



Reorganization of the French National Museums both in Paris and the Provinces is the most ambitious scheme for museums now being undertaken anywhere. All of these museums so familiar to the American tourist are now taking on a "new look" and some, like Cluny, are quite unrecognizable to Paris students of the Twenties like me. Above: The Victory of Samathrace, Louvre.

THE NEW MUSEUM

Froelich Rainey

This study of the contemporary museum in the western nations was begun for very practical reasons. In 1953, the University of Pennsylvania and the management of the University Museum decided to request an appropriation from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to cover in part the operating expenses of the University Museum. Like so many other institutions in the United States, the Museum was originally established with private funds and private endowments. In recent years, with the changing economic system, the burden of maintenance cost has fallen more and more heavily upon the University of Pennsylvania. Now, like almost all great public museums in America we are asking the public to supply at least a part of the operating cost.

All of us who are responsible for the operation and maintenance of public institutions like this realize that the profound social and economic changes now taking place must necessarily affect the nature of museums. It is urgent for us to understand what is now happening in the museum world and what is likely to happen during the next generation.

Fortunately, the W. W. Grant Foundation in New York, which is actively concerned with education in America, was willing to finance this study both in America and western Europe. The object has not been a detailed statistical analysis or descriptive summary of museum activities. My intention was to visit a number of the most active museums and to discuss with the directors, curators and other members of the staff our common problems, hopes and ideas for the future. In this way, I hoped to reach some general conclusions about what was now happening in the museum world and to arrive at some reasonable conjectures about the direction in which we are all moving.

In these conversations with museum personnel in fifteen nations, extending from Mexico to Sweden, I have, however, become impressed with the idea that what is happening in the museums can be recognized only in terms

of what is happening in western civilization in general. A study of one kind of institution cannot be made without first forming some opinion about the changing ideas in western culture as a whole. Significant change must be the result of a compelling idea, not of a specific invention or discovery. I think many of us today have come to believe that there is, immediately before us, a new compelling idea which is not yet crystallized or verbalized, but which certainly must be very different from that of the last generation. If we in the past fifty years have been preoccupied with education and improvement in the life of the average man, will we perhaps now turn toward some solution for the problem of developing intellectual leaders in a democratic society?

In the museum world it is not difficult to recognize the far-reaching and specific changes now taking place. The interchange of ideas between the western nations is very rapid and thoroughgoing, particularly among the personnel of museums, since they have little regard for national frontiers. These current changes are significant and important but I think that many of the men with whom I have talked during the past few months are trying anxiously to see through the next decade. They feel this is urgent because in one sense the present is already past and, if you are planning for the development of an institution, you **MUST** speculate with the future.

In this report to the members and friends of the University Museum, I shall not attempt a description of the scores of museums which I recently visited. They are, after all, only a small sample of the astonishing number of museums in the western nations (for example, more than two thousand in the United States alone, and at least a thousand in France). This will be, rather, the impressions of an anthropologist and an administrator who, in visiting a very small percentage of these institutions, attempts to see what may be significant to the development of our own.

One word about the men and women who manage museums in the United States and Europe: they certainly are not the stereotype which the average person automatically imagines as a museum director. They are in fact not unlike the most active business executives, lawyers, doctors, and other professional people who are very much aware of what is happening in the world about them and very much concerned with contemporary civic, political and international affairs. Perhaps this in itself marks one of the significant changes in museums during the last generation. To all of them I must certainly acknowledge the borrowing of ideas and conclusions. That, after all, has been the essential purpose of the study.



Italy has the happy advantage of charming palaces to house its work of art. But Italy, like France, is making a nation-wide reorganization of museums to improve the aesthetic arrangement of objects in terms of contemporary taste. This means the reduction of the number of things shown in one gallery and I am sure that many priceless things are now being seen and appreciated which were once buried in sheer clutter. The National Museum in Florence is one of a great many examples.

NATIONAL MUSEUMS

With the term national museum most Americans will immediately think of the United States National Museum in Washington. Many of us are inclined to damn the National Museum as a cluttered mass of unrelated objects or because it is sometimes unable to get out a prompt and full reply to our requests for specific information; but, to administrators of museums in this country, the wonder is that the National Museum can be as efficient as it is what with pressure from government officials to accept all manner of collections, to be all things to all people, and the obligation to justify an operating budget to a Congress which may have some difficulty in understanding the nature of a museum. In spite of insurmountable difficulties as seen by those of us who operate privately financed institutions, the Museum manages to remain abreast of contemporary ideas in museum exhibition and management. It is at the moment remodeling and reorganizing most of its vast collections.

It is impossible to classify national museums on the basis of what they contain. Many, such as the National Museum in Italy, are essentially archaeological, but they can be exclusively fine arts and painting like the Barberini Palace in Rome and most are a combination of art, archaeology, history, folk culture, and decorative arts. One of the oldest, the National Museum in Copenhagen, has one of the most extensive collections of archaeology and ethnography of any museum in the world. It may be said to be the originator of the modern science of archaeology. Yet, it contains very extensive national art treasures, national historic collections, and even a section on the history of Danish resistance during the Second World War. There are other national museums which contain some of the major archives of the country. Most of the world is familiar with the Library in the British Museum and one need only be reminded of the fact that Lenin wrote his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* in the British Museum Library to realize the effect of these libraries and archives upon world thought.

Practically all nations of the west maintain some kind of national museum as an obligation to the Federal Government. Such institutions, particularly in Europe, have carried out much of the ethnographic, archaeological, and historical research throughout the world. Just as the United States National Museum and the Smithsonian Institution have concerned themselves for many years with the history, ethnology, and archaeology of North America, so have national museums of Europe been primarily concerned not only with their national history, but with the origin and development of western civilization. Most of the national museums of the west still maintain a high

level of research in the field. But many of these institutions, for example the British Museum, consider the preservation of national art treasures, archives, and records of scientific research as their primary obligation to the State. This is a function which is not always easy to explain to government officials.

It is a significant fact, I think, that the government of France, since the Second World War, has financed and supported a very expensive and large scale reorganization of the National Museums of France. With what appears to a foreigner to be a chaotic internal political situation in France during the past few years, this investment in the National Museums comes as something of a surprise. The explanation must be found in the prevailing philosophy of the French people since it is unlikely that any group of persons in France can be entirely responsible for such a large scale development. Something similar has been happening in Italy, in Holland, in Mexico, and in Spain. It is curious that no such development has taken place in Germany as yet, in spite of the phenomenal economic recovery made in western Germany during the past few years.

The current enthusiasm in the western world for the recovery and preservation of historic monuments, buildings, and collections should affect the future of all national museums. It is encouraging to see the reorganization of the United States National Museum and the more far reaching reorganization of the French National Museums. This must necessarily reflect a thoroughgoing public interest since it is done exclusively with public funds. This trend is also indicated in Mexico where the Belles Artes Museum has recently prepared a very extensive traveling exhibition of Mexican arts, remodeled its National Museum of Antiquities, and utilized native designs in the construction of a vast, new University. The restoration of the Independence Hall area in Philadelphia is another good example of the contemporary world wide emphasis on national traditions.

