

Opened a year ago, Huntington Hartford's Gallery of Modern Art is a notable addition to the cultural life of a great city

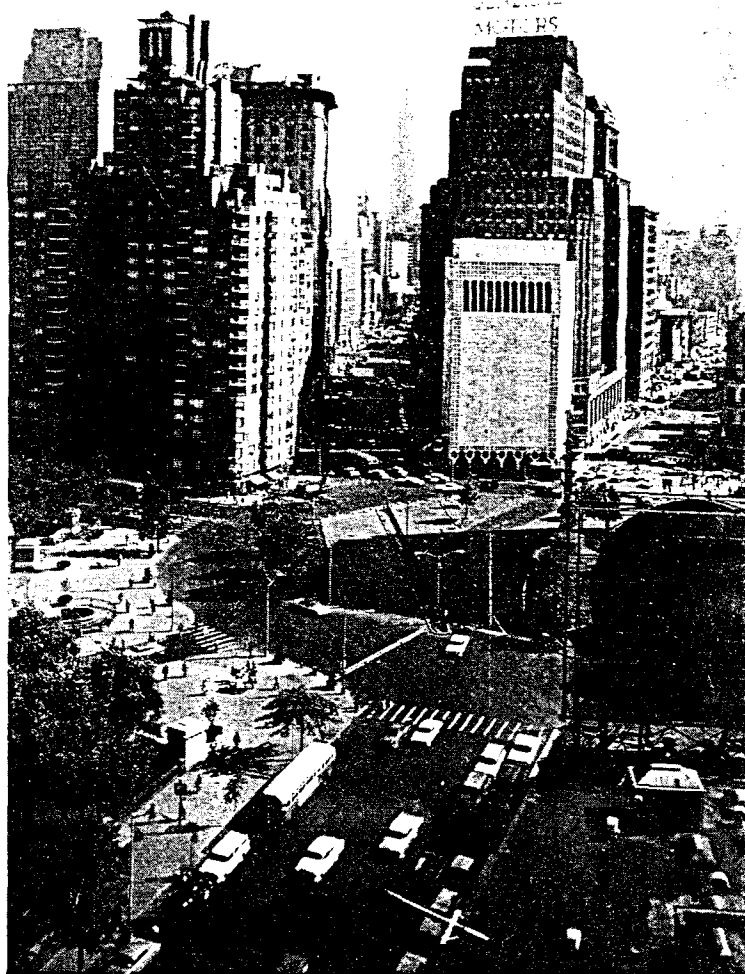
A New Museum in New York

BY NELSON LANSDALE

OF NEW YORK'S thirty major museums, the newest and most luxurious is the Huntington Hartford Gallery of Modern Art, which opened in March, 1964, after five days of festive previews. Five years in planning and construction, it was designed by Edward Durell Stone, best known for his American Embassy in New Delhi, the original museum of Modern Art in New York, and whose John F. Kennedy Arts Center is now a building in Washington.

The new museum cost about \$7,500,000, complete to white marble sheathing, and portholes which decorate its four corners — inspired, Stone says, by architectural detail of Saint-Germain des-Prés, the oldest Romanesque church in Paris. Cut out, the marble portholes pave the lobby floor, which contains turnstiles, a checkroom, and a quotation from Rudyard Kipling on the marble walls near the elevators. The ninth floor is a Polynesian restaurant with a beautiful view of Central Park; the eighth is a gallery lounge; the seventh is for storage, and the sixth for offices. There is also a handsome basement auditorium seating 154, with an expandable stage; a sub-basement is given over to air-conditioning.

