the 1960's to the 1980's however, reflected those Soho lofts. These were designed to be greater expanses with no carpeting and movable walls which allowed flexibility.

The Impact of Democratic Concerns on Presentation

The central architectural image of the new Museum of Modern Art is the Garden Hall with its great banks of escalators and dramatic view of the sculpture garden (p. 369). It is a symbol of the triumph of architecture in the service of the people. The modern museum in its

function of presentation, exists to present art for the people. The Garden Hall is designed to meet this function. It is designed to welcome the masses, service the masses, and move them out into the galleries. The Garden Hall is the axis where the influence of modernism meets the influence of democracy.

Modern architecture, as it appears in the museum, has served the public well. The same demands of truth and pragmatism that produced art forms difficult for the general populace to appreciate, provided, when applied to architecture and design, democratic solutions. In other words, while modern art was elitist, modern architecture was really democratic. This was reflected in the shift that occurred in the design of the art museum.

The first art museums, those great palaces in American parks, were accessed by way of a staircase, usually marble and often flanked by fountains. The columnated entry was a common theme, leading into a great hall, with the galleries beyond, perhaps at the top of yet another marble staircase.

The first Museum of Modern Art building was entered at street level, a less intimidating and more democratic approach. Today's Museum of Modern Art continues that

custom as do most modern museums including the Whitney and the Guggenheim. In Washington, D.C., the differences can be observed between the West Building of the National Gallery (1941) where the marble stairs lead into a great columnated rotunda, and the East Building of the National Gallery (1978) accessed from street level through revolving doors.

Those first art museums were not designed to cater to visitors' creature comforts. There were no restaurants or book stores and few, if any, places to sit and rest. The modern museum has an information center near the entry where maps are dispensed indicating not only exhibition areas, but rest areas, restaurants, lavatories, lounges, coat rooms, and shops. These buildings consider seriously issues such as traffic flow, lighting, climate control, wheel chair accessibility (p. 187).

The first art museums, while considered educational institutions, did not strive to explain the work, its significance, its historical precedents. The modern democratic museum couples the art exhibited with informative signage, gallery talks, publications, video presentations, recorded tours. American democratic

ideals demanded education to be every person's right. The museum was soon recognized as a potential center for public education for people of all ages and economic and social levels (p. 190). Inherent in the commitment to make art available to a large and diverse public is the danger of a program so democratic in its scope that its content is reduced to the lowest common denominator. Inherent in the opening of the galleries to the masses is the danger that the quiet, contemplative atmosphere required for an aesthetic experience is lost in the commotion. These issues will be addressed further when the educational and aesthetic purpose of the museum are examined.

The Impact of Capitalism on Presentation

The democratic program of presenting exhibits for the larger population is directly connected to the influence of capitalism which brought with it profit-making procedures dependent on consumers for success. (See Chapter 7) As director of the Museum of Modern Art, Alfred Barr instituted what were considered unusual practices for an art museum. Since, in the early years, the museum was not set on a course to establish a permanent collection, it depended on loans for its

exhibits (pp. 293-4). All exhibits were therefore temporary and with each show change came new announcements, parties, and publicity. Barr established the first public relations office in an American museum. The changing exhibits and press coverage kept a steady flow of visitors coming (p. 297). It was Nelson Rockefeller who determined that the Museum should charge admission. The visitors therefore generated income and the changing shows and press coverage became essential to maintaining the income. Barr produced, in an effort to educate the visitors, exhibit catalogs and brochures which were quickly consumed by the public and another source of income was realized. Thus the beginnings of income generating activities were explored at the Museum of Modern Art.

It was at the Metropolitan Museum, however, under the directorship of Thomas Hoving, that museum operations were thrust in the direction of all-out consumerism and programs such as a temporary exhibit or the publication of a catalog were viewed, not solely as educational endeavors, but as sources of income (pp. 238-45). Special exhibits were events to be promoted in the press thus increasing museum attendance and therefore museum

income, not only from admission charges, but also from parking charges, restaurant charges, museum shop sales, and membership dues. For example, the 1965 pre-Hoving annual report cites two major sources of income: New York City (25%) and the Museum's endowment (67%). By 1976, only 10% was contributed by the City, and 20.6% came from the endowment. Although the actual dollar amounts from these two sources had increased, their percentage of the total budget had declined because Hoving's blockbuster shows were at this point, generating 59% of the operating budget. These exhibits not only generated huge incomes for the Museum through admission charges and other revenues but were also substantially self supporting ventures because they attracted corporate support (p. 243).

During the first four years of his tenure, Hoving tripled the number of exhibits to a grand total of sixty shows for that year. The crowds and commercialism generated by these shows disturbed many museum professionals and, as we have seen, caused the resignation of the head of the department of European painting, Anthony M. Clark.

"Hovingism", as these commerce-oriented museum

practices came to be called, was debated at professional meetings and criticized in professional journals but, in the end, Hovingism, in various degrees, infiltrated the offices and boardrooms of American museums, changing forever their policies and practices.

The Guggenheim Museum under the directorship of Thomas Krens has demonstrated the most visible adoption of the museum-as-commerce philosophy (pp. 279-85). We have noted the controversy over the auctioning of certain paintings from the museum's collection and the concern expressed regarding the subsequent purchase of Count Giuseppe Ponza di Biumo's collection of contemporary art. Krens' degrees in economics and management and his lack of art scholarship may account for his view of the art museum as an industry in need of reform. He believes museums are in a crisis, they need to explore "mergers and acquisitions" and understand "asset management." "What I want", says Krens, "is to build an arena to make exhibitions...and I want to do it globally." (Weisgall, 1989, p.57).

"A museum's exhibition program" worries Metropolitan Museum director Philippe de Montebello, "now tends to be viewed by the administration as being at the service of

the museum's budget - instead of the other way around. Exhibitions are exploited by a formidable business machine...the whole critical mass of staff and services employed to generate, shape and execute exhibitions is exploited to the detriment of the staff's custodial as well as creative functions." (de Montebello, 1984, p.47).

Hans Haacke, the artist who has made the museum-corporate relationship the centerpiece of his work, fears for the loss of art scholarship as the hurried exhibit curator relinquishes reflective time (p. 246).

The museum director and art scholar Sherman Lee wrote: "An art museum is not the same kind of institution as a corporation. I don't think many business assumptions are valid for the art museum. We must not think in terms of a balance sheet." (Lee, 1983, p.78).

A major influence on the development of this view of the exhibition as an income generating activity has been the underwriting of exhibits by corporations. With corporate support the exhibit becomes a major source of income for the museum and therein lies the incentive Haacke described as a form of addition. The corporate support demands that the museum create and promote extravaganzas in order to attract visitors. The

corporation wants the publicity, the museum wants the corporate support, and the crowds want the blockbuster.

Museums, in the process of courting corporate support, have become adept at corporate methods and corporate thinking. This situation is illustrated clearly in the text of a brochure distributed to corporations by the Metropolitan Museum: "Many public relations opportunities are available through sponsorship of programs, special exhibitions and services. These can often provide a creative and cost effective answer to a specific marketing objective, particularly where international governmental or consumer relations may be a fundamental concern." This brochure also contained a page of quotes from business executives telling their colleagues why they are sponsors of the Metropolitan.

Corporate officers know that the greatest publicity benefits will be derived from the art exhibits that generate publicity and draw large crowds. The underwriting of such an exhibit has been a sure bet for the corporation because of the visibility factor. The 1988 show at the Guggenheim Museum called "Fifty Years of Collecting" is a good example of this (p. 259). The show featured art held by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

from the collections in both the Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice. Chase Manhattan Bank sponsored the exhibit and mounted a massive advertizing campaign which included newspaper, magazine, and radio advertizing, and direct mail marketing. A comparison of the one month duration of the exhibit to the same time period of the previous year reveals an increase in museum attendance of twenty-two percent.

Corporate sponsorship of exhibits has raised concerns regarding art scholarship since it is feared, first of all, that in their efforts to secure donations, the museum staff will propose only those exhibits perceived to be attractive to the corporation and the public, setting aside esoteric projects with a more selective appeal. "If financial backing to do a project is needed," says J. Carter Brown, discussing corporate funding, "and if from the beginning the museum people realize that it is the kind of project that nobody is going to want to back, this interferes with a curatorial decision." (Morfogon, 1988, p.148). In a more blunt analysis, Philippe de Montebello describes corporate funding of exhibits as "an inherent, insidious, hidden

form of censorship " (de Montebello, 1984, p.42).

The second area of concern for art scholarship is addressed by Hans Haacke when he points to the time involved for curators doing business with corporate representatives, time away from curatorial duties. For example, Whitney Museum curators, during the heyday of corporate involvement with that museum, arranged for the purchase of \$8 million worth of art in public spaces at Equitable Center. Perhaps more than any other art museum the Whitney Museum of American Art, under the directorship of Tom Armstrong, attached itself to corporations and depended on corporate support (pp. 263-79). And no other art museum has come under fire for lack of art scholarship to the degree of the Whitney Museum. The analysis of the Whitney exhibition program recorded in Chapter seven reveals the lack of any comparative art historical themes. Michael Brenson questioned in a 1989 New York Times article: "Who can remember the last Whitney exhibition that seemed finished - in other words, thoroughly conceived, considered and installed? Who can remember a Whitney exhibition that generated confidence in the museum's capacity to deal with either the achievements of the old or the challenges

of the new?" To assume a connection between corporate involvement and lack of scholarship is not unreasonable. Philippe de Montebello raises concerns for this entire generation of corporate-influenced curators who, because of the time given to fundraising and donor services, have been denied "sufficient unstructured time for studying and looking" and therefore "will not have sufficient knowledge or experience so they can later perform with intelligence and discrimination in more important positions." (de Montebello, 1984, p.42). The traditional values of the museum have been upset and the basic work of the museum has been set aside. Instead of research and scholarly publications, the curators' efforts go into special events, according to de Montebello, which are measured by quantity, not quality.

The evaluation of museum programs, according to the Ethics and Standards Report issued by the Association of Art Museum Directors in 1981, requires that judgements be made "on the basis of quality and not merely such quantitative indices as popularity, receipts, media response, or even the success of related social activities."