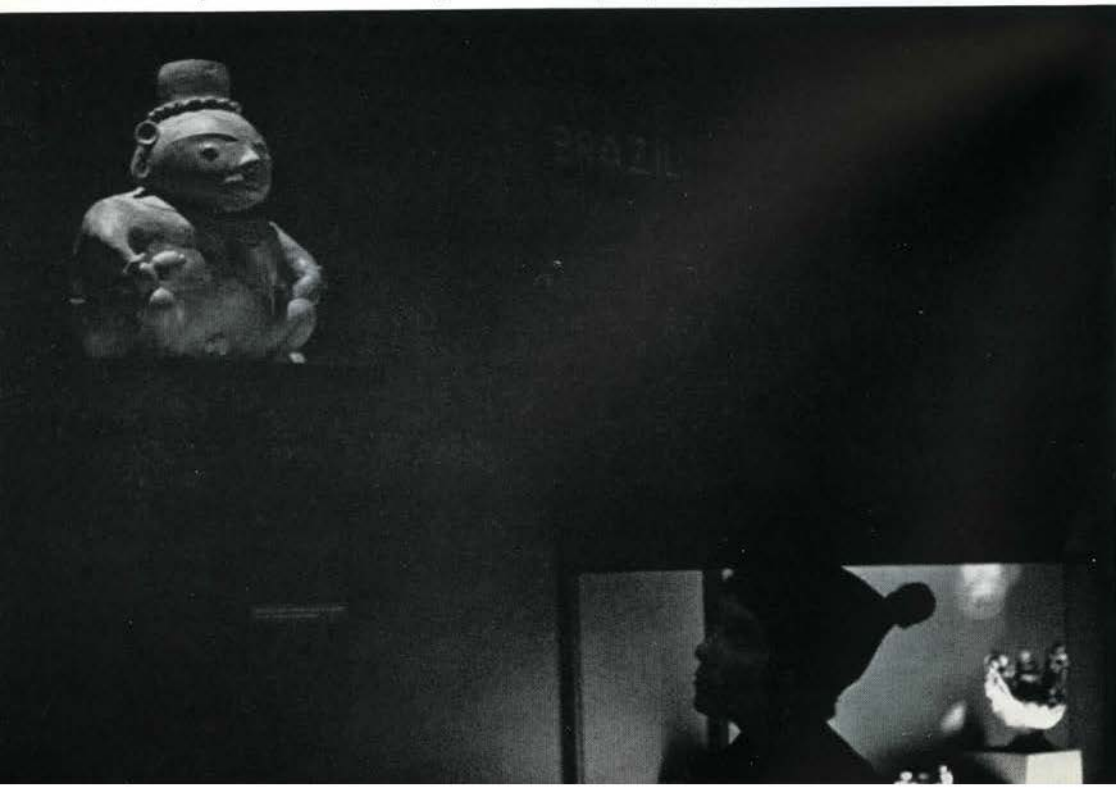
ART MUSEUMS

When most people speak of "the museum" they mean the Art Museum. I do not suppose there is a city of any size anywhere in the western nations which does not have some sort of art museum. They must far outnumber all the others. In this rapid survey I have been appalled not only with the number of art museums but with the number of art objects, decorative and Fine Arts, preserved by the people of Europe and America. It is true that we are in a period when these objects are gravitating from private houses into public institutions and when governments rather than individuals take the responsibility for their preservation. But the number preserved must surely reflect a particular point of view characteristic of the late Nineteenth Century in Europe.



The Prado in Madrid with world-famous picture galleries like this is more concerned with preservation than with remodeling or with popular educational activities. Like the Mauritshuis in the Hague, it will remain a "must" in the itinerary of European travelers.

The Museum of Modern Art in New York is famed for its dramatic temporary exhibitions of everything from native arts of America to contemporary furniture and glassware. It has set the standards for exhibition technique as well as for design and contemporary sculpture.





Remodeling and reconstruction which is characteristic of this period has been carried out on the grand scale by the Metropolitan in New York. Forty-four galleries have been renovated during the past three years.

One of the most popular innovations at the "Met" is the new restaurant. We are all happy that you no longer need grab a bite to eat in the basement on the approach to the rest rooms and hope that other American Museums will see the light.



The largest collection housed in one building is that at the Metropolitan in New York—an art museum which now ranks with the Chicago Science Museum and the Stockholm open-air Museum as one of the most popular in the world, having recently passed the two million per year attendance record. Anyone who has visited the Metropolitan in the past year since its renovation can have no doubt of the current popularity of this institution nor can he question the present assumption that cities must accept the responsibility for museums just as they do for schools or public parks. The Museum of Modern Art in New York also demonstrates the popularity of art but in a somewhat different way. This is the only major, world-famous Museum I know which is still entirely financed by private funds—admission fees, gifts, membership, and sales. But both institutions are active, vital organizations which remain abreast of the public demands placed upon them.

In sharp contrast are such museums as the Mauritshuis in the Hague and the Prado in Madrid. By American standards, these are static museums which make no attempt to remodel or to introduce public activities. Their collections are jewels in themselves and all the world will travel to see their Dutch and Spanish paintings regardless of current styles in the museum world. Mauritshuis in particular is a period piece which could hardly be improved upon and must remain as it is a delight to all who love Dutch and Flemish paintings. There are many art museums of this kind in Europe which need to make no effort in terms of popularization and public education. Their task is primarily one of careful preservation.

But there are others, both in Europe and America, which have become civic centers with an educational role comparable to that of the public schools. I have the impression that the art museums are leading the way in this direction with their art classes, concerts, films, public meetings, and clubs. In Detroit, for example, I was startled to find three separate religious denominations holding Sunday morning services in the Art Museum—but on second thought, realized that this was a very attractive idea no longer revolutionary for American art museums. The Louvre, also moving in the direction of popular appeal, has made evening visits to its art galleries a very popular affair, perhaps as a result of the dramatic lighting and of the new custom of placing posters around the city, frankly advertising the museum.

One of our most successful sculptors tells me that he is not sure whether modern art is decadent or a new and vital form. But, whichever it is, it has apparently stirred up enough controversy among the public in general to make art everybody's business. Art museums are today enjoying a lively burst of activity.

SCIENCE MUSEUMS

No one should be surprised to learn that some of the most popular museums in the world today are museums of science and industry. This past year, over two and a half million people visited the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. I suspect that it is the fathers and sons who take the mothers and daughters to the museums of science but there can be no doubt that everyone is fascinated with the technical gadgets which have revolutionized the western world. In Chicago's Science Museum, you can see everything from a coal mine to a transparent woman. You can also attempt to understand exhibitions of the most complex electronic equipment, industrial production processes, biological processes, and the mysterious world of the chemical and physical sciences. But, like all museums, these science museums are concerned with the processes of history. There is yesterday's main street in Chicago and most of these museums show historic sequences in the development of machinery. It is here that the public attempts to understand the astounding growth of technology and where the museum personnel attempt to explain how and why.

Since science museums are today among the most popular, one naturally asks why there are not more of them. It is a fair assumption that the Museum of Science Industry in Munich set the pattern of such institutions; but compared to art museums they are really very rare. It seems to me the most active of those museums which I have seen are in Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, and Buffalo, although practically every European country has at least one major museum of this kind. Perhaps an explanation of the relative rarity among museums of the world is the exceptionally high cost of maintenance and operation, a cost which is often shared by the city or state, industry, private endowment, and admission fee. One can readily understand the high cost of installing a planetarium, elaborate electronic equipment, or, let's say moving a German submarine from the Atlantic to the Great Lakes area. Moreover, when it comes to technical equipment, the public demands that the exhibits be kept up to date—at best a very expensive process. Fortunately industry, at least in America, has recognized the advantage of installing in such museums, at its own cost, exhibitions such as the Bell Telephone exhibit in the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia. This is obviously done for advertising and public relations purposes, but there seems also to be a growing tendency for industry to farm out research to the staffs of science museums. As most readers of this paper will know, this has been a long established arrangement in the Franklin Institute, and with industry's acceptance of the importance of such research, this relation between museums and industry should presumably expand rapidly in the future.



Boston's Museum of Science, which is just now being created, has a peculiarly human and lively quality which makes it a force in the educational system of the Greater Boston area. Children meet a live porcupine who does not "throw" his quills.



The popularity of science museums is natural in a society like ours which daily feels the impact of scientific discovery. And the recent increase in popularity demonstrates how much the general public desires to understand what is happening in the sciences. Interpretation of highly specialized research is undoubtedly one of the most important functions for all types of museums. Chicago's Museum of Science entertains more than two and one half million people each year.