A less talented architect than Stone, confronted with a small, irregular plot (no two sides are equal in length, a fact effectively screened by the arcade of Moorish arches at the street level), and the city's requirements for a fire stairway, along with the necessity for large elevators (in which large works of art as well as people must be hauled up and down), might



A photograph of the Huntington Hartford Gallery of Modern Art, showing its northern facade on Columbus Circle

well have thrown up his hands in despair at the prospect of creating any kind of public building on the site; the next door neighbor is the Coliseum, which may be the ugliest public building in New York, if not in America. In Hartford's monthly magazine *Show*, Stone declared: "I was in effect putting a watch together — and a miracle was needed to get an orderly, spacious gallery area." If what he has achieved falls short of a miracle, it must be said to Stone's credit that he has produced a building which in many ways is a model of elegance and comfort.

Stone also has plans to landscape Columbus Circle, adorning it with a colonnade made of columns from the ruined Pennsylvania Station, which in its turn would give the museum, so situated as to put a period to Broadway at 59th, a more appropriate approach. Meantime, New York City's Newbold Morris, inspired by the Fontana de Trevi and other fountains in Rome which make the Eternal City's streets so refreshing by comparison with Manhattan's arid canyons, has asked Douglas Leigh to create a fountain at the base of the Columbus monument, for which George Delacorte (the publisher who has already given the public the



A view of one of the exhibition galleries, hung with a one-man show of Paul Tchelitchew

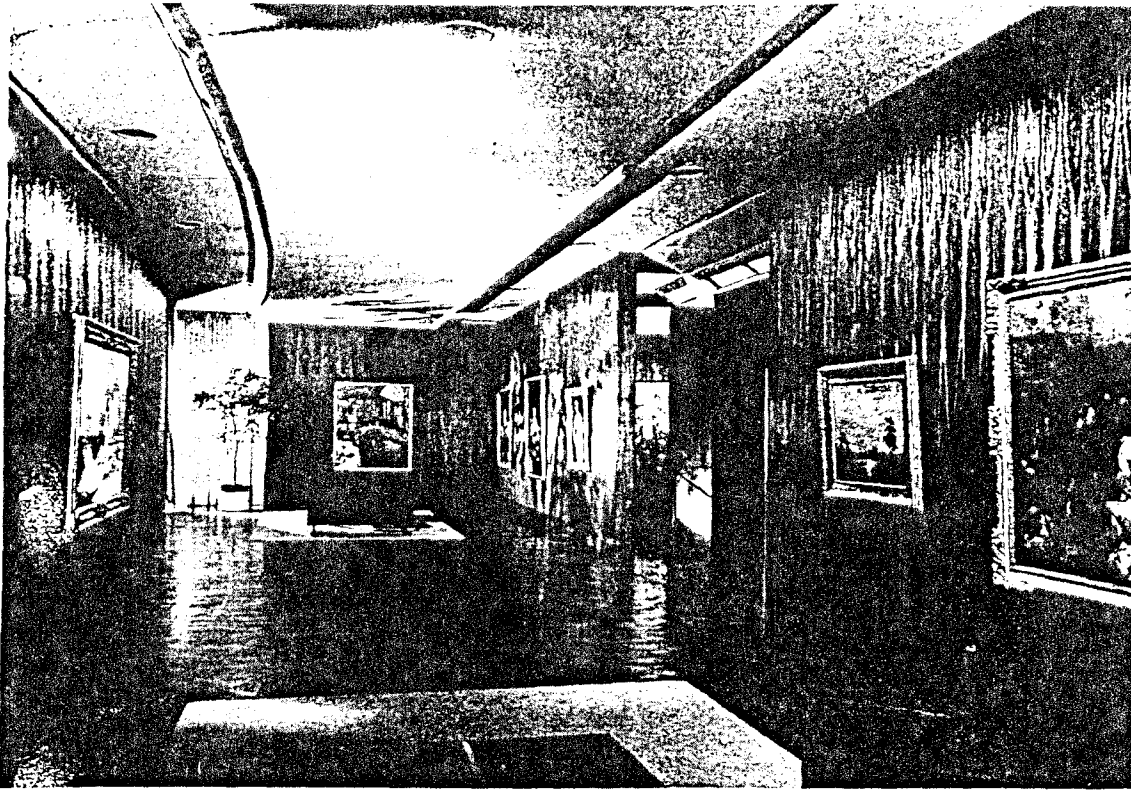
Shakespeare Theater in Central Park) has provided the funds. The two plans may eventually be coordinated, which would end the present chaos at Columbus Circle, now awkward for vehicles and all but impossible for pedestrians.