As has been noted, presentation involves also the

various means of promoting the museums program including sales of printed matter and reproductions, activities which have grown as the museum seeks more sources of income. The American Association of Museums has expressed concern in this regard, in particular with the manufacturing and marketing of reproductions. Nelson Rockefeller came under attack when, in 1978, he announced the establishment of the Nelson Rockefeller Collection Inc., a business to produce and market duplicates of objects from his art collection. These reproductions were advertized as being indistinguishable from the originals, a claim that art critic Hilton Kramer called shameless. "At best reproductions are mementoes...to suggest that they somehow have the power to function as equivalents of the artist's own work is...a serious corruption of taste." Kramer went on to criticize the art museums he said "cynically led the way into corruptions of this sort." (Gilmour, 1979, p.80).

In 1981 the Ethics and Standards Committee issued guidelines for reproductions of works of art in an effort to maintain a climate of artistic integrity. "Recently, a proliferation of 'art-derived' materials, coupled with the marketing of copies of original works, have created

such wide-spread confusion as to require clarification if ethical standards are to be maintained." (Association of Art Museums, ¹⁹⁸¹ p.1). The Committee recommended four steps to insure the public's understanding of reproductions: museums should mark the objects as reproductions; offer them in sizes and materials other than those used by the artist in the original; price them according to standard marketing practices; assure through advertising that the buyer understands the object is not an original and that there is no qualitative comparison.

The area of presentation, as we have seen, is the public side of the museum and encompasses the exhibition programs, their topics, ways and means, their support activities, the publications, reproduction, various printed matter, and all aspects of the museum's public relations. It is in this public area that the influences of modernism, democracy, and capitalism come to play and it is here that the dangers of those influences can be most clearly recorded and analyzed in order to insure the integrity of the museum's function.

Purpose: Educational and Aesthetic

The art museum fulfills its function for a purpose and that purpose is educational and aesthetic and, as

recommended by the American Association of Museums, should be supported by a joint commitment of the Board of Trustees and the professional staff. The following is a summary of the advantages for and challenges to the fulfillment of the museum's purpose incurred through the influences of modernism, democracy and capitalism.

The American art museum is at the service of the public, a public who in this democratic society is viewed as entitled to access to the country's art treasures.(See Chapter 2). The museum stands with its doors open, its treasures gathered for the benefit of all the people. The primary benefit is understood to be knowledge, knowledge gained through observation, instruction and experience. The museum attempts to guide the visitor by arranging the paintings and other objects of art in some systematic or thematic way that allows for study and comparison. The museum also provides supplemental information through labels, exhibition catalogs, lectures and so on. The knowledge gained in the art museum has been perceived from the beginning as improving somehow the minds, morals, and taste of the visitor and creating therefore better citizens.

This benefit of knowledge is imparted to the museum

visitor in two different ways. The knowledge gained from the aesthetic experience is, what Sir Herbert Read describes as, the primary humanizing element in the development of human consciousness. "Without the creative arts there would be no advance in myth or ritual, in language or meaning, in morality or metaphysics." (Read, 1960, p.92). The knowledge gained by educational experience is verbal, that is, it is conveyed through the printed or spoken word and concerned with the conditions surrounding the work of art, such as historical or biographical information, or perhaps formal or technical information. Together, the aesthetic and educational compose the purpose of the art museum.

Educational programs are at the service of the museum's aesthetic purpose. They are viewed theoretically as the means to the end. For many years art museums employed a hands-off education policy believing that the art work should stand alone with no verbal explanations. This approach allowed for the aesthetic experience, (an emotional, intellectual, spiritual response to a work of art as a work of art) but did not attempt to elicit it. The knowledge that the visitor gains from the aesthetic experience is not

necessarily rational or logical. It is non-verbal and not easily communicated from one individual to another. Educational programs therefore cannot directly provoke an aesthetic experience.

Let us consider for a moment the purpose of the museum, aesthetic and educational, and consider the opposing nature of the purpose. The educational purpose, that is, giving instruction or information, is by definition active. The aesthetic purpose, on the other hand, is passive and private, a very personal experience difficult, if not impossible to verbalize. The educational programs developed in the art museum depend on words to convey information. They are often interactive, public events.

How have democratic concerns, modernism, and capitalism impacted on the museum's purpose and has this impact put the museum at odds with itself? These are the questions to be addressed beginning with the impact on the museum's educational programs followed by a consideration of the aesthetic purpose of the museum.

The Impact of Democratic Concerns on the Museum's Purpose

American art museums began their educational pursuits mainly because of democratic concerns. (Chapter

6) Key people in key museums wrote and taught their ideas regarding the educational mission of art museums. John Cotton Dana, director of the Newark Museum from 1909 to 1929, was a firm believer in the museum as a democratic institution of learning, an institution with exhibits and programs made available to all the people (p. 190). The influence of his ideas is still being felt. Benjamin Ives Gilman is generally considered to have invented the gallery talk at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, a democratic method now standard in art museums. As director of America's first modern art museum, Alfred Barr faced new challenges in the presentation of the new art forms (pp. 214-224). The often-times unrecognizable images in modern painting required new educational methods, a situation that probably accounts for Barr's innovations. He is credited with placing the first wall label along side a painting, and he produced instructional catalogs to accompany every exhibit. "If you dislike modern art," he wrote on a handbill, "the Museum welcomes you. We believe our collections and special exhibitions, explanatory labels and sympathetic gallery guides will interest you and convince you that the art of our time ... your time ...

is worth your attention even if some of it puzzles you at first. (But watch out! With some unprejudiced study you may even come to enjoy it.)" (Barr, 1932, n.p.).

Barr had to work at democratizing the Museum of Modern Art since the average citizen found this art especially intimidating. In 1943 he published a brochure called "What is Modern Painting?" in which he taught his new audience the correct pronunciation of artists' names (Ma-tees, Say-zann) while leading them from paintings with familiar, recognizable imagery to abstract compositions.

Because the difficult paintings that modernism produced demanded explanation in order to satisfy democratic concerns, the modern museum professional developed new educational methods. If it were not for the difficulty posed by abstract painting, museum educational practices might not have developed so rapidly.

The Impact of Capitalism on the Museum Purpose

With certain educational methods in place (i.e.: the exhibit catalog and the gallery talk), the major expansion of educational programs was spurred by the realization that they generated income for the museum.

Nelson Rockefeller at the Museum of Modern Art introduced capitalist practices in promoting exhibits through the press and then charging admission. (Chapter 8) The Metropolitan Museum engaged corporate sponsors for museum exhibits and programs and adopted their methods for quantitative evaluations of these events. (Chapter 7)

From the educational standpoint, modernism, democracy and capitalism have worked together to produce the world's most efficient and effective museum education programs. When we consider, however, the degree of fulfillment of the museum's aesthetic purpose, the achievement level seems somewhat dubious.

Modernism succeeded, through its impact on architecture, to provide not only a functional, comfortable place to view art, but a separate place, away from the secular world with no (as it was designed) visual distractions. The perfect white cube was the space in which the visitor could commune with the work of art and experience the aesthetic. It might also be argued that modernist painting and sculpture made people more attuned to aesthetics since they were forced to move beyond a response to obvious subject matter alone. Modernism was at the service of aesthetics, a situation

not true of democracy and capitalism.

The influence of capitalism on the museum and the democratic impulse of the museum's educational programs combined to create galleries so packed with people so as to negate the possibility of an aesthetic response. The educational programs geared toward the masses may also pose a problem in three ways. Firstly, the lecturing to tour groups in the galleries can be a distraction to other visitors and should therefore be carefully scheduled. Next, the intellectual level of educational programs should be closely monitored to avoid the "common denominator syndrome" in which little or no scholarly material is presented. And thirdly, the natural thrust of the educational program toward those things which surround the work of art (i.e.: biographical information on the artist, technical information on the process, historical information on the subject or school) should not override the aesthetic purpose but rather, clear a path for it.

Capitalist marketing techniques helped bring in the large numbers of museum visitors and the danger exists for capitalist thinking to influence them. The quantitative versus qualitative analysis of art can lead

people to judge a painting's worth according to its monetary value rather than its aesthetic value. It can propose the judgement of an exhibit be based on attendance rather than scholarly research and quality of content. It can influence curators in this regard, stealing their reflective time while demanding attention to the bottom line, subjugating scholarly exhibits in favor of the popular.

The duality of the museum's purpose, educational and aesthetic, may very well be at the heart of the paradox of the American art museum. The educational purpose and the programs born of it serve the museum's democratic needs and have come to dominate the art museum, posing the danger of doing so at the expense of the aesthetic. Since aesthetic knowledge seems to be predominantly nonrational with no verbal requirements it could be theorized that the nature of the work of art might always elude museum educators. In any case, the educational and aesthetic are at odds: active/passive, public/private, verbal/nonverbal. Their peaceful coexistence and more, their mutual support, constitute the challenge set before us as we move into the next century and on to the maturation of the American art museum.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW: VITO ACCONCI

The following interview with Vito Acconci was conducted by Nancy Einreinhofer at the artist's studio in Brooklyn, New York on Tuesday, January 9, 1990.

N.E. Can we begin by discussing your exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art? How did that show come about?

V.A. Yes, from what I remember, it began as soon as Linda Shearer went to the Modern. I don't know what year that was. She had decided that she wanted her first big show to be me. This was at least two years before the show. At that point we had no idea what the show was going to be so it was just this generalized idea. At first I think she had thought of a retrospective but, around the same time, the LaJolla Museum in California was planning a survey show of my work. Linda's first inclination was to join with that show and make it a bigger show. I think there was some kind of objection to this at the Modern. I think they wanted Linda's first show to be her own show and not something she did in

conjunction with another museum. Because the LaJolla show dealt with a kind of survey from the beginning of my career, and dealt basically with indoor stuff, we thought the Modern show would make more sense dealing with public work. The LaJolla show was still traveling so we decided to try to make the Modern show as different as possible. I was doing a lot of outdoor stuff so we addressed the notion of outdoors. The theme of the LaJolla show was sort of domestic and home, inside. So I thought, okay, if that is dealing with inside we'll try to make the Modern show deal with outside. Understanding all the while that the Modern show was going to be indoors. So it was a little bit like beating its head against the wall. But if anything, we wanted to stress the idea of more public stuff if the LaJolla show was going to stress more intimate.

N.E. That is one of the things that comes up in the catalogue. I think Linda Shearer actually says that you have this profound commitment to

public art now.

V.A. Yes. I think I do. Theoretically I think the most appropriate place for my work is a public space. It seems that stuff of mine is more about culture than it is about art. And I think it is more about conventions and images that anybody in a particular culture knows, rather than a particular art audience. And it seems that it works best in a place where people from varying classes, people with varying backgrounds, come across cultural conventions, so that there's some kind of discussion or argument.