One of the most exciting developments in the world of science museums, it seems to me, is the recent establishment of such an institution in Boston. Most of the large and expensive museums in America were established during the years 1890-1925. Because of the changing political and social philosophy of this generation and particularly its effect upon the tax structure in the United States, very few new museums are now being built. Yet Boston, since 1948, has established a large and very active Museum of Science which is still growing in a phenomenal manner. Perhaps the secret of its success is the intensely alive character of the place—a quality symbolized by “Spookey” the owl, a member of the Education Department, who travels widely for lecture demonstrations and who, when I first visited his institution, met me at the front door. He is no stuffed owl, so symbolic of the old Museum, but very much alive and very much appreciated by the children as well as by visiting directors. The scientific demonstrations in this Museum also give the place the air of a carnival or fair. Activities which go on in the building would certainly startle the old Museum of Natural History in Boston, now discontinued. Like many other active museums today, this institution has become a civic center for all kinds of group activities such as meetings of scientific organizations, educational groups, medical groups, business and civic groups as well as clubs, classes, and other more specifically educational activities. It is essentially a scientific extension of a public park and, as such, speaks to the whole population of the metropolitan area. It seems to me that the science museum more than any other kind reflects the prevailing attitudes of the social democratic system which now dominates the western world.

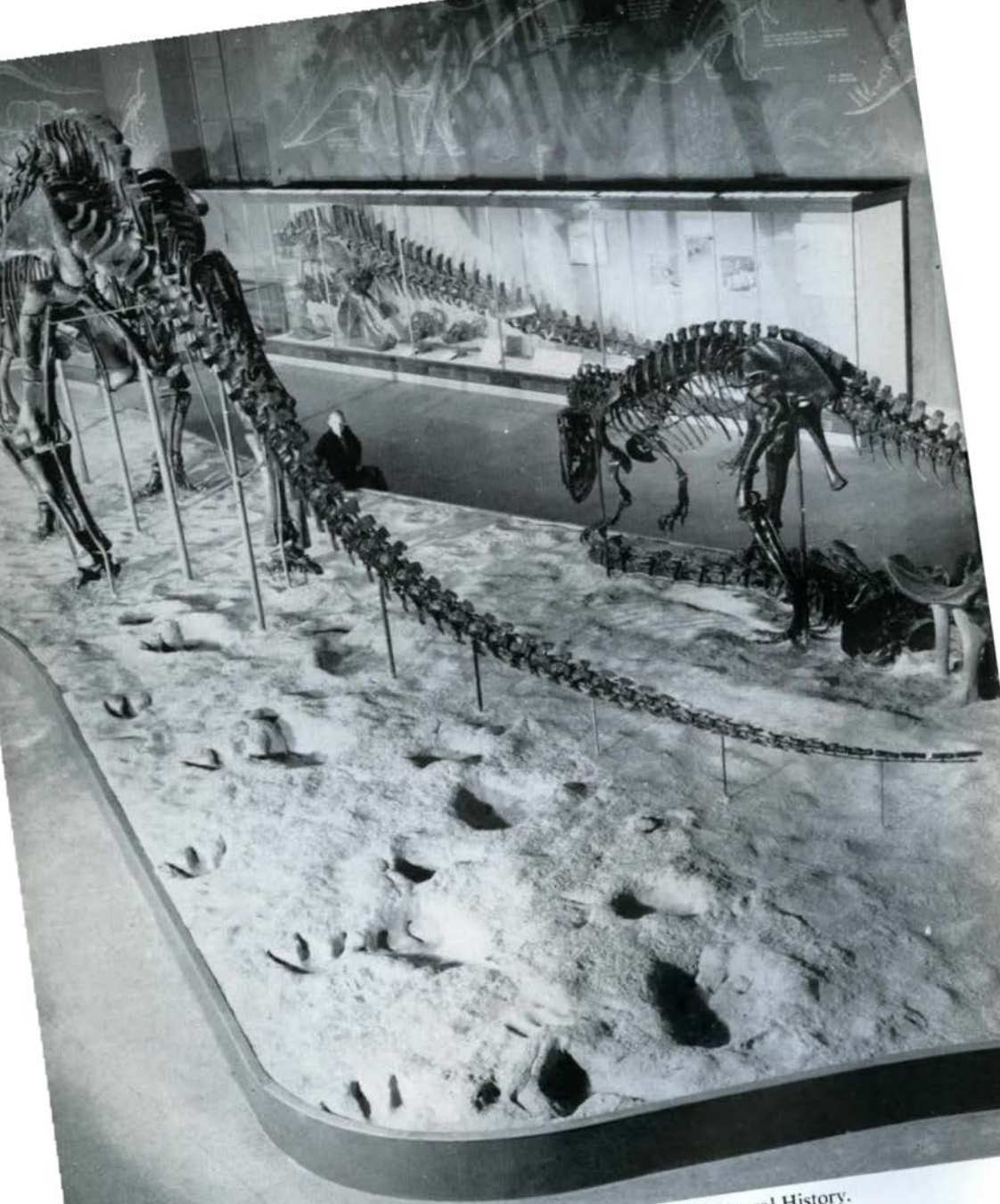
This use of museums by the public and for the public in innumerable activities found an early development in Buffalo at the Museum of Science which, today, has a great many museum courses of instruction for the adult such as furniture refinishing, gem cutting, ceramics, folk dancing, welfare working, and so forth. Children are taken on excursions in the countryside, introduced to astronomic observations and to lectures and films on science in general. It strikes me as an observer of many different kinds of museums that this type of activity, very early developed in the Buffalo Museum of Science, has also affected the activities of art museums, historical museums, natural history museums, and even those of art, and archaeology. The idea of utilizing the museum for all kinds of public activities certainly has spread into all classes and types and is characteristic of the contemporary museum, particularly in America.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUMS

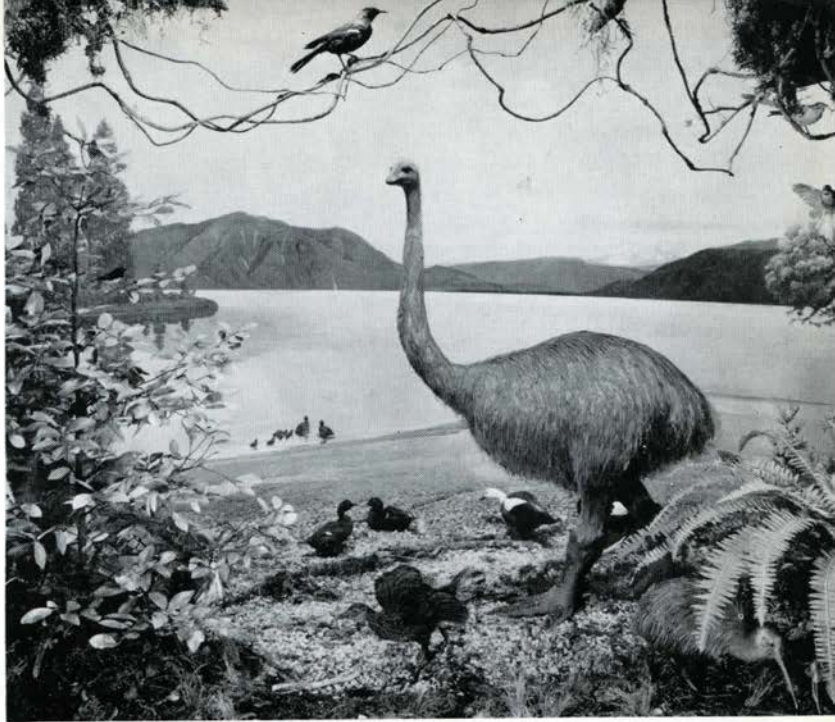
Natural history museums are, as Dr. Albert Parr has said, somewhat on the defensive. I might add that this does not apply to the American Museum of Natural History which Dr. Parr directs. It is one of the most popular museums in the world and remains in a position of leadership. Yet, anyone like myself, who must face up to the specific problems of university museums, can fully appreciate the shifting emphasis in education and the world of learning which undoubtedly accounts for our common problem. The great impetus in the founding and elaboration of natural history museums which took place in the late Nineteenth Century, has somehow lost headway. That was an age of collection and classification in natural sciences, an age which produced the massive collections for the study of botany, geology, paleontology, archaeology, anthropology, zoology, and so on, an age of reason with implicit faith in the ultimate value of collecting facts and things. It produced museums which were a center of instruction and research in the natural sciences. Then, with the growth of experimental laboratories of all kinds in universities, schools, and in industry, the way of learning in the sciences imperceptibly altered. Today it is not surprising that the comic strip caricature of museums in general is the natural history gallery stuffed with fossil bones, Indian headdress, stuffed birds, and bottles of sea anemone. All over the western world there are late Nineteenth Century natural history museums peacefully sleeping.