Stone's basic design for the exhibition areas at Hartford's Gallery of Modern Art, which he has described as "a grand staircase, with the galleries serving as landings," in plan somewhat resembles Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum, in that visitors go by elevator to the top exhibition floor (5) and make their way down afoot. Where the sloping, circling ramp of the Guggenheim induces a slight vertigo (where to go, from abstract expressionism and Pop art?) akin to finding your sea-legs aboard ship, the long galleries at the Hartford are effective for exhibition purposes. Though it does not seem so, the Hartford Gallery of Modern Art has more hanging space than the Guggenheim. The small rooms at the ends of the Hartford are fine for display of smaller works of art, but in terms of circulation they are apt to become, at least on opening nights, *culs de sac*. This is a minor problem for the more or less social percentage of the public who receive and accept such invitations.

The beautiful paneling, expensive bronze trim, comfortable leather furniture, and parquet floors, heavy gold area carpeting, with red for the staircase areas, all suggest a rich man's club (although why in a modern fireproof building should one be forbidden to

smoke?). This atmosphere of elegance is a distinct asset in showing works of art, provided only that they can live up to the setting, as for example at Wildenstein, and one not shared by other major museums mentioned here. The view from the topmost ramp of the Guggenheim to the street level, for example, is a spectacular sight, but nobody in his senses would call the museum relaxing, elegant or comfortable. And the Gallery of Modern Art has assets not measurable in terms of marble and parquet: a sensible young (38) director, Carl Weinhardt, Jr., and Assistant Director Forrest Selvig (40), both recruited from the Minneapolis Institute of Fine Arts. Together with a press officer, Sally McLean, an alumna of the Guggenheim, who knows what time it is, they have in the two floors of the gallery which are free for temporary exhibitions, an excellent chance to make their new museum a vital force in New York's art life.

Since the Guggenheim, the Whitney, the Modern Museum, and the Jewish Museum have all displayed and promoted the artistic left, as represented by abstract expressionism and more recently by Pop art, it seems only fair that the right wing, or conservative viewpoint, might now have a citadel of its own outside the National Academy of Design and the Art Students League, which devote most of their exhibition space to their own immediate purposes. It is too bad that the Huntington Hartford permanent collection does not serve this purpose more coherently, but the



One of the galleries containing paintings from the permanent collection. All photographs by Arnold Eagle

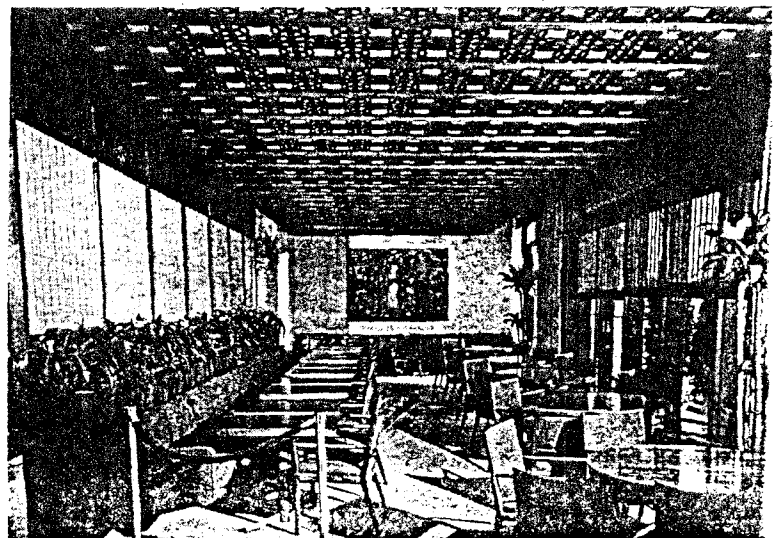
A. & P. millionaire's collection is for many reasons not under discussion here and now.