My work seems better in a place where people with varying backgrounds happen to cross rather than a museum or gallery which is pretty much a certain class. So theoretically, I think a public place is the most appropriate place for my work.

N.E. But you really do have to make certain kinds of changes when you move from the protected environment of the museum.

V.A. Sure you do, you really do, because a museum

or gallery is a protected environment. And really you are sort of allowed to do anything.

N.E. Do you think that's true? You really are allowed to do just about anything in a museum setting?

V.A. Yeah, I really think you are because I think the museum and gallery system is still built on the idea of the supremacy of the artist. I think that museums and galleries are still build on the idea of art as a kind of altar and the artist as a kind of willing victim. I think that's why museums have no windows, you're closed in with western culture, you're meant to be overwhelmed by it. There is no escape. In other words, if that supremacy of the artist didn't exist it seems like museums wouldn't exist. It seems that there has to be the notion of the artist as some kind of specialized being to allow for the passage from one artist to another and from one group of artists at one time to a group of artists in another world. If the artist wasn't so specialized, if he was just ordinary, living

in an ordinary culture, then why is the museum preserving all of this work?

N.E. As you speak about it, it seems like a pretty difficult thing to give up. That is, to direct yourself more toward public art...?

V.A. I don't know that I think that. For my generation it was an easy thing to give up. My generation started doing work at the end of the sixties at the time when there was a real questioning of the notion of western culture. There was a questioning of the priest-like idea of artists that we inherited. My work appeared at the end of the sixties. It was a time of the Whole Earth Catalogue. It was a time when art just seemed to be one activity among a number of activities. It didn't seem quite as important as we'd been taught. So I think for my generation it was easy to give up. I suspect my generation probably started doing art as a reaction against the abstract expressionist artist as this kind of superior being. It's as if the abstract expressionist said something like: "I don't know where it

came from, I just know that it came." Well, the implication is that it came to them but didn't come to the rest of us. Why is this person so special? Why weren't the rest of use chosen? I think that's why it seemed important to us not to emphasize the artist's hand. The artist's hand meant that this is something particularly valuable, something that separates the artist from the non-artist. For my generation, the artist became simply the person who decided to organize certain things.

N.E. That seems to be something that turns up in your work a lot, that is, the idea of the museum or the gallery as this very special space. You enter that space and do something to change that. For example, I remember at one point you referred to the art gallery (rather than a museum) as a store. Then you go in there and you make it an environment that is not a store. You make things that are pretty difficult, if not impossible, to sell.

V.A. Yeah, but in a way that is strongly self-

defeating on my part. Whatever I do to make it not a store, it never works because it is a store. While what I provide might be not saleable, it provides window dressing and it provides publicity. So it still provides a business function. I might not get the benefits of it but it enhances the gallery as a store.

N.E. That's actually what I am asking you: How do you balance that off? I mean, on one hand you are participating in it.

V.A. You are really participating in it no matter how much you're undermining it. If anything the undermining makes that system stronger. Sometime at the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, when there were a lot of us who were doing stuff that wasn't conventional or saleable, we quickly showed in very "establishment" galleries. It was almost as if the galleries were saying: "Look, we can even show this and we can even find a way to sell this. So if anything, we're even stronger than we thought we were." It seems

that work, which covered a whole range of people, (from me to Dennis Oppenheim to Joseph Kosuth to Bruce Nauman, you could name 100 names) that work made galleries much more of an institution than they had been. It was almost as if, by the fact of it being shown in the gallery, it was justified as art and made potentially saleable. You could do something that wasn't saleable but it could be documented, and then the document could be sold. So I don't know if that could ever really work, that kind of undermining.

N.E. That definitely seems like one of the lessons from that period.

V.A. Yes, and I think it is one of the lessons that a current generation of artists learned very well. Their impulse is to say: "Okay, if it's a store we're going to make it as much of a store as possible. And we're going to take the benefits of it." I don't know, maybe that's not so terrible. I'm not sure. I mean, on one hand it turns me off and on the other, it's incredibly smart. It's much more

of an understanding of a business system than we had. Maybe, in some ways, it's overdoing the business part of a system so much so that maybe it will break.

N.E. Probably it will flip-flop.

V.A. It probably will from what I've seen from people of the younger generation, people who are still in school. There is something else going on but it's hard to know what. They don't seem to be that geared to art as commodity.

N.E. Yes, I think that's true.

V.A. You always see what the generation right before you did, and you're almost forced to rebel against it. If you don't rebel against it then what place do you have? You always sort of kill the father, in order to do work yourself.

N.E. I'd like to refer now to the catalogue from your show at The Museum of Modern Art. There are ten statements written by you regarding public art. The first is called "Escape from Art." It's this idea of being a refugee from

the luxury of the museum space from ...

V.A. Yes, it's the idea that we were talking about, that by the act of doing art you are immediately in this kind of art world. There really is this kind of security and it starts with art school. When you enter art school you enter the minor league; your training. It's the education of an artist. First you go to certain art schools (and there are certain art schools that have better reputations than others) and then you show in some supposedly alternative space. Then you're picked up by a gallery. It's a very closed system.

N.E. You talk about this idea of there being a lot of categories in reference to one of the reasons why you might prefer doing public art. Let me read the quote from the Museum of Modern Art catalogue (1985). The Escape from Art; "The person who chooses to do public art might be considered a refugee, in flight from the gallery/museum which has been established as the proper occasion for art in our culture at this time. Escape from the confines of

that space means losing the privileges of its laboratory conditions: the luxury of considering art either as a system of universals or as a system of commodities. Abdicating the accustomed space of art, the public artist declares himself/herself uninterested in art questions, and no longer involved in the development of art as we've known it. Public art revises the present of art and conjectures its future: a time when art might be considered not as a separable category, in its own area and with its own products, but as an atmosphere instilled, almost secretly, within other categories of life."

What do you mean by other categories of life?

V.A. In our culture, as soon as something is called "art" that labeling is like a notation to people who aren't involved in the art world, to feel very, very, very, very, very left out. They immediately feel like this is part of a realm they don't understand.

N.E. And that's true.

V.A. Yeah, its true, but ...

N.E. It's true of contemporary art and maybe even of modern art. It's not possible for a person to walk into a gallery or a museum showing that kind of art and understand it if they have absolutely no background.

V.A. Yes, it really has been true. I guess that's one reason why I feel much more interested in trying to deal with images and conventions that most people would get. I mean, maybe the way things are shifted or collided, there might be some question. You might not know what it all leads up to but you know what a house is, you know what a window is, you know what all the elements are, so at least you're on familiar ground. I admit this is real important to me. It's important that the stuff that you use in a piece is the stuff that is conventionally available. I guess what I am saying is that ideally, art shouldn't exist as a category. Maybe you do something like art but you do it in another field. Maybe art should be a way of doing

things rather than a particular set of products. Maybe art just means thickening the plot of something. You take what exists in any kind of category and you shift it around a little bit. That's probably what scientists do. Sometimes I'm not sure what the separation is except that one thing is called art and one thing is called something else.

N.E. I don't think you have the same freedom in science.

V.A. I mean a theoretical scientist is probably just playing around, just playing around.

N.E. Perhaps one can play with theory but it does come to the point where things have to be tested and proven.

V.A. But a lot of things are tested and proven theoretically. Then is there much of a difference between theoretical science and philosophy and art? It seems to really start to mix.

N.E. Yes, but that's not a realm that's accessible to the average Joe either.

V.A. You're right. If anything that would be a way

of putting forward and favoring so called "high art" because it's very much out of the reach of everybody. So why am I so against art that's in a museum where as I'm not against philosophy?

N.E. There seems to be a strong democratic impulse here.

V.A. Yeah, there is, there really is. I really want everything to be accessible. I'm much more interested in popular art, popular music and popular movies than I am in art. Because it's not about something hidden. It's about the images everybody can get, and get economically. The price of a movie is still \$7.50.

N.E. Well, the museums do provide art free of charge.

V.A. It is and it isn't. They say "Do not touch." They make art free but you can't touch it and there's something about that. Obviously this stuff has to be preserved and in order for it to be preserved you can't touch it. I guess that's true, but there's always the

implication that if you can't touch something it's because somebody else owns it. If you can only look at something, you're in the position of mere desire. You can never have it in your hands, you can only stand apart and wish for it. That is always a lower position. The function of "Do Not Touch" is to make you feel that you don't own this and somebody else does. You can never have it in your hands. You are never quite good enough for originals. I think for me those "Do Not Touch" signs in the museum were a major reason why I started making art. I mean, I wanted my stuff to be touched. A lot of that has to do with coming from New York which is not so much a visual city as it is a tangible city. Compare New York to Chicago. Chicago seems built so that there are vistas of buildings. There are panoramas you can always see. But in New York you touch, you feel, you smell, you hear. Seeing isn't quite as important as the touching. When you can see something from afar, you're in a sense, in control of it

because you're looking at something as if it's a model. You're looking at something and you're able to organize it. When you can't quite see something and you just feel it, touch it, etc. you're more in the middle of it. You see, if you stand far enough from a person, where you can see the whole person, you can sort of know the person. But if you stand three inches away certainly things get shaky. That shaky feeling seems to say "Now that organizational capacity of sight is gone, we have to literally feel our way around." That has always interested people and somewhere in the back of my mind, those are some of the guiding impulses.

N.E. Another point that you make in the Museum of Modern Art catalog is what you call "life on the edge." You're referring to public art ... "In the gallery or the museum the artist functions as a center for a particular system. Once outside that system, the artist is lost between worlds ... the artist's position in our culture is marginal." So my question to you

is - do you think that system is detrimental to artists generally? It is connected to that whole idea of the precious object and does it support the concept of artist as priest?

V.A. I think it is. I would like to have art that is part of life rather than this separation.

N.E. Do you think the museum functions as a separator?

V.A. Yes, the way we know it now.

N.E. What about the educational programs that museums have? They are trying to introduce art concepts. If you think about recent history, that's something that has escalated.

V.A. Yes, it has, and I have to admit I don't know enough about how most museums do it. I know during the Modern show there was a video tape about me, an interview tape that the educational department had. But what was that worth? I think a real educational system would talk about the art of a certain time in relation to the architecture of a certain time, the music of a certain time, the theater of a certain time. I guess that's one of the

things I was getting at ... that kind of a mix of categories. It seems that art history should be culture history. I did "Seed-Bed" in 1972. What went on in theater in 1972? What kind of pop music was around? The museum could communicate the feel of what was going on at a particular time. I don't know if I know enough about how educational departments deal with it, but there is still this notion that art is pulled out of nowhere. If you trace the history of the artist you see that the artist exists in a particular time, in a particular place. Also, I would like people to come across art the way they come across a lamp post or a stairway, to come upon it just as something that's in the street.