Chance plays an important role in a sketchy survey of museums such as I have been making and it has chanced that the most alive natural history museums I have seen are in the United States. Of these the New York, Buffalo, Rochester, and Denver Museums are the most active. Visitors in New York will remember the superb habitat groups of the American Museum, created during the past twenty-five years. Similar groups have been and are now being installed in Rochester and Denver but large, beautifully designed and expensively installed exhibitions form only a part of the thought and activity going into these museums at the present moment. All recognize that there is a new kind of natural history museum, a new idea and a purpose just around the corner. They are in a period of experimentation.

The emphasis upon universal education in one sense has maintained and revived the natural history museum. The proof of this can be seen almost any day in such museums where troops of school children swarm in all the galleries. But, at least to me, this is not the answer to our current dilemma. Everywhere, at the moment, one finds very intelligent, responsible, and thinking people who are anxiously trying to understand the fundamental



The Brontosaurus Hall, the American Museum of Natural History.



No one of the natural history museums which I have visited is more concerned with the new role of museums in education and in utilization by the public than that in New York. It has set a standard in the construction of habitat groups which are familiar to most visitors to the city, but is now remodeling most of its other exhibitions and experimenting with a number of new techniques. It is financed primarily by the city of New York and is one of the world's most popular.

nature of the world we live in. If the late Nineteenth Century was an age of collection and classification, the early Twentieth Century an age of elaborate laboratory experiment, then it seems to me that the late Twentieth Century will be an age in which the search for understanding and meaning will be dominant. The great problem for natural history museums, as well as for the museums of science and history, is to find the best means of meeting the demand of those who have an absorbing, intellectual curiosity. Cold statistics on numbers of people who pass through galleries in a museum have little meaning. It is the effect upon the intellectual leadership which matters.

One afternoon in Denver last year, I sat behind a habitat group being constructed by two very skilled and very knowledgeable museum employees. It was a group showing a natural scene in the mountains about Denver and it was a labor of love by men who knew and understood nature, unaffected by man. This was a dream world recreated in plaster and plastics which impressed me with a kind of nostalgia for America before the white man.

There was a touch of Walt Disney about it which must appeal to all of us. This was one of the best examples of modern installation technique one can see anywhere and yet we all realize this can hardly compete today with a film like "The Living Desert." How can static exhibitions compete with all the other astonishing forms of communication now so familiar to us?

One sign of a changing direction and function of such museums is their use by people in the community who do things in the museum. All of these natural history museums which I have mentioned above are centers of intellectual life. They not only maintain lectures, nature clubs, films, and other means of instruction, but active research programs which take people from all walks of life into the field to experiment and to understand on their own account. They are institutions to which people automatically turn for information. Only people who work in museums realize how much the general public relies on such institutions to answer their questions about the nature of the world and man. This is a function you cannot measure with statistics and yet it may be their most important function in the future.

One sign of the changing philosophy behind natural history museums is the change in the kind of publications which the most active of these institutions produce. The sober, scientific monographs which are the basis of all research are still published but there are bright new magazines such as the American Museum's "Natural History" which compete with the slick publications on the newsstands. These are the publications which reach out to the general, interested public and which undoubtedly will become more numerous and more widely circulated if we are actually entering an age of a search for understanding.

HISTORICAL MUSEUMS

A new development in the United States is the recent founding of several open-air historical museums. The idea probably springs from the famed open-air museum in Stockholm known as Skansen. Founded in 1891 this has become one of the most popular museums in the world. There are just over a million people in Stockholm today, but each year Skansen entertains more than two million persons. Just as the American tourist returns from Sweden impressed by the design for living which these northern people have created for themselves, so he returns with a sense that Skansen represents the essence of Swedish folk culture. The basic idea, of course, is the gathering together of authentic Swedish rural houses in a parklike area to represent in these houses the essential way of Swedish rural life. But as one wanders around this charming setting one must ask what is actually the exciting idea here that attracts so many Swedish and foreign visitors? Certainly one



Colonial Williamsburg recreates early American folk culture and like all the open-air museums gives the individual a sense of participation in history. The recent popularity of this kind of folk-historical museum both in Europe and America suggests a changing philosophy at mid-century. Above: A concert in the Governor's Palace.



Chowning's Tavern, Williamsburg, Virginia.

The Stocks, Public Gaol, Williamsburg, Virginia.





This reconstruction of a Viking house in Denmark is the kind of on-the-site museum which is established after many archaeological excavations.

Skansen in Stockholm, the most famous of the open-air historical museums, is the heart of Swedish folk-culture. It entertains each year twice as many people as there are in Stockholm. Illustrations show a wedding at the church of Seglora.



important factor is that things work. You can see a Nineteenth Century tannery in operation, an Eighteenth Century goldsmith workshop, or that of a glass blower, or a pottery manufacturer. This adds a certain living quality to the village and to the un-lived-in rooms. But more than that, there are good restaurants, concerts, theatres, special exhibitions, dances, and above all, Skansen has become a public meeting place for Swedish jubilees, celebrations, and other national festivals.

Quite suddenly in the United States, during the past few years, this idea has caught on. Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, founded and financed by Mr. Rockefeller, has become a kind of national shrine like Mt. Vernon but, in addition, it is a living colonial village. For touring Americans it has become another Niagara Falls. Nearly 300,000 people visit Williamsburg each year, not only to wander through the beautifully furnished and restored colonial buildings, but to stay at the Tavern and the Inn built to harmonize with the colonial style, or to be served in a Tavern by waiters in colonial costume. The shops of Williamsburg are undoubtedly affecting the design of contemporary household furnishings. The Director, Mr. Humelsine, tells me he does not like to hear Williamsburg called a museum. Perhaps this in itself reflects the undertones in the name which still remain with us—a stuffy, dead place which is still a stereotype in people's minds. I can sympathize with him, but as a Director of a museum, I would insist upon including this in my survey of the museum world. It may come as no surprise to recent visitors that Williamsburg has become a big business. It does not support itself and relies upon Mr. Rockefeller's endowment, but the income from all its activities amounts to a very impressive figure and in itself reflects the enthusiasm of the American people for this recovery of American folk culture.

Similar open-air museums have been developed in Cooperstown, New York, Old Sturbridge in Massachusetts, in Copenhagen and in Sherbourne, Vermont. It is probably a safe assumption that the idea is spreading rapidly around the western world and that many more open-air museums of this kind will be established in the next decade.