For lack of a suitable place in which they could be seen, New York has in recent years missed one big show after another which was organized outside the city. Recent examples include exhibitions of Spanish paintings held last year in Indianapolis, and Providence, R.I.; Four Centuries of American Art organized in Minneapolis; the Boston Museum's survey of the Barbizon School; and "The Private World of John Singer Sargent," organized by the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, which the Hartford tried unsuccessfully to secure after it had been fully booked. New York's art world is a small town which is entirely too complacent about its supremacy over the rest of the country. It may be true that a living American artist, like an actor, has not really made the big time until or unless he has succeeded in New York. But this is far from true of museum shows. If the Whitney Museum of American Art last year showed "Maine and Its Artists," from Colby College, others, like the Museum of Modern Art do not borrow whole shows as a matter of policy, or cannot, as at the Metropolitan, where a gigantic \$11,000,000 reconstruction program is under way. Other shows, like the brilliant "Four Centuries of American Masterpieces", organized by the Skowhegan, Maine, School of Painting and Sculpture, turn up in a commercial pavilion at the New York World's Fair. It is precisely at this point

that the felicities of Stone's building and the brains of the Hartford staff have found a vacuum that they are already beginning to fill.

The Gallery of Modern Art opened its doors with a loan show of the works of Pavel Tchelitchew, directed jointly by Weinhardt and Selvig. The memorial exhibit was the first seen here since the Museum of

continued on page 66



Polynesian Restaurant, ninth floor, overlooking Central Park. The tapestry was woven in France, after a Gauguin painting

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HALE (from page 65)

utilities."

Finally, we must consider our own time, the needs of life, and our responsibility to guide the direction of the future. In this context we have heard of, and experienced, the dehumanization and fragmentation of our lives and cultural values. We have seen the emergence of art forms that are said to reflect the shell-shocked state of man. But we must ask ourselves if it is not justified to expect art to do more than reflect an image. Humanist art, the art based on the striving to understand organic form, has always done more than reflect; it has ennobled and embodied life. It would seem most logical, at this time, for art schools, colleges, and universities to re-evaluate their programs and to reinstate the teaching of anatomy as an essential study of organic form.

MAYER (from page 54)

It must not bleed in oil and its physi-

cles must be acceptable.

The Standard Committee, in a search to select a brilliant member of the crimson-red-maroon family, came up with one which is tentatively offered (not yet officially adopted), the quinacridone reds, which outperformed every other organic color under examination. Two American manufacturers have added it to their lines - unfortunately, under proprietary names. If you scrutinize the tube, you will see the name "linear quinacridone" either under the color designation or on the back of the label. I do not hesitate to use it.

The whole subject of super-brilliant organic colors is badly in need of laboratory work under impartial auspices. Perhaps from those mentioned above, there are fully acceptable colors. But the careful, experienced painter will remember all the premature adoptions of the 1910-1920 period when aniline colors had their first major improvements in permanence, and so he will await a complete evaluation before placing his trust in them.

There is no counterpart of our Standard in England, but there is a British Standard for "Powder Pigments for Artists' Use 2876:1957." It should be noted that it does not presume to be a guide for artists as it is quite inclusive and lists several pigments that would not be in anyone's approved list. There are a few differences from American Standard terms; French ultramarine for ultramarine;

Aureolin for cobalt yellow; white lead for flake white (which indicates artists' quality white lead); and mineral violet for manganese violet. Light red is described as calcined yellow ochre.

Copies of CS-98-62 can be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C., at \$1.00 each. An earlier version without the 1962 revisions is reprinted in *Modern Artists' Handbook of Materials and Techniques*, Revised Edition, Viking Press, N.Y.

