

## FOREWORD

Every large museum, and most smaller ones, have far more specimens than can possibly be exhibited at the same time. In the University Museum we estimate that there are between four hundred thousand and half a million individual objects that only occasionally are seen by anyone but curators, students and visiting scholars. This is as it should be, because a university museum is doubly obligated—to the community, served chiefly through exhibition halls and educational programs; and to scholars in search of original material for their archaeological or ethnological research.

Aside from the obvious value of large collections available to specialists, and for loans and exchanges with sister institutions, the storage provides rich materials for temporary exhibitions on numerous areas, periods and special topics within the vast range of human culture. Normally, even in a show in which aesthetic values are stressed, the Museum Staff chooses the pieces to be dusted off and placed temporarily in the public eye.

As a departure from the conventional, or curatorial, system of selection, non-anthropologists chose the specimens for the "Storeroom Show."

Seven men, all active in the field of modern art, ransacked our storerooms for pieces that appealed to their several tastes.

The Museum invited a director, a collector, a painter, a sculptor, a designer, a producer of ballet and a cartoonist to select, without suggestion, anything they considered of artistic merit or otherwise of interest. These objects are shown under the names of the selectors. The reasons for their choices appear in the pages of this catalogue. To the anthropologist, accustomed to evaluate materials on non-aesthetic grounds, the reasons for selection are novel, often even startling. But whatever we may feel about the beauty or interest of a particular piece, the choices in general strongly reflect the tastes and personalities of the selectors.

Exhibiting the chosen specimens in a basement storeroom is an even more unconventional aspect of this show. It was done to avoid the expense of decorating a temporary gallery, and, quite frankly, to try to emphasize the fact that all of the objects had been, in fact, in storage.

We also felt that the public, never admitted to the often untidy, but nonetheless intriguing recesses of museums, might enjoy a look behind the scenes. We hope everyone will realize what to us and other museum people is obvious: that ordinarily such diverse things as Mayan sculpture, Ordos bronzes and Northwest Coast crests would not turn up as close bedfellows in the *same* basement.

The selectors, to whom we are most grateful for their interest and time, were:

Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director, Museum of Modern Art, New York

Lincoln Kirstein, Director, New York City Ballet

Louis E. Stern, Collector

Jacques Lipchitz, Sculptor

Franklin C. Watkins, Painter

Charles Addams, of the *NEW YORKER*

Norman Bel Geddes, Stage and Industrial Designer.

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