Very closely related to this idea is the restoration at ancient archaeological sites of houses or other structures such as the Viking houses at ancient sites in Denmark or the guest house, constructed in Minoan style at Phaistos in Crete. There is something fundamentally exciting to all people when they can actually walk inside of an ancient structure and, in a sense, identify themselves with their own ancient ancestors. I have the impression that the western world is increasingly enthusiastic about recovering its own folk

culture. This in itself may reflect one facet in the changing philosophy of our times. Perhaps the uncertainty of our own generation and a certain skepticism about the Twentieth Century, with its philosophy of progress and its age of the machine, create a new nostalgia for the calmness and the certainty of the past. But also this is an age of emotional nationalism, and however we may applaud the theory of the United Nations, each individual nation now grasps to itself its own heritage. We archaeologists who attempt to work in many countries of the world realize perhaps more than anyone else the intensity of national feeling about national antiquities and national heritage. Somehow, the Skansen idea of recovering the folk culture which is now picked up with such enthusiasm by the rest of the western world seems to me to point to important philosophic changes now taking place.

There is probably no major city anywhere in the western world which does not have some sort of historical collection or an extensive historical museum, but it is very difficult to disentangle historical museums from art museums. The historical museum in Bern for example is essentially both. Similarly, the Northern Museum of Stockholm or even the National Museum of Copenhagen has an essentially national or folk-historical importance. Very often, recovery of folk culture in a city or a state is the essential impetus in the founding of their combined historical and fine arts museums.

Very closely related in my mind is the London Museum which, since 1941 and its establishment in part at Kensington Palace, has become a museum of the history of London. Installed according to the modern theories of museography, this attempts to give the casual visitor a panorama of London life from the earliest times up to the present. There are, of course, innumerable examples of this kind of thing all over the western world, but so many of them have gone to sleep. There are literally thousands of small forgotten historical museums sleeping away the years in provincial towns of Italy, France, England, Spain, and the United States. The interesting thing at the moment is that so many of these forgotten monuments to the past are suddenly being revived, refurbished, and reawakened.

Any comments on historical museums must, I think, include some reference to whole towns or cities which have become museums in themselves. Revisiting Bruges in 1954, I was struck by the feeling that the whole ancient part of the city had become in effect a national museum. Even modern museum exhibition technique is being utilized in flood lighting ancient houses, bridges, or palaces. Tens of thousands of tourists visit Bruges just as they visit Skansen or Williamsburg and ancient Bruges has also become big business. The same can be said, of course, of Carcassone in France and to

a certain extent of many rural villages in England, France, or Italy which are going concerns as normal living towns and yet are swamped by the tourists who visit them just as they would visit a museum or park. Often one must sympathize with the villagers who are caught up in the western world's growing enthusiasm for historical monuments.

There are times when an American wandering around in the cities of Europe comes to feel that a kind of creeping paralysis is spreading over the older sections of the cities. Steadily more and more public buildings, palaces, private homes, and estates are being set aside as historical monuments. There is a kind of echoing emptiness in the thousands upon thousands of European buildings now maintained by the State, and a certain sadness in the fact that these buildings no longer house large and active families, old men and shouting children, great staffs of servants, law makers, state officials or armed guards. Perhaps the whole idea of preservation has been allowed to go too far. It may be that these relics of the past should either be living towns of the past like Williamsburg, or returned to active use as public buildings. At the moment, however, this is obviously out of the question. The tendency now in force to preserve, restore, and set aside will undoubtedly continue for some time to come.

UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS

All of the university museums in the United States may be considered, in one sense, offspring of the University Museums in Oxford and Cambridge which were founded early in the Nineteenth Century. They were the result of a theory about teaching in universities. Natural sciences, such as geology, palaeontology, archaeology, and ethnology were, in the Nineteenth Century, taught by utilizing scientific collections of all kinds. The university museums were conceived to be laboratories for instruction in the natural sciences. This theory, of course, is still with us and all university museums are used to a certain extent by the students of the university with which they are connected. However it seems to me that the philosophy of teaching these subjects has shifted away from collections of objects to the library and the field. This shift in the theories of teaching is reflected in most of the university museums by their preoccupation at the moment with justifying their operating budgets to university administrations.

Visiting university museums in the United States such as those at Harvard, Michigan, and Yale, I have felt that there is something fundamentally wrong with our current conception of a university museum. It seems to me the clue, as well as the solution, to this difficulty can best be found in Oxford

and Cambridge. Over the years the Fitzwilliam Museum of Art at Cambridge has become as much a Museum for the public as a Museum for the students at Cambridge. The administration there now even receives complaints from individuals of Cambridge who assume that the Museum is in some way financed by the public. Although financed exclusively through the University and some private sources, it operates very much like any public city museum of art in Europe or America. Likewise the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, which is now in an obscure location on the campus and which has been beautifully organized for the instruction of students in archaeology and ethnology, is now laying plans for a large new museum building, located in a position more accessible to the public and directed toward the public of Cambridge as well as the student body. There can be little doubt that the history of these museums reflects a changing philosophy in regard to teaching practices and also a changing philosophy as to the use of university museums by the general public. We ourselves at the University Museum in Philadelphia have been moving in the same direction. Even though all these museums are still utilized by students, it is unreasonable to suppose that we can operate in the future on annual budgets of one hundred thousand to five hundred thousand dollars as laboratories of instruction for, at most, a few score graduate students.

To the public at large it may seem a curious fact that most university museums, both in the United States and in Europe, expend a considerable sum each year out of general university funds for the education of public school children. This practice in itself reflects a changing philosophy which is clearly out of gear with the realities of finance and management. It also indicates the direction in which university museums, at least in the United States, are moving. Like privately endowed art museums, historical museums, and so forth, these will also turn more and more to public financial support, altering their objectives, their management and their ideas accordingly.

A somewhat unique situation in connection with university museums exists in Basel, Switzerland. There all seven of the city museums are loosely managed through the University of Basel and yet most, if not all, of the operating costs of these museums are actually provided by the City. Basel impressed me as a city with an unusual sense of responsibility for its institutions of learning.

Most universities, both in Europe and in America, have some sort of museum on the campus, but extensive internationally famed university museums, such as the Ashmolean at Oxford, are not common. In general, such museums are the result of large private gifts to the university and, until

recently, they have been maintained by private funds. There is a growing idea that university museums offer an ideal means of understanding between town and gown. The public, more eager than ever to understand the specialized research or specialized learning in universities, may find in the university museum the kind of interpretation which it seeks. Perhaps this will become the most important function of such museums.

MUSEUMS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

There is no greater contrast both in theory and practice among archaeological museums than that between the Archaeological Museum of Florence and the National Roman Museum which is associated with the Baths of Diocletian. In Florence the student of archaeology is in his element. Systematic organization of objects, chronologically and culturally, can hardly leave anything to be desired. With persistence and rugged determination, anyone could find there a very good education in Italian antiquities. Even the specialist must find surprises. It is a scholar's museum with, to judge from the relatively rare visitors, little excitement for the average person. The Roman Museum ("Terme") in contrast, is more like its neighbor the central railroad station of Rome. Obviously the location of this Museum in the center of Rome explains, in part, the crowd. The Director, for example, told me that one of the chief advantages of an admission fee was to exclude some of the less desirable and more destructive persons who drift in from the central square.

But more important is the manner in which antiquities are here presented to the public. Like all active museums of this generation "Terme" has systematically removed a large part of its collections from exhibition. Those things which remain are presented by trained architects and museum people in a strikingly beautiful setting—for me, one of the very best exhibition techniques seen anywhere. People from all over the world are now talking about "Terme" and even the Romans are rediscovering it. It is a dramatic guide to what exhibition technique, point of view, and theory of museum presentation can do. It also demonstrates the pleasure which the lay person can find in antiquities which are placed before him as works of art.

Anyone visiting the museums of Italy in the last two or three years will recognize the amount of thought, money and care which is now going into these institutions. The Museum at Nemi, for example, has just been rebuilt in the modern manner in an attempt to recover something of the famous pleasure boat at Nemi which was burned during the war, but this is only one example of a great many remodelings, rebuildings, and general face-



The National Archaeological Museum (Terme) in Rome has been remodeled by architects and archaeologists. It is the most dramatic exhibition of archaeology which I have seen and it has revived a world-wide interest in this kind of museum. Mosaics are in some cases covered by water, as originally intended, so that colors are vivid. There are few objects, beautifully lighted, and quiet colors which enhance the beauty of sculpture.



lifting going on among the archaeological museums and monuments of Italy. The practical considerations of the tourist trade probably account for some of this, but it is also reasonable to suppose that, as in France, there is a new and vital interest in national art treasures and antiquities.