LANSDALE (from page 57)

Modern Art gave him a large one-man show in 1942, with inevitably many of the same pictures (most notably his masterpiece, "Hide and Seek," which the Modern counts among its most popular possessions). It was an odd choice for a new institution whose founder told *The New York Times* he hoped to "restore some healthy standards to the art world." Even Tchelitchev's most ardent apologist, Lincoln Kirstein, who wrote both catalogues, would scarcely call Tchelitchev's work "healthy."

nor pretended to be. The Hartford show catalogued 332 pictures and was thus larger by a third than the Modern Museum's big retrospective when the painter was at the peak of his powers. It served a most useful purpose in reviving interest in a painter who slipped, after his death in Rome in 1957, into almost complete oblivion.

It is easy to see why the Museum of Modern Art, having accorded an artist the highest accolade within its power - a full-dress one-man exhibition - cannot, unless he is the endlessly inventive Pablo Picasso, go on showing his newer work indefinitely. This would be bad, among other things, for the box-office, and the Modern (with no city or state subsidy aside from tax exemption) depends heavily on its membership and paid admissions for operating expenses. It might also be pointed out that even one big one-man show does not always do an artist any great favor. Where several Fernand Legers usually stand out in group shows, the big exhibition of his work jointly staged several years ago by the Modern Museum and The Chicago Art Institute proved that too many of them are endlessly repetitive and a crashing bore. Last season's Gaston Lachaise show at the Whitney produced much the same soporific effect on many visitors; the Arthur B. Davies exhibit was another instance in which the Whitney showed up a painter to whom it had intended to pay homage.

However, an artist of Tchelitchev's

talent — he was at the very least a superlative draughtsman, an unexcelled decor designer, and an extremely imaginative and original portraitist — deserves something more than one big show in his lifetime, and cursory obituaries when he dies. Now justice has been done, an oversight corrected, and all concerned may bask equally in the praise.

A show of the Pre-Raphaelites from the John Herron Museum of Art in Indianapolis followed the Tchelitchev show at the Hartford Gallery. And here is the nub of an important difference between two kinds of loan shows, which virtually all big art shows must be. In the simplest terms, one is like a party to which you invite your guests and provide the food and drink. The other, and less usual kind, is like a party for which you lend your house to somebody else; then he invites the guests and provides the refreshment, although he will probably not make much fuss if you invite a guest or two, on your own, whom you think would fit in. It is the second category to which the Pre-Raphaelite show from

the Hartford Gallery and the other people the owner of the house (Hartford) added were nine works by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, the foremost pupil of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a founder of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. But these eighty-four pictures, borrowed from all over the map (London, Ottawa, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, New Brunswick) demonstrated once and for all that the rumored revival of these mannered nineteenth-century *precieux ridicules* has no solid basis in taste or talent. The dummies in Saks or Bonwit's windows, to say nothing of those at Madame Tussaud's, have more life than these posturing subjects. On extended examination, it is almost incredible that their motto could have been "Death to Slosh." Their "intentionally pathetic and moralizing" subject matter — "romantic, literary, sentimental, pious" — not only had no connection with the modern world, but never could have had with any other. John Canaday of *The New York Times* said: "After the first few minutes . . . the tendency to throw up is difficult to control." With unusual accuracy, *Time* noted that "They just did not know enough about what they professed to love," i.e., the real pre-Raphaelites, from Giotto to Filippo Lippi.