N.E. What about all the problems that go along with that? The fact that the audience is more of a victim with public art because they haven't asked for it.

V.A. Yeah, that's a problem because they haven't asked for it. That's a problem I don't know quite how to deal with because the implication

is that my stuff is dealing with these concepts so it has a right to be here. I'm certain that is being as much of an artist as a god or a priest because they haven't asked for it. When a public project is being presented, how much should the public have to do with the choosing of it? That is always a problem. How many people in the public should have a voice? Who is that public's representative?

N.E. This is, in a way, kind of an awful question but ...

V.A. No, ask it 'cause I'm all mixed up.

N.E. I don't think there are any easy answers. What do you think about this: In a museum you have a Board of Trustees who are moneyed, educated people, who therefore are being allowed to dictate taste. Then you have the curators who have been trained and are experts in the field. With public art, you think about the possibilities of allowing the ordinary folk to make decisions. I don't know if it sounds elitist to be questioning this

but what about it?

V.A. I think that has been the biggest problem so far, I'm not sure exactly how to get around it. When a prospective public art project is proposed to people in general, it's always proposed as "this is a public art project." As soon as people hear the word "art" there are certain traditions and conventions that people associate with art. They immediately want it to be that way rather than this way. It seems that people's taste in popular music might be much more adventurous than their taste in art. Why is that? It's because they're not afraid of music, I mean, it's not presented as something that's supposedly "art", something that's supposedly above them.

N.E. If you think about the kind of art the general public would want, what might that be?

V.A. I don't know, if they think of it as "art", then we're in trouble. Then they'll probably want a statue of a general on a horse in the park. But if they think of it as just something in a park, then they might be more

adventurous. If it's presented, not as a piece of art in a park, but more like something to sit on or play in, then maybe art becomes something else. Maybe you think I'm glorifying democracy and probably I am. When I think of the number one pop songs now, I sort of get sick, but that wasn't always true. At a certain time, the late sixties and early seventies, pop songs were kind of interesting things. In the eighties they don't seem to be that way. It seems there's been a disfunction. It's in the air of a particular time. The sixties were a time when there was more integration, it was a time of plenty. Now there's a separation. There's a separation of disciplines, of categories. There's a separation of rich and poor and there's also a separation of music and art.

N.E. You have written about your concern for the public welfare. You have this idea that by subverting a culture you can keep it open. The flip side of that theory is the idea that by confirming or reconfirming the elements of

a culture, eventually it suffocates. Do you see how these theories might apply to the museum culture?

V.A. You mean by providing so much high art it eventually dies?

N.E. I mean to get you to look at a system that's tightly controlled. They've got their hands on it and even though we agree that it has its place and it's a good thing, we must admit it's tightly controlled.

V.A. Yes, it does seem that when something becomes so tight and so closed, what can it do but eventually die? It could always bring in other art to keep itself going. What about museums that bring in decorative art departments? Is this a way to open things up? I'm not sure.

N.E. That's an interesting idea. I wasn't thinking about other departments.

V.A. Nor was I.

N.E. There is also the project room at the Museum of Modern Art. That's a wonderful thing.

V.A. The Museum of Modern Art has a design

department too.

N.E. Yes, and film and photography. It seems much easier to allow works of popular culture into those areas.

V.A. Is that a way to keep museums alive? It's funny that neither you nor I thought of that immediately. It's funny because I've gone to a lot of films there and I know they have a film department, but that's still not what I immediately think of when I think of the Modern. However, in those departments objects are still presented as every day things where as the fine artist is presented as more specialized. There's still a difference.

N.E. And I think generally people still consider that high art is the real research. It is what influences design.

V.A. Yes, and possibly it is. But I think it's back and forth. I think for me and for a lot of artists it is. We've all gotten stuff from other places. It seems like I might be influenced by something from a movie and then maybe I play around with it. In a sense, I do

research with that thing so it's always an amalgam. Even if its a research of ideas, those ideas come out of a particular time. Electronics, for example, has something to do with television, something to do with light, something to do with past cultures. So that might be research but it is still research based on a particular, historically determined, material condition. It's not pure abstraction.

N.E. What about the politics of a museum as they're influenced by corporate money and government money. Public art is really not immune to that either.

V.A. Not at all, it's based on it.

N.E. It seems that we might be limited again because of that.

V.A. Yes. It's limiting. When you do something in a plaza, in a way, you're a kind of employee for that corporation, so you're only allowed to do certain things. There's always that question of what we're allowed to do. You might have a lot of choices but they're

muddled. If you want something to be in a certain place, you probably leave certain things out without even realizing it. I know the more I think about stuff in public places, the less I think about things that might really attack a viewer. Its just because I feel I'm not allowed to do that. In a museum you have more choices and more options because in a museum the viewer has said: "O.K., I'm submitting to this. You do what you want." You have certain rules that are set up. It seems whatever the situation, there are certain rules that you agree to. Anytime you do something in a particular circumstance, there is a certain code. You can twist the code, you can shift the code, but there still is a certain kind of code.

N.E. Do you see why you're attracted to public art?

V.A. I think part of what attracts me to public art is the fact that architecture is a kind of institution. Just by the fact that a building is allowed to exist, it in some way serves some kind of corporate good. So it seems that

what public art could do is to act as a kind of leech on the institution. It can nudge it. It can come in from the outside. The fact that an artist isn't given as high a budget as an architect might be is, in the long run, an advantage. If you have to use smaller money you're in a marginal position. In that marginal position you can act as a kind of marginal note. The building could be the main body of the text and you can sort of jab at it. That might not be the worst thing in the world. (But maybe I'm only saying that because I get a smaller budget.)

N.E. Well, I guess if you wanted the other you could be an architect.

V.A. I know, it makes you wonder though what a lot of people who do public space stuff, including me, what distinguishes our work from architecture. It's getting kind of close.

N.E. Really? Isn't it function?

V.A. I always think of myself as functional.

N.E. I guess a lot of your work is.

V.A. Yeah.

N.E. Maybe it's not necessary function.

V.A. That's true, it might not be necessary, but then again alot of functional architecture isn't. I mean, a modern building isn't totally functional. But buildings are more than just functional. They are also signs, they really are. So I'm not sure what distinguishes them so much.

N.E. So, I was thinking about the things you have to say about making public art as opposed to showing in this protective museum context. I share the idea about the museum being like the temple, and the artist like the priest. So now I wonder if the museum has escalated its people as a way of taking care of the art. I mean, have they become dependent on that art being difficult, not easily accessible.

V.A. Well sure, because otherwise that staff would never be able to exist. It's true. It's this kind of self-preserving system. We have to preserve the difficulty so that we have a reason to keep going. Sometimes I wonder if museums should even try to deal with

contemporary stuff or if they should be a preservation of the past. Maybe museums are better if they just deal with another time.

N.E. How would contemporary art get into museums?

V.A. When it became history. In other words, if museums are this deadening thing, than maybe they should just deal with the dead.

N.E. I don't think they want to be dead. I think maybe they want to be elitist but I don't think they want to be dead. They do everything in their power to try and reach numbers of people. Big blockbuster shows ...

V.A. Yeah, sure, people love to visit the dead. They love to visit Williamsburg and the 18th century. Maybe that's the kind of function the museum should have. It's almost like a time capsule. So why not present it as a kind of dead thing? You sort of move through, search, explore, learn about it, while always knowing that you can't really know about it because you don't know that time anymore.

N.E. What about artists alive and well? Where do you see them showing their work?

V.A. If you think about it, for living artists to show in a museum is, as far as the gallery is concerned, a way to up that artist's value. That's all it is.

N.E. How do you cope with all of those contradictions?

V.A. One of the reasons is that I've never made that much money from art. I never made that big salary. So a museum show doesn't mean an incredible gain in value for me. I've never been in the position to make this incredibly hot salary.

N.E. You probably could have been. You're practically a legend. So if you wanted to I'm sure you could have moved in that direction.

V.A. It's so much choice.

N.E. Isn't it funny too that you could be? That's, in itself, a contradiction of all that we've been talking about. How can you be as well known and respected as you are without having sold a lot of stuff? So much of the art world is based on certain people owning certain things.

V.A. That's an interesting thing. Why does that happen?

N.E. How did that happen? I wonder how many other artists there are who managed to stay on the border.

V.A. If anything it's other artists in my generation. It seems like in that particular time it was difficult to own art.

V.A. Larry Weiner, Dennis Oppenheim, Bruce Nauman. Our generation, and the kind of stuff we did, was so much out of that conceptual time. The reporting of our art could make a myth without necessarily having the stuff or even seeing the stuff. It was almost like the National Enquirer headlines: "Man masturbates under floor." Everybody remembered that. It was almost like making a movie. I mean, you didn't have to own it. Why would you want to? But it does seem to have to do with that art at that certain time.

N.E. It was that period. But that generation has become the masters now. You're the living masters. Why is it that you haven't been

overcome? The times have changed and art has become more of a commodity than it was even then. So why do you suppose you haven't been overwhelmed by the system? You've managed to stay somewhat on the border.

V.A. It's true in general we have been sort of on the border. I don't know if any of us wanted it this way, at least with those three names. They almost became like a kind of conscience on the scene. Because even when galleries would show us, it was like a gallery could prove it was serious. "If we're showing these people whose work we're not going to sell, we must be serious." So in a lot of cases we've taken galleries off the hook. If a gallery is a young hot gallery that deals with a lot of salables they can throw in a kind of grandfather figure for credibility. Our work is not about commerce. It's not about making a profit. This is a vague romanticism, but in a world of products, why not? I mean, if anything, we would be laughed at by a lot of young artists. I'm sure we are, by some. A

lot of young artists think that we were beating our heads against a wall in terms of what we were talking about earlier. You really can't undermine that commercial system. So since no matter how hard you try (and maybe even the harder you try) the more you're providing for that commercial system. So alot of younger artists might see us as tremendously strong headed. It's almost like we didn't understand something. I guess I feel that if you're in a system you should understand it as much as possible and benefit from it. Art prices can only be as inflated as the collectors allow. The incredible prices by those Japanese collectors are all for western art. It signifies a proliferation of this one system, this western art tradition.