The more I have seen of museums in general, the more difficult it has become to make any reasonable classification. The Ashmolean, the British Museum, the Louvre, the National Museum of Antiquities in Stockholm, and a great many art museums are, in a large measure, museums of archaeology. Many of the national museums are a combination of archaeology, history, folk art, and fine arts. Others, such as our own University Museum, are museums of both archaeology and ethnology. Nevertheless one must recognize a distinctive type of museum which ranges all the way from the minute repository of excavated objects at a specific archaeological site (on-the-site museums which must number many hundreds) to the vast collections from most of the countries in the world such as one finds in the British Museum.

On the whole it is clear that archaeological museums at present do not appeal to the public at large to the same extent as museums of science, art, and folk history. Yet art objects of the ancient past are included in most of the great art museums and, when presented as they are at the "Terme" in Rome or in some of the recently remodeled galleries of the Louvre, they can strike the imagination of the public as much or more than any other kind of exhibition. Perhaps most of the archaeological museums have been too conscious of their educational function and too little conscious of the need first to fire the imagination before attempting to instruct. I should say that no one has been more successful at this than the Museum of Modern Art in New York with its temporary exhibitions of ancient and primitive art. The public reaction to such exhibitions should convince the archaeologist and the antiquarian of his vulnerability to that familiar criticism that he too often smothers an exciting story with many facts, many objects, and much scholarly specialization.

MUSEUMS OF ETHNOGRAPHY

Most of the western nations began collecting the exotic paraphernalia of the native or primitive people during the period of discovery in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, but such collections did not find their way into great public museums until the Nineteenth Century. Today, a great many museums of all kinds, such as natural history museums, national museums, and museums of antiquities contain enormous collections of the



The National Museum, Copenhagen, remodeled its ethnographic collections in 1938. Some of their groups remain very good examples of a style of ethnographic exhibition which it is difficult to improve upon. The U. S. National Museum has just now, in 1955, opened its remodeled exhibits of the same type.



clothing, weapons, implements, and religious paraphernalia of native people, particularly of those in the Pacific, Africa, the Americas, and southeast Asia. There are relatively few museums, however, which are specifically museums of ethnography. Those which immediately come to mind are the ethnographic museums in Leiden, in Hamburg, and in Tervuren, although this latter also contains much of the natural history of the Congo. In America, some of the most important ethnographic collections are in university museums such as Peabody, Harvard, in the American Museum in New York, and the University Museum in Philadelphia, but there is, to my knowledge, no specific ethnographic museum in the United States such as that at Hamburg, Germany. It may be too late to establish such a museum in this country but it seems to me that some combination of many scattered collections of ethnography in the United States, presented with modern techniques of exhibition and with our present knowledge of primitive cultures around the world, could result in a very popular, exciting, and significant museum. Material is certainly available. It requires only the idea and the energy to utilize techniques and knowledge available to us. One need only visit the recently remodeled museum in Leiden to recognize the importance and the attraction of a modern ethnographic museum.

VARIOUS MUSEUMS

There are a great many museums in the west which have as their objective the accumulation of knowledge and of objects having to do with a very particular subject or activity. The Whaling Museum at New Bedford is a good example of this in the United States. Another is the Corning Glass Museum which not only includes exhaustive literature on glass manufacture, but extensive exhibitions and a research program having to do with the subject of glass. Quite recently maritime museums such as that in Paris, have been established in various cities. There are also transportation museums, medical museums, and innumerable small museums demonstrating the development of industries or techniques. Such institutions reflect our current enthusiasm for specialization, but they may often attract very considerable public interest because of their ability to work out one activity in great detail. Also such museums can be very useful in research—research which can have practical application in industry or invention.

EXHIBITIONS

There is one theory about museum exhibition upon which everyone now agrees: That it is essential to limit the number of objects in any one exhibition gallery. One must remember that our major museums were installed



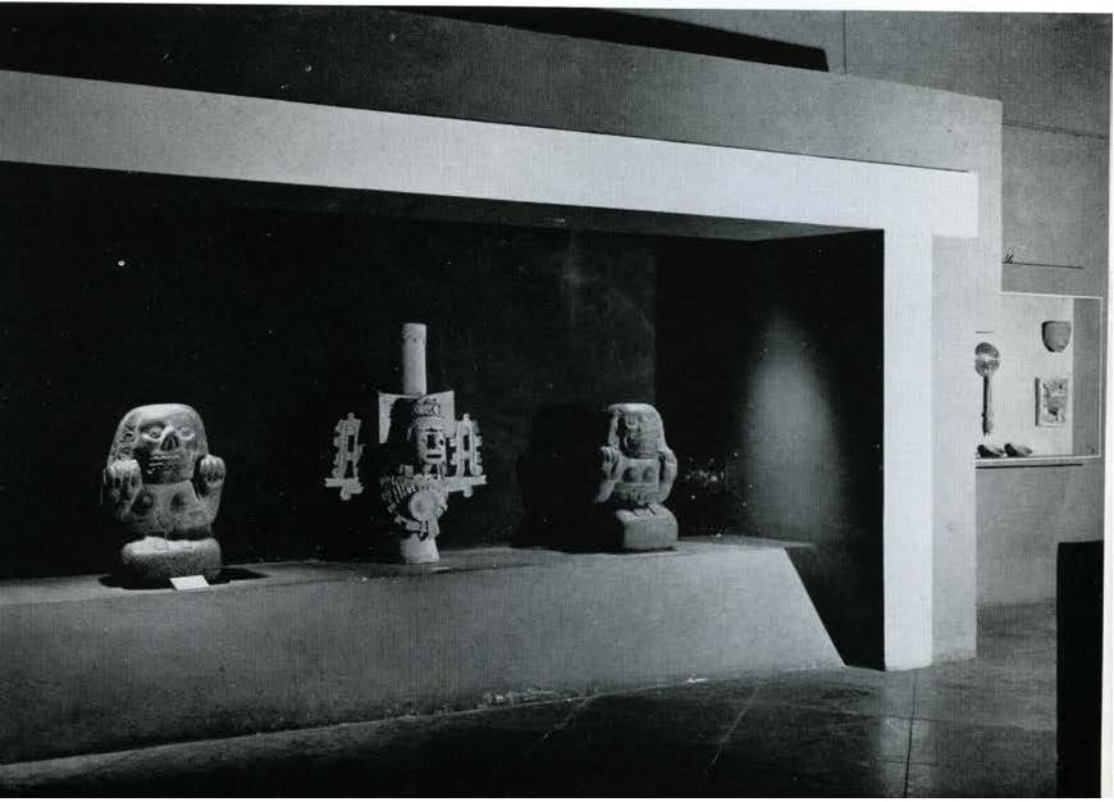
The Victoria and Albert Museum in London is for me a kind of symbol of the great public museums in Europe and America because it was established in the Victorian age for the public and at least in part to improve public taste and the design of utilitarian objects. It too is now undergoing a face-lifting. Moreover it has an active public relations department which takes a new look at the purposes and objectives of this kind of museum in the changing character of London.

The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, like many museums of Modern Art, plays an important role in design and in contemporary public taste. This recently designed gallery is a good example of the best in American design for utilitarian objects, and of exhibition technique as well.