Aside from an astonishing thirty-four pictures "never before exhibited (which attests to the months of hard work behind it) such a show had a definite negative value in demonstrating the the Pre-Raphaelites are not, nor are they ever likely to become, worthy of serious adult attention. This

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Along with the pre-Raphaelites, the Hartford Gallery showed a hundred small bronzes and drawings by Antoine Bourdelle, most of them already seen at the Charles Slatkin Galleries in New York and circulated by them to sixteen museums from coast to coast in the United States and Canada since 1961. Rodin called his disciple "a beacon of the future"; Sir Jacob Epstein felt that he was destined for early oblivion; but Epstein was not a generous judge of other contemporary sculptors, and Rodin, like Anatole France, may have been personally prejudiced in Bourdelle's favor. As usual, the truth doubtless lies somewhere in between, but at the Hartford Gallery, the Bourdelles were not well treated, suffering from overcrowding. Since his major works are owned and shown by the Modern, the Metropolitan, and at Philharmonic Hall, it is hard to see what useful purpose such a show was ever expected to serve. Since his death in 1929, Bourdelle has been anything but neglected.

Last March most readers of *The Saturday Review* were astonished to discover that Maxfield Parrish is still alive and flourishing at ninety-four, in Plainfield, New Hampshire. Perhaps equally startling was the May opening at Bennington College, a hot-bed of the avant-garde, of fifty oils, drawings, and posters by the foremost illustrator of the 'Twenties, introduced by Lawrence Alloway, a former Bennington professor turned Curator of the Guggenheim and High Priest of Pop Art. Parrish specialized in a beautiful never-never land which existed only in his imagination so memorably that "Maxfield Parrish blue" used to be as common in ordinary parlance as "Williamsburg blue" is today.

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(continued on page 68)

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NEW YORK, SYRACUSE. Everson Mus. of
Art. 13th Syracuse Reg'l Art Exh. Mar. 6-
Apr. 4. Open to artists living within 100 mi.
of Syracuse. Media: ptg., sculp., crafts, dwg.,
& graphics. Limit: 2 entries. Jury. Prizes. Fee:
\$3. Everson Mus. of Art, 407 James St., Syra-
cuse, N.Y.

★OHIO, ATHENS. Ohio Univ. Ultimate Con-
cerns: Prints & Dwgs, Mar. 9-27. Open to all
artists. Jury. Purchase prizes. Fee: \$2. Entry
blanks due Feb. 13; work due Feb. 20. Dr.
Frederick D. Leach, Director, School of Ptg.
& Allied Arts, Ohio Univ., Athens, Ohio.

TEXAS. SAN ANTONIO. Tex. Watercolor Soc.,
16th Ann. Exh., Mar. 14-Apr. 4. Open to
present or former residents of Tex. Media:
Watercolor or unvarnished water soluble casein
on paper. Fee: \$3 for non-members. Jury.
Prizes. Entry cards & work due Feb. 20.
Dorothy P. McKinley, Apt. 151, 7143 Oaklawn,
San Antonio, Tex. 78229

WASHINGTON, BELLINGHAM. Western
Wash. State College. 2nd Ann. Dwg. & Small
Sculp. Exh. Apr. 1-30. Open to artists of
Wash., Ore., Calif., Ariz., New M., Utah,
Nev., Colo., Wyo., Idaho, Mont, Alaska,
Hawaii, B.C., Alberta, Sask., Yukon. Jury.
Prizes. Entry cards & work due Mar. 1. Art
Dept., Western Wash. State Coll, Bellingham,
Wash.

★WASHINGTON, SEATTLE. NW Printmak-
ers 36th Internat'l Print Exh. Mar. 4-Apr. 4.
Open to all Amer. & foreign printmakers.
Media: all fine print media except mono-
prints. Jury. Prizes. Fee: \$2. Entry cards &
work due Feb. 10. Secretary, Seattle Art Mus.,
Volunteer Pk., Seattle, Wash. 98102.

WEST VIRGINIA, HUNTINGTON. Huntington
Gall. Exh. 130 (13th Ann.) May 2-30. Open
to artists of W. Va., or Ky. & Ohio within 150
mi. radius of W. Va. Media: ptg., sculp.,
graphics & crafts. Jury. Prizes. Fee: \$4. Entry
cards due Mar. 19. Work due Mar. 26. Hun-
tington Gall., Huntington, W. Va.
Gal 1 AA Feb. 6 '66 Cal Jack
(continued on page 70)

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