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW: HANS HAACKE

The following interview with Hans Haacke was conducted by Nancy Einreinhofer on Monday, February 11, 1991 in the artist's studio in New York City.

H.H. Since you are doing this museum studies project, you probably know that the history of the museums in this country differs essentially from the history of museums in Europe. European museums, with very few exceptions, are public museums, meaning that the budget comes from the tax payers and is administered by the municipalities, by provincial government, or national governments. There are people who are appointed, at least in art, to represent the public authorities, city government, etc., as such, they indirectly report to the electorate. So there is a degree of public accountability. Whether this is played out in each case, as it sounds in theory, that one would have to check case by case. But in principle this is very, very different from here. In America the vast majority of museums

are private and they are founded by private individuals, wealthy people who have an interest in art. In the case of the Modern and also in the case of the Guggenheim, these are to some degree still today family museums. Key positions in those museums are held by members of the family of the founders. They are not accountable to anybody. The regents may have to O.K. the charter of the museum, but only if there are flagrant violations of the public trust is there any interference from public authorities. So in many ways, they can do as they please. The major bulk of finances also comes from private sources. They do appeal to the National Endowment for the Arts. And starting sometime in the 60's, they have appealed to corporations to chip in. That changes the picture a considerable degree.

N.E. But those corporations very often have representatives on the boards.

H.H. In some cases, yes. For instance, at the Guggenheim there is the former Chairman of

Mobil. David Rockefeller is the ex-chairman of Chase. So there's a direct link to the corporate world. Invariably, more and more corporate representatives come on to the boards. Not necessarily because their corporations have been putting in more money to the museums than anybody else, but they can very easily grease the wheels of their peers.

N.E. Do you think that where there is money there is influence?

H.H. Oh, of course, always.

N.E. So you feel fairly certain that they are influencing the museums' programs?

H.H. Oh yes. Not that they micro-manage it. That would be a naive perception, but they set the tone. The director and the curators can anticipate what would fit into the picture and what may be looked at a bit askance. Of course they look over their shoulders at what would attract corporate funding and how to make that museum attractive. In general, they need the museum to be the showcase for a corporate art campaign. That indirectly has a

tremendous influence.

N.E. That's one of the things I was thinking about: the idea that the museum's curators would somehow sense that influence. Not that they would be told directly that you should do this or that, but that they would just know instinctively, as good curators and survivors, that there are certain kinds of exhibits that are preferred over others.

H.H. Well, there's this other peculiar thing that is often quite shocking for museum people from Europe. When they meet their colleagues here they discover that their colleagues, curators and of course the directors, are told to fund-raise rather than doing their curatorial work. They have to raise the money for the shows they want to do. Accordingly, the show is styled or the topic chosen. The show must be attractive to corporations.

Many curators are sick and tired of it because the people they have to deal with are not necessarily interesting people to talk to.

N.E. Another thing too that I think ties in with

the other aspects I'm looking at is the popular appeal. All of this is in the museum's interest. The museums do in fact now make a lot of money on admission and of course its in the corporations' interest because it's to their benefit to reach, with their good will, a larger number. So do you see how that might impact on museums that show modern art?

H.H. Well it probably cuts across the board. Whether it's modern art or other art, it must be attracting large numbers of people either because of the topic (and that excludes a whole range of topics that would not do the job), or for the way it's dressed up.

N.E. Dressed up? What do you mean by that?

H.H. Dressed up in the sense that the show must be "sold" to the public. There has to be some excitement. Things must be done in order to attract attention. Things that make it sound somehow sexy for people to come. There is a standard formula: gold, death and ... I don't remember the third.

N.E. Probably sex.

H.H. Yeah, perhaps. I can't remember. Possibly.

N.E. Those are the things that attract.

H.H. Yeah, think about the shows at the Met. Plenty of gold and death: the Mexico show, Egypt, and so on. That need not necessarily be without scholarship. But there are certain subjects that are more likely to draw the crowds, to be block busters.

N.E. In talking about the business of promotion, it seems to me that that's another thing the museums have taken from the corporation. They have learned from the corporation how to promote an exhibit, the marketing and advertising, the whole business end of it.

H.H. They are in a bind. There's not enough money to do what they would like to do and they themselves have, to some degree, taught the lay public to look for the excitement. So they have to dress up the notion of art in a way that the public at large expects. They have to create extravaganzas which are expensive. So they are under pressure to deliver in order to attract the people and at

the same time that makes it more expensive. It's like an addiction. You start small then you need more, you need bigger doses. Then that is not enough and you become more and more addicted. In order to attract the crowds and also to attract the corporate support, blockbusters have become necessary. That is becoming a problem in Europe. They are politicians in a way. They would also like to be associated with the popular event. If you cannot deliver that then you have difficulty for your entire institution to survive. And for yourself, as a director let's say, if you want to move on to a bigger institution and if you want to rise in the ranks to the most prestigious post in the country, you must deliver. There is tremendous pressure to deliver things that are not necessarily within the profession scope, that do not necessarily serve the public to really understand what these things were or what meaning they have or could have today. It's like television news, it has to be entertainment.

N.E. Did you see the "High & Low" show at the Modern? What was your response to that?

H.H. Well it didn't address the subject seriously at all. But it came on as a ground breaking event. It has also been attacked by conservatives as having sold out the museum to popular interests. In effect, it was a re-establishment of the classical cannon. In the show itself (maybe not quite so much in the catalogue) you were given the impression as you walked through the museum, that there were these artists who saw these things in the popular, cultural world and picked up some of them and made something noble out of them, something worthwhile to be collected, something worthwhile to be brought into the museum. Where as of course in the real world of 20th century art it didn't work that way at all. There was never such a demarcation between the two worlds. There's a show in Paris somewhat parallel to the "High & Low" show which took a totally different approach to art and advertising. There I walked out

with the impression that art and advertising and posters, stationery, design, promotion, all this, that these were one in the same people who did that. And in many cases they really were. Magritte did a great number of posters for companies. We all know that Toulouse Lautrec was a poster maker among other things. And it was not only to make some money, that was part of their normal activity.

N.E. So you felt as though "High & Low" re-established this idea of art being separate, high art being separate from everything else. I also felt they didn't explain any of the thinking behind the art. It was almost as if Marcel Duchamp was a wiseguy, a clever fellow to have thought of doing that trick with the bicycle wheel. The real ideas behind the work weren't explained. If you didn't walk in there already having that as part of your information, I don't know if you would go out with it. That was the thing that disturbed me the most.

H.H. There is something else that I personally have an interest in, as you might guess, knowing my work. There was no trace whatsoever that the so-called "high artists" participated in political campaigns, that they produced political book covers, designed magazines, made what you could dismiss as propaganda. There was no trace of any social involvement. There was no mention of John Hartfield.

N.E. Yes. The rewriting of history. Were you surprised that the critics were so hard on the show?

H.H. I was surprised and also quite happy. It very rarely happens that the New York Times attacks a show in a major museum. It is rare that a subject is really attacked, in a most ferocious way, as this one was. And I think it was well argued. I can't even remember another example. Not only one article but two or three, and in very prominent spaces. It makes me think that the critics are still a little alert, that's quite a find. Also, the New York Times apparently let them do it,

which is a policy decision. I don't quite know yet what to make of that. At the New York Times it has happened frequently during the past five or ten years that the Met, the Guggenheim, (with Krens), and the Museum of Modern Art, were rather severely taken to task. I don't know what's behind this. Just note it. There were a few occasions when Phillip de Montebello was really made fun of. One needs to know that Saltzberger, the publisher of the Times, is on the Board at the Met. So there must be some other agenda as well.

N.E. Can we talk about the Met and Mobil piece that you did?

H.H. Yes. Here's the catalogue. Up there, on the entablature, is a quote from a flyer that the Met sent out to its' business friends. The flyer had the title: "The business of art knows the art of business." It explained to corporations what they could get out of sponsoring events at the Met.

N.E. This was a flyer that went out from the

Metropolitan to corporate sponsors?

H.H. Yes. The flyer contained a whole page of quotes from business executives telling why they are sponsors of the Met. One quote in particular sticks in my mind. Weisman, who was at that time the Chairman of Philip Morris, said it's cheaper than advertising.

N.E. He probably should have said it's a cheaper form of advertising.

H.H. Since part of your topic is concerned with how these institutions fit into this so-called democratic society, let's look at a quote like this. If you consider it, then it becomes apparent that the museum presents itself to the corporation as the agent to influence public policy. Of course neither the corporation nor the museum presents itself to the corporation as the agent to influence public policy. Of course neither the corporation nor the museum has been elected. The museum is a not for profit institution, tax exempt, but, in effect, as it presents itself there, tells the corporation that it

can be used for a political campaign, to influence legislation. That is where, politically, theoretically, it takes on an angle that people, for the most part, have not thought about. They're more worried about possible censorship, which I'm sure exists, self-censorship primarily, through the corporate influence. But the other part that I think is at least as serious, if not much more serious, if not much more serious, is that these tax exempt institutions become lobbying enterprises. The art they show is instrumentalized to push a corporate interest. Mobil, around 1985, in its usual corner in the New York Times, on the Op Ed page, had an ad entitled "Art for the Sake of Business." It explained why it's involved with art and culture. One line they had underlined was the answer to their own question: "What is in it for us?" "To improve the business climate." The business climate is of course very large. It can be simply selling gas on the corner. But I cannot believe that selling gas on the

corner is really what they think they can gain by sponsoring a show at the Met. It's somewhere else where it counts.

N.E. And where is that somewhere else?

H.H. The somewhere else is environmental legislation. It was actually not Mobil but Exxon which had a big oil spill. If Exxon had what Mobil calls "a good will umbrella", maybe it would not have been attacked as much. Maybe people would have been willing to say "Yeah, but ...". We see it now with Philip Morris. Everybody agrees smoking is bad but Philip Morris does so much for culture. That is a corporate strategy. That is not something that happened by chance.

N.E. Do you think museums suffer in any way if they don't respond to corporate demands? I guess they suffer because they lose that support, they lose the dollars.

H.H. Yeah, and it is their own fault. They have made everybody expect these extravaganzas so that things have just become bigger and more expensive. There is no tradition, and the

public has not been made to understand this, there is no tradition that says that a democratic society has to pay for its culture. You don't leave it to special interests groups. That is a fundamental flaw. To get out of this is extremely difficult and I don't see much of an attempt to get out.

N.E. How would we get out?

