

### 3rd INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ART CRITICS

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#### " ORGANIZATION OF TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS "

Report of W.J.H.B. Sandberg :

#### " ORGANIZATION OF EXHIBITIONS OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN MUSEUMS "

In the following I am talking about the museums of to-day and I have in view the museums which not only show contemporary art but find the base of their existence in the present . - The historical museum sees its origin in past centuries, the museum of modern art finds it in the present . - The museum of contemporary art is not looking for works of art of the past so long as they do not teach us something about the art of the present . This museum looks at the past with the eyes of 1951 .

No permanent collection, however big it may be, will be able to show modern art in all its aspects . We try to fill in the gaps with temporary exhibitions . The museum of modern art should give all information about painting, sculpture, graphic art, applied art, and if possible also about films, photography and architecture. For the permanent collection one only needs a limited number of well chosen examples . Temporary exhibitions can draw the special attention to the various aspects of the permanent collection .

An exhibition is planned along logical lines such as chronological order, similarity, etc. No such formal considerations as symmetry or colour should be decisive . One of the prominent features of modern art is its asymmetry . Symmetry of the symbol of equilibrium and rest, asymmetry is the symbol of movement, dynamism, life. Most people who organize exhibitions still seem to live in the past .

Exhibitions are organized for the visitors only, never for the exhibitors . The death of an artist, the seventieth birthday of a sculptor, or goodwill towards a foreign embassy should never be a motive to exhibit certain works . The big exhibitions of artists societies are of great value for the artists; there they can show their work to the public and compare it with the work of their comrades .



These exhibitions should be organized in separate buildings .

An exhibition is not organized for the conservators of the museums; its purpose is not to go beyond the intellectual and receptive level of the average visitor . This visitor can only receive a limited number of impressions at a time . This number depends on :

the surroundings - these may distract his attention or allow him to concentrate; to concentrate ;

it may be influenced by the way in which the works of art are shown and also by degree of enthusiasm of the visitor;

the exhibition that knows how to catch his interest does not fatigue him .

The number of objects shown should usually not exceed a hundred .

One of the principal purposes of the museum of modern art is to confront our contemporaries with the present . To realize this aim it is necessary that the person in charge of the museum should not be "conservative"; the head of the museum must follow the efforts of the artists with ardour, he must live entirely in the present and he must be a real director, i.e. a leader who can give a special direction to this museum .

For many art historians it is difficult to enter into the kingdom of the present.

It is impossible to confront our contemporaries with the present without temporary exhibitions . (See my article in "L'art d'aujourd'hui", October 1950).