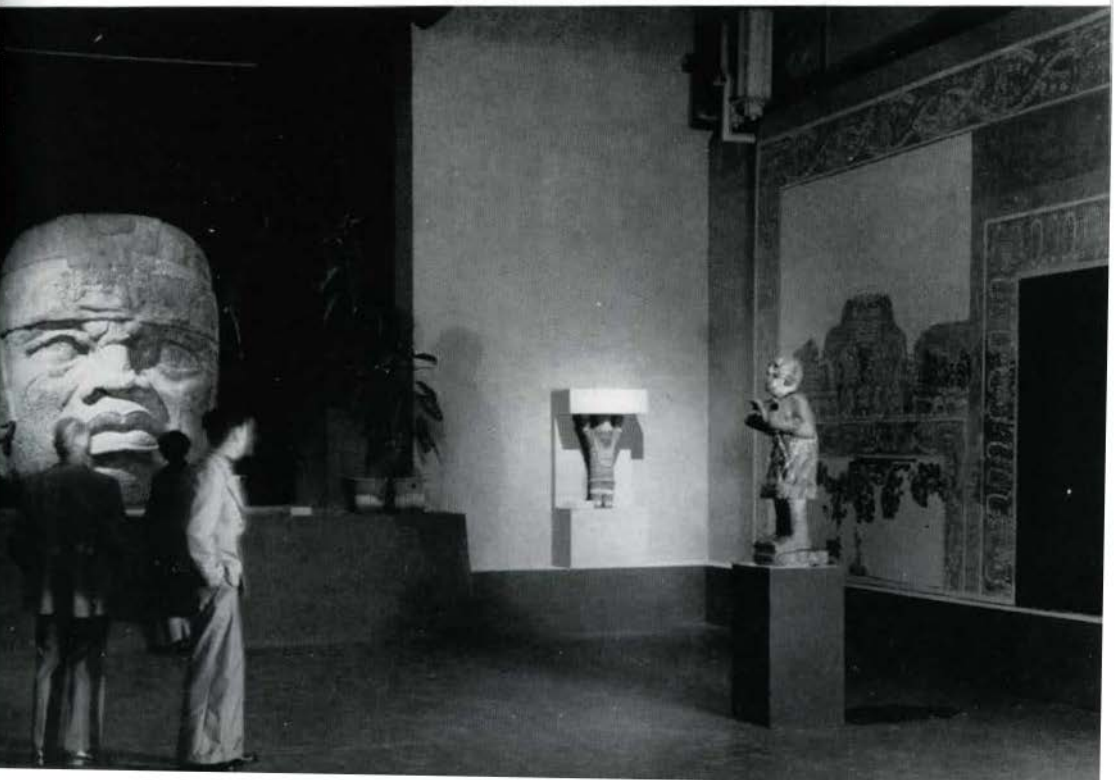


The National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City was one of the first of the American Museums to introduce modern exhibition techniques now widely utilized in museums everywhere. This Pacific gallery was completed in 1955. All of us are now attempting to avoid glass cases wherever possible and the open exhibition of Mexican objects (*below*) is one technique.





The Belles Arte Museum in Mexico City, last year produced a dramatic exhibition of the national arts of all periods. Color and light with good professional design and a limited number of objects in each gallery have given many thousands of people an idea of what modern exhibition can do for the understanding of man's history. Like all western nations the Mexicans have a new enthusiasm for their own folk culture and this now has a marked effect on the artistic life of the country.





One of the rare examples of modern design for museum buildings is Yale's new Art Gallery and Design Center. Movable "pogo-panels" conceived by George Howe make a very flexible exhibit area. Details of design provided for sound-proofing, air conditioning, and flexible lighting equipment.



Boyman's Museum of Art in Rotterdam, one of the very few museums recently constructed in the western nations, is the essence of modern tradition in design and exhibition. This is an age of remodeling rather than new construction of museums and many museum directors envy the one who has the opportunity to start from scratch with an entirely new building designed for the modern museum.





Stockholm's State Historical Museum has an ultra-modern installation which pleases everyone. A combination of good designs, unique collections, and national history make this one of the most popular museums in Scandinavia. Above: The Goldsmith's Gallery.

under the influence of the Victorian age. There is no better proof of the world-wide change of opinion about exhibitions than the remodeling of the Victoria and Albert Museum itself, where current installation is based upon a great reduction in the number of things actually shown. During the war when the Metropolitan Museum removed some of its finest treasures for security reasons, it was observed that the remaining objects, even though inferior in quality, attracted more attention than the original complete exhibitions. One of the effigy pots from South America which had been on exhibition in the University Museum in a case with many other vessels for at least twenty-five years suddenly appeared in illustrations in current news magazines when it was removed to a special exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art and shown separately as an individual work of art.

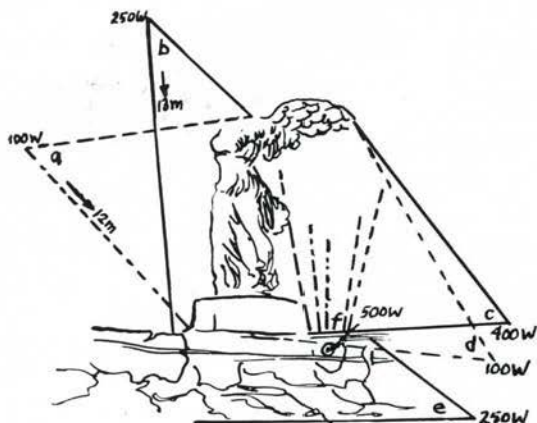
This current style of exhibiting fewer objects goes hand in hand with the general overhaul of museum exhibitions in all of the countries which I visited. Such remodeling varies all the way from a \$10,000,000 face-lifting job at the Metropolitan to the complete remodeling of the Archaeology Museum in Seville by its staff of two people at very modest cost. But the philosophy behind this work on museum exhibitions is the same. Ideas



New York's Museum of Modern Art is famed for its original exhibition techniques and for the number of its changing exhibitions each year.

about museum exhibition spread very rapidly throughout the western world. An innovation in Mexico City will quickly be repeated in Chicago, New York or Paris. Effective communication among museum people throughout the west has existed for a long time, but since the establishment of the United Nations and the publication by UNESCO of the journal called "MUSEUM," ideas have found a new and still more effective medium for distribution.

Another theory of exhibition which has received universal acceptance is that light must be used lavishly in galleries of all kinds. However it is a rather curious fact that artificial light is more popular in North America and Mexico while natural light is more popular in western Europe. An exception to the rule is the Louvre in Paris where dramatic night lighting has recently been introduced to encourage evening visitors. To an American, European criticism of artificial lighting in the Louvre seems very strange indeed, but when one sees the elaborate arrangements made to light art objects effectively with daylight throughout most of the other museums in Europe, the criticism is understandable. Nevertheless, one visit to the Louvre at night convinced me that the public finds dramatic spotlighting an exciting affair. The changing lights on the Victory of Samathrace are good



Method of spotlighting the *Victory of Samothrace*.

“theatre.” It is quite probable that thousands of people have been sharply aware of her for the first time only since this lighting was installed.

Effective lighting in museums has become a highly specialized skill, often performed by lighting engineers. Moreover, recent inventions of different forms of sealed beam lights, spotlights, stage lighting, and so forth result in a continually changing lighting system. Fluorescent lighting is popular because it is cheaper and cooler but, it seems to me, it has a very unhappy effect upon the visitors who in this pitiless glare appear a sad and sickly lot. Varying colors of fluorescent light now being installed are an improvement. Nevertheless, the warm glow of incandescent light remains a more attractive medium for most kinds of exhibition.

Europeans and Americans apparently do not agree upon use of color in exhibitions. During the last few years most museums in Mexico and North America have introduced a great variety of colors into backgrounds of cases and on the walls of galleries. You often hear in America that light and color are the bases of modern exhibition technique. But in several countries in Europe, particularly Holland and Belgium, the current enthusiasm is for light greys and off-whites such as those in the Boyman’s Museum at Rotterdam. Certainly many Americans agree with this. I have noted with interest that the Brooklyn Museum remodeled its Egyptian galleries with this same light background. Probably one of the first places in America to use very bright colors in exhibition was the National Museum in Mexico and I suppose that Miguel Covarrubias had much to do with this. For many of

us the colors now used in museum exhibitions have become rather overpowering and there is a new pleasure in the off-white and grey galleries, but there can be little doubt that dramatic lighting and bright colors have helped to revive the public's interest in museums. This trend was at least a happy contrast to the old museum buff seen in the dull grey light filtered through smoke covered windows.