H.H. It would require a realization on the part of the museum officials. They would have to understand how this situation really constrains them. Then they would have to plan what to do in order to make up for the gap that would open in the absence of corporate funds. That would require an educational campaign that could take 5-10-15 years. An educational campaign to make the public understand that it is being short-changed if it is not willing to let the politicians appropriate money for democratic culture. We're talking about a long educational process. In the meantime, they'd just have to finagle one way or another any play one

against the other to retain some maneuverability. But the ultimate goal should be to wean themselves from dependence on corporate support. At the same time they must be very alert, and immediately ring the alarm bells, if the government wants to step in and tell them what to do.

N.E. That's what I was just going to say. I don't know if we'd be in better hands necessarily.

H.H. Well, there again, that requires an educational campaign. It's not only the museums, I think there has to be, (maybe this is utopian) there has to be a democratic education. People must be taught what the Bill of Rights really is, what implications it has. If this is something that somebody talks about in Washington about every ten years or so we might as well forget it. That should be part of every civics course.

N.E. Well I guess Philip Morris is doing that right now.

Let's get back to the business of mounting exhibitions that have a large popular support,

that draw lots of people. One good thing evolving from that is the opportunity for museums to develop better educational programs in order to explain art that is otherwise inaccessible. The down side is that there's the possibility, and I think, we saw this with the High and Low show, the possibility that the art is presented in a way that's simplistic; information provided is superficial. We can assume, on the one hand, that the objects carry their own information and that is their safeguard. Curators will come and go, corporate support will come and go, directors will come and go, but the objects will remain and the information will remain with the objects. On the other hand, and I think the "High and Low" show is an example of this, when the art produced in this century is taken out of the context it is meant to be seen in, you can in fact change the meaning of the object.

H.H. I think that has been very acute for the works of this century but I think it's true for work

of any period and any geographical area. Invariably, objects are taken out of context and unless the institution provides a genuine understanding of the context, people will misunderstand them. Shows may have to be presented differently. We cannot assume the objects speak for themselves, they can't do it. It will require a long educational process to liberate the mistakes. Perhaps curators themselves need to rethink, and should be allowed and given the time to rethink, their job. What are they suppose to do? Also, the financial constraints right now could force museums to rely, more than in the past 10-15 years, on their own collections. This would be good because it may lead, if we're lucky, to genuine scholarship. And it may lead curators to learn more about the art collections and to figure out how to present them to the public in such a manner that the public can really draw something, not just be looking at the pretty pictures on the wall. There is a tremendous amount of work that

needs to be done, it's not easy and I'm not sure whether every curator is equipped to do it. Curators also need to develop ways to speak to a lay public in a language that they probably understand without talking down to them and without simplifying things to the point that it is in effect a falsification of art. It's not easy, but that's the job.

N.E. One of the things that occurred to me as you were talking about this re-educating or educating the public to a sense of democracy, I wonder if there isn't a strategy to make that appealing for the corporation to sponsor.

H.H. This still doesn't take care of the lobbying part of the equation but there's potentially another element that would not go over too well. That is, if you look at the history of 20th century art, you find a relatively large number of artists, directly or indirectly, were politically on the left. If you really give a full picture of what was done, what were the reasons, how was it meant, how was it understood at the time when it was produced,

you cannot suppress this. I wouldn't guarantee that every corporation wants to look at the history of 20th century art from that angle. I would suspect the reason why, consistently, whenever the subject of a show in the Museum of Modern Art was considered, why consistently John Hartfield was left out, was because he had very determined ideas about society, politics. He was a declared Communist. You don't have to be a Communist to defend them, and this was part of 20th century art, it was 20th century image making and if you simply cut this off you make a political statement. They have, in a way, co-opted Rodchenko. The poster for the bus signs, for the catalogue, show no trace of the fact that Rodchenko was also one of the foremost political artists in the Soviet Union during the Constructivist era. You would think he was a department store advertiser, that was all.

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW: ZARA COHAN

The following interview with Zara Cohan was conducted by Nancy Einreinhofer on October 12, 1990 in Ms Cohan's office at Kean College, Union, N.J.

N.E. I'd like to get a sense of what the Museum of Modern Art was like thirty years ago: the place and the people. How did you come to work at the Museum of Modern Art?

Z.C. I always wanted to work at the Museum of Modern Art because I loved going there and I loved being a member. I used to carry around a big History of the Impressionists book. The whole idea of modern art, that wonderful building, N.Y.C., it was all very exciting. This was 1956 and I'll never forget the job interview because I was given an opportunity to take two jobs which I thought was interesting. One was with Edward Stiechen and I didn't know who he was. What did I know thirty years ago? The other one sounded more interesting. It was Assistant to the Director of Membership, and that was really a fun job.

N.E. What was that department like?

Z.C. There was an interesting crew of people who

worked there. At Christmas time I would sit in the lobby and sell memberships, gift memberships. There was a book desk as you entered the front door and there was a funny old fashioned sign. It was black and you could move the letters around to change what the movie was. Frank O'Hara and John Button worked at the counter and they were terrible to the public. They were absolutely terrible, they were funny. so I guess I went down because I had a good smile and I was patient. The powers that be thought it would be a good idea to have a membership desk downstairs, so they created it right across from the book counter. To the right was the coat room. There were two lovely ladies, Helen and Nelly, who worked there and they would always say, "I want you to feel this fur coat." They're in there feeling this spectacular fur coat and a Trustee would walk in and check her dog. It was funny. I mean there was this funny human atmosphere even though some of us were rather snooty. Then directly opposite the membership

desk was the book counter. So there were two of us to begin with, an ex-nurse and myself, an ex-school teacher. Then we needed weekend help so John Button said he'd like to work there.

Famous artists would come by. David Smith was always nice. He'd always come over and say hello to us. He understood we were not just people handing out passes. Underneath it all maybe we were somebody struggling to survive in this art world. The other person who was very nice was Henry Moore. And actually everyone was really nice. Except some members or people who were dissatisfied with the exhibitions. On the 2nd floor was the permanent collection and it was Alfred Barr's vision of what the art was. So today when I walk through I get very annoyed because the pictures aren't in chronological order.

This fiddling around with the pictures, their juxtaposition, I think it confuses the issue. All the stuff that is now on the 2nd and 3rd floors, most of it wasn't out. You saw one

painting of each artist or possibly two. And of course there were lots of Picassos' and there was Guernica and the sculpture garden. The sculpture garden was marvelous. It was very small but it still was that oasis and we did have a Modern Jazz quartet in the sculpture garden in the summer.

N.E. Was that a 1958 innovation? Evening hours?

Z.C. Yes, I think the museum was very innovative in many things like keeping the museum open in the evenings. People also came at night to see the movies. There was a whole group of folks who called themselves "FOOFS" - they were Friends Of Old Films. They were the funniest looking people. They must have lived on 9th Avenue in a room for \$15 a week. They were committed to those old films and of course the museum had them all and would show them all. They would squeeze out 18 bucks so they could get a membership so they could get tickets ahead of time. They would line up and then they would argue about fine points of the film. I don't know how many times they had

seen it. There was this one guy with this old hat with a sweaty band on it. He would come in. There was a woman who always wore those zories in the winter, I don't think she had any stockings. I mean they were hardly dressed at all but they were the most marvelous insane people. Of course John Button would say "The moon's full." All these weird people would come out. We had a marvelous time. It was fun. The people were interesting. Well then of course ... Well let me finish. In 1958 I was at this meeting. I was sitting next to Big Daddy and he would doodle. There's a book I could show you of his doodles. He would do them over the agendas. Anyway, the two of them, Barr and D'Harnoncourt got off the subject and began to project what the museum would be like when they were gone. Then they stopped and they said "Well, that's somebody else's problem. It can't be ours." So they knew to let go. I learned a lot from that. It was a very quiet time in the museum. People could walk by and

it was nice. There were young couples holding hands. It was just a human and civilized place to go. And it was true that sometimes you could fall asleep because nobody would come in.

N.E. One of the things I'm thinking about as you're talking about Barr's vision of the museum, and the way the objects were presented, the idea that when he was gone somebody else would take over and they could actually change the meaning of an object by putting it next to something else. I guess as people who are interested in museums we have to believe that the object in the end is the most important thing and that it will win out in the end.

Z.C. Yes.

N.E. But could you talk a little bit more about what his vision of the museum was?

Z.C. Albert Barr thought that the museum was like a newspaper. It had to report all the time. I think the trouble might have come with the fact that they realized how important they had become. I mean, the museum would sneeze and

they would get in the paper and everybody thought that that would be great. They became very cautious because of that. They realized that the price of the art went up when they did something. They were basically extremely ethical. They were interested in the art as object and not in monetary terms. I think they became frightened of that power. I remember when the museum put on the exhibition the "Responsive Eye," Optical Art. Well you couldn't turn around. Everything, including garbage cans, had optical art on it. Clothes, handbags, I mean that was one of the first indications of that. The mass culture took over and made a popular thing out of it.

N.E. Why was that happening?

Z.C. Andy Warhol was right. I mean that he saw this popular culture taking over everything. In the long run Andy Warhol may become an important philosopher of the 60's. It's hard to believe, but the museum became a jazzy focal point.

N.E. It was a fashionable place.

Z.C. It was a fashionable place. I mean the women with the big diamond rings came in and they wanted to be members or have artists passes. (They were the discount entries provided for artists and students). "The Museum of Modern Lunch," somebody called it. I mean, what was going on here?

N.E. And what was it?

Z.C. It was in the right place at the right time.

N.E. It was location.

Z.C. It was really before television. You had to read the New Yorker and the stuff about the museum was always in the New Yorker. I guess the Times and Hilton Kramer were talking about it too.

N.E. So it was the location and the media?

Z.C. It was the mid-town location and you didn't have to climb a lot of steps to get in there and 1958 was very exciting. Even though there was a recession. The 60's were fascinating. In the 50's and the 60's, New York City was a spectacular place. Everybody wanted to come into New York City. It was then being dubbed

as the Art Capital of the World. Kennedy was in the White House and Lindsey was making his place in New York City. It was classy. Nelson Rockefeller was getting into Albany. So there were people who were interested in the arts. The arts weren't just for the rich and you weren't a sissy if you liked the arts. It was rather important, and all the Nouveau Riche people from the suburbs came to the museum all the time. Anyway, it was a very exciting place to be. It was an entirely different museum. It was small. When there was the fire one guy lost his life because he was new and couldn't find the exit. If you read the newspaper accounts about the fire the fact that the man died was very sad. It made all the headlines. But the fact that the Monet "Waterlilies" was destroyed was very sad. It was awful. People gave up time and volunteered their money.

N.E. I remember seeing photograph of people, I think the guards and secretaries carrying those paintings out of the museum, away from

the fire.

Z.C. That's right. They risked their lives. And before that time when there were air raid drills, around 1956, the staff was asked what painting we would like to save in the case of an air attack. It was interesting that people would think of not only protecting themselves but what picture to save. Then came the Cuban Missile Crisis. That night we were in the Dakota with my boss who was a Brahmin from Boston and who was getting married again to a former ambassador from Canada. We had some fancy cakes from Greenbergs and we each were given a rose by the Ambassador himself. But there was a strangeness about the whole thing. When we left the Dakota that night we didn't know if there'd be a New York City the next morning. In the middle of the night, several paintings left their perch and were taken away to this huge underground vault. The next day we were told to say, those paintings were being worked on. One kid blew my cover. "I know why your paintings are all put away,

you're afraid that the Russians are gonna shoot'em." I looked around and I said "That's very, very interesting, I never thought of that." The kid was right, he blew my cover. Mr. Barr felt that in case New York City was leveled that it was his responsibility to save some paintings for the future.

Anyway, for our thirtieth anniversary, I had to sit outside in the lobby, sit at this black top desk with an exquisite red Bauhaus filing cabinet. I had to sit there and give out all this 30th anniversary stuff. And there was this great Jackson Pollack in front and a wonderful Rothko. All of a sudden a light went out on the Rothko. Barr said: "Tell the people it is a new way to look at that picture." Rothko was furious because the light changed the painting completely. He was so upset. I would tell people this story when I'd go to Rothko's exhibitions. And sure enough, there'd be this small sign that said Rothko wants no light on this picture. He would sometimes come in, he was always in some

kind of high pitched dither about the way his pictures looked. I think he painted either in natural light or under fluorescent light. The change of light, especially these two floods on that painting could make a different kind of picture, very sensitive. Sometimes people would come to me and say the light is out and I's say "Well the artist requested the lights go out." Living with those masterpieces, I want to tell you, really put me on such a high seeing plane. Now I have a hard time going through Soho. And then being in the midst of controversy was fun. The best thing was Tingley's "Homage to New York City." This was after the fire. It was in the 60's, it was a February night and only the 400 were invited. It was cold and there must have been about 160 people out there all wrapped up in their minks. Tingley was building his "Homage" with an old piano and all types of objects that he painted white. Everything was white. This thing was programmed, it was a player piano and the object of this strange Rube Goldberg

machine was to paint out naughty French words. It began to destroy itself. The "400" were booing and smoke was rising and someone walking down from the 54th Street apartment house called the fire department and said "The museum is on fire again." Anyway, The Museum of Modern Art wouldn't allow the fire department to destroy it but these great maintenance guys that were employed in the museum destroyed it. They had to, to actually get the fire out. The fire department demanded it. It made all the papers. The museum was getting this spoiled reputation by doing weird things. But the main mission was reporting what Modern Art was all about.

When I first arrived in 1956, Jackson Pollock had just killed himself. There was a small show of his work at that time. Dorothy Miller felt she had to show emerging artists. But they always kept in mind their power. They felt very responsible. Responsible to the art and the artists and maybe also to the collector.

I'll tell you a story about when things began to change. I think one indication was the incident with Thomas Hoving. There was this marvelous woman named Adele DeGroot who would always stop by my membership desk. She was a patron of the museum. So one day I was assigned to entertain her. We walked around the garden, saw some new Picasso. I think it was the "House of Cards." Then we talked and she said how she really treasured her Impressionist paintings. "They are after my paintings," she would say. Well, before she died Hoving got her to give the paintings to the Met. No sooner was she 6' under, he sold most of them. The stipulation was for her paintings to stay together. They all weren't great paintings and Hoving only wanted two or three but he had to take all of them. She wanted them to stay together. I don't know how he finagled that gift agreement but he was able to juggle it. He had powerful lawyers.

N.E. That's a terrible thing.

Z.C. This was one of the first things that hit the

fan about the inner workings of the museum. There were so many controversies, I mean, you had the fire. You felt sorry. Cigarette smoking was blamed or possibly the air conditioning ventilation on the 2nd floor. The big Monet was destroyed and the "City Also Rises" was damaged. Everyone felt sorry but nobody was really blamed. People were trapped on the top floor, they couldn't get out. They were gathered in the restaurant. There were these terrible windows and people couldn't get out of their offices. One staircase was closed because they were trying to repair the air conditioning. The place was basically a fire trap but none of that leaked out to the press. But this Hoving thing was a scandal. That's when people began to ask: "What right do museums have to do this?"

N.E. So that's public knowledge, that's public information that he did that?

Z.C. Yet it is.

N.E. And did her heirs challenge it in any way or did anybody challenge it?

Z.C. Yes and they all lost. She had a niece, what did the niece know? I mean that was in the beginning of the 60's and people were just beginning to question the authority of institutions. Hoving's behavior indicates a major change in museums. It was a change in the outlook of human beings. It was an attitude of "what can I get away with." It probably peaked in the 80's with the Wall Street scandals. This was the end of the way the museum was when I was there. There was building after the fire and then there was building after the 30th Anniversary Drive. The membership desk was placed on the opposite side as you walk in. There was membership and information together. When the museum reopened after the 30th Anniversary Drive there was a real bookstore. There was the membership desk and an information desk and a full-fledged museum shop. We still let starving students in for free, and starving visitors. We had the power in this little pink pass. It is no longer in existence. We

used to let all these people in. Buy now that human quality is gone. I watch what's going on today. Sometimes I challenge it just for fun. I watched one young lady assisting an Asian person, I think probably Japanese, who was trying to give some gift memberships. She was really very patient. I approached her and I said "On behalf of those of us who began the membership desk back in the Dark Ages, I thank you." She laughed. But who are these people who work out front in the museum? They are so bad, they are so arrogant. Are they artists who didn't make it? Are they art historians who would like to do curatorial work? Are they people who can afford to work there?

N.E. There's a kind of sadness, I feel a certain kind of sadness about the fact that this is gone and I don't see any hope for it ever coming back.

Z.C. Probably not. Everything has gotten too big. Think about the vastness. By the time you get to the architecture and design galleries you are pooped. There's all this stuff to see and

some exhibitions will wear you out.

I remember when the Guggenheim opened, I think it was 1958. The New Yorker wrote that to be a real museum you must have your own chestnut man. Isn't that wonderful? At the Modern we were so proud because we had our own chestnut man. That was before unions and strikes. But I'd like to tell you a little story about why the museum has, to this day, a cost of living increase. Let's see, it was 1956 when I started and I think my salary was \$65.00 a week. So I was living in N.Y.C. and my roommate worked for the Steve Allen Show and she was making four times as much as I. We lived in a funny apartment on 3rd Avenue near 38th Street. It was a three room apartment that rented for \$65.00 a month. We sublet it for \$120.00 from a guy who was in Hong Kong. I made \$65.00 a week and I could survive. The bus fare was 10 cents. If I had some money left over I could go into the A&P on 3rd Avenue and buy a can of tuna fish for 35 cents. I never starved. Also, the old

Tonight Show had these strange advertisers. We always had salami and cheese and that kind of stuff in the refrigerator. sometimes a turkey would appear. We had enough food and so we managed. Being a child of the Depression I knew how to do that. One day the New York Times ran an article about the cost of living in New York. I sent for the brochure from Albany that told how much it cost a young woman to survive in N.Y.C. Alan Porter's secretary and I met in his office. She had the names and addresses of every trustee. (As a matter of fact, she was originally from a very wealthy family. She showed me a Paul Revere silver pot that she had. She was barely surviving in an apartment in Greenwich Village, hiding the Paul Revere pitchers). So one dark night we took these postcards that said Museum Of Modern Art. We wrote individual postcards to this Albany address saying "kindly send your booklet to Nelson Rockefeller," with the address. We went right down the list of trustees. At the

next trustee meeting we all got a cost of living raise. To this day when I visit the museum someone will say "Do you know who's responsible for your cost of living raise?"

APPENDIX IV

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
EXHIBITS, 1984 - 1988

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART EXHIBITS
1984 ANNUAL REPORT

Gainsborough Drawings October 2 -December 4, 1983

Juan Gris October 16 - December 31, 1983
Major retrospective of key cubist painter.

Modigliani: An Anniversary Exhibition December 11 - April
22, 1984
Paintings, drawings, and several sculptures

The Folding Image: Screens by Western Artists of the 19th
and 20th Centuries March 4 - September 3, 1984

Mark Tobey: City Paintings March 11 - June 17, 1984

The Legacy of Correggio: Sixteenth-Century Emilian
Drawings March 11 - May 13, 1984

Mark Rothko: Works on Paper May 6 - August 5, 1984

Early German Drawings from a Private Collection May 27 -
July 8, 1984
Works from a private collection complemented by
works from the British Museum and the National
Gallery.

Watteau: 1684 - 1721 June 17 - September 23, 1984

The first full-scale retrospective of the artist celebrating the 300th anniversary of the artist's birth.

The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse, the Allure of North Africa and the Near East July 1 - October 28, 1984

Explores the fascination that these lands exerted on the European and American imagination in the later nineteenth century, ending with the abstract work of Matisse and Kandinsky.

Renaissance Drawings from the Ambrosiana, 1370-1600

August 12 - October 7, 1984

87 works from the holdings of the Ambrosiana in Milan.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART EXHIBITS
1985 ANNUAL REPORT

John James Audubon: Birds of America October 14 - March 10, 1985

Prints presented in period maple frames.

American Naive Watercolors and Drawings October 14 - January 13, 1985

Thomas Moran's Watercolors of Yellowstone October 14 - January 27, 1985

Old Master Drawings from the Albertina October 25 - January 13, 1985

From one of the world's finest collections of old master drawings including Durer, Poussin, Claude, Michelangelo, and Raphael.

Degas: The Dancers November 22 - March 10, 1985

The image of the female dancer and how Degas approached the subject, includes sculpture, paintings and drawings.

American Paintings from the Armond Hammer Collection: An Inaugural Celebration January 13 - February 18, 1985

American history from the time of George Washington to Ronald Reagan and includes American artists from Gilbert Stuart to Andrew Wyeth.

Landscape Drawings from the Collection - February 3 -
June 2, 1985

Leonardo Da Vinci Drawings of Horses from the Royal
Library at Windsor Castle February 24 - June 9, 1985

A selection of fifty animal studies.

Robert Nanteuil: Portrait Engraver to the Sun King -
March 10 - April 28, 1985

Ancient Art of the American Woodland Indians March 17 -
August 4, 1985

An exhibition of the artistic achievements in the
Late Archaic, Woodland and Mississippian periods
(3,000 BC - 1,500 AD) of the Woodland area of North
America. Includes sculpture of wood, ceramic,
copper and shell.

Collection for a King: Old Master Paintings from the
Dulwich Picture Gallery April 14 - September 2, 1985

36 old master paintings including works by
Rembrandt, Claude, Poussin, Guercino, Tiepolo,
Murillo, Canaletto, Gainsborough and Hogarth.

The Sculpture of India: 3,000 BC - 1,000 AD - May 3 -
September 2, 1985

A survey of masterpieces from India's old master
sculptural tradition.

Leonardo to Van Gogh: Master Drawings from Budapest May
12 - July 14, 1985

A representation of the great masters of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries including Leonardo, Raphael, Coreggio, Veronese, Durer, Hans Baldung Grien, Altdorfer, Goltzuis, Rembrandt, Jacob van Ruysdael and Poussin.

Figure Drawings from the Collection June 9 - October 19, 1985

Master Drawings from Titian to Picasso: The Curtis O. Baer Collection July 28 - October 6, 1985

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART EXHIBITS
1986 ANNUAL REPORT

Ansel Adams: Classic Images October 6, 1985 - January 26, 1986

The first full exhibition of the 75 photographs chosen by Adams before his death to best represent what his work was all about.

Durer to Delacroix: Great Master Drawings from Stockholm
October 27, 1985 - January 5, 1986

118 master drawings from the 15th through the 19th century - including Raphael, Leonardo, Titian, Grunewald, Rubens, Rembrandt, Claude Poussin and Watteau.

The Treasure Houses of Britain: 500 Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting November 3, 1985 - April 13, 1986

Over 800 works of art assembled in a series of rooms which make reference to country house interiors.

The New Painting: Impression 1874-1886 January 17 - April 6, 1986

A study, chronologically and historically, of works that have come to define Impressionism.

Winslow Homer Watercolors March 2 - May 11, 1986

First major survey of his watercolors celebrating

the 150th anniversary of his birth and spanning thirty years of his career.

Drawings by Jacques De Gheyn March 9 - May 11, 1986
99 drawings by the Dutch draftsman.

Baroque Masterpieces from the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art April 6 - September 29, 1986

A selection of thirty-three paintings from the Ringling Museum in Sarasota, Florida. Included are works by Guercino, Strozzi, Pietro da Cortona, Vouet, Poussin, Salvator Rosa, Guardi, Rubens, Hals, and de Heem.

Impressionist to Early Modern Paintings from the U.S.S.R.: Works from the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow May 1 - June 15, 1986

41 of the finest examples of impressionist to early modern paintings including canvases by Cezanne, Monet, Renoir, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Matisse, and Picasso.

George Inness June 22 - September 7, 1986

Retrospective of 43 paintings selected specifically to highlight Inness; role in the evolution of American landscape painting.

Gifts to the Nation: Selected Acquisitions from the Collections of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon July 20 - September 7, 1986

90 works from the twenty years of Mellon donations
- including drawings, paintings, and sculpture.

Renaissance Master Bronzes from the Kunsthistorisches
Museum, Vienna

75 sculptures collected by members of the royal
houses of Austria and the Holy Roman Empire over a
period of 400 years.

Seven American Masters August 1986

An installation of post-war paintings by Newman,
Rothko, Held, Jasper Jones, Ellsworth Kelly,
Lichtenstein, and Rauschenberg.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART EXHIBITS
1987 ANNUAL REPORT

Henri Matisse: The Early Years in Nice 1916 - 1930

November 2, 1986 - March 29, 1987

171 paintings inspired by the light of the Mediterranean and the exoticism of the neighboring North Africa.

The Age of Bruegel: Netherlandish Drawings in the 16th Century November 7, 1986 - January 18, 1987

Over 120 works tracing the development of the Netherlandish school.

Goya: The Condesa de Chinchon and Other Paintings, Drawings, and Prints from Spanish and American Private Collections and the National Gallery of Art November 16, 1986 - January 4, 1987

A small exhibition of works by Goya on canvas and paper.

Alexander Archipenko: A Centennial Tribute November 16, 1986 - February 16, 1987

His important early sculpture and also including later works such as his "sculpto-paintings" in which he fused sculpture and paintings.

The Age of Correggio and the Carracci: Emilian Painting of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries December 19, 1986 - February 16, 1987

Nearly 200 works by 50 artists from the principal artistic centers of Parma, Ferrara, and Bologna.

The Age of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent January 25 - May 17, 1987

Over 200 works of art from the civilization that flourished at the eastern end of the Meditterrean in the 1500's.

Italian Master Drawings from the British Royal Collection May 10 - July 26, 1987

A survey exhibition of drawings from Windsor.

American Drawings and Drawings of the Twentieth Century: Selections from the Whitney Museum of American Art May 25 - September 7, 1987

Nearly 80 drawings tracing American draftsmanship from the early 20th century to the present. From early abstraction, figurative, traditional and surreal movements - Prendergast to Borofsky.

American Drawings and Watercolors of the Twentieth Century: Andrew Wyeth, the Helga Pictures May 24 - September 27, 1987

About 140 images of Helga, the artist's neighbor, including pencil drawings, watercolors and temperas.

A Century of Modern Sculpture: The Patsy and Raymond Nasher Collection June 28, 1987 - January 3, 1988

An exhibition of the private Nasher collection set

in landscaped settings reminiscent of their sculpture garden in Dallas, Texas.

William Merrit Chase: Summers at Shinnecock 1891 - 1902

August 23 - November 29, 1987

A selection of works done at Shinnecock on Long Island including paintings and pastels.

Berthe Morisot - Impressionist September 6 - November 28, 1987

A retrospective devoted to impressionist Berthe Morisot. Includes paintings, watercolors and colored pencil drawings.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART EXHIBITS
1988 ANNUAL REPORT

Georgia O'Keefe 1887 - 1986 November 1, 1987 - February 21, 1988

A selection of more than one hundred works including oils, watercolors, pastels and drawings.

The Armond Hammer Collection: Eighteenth-Century Drawings
November 1, 1987 - April 17, 1988

An American Sampler: Folk Art from the Shelburne Museum
November 15, 1987 - April 14, 1988

Focuses on textiles and sculpture from the Shelburne Museum in Vermont.

English Drawings and Watercolors 1630 - 1850 January 31 - June 12, 1988

An exhibition of 67 Greek works dating from the tenth to the fifth centuries B.C. The exhibition charted the ability of early Greek artists to depict figures at rest or in motion.

Sweden: A Royal Treasury 1550 - 1700 April 12 - September 5, 1988

Over 100 royal objects characteristic of Europe's late Renaissance and Baroque courts.

Gauguin Drawings from the Armand Hammer collection May 1 - October 23, 1988

The Art of Paul Gauguin May 1 - July 31, 1988

Retrospective of paintings, works on paper and ceramic and wooden sculpture.

The Flag Paintings of Childe Hassam May 8 - July 17, 1988

Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane May 15 - September 8, 1988

Over 60 luminist landscape and marine paintings by the 19 century American master.

Masterworks from Munich: Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century Paintings from the Alte Pinakothek May 29 - September 5, 1988

62 Baroque paintings from Munich's collection.

Italian Renaissance Drawings September 18 - December 31, 1988

APPENDIX V

MUSEUM SURVEY

MUSEUM SURVEY

1. Name of Institution _____
2. Governing Authority _____
3. Date of Founding _____

	1970	1980	1990
4. Approximate square feet of exhibition space	_____	_____	_____
5. Number of Full Time Personnel	_____	_____	_____
6. Number of Part Time Personnel	_____	_____	_____
7. Number of Volunteers	_____	_____	_____
8. Annual Budget	_____	_____	_____
9. Attendance Per Year	_____	_____	_____

10. Indicate which of the following public programs your museum sponsors: Indicate in these columns the approximate number of programs and people per year.

	1970	1980	1990
___ Lectures	_____	_____	_____
___ Lecture Series	_____	_____	_____
___ Demonstration Meet the Artist Days	_____	_____	_____
___ Guided tours	_____	_____	_____

and the public you serve:

	1970	1980	1990
___ School groups	_____	_____	_____
___ Adult groups	_____	_____	_____
___ Individuals	_____	_____	_____
___ Presentation at schools	_____	_____	_____

In this section we ask that you provide some insights into the developing professionalization of museum personnel.

1. Please indicate either by number or percentage the personnel in your museum with degrees:

	1975	1989
B.A.	_____	_____
M.A.	_____	_____
Post-Grad.	_____	_____

2. Please check (X) if personnel having received museum training at:

Workshops	_____	_____
Internships	_____	_____
Apprenticeships	_____	_____
Fellowships	_____	_____
College Courses	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

3. Please check if personnel have attended professional conferences:

	1975	1989
A.A.M.	_____	_____
M.A.A.M.	_____	_____
State	_____	_____
Smithsonian	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

4. Please check if personnel hold membership in:

A.A.M.	_____	_____
M.A.A.M.	_____	_____
State	_____	_____
Other (list)	_____	_____

Do you think that museum personnel have become more professional over the past fifteen years? Please Comment.

Name of person completing form _____

APPENDIX VI
VISITOR SURVEYS

SURVEY AT EQUITABLE CENTER

What brings you to Equitable Center?

Work___ Business visitor___ Gallery visitor___

The lobby mural is the centerpiece of the building. What is your opinion of it?

What is your opinion of the artist?

Have you visited the gallery adjacent to the lobby?

Yes _____ No _____

SURVEY OF FREQUENT MUSEUM VISITORS

Name _____

Artist____ Art historian____ Collector____ Interested
Observer____

How often do you visit a museum or gallery?

_____ Times per year____ month____ week____

Have you visited the Whitney Museum this year? _____

If Yes, what exhibits did you see?

What is your opinion of the Whitney Biennial?

Have you visited any of the Whitney's corporate branches?

If "Yes", which ones? Downtown____ Equitable____ Philip
Morris____ Fairfield____

What was the impetus for your visit? _____

If "No", why not? _____

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