The very attractive exhibitions of the National Archaeology Museum in Rome are a product of skilled architects, working in collaboration with museum people. Similar collaboration has been carried out in the Walker Art Center at Minneapolis and many other museums both in America and in Europe, but there are often difficulties in this kind of collaboration. Professional museum people tend to be more concerned about meaning, relationship, and instruction than the architectural designer and disagreement on the ultimate objective of exhibitions is inevitable. However as all museum people know, disagreement on the details of exhibition technique is the rule in any case. I think most of us would agree that the contemporary museum badly needs the assistance of skilled designers. Some compromise is inevitable and perhaps out of this will come future exhibitions which can compete with all the other means of communication in this modern world.

I have the impression that museums everywhere are experimenting with exhibition techniques and that no one is quite happy with what we are now producing. One difficulty most certainly is competition in the whole field of communications. It is something of a jolt to remember that the basic idea of museum exhibition was established prior to the cinema, the radio, the television, the mass publication of illustrated periodicals, and the mass production of books. The babble of communication in the western world must have its effect upon the future museum and I do not think that any of us fully comprehend the changes which modern techniques of communication eventually will bring about. The advantage of the museum lies in reality and authenticity. Here are the original objects representing man's heritage. Whatever changes may take place in exhibition technique to meet our competition with contemporary electronic communications, reality and originality should remain, I think, our great assets. All of us in museums know that people want to see, feel, know, and utilize the real and the original thing. They also want to participate in the intellectual life of the museum. This knowledge should be our guide in the inevitable changes which we make.

Visiting scores of museums in a few months' period, I felt a certain discouragement in that I could rarely find any technique or style of exhibition

which was strikingly original. Perhaps there is a limit to what you can do given the basic idea and philosophy of the museum. Also, given our present rapid system of communications in the west, one exhibition is hardly completed before other museums are already borrowing elements. My overall impression is that museum exhibition is in rapid change within certain well accepted limits. It reminds me somewhat of the production and styling of American automobiles and is, perhaps, the natural result of the kind of world we live in.

There is also a kind of paradox facing museums of all types. In an age of universal education and of great faith in the results of educating the masses, there is a compelling necessity to educate on a simplified basis in museum exhibitions. This tendency reached its maximum in Russia after the First World War, when museums were used systematically to educate the half-literate peasant. Inevitably, education on this simplified level conflicts with artistry. With us the conflict in objective is, perhaps, most noticeable in university or other school museums; it is less apparent in the museums of science and natural history and in the art museums. Museums of natural history and science very early accepted education as one of their primary functions, while art museums have never been willing to sacrifice artistry in favor of serious education. Nevertheless, museums of science and natural history are now, much more than before, concerned with good design, pleasing exhibitions and a certain dramatic quality, while art museums at least tend in the direction of instruction and education.

This desire to utilize museums as educational institutions for the general public has also been responsible, I suppose, for the large traveling exhibitions, the loan collections in schools and the mobile museums, such as those developed by the Art Museum in Richmond, Virginia. These, in effect, take exhibitions out of their normal setting to the people wherever they may be. Something similar is the exhibition of museum objects in banks, stores, and other public buildings such as is now seen to a surprising extent in Philadelphia. Recently, at least in America and in England, museum exhibitions have been taken to the public through television broadcasts in a way which would have been inconceivable only a few years ago. With color television, this method should expand enormously. What effect this will have upon exhibitions within the museums themselves is anybody's guess.

EDUCATION

The UNESCO International Seminar on the role of museums in education, held at the Brooklyn Museum in 1952, most clearly demonstrates a world-wide interest in one function of the contemporary museum. This was

an exhaustive discussion of current educational techniques in museums in which many of us contributed our statements of what we were now doing and what we hoped to do in the future. Much of these discussions has been summarized in an international journal called "MUSEUM." Following up these discussions with this cursory examination of museums of Europe and America, I have the strong impression that one of the major results of that conference will be the establishment of specific educational departments in many more European museums, similar to those already widely developed in America.

In almost all countries of the world school children visit museums in guided tours as school classes, but in America this kind of activity, along with many other activities, is grouped under the heading of education and tends to be managed and directed by a specific department of education. In Europe, the visits of school children to museums have been taken more or less for granted. I would surmise that there is some cultural difference here in our attitudes toward learning in general. American faith in the results of education as a kind of panacea for all of our difficulties tends toward a more thorough organization of educational facilities and a continuing pressure to utilize museums more and more for the public welfare. This kind of faith in education, of course, has become extremely important in Soviet Russia where education, since the revolution, has become a kind of holy crusade. It would seem to me that many of the western European countries are more relaxed in their attitude toward these matters. Nevertheless, I found several European museums in 1954 preparing to install the kind of education department so characteristic of American museums.

The general accepted theory behind the educational seminar in the Brooklyn Museum, however, leaves me with some misgivings. Education in America at least appears to have become a kind of practical means to an end. In most people's minds it is a formalized affair resulting in credits, degrees or other recognition which in many respects determines the economic level or the social position of the individual. This is most pronounced among teachers themselves. You must achieve certain degrees or credits in order to move upward in the teaching profession, but it applies also in business and the professions. Hence, education to many of us in America has a very practical function. There are kinds of instruction in many museums which are like that in the schools or colleges. University museums, for example, are used as laboratories and centers of instruction like other university buildings. Art museums in many cases have serious schools of fine arts. Science museums may be used as a direct teaching branch for the



Children's parties, games, and craft classes have become a welcome relief to guided school tours. This is a Metropolitan Museum party for children of members at the Cloisters. Like me, these youngsters will always associate armor and the medieval world with the Metropolitan.



Like other great public museums in America the Philadelphia Museum of Art has large classes for children and adults alike. This is part of the current trend toward individual participation in the things of the museum.

school system. But much of what is discussed as education in museums is really a personal intellectual experience or intellectual entertainment, both for children and for adults. I should like to distinguish between these two points of view as it affects the work of museums and the individuals who make use of them.

It seems to me a mistake to consider museums an integral part of the formalized system of education. Classes of school children should be welcomed and assisted in their visits to all kinds of museums, but I should say that our primary function is to strike the imagination of individuals of all ages so that the museum becomes a personal experience not associated in people's minds with the practical advantages of formal education.

Today, with greater economic security, more leisure time, the disappearing local community with its social cohesion, and a wider diffusion of knowledge among the people as a whole, there is a very great need for institutions like the museum where the individual can experience the pleasure of learning for its own sake. This of course poses a dilemma to the museums. In the social democracy of the western nations the importance of institutions tends to be determined by the number of people who participate in them. Hence, success of individual museums is normally determined by the annual attendance figures. This means that almost all promote the attendance of very large school classes and the most familiar group in many American museums is the long procession of a class of grade school children, led by a public school teacher or a museum docent. I know that many museum people philosophically revolt against this kind of production-line museum education and are now attempting all manner of experiments to release the student from the strait jacket of his class. There are now clubs, games, parties, work groups, films, concerts, and all manner of activities attempting to break the rigidity of a school class. This is a hopeful sign for the individual, but being realistic about it, one must admit the great majority of school children will continue to see museums in queues. At the moment we can only hope that those with intelligence and an active curiosity will return to discover the museum on their own.

Our current attitudes toward education are probably also responsible for the current concern about proper training of curator-educators or museum teachers. We have great faith in experts and specialists and so, when we face the problem of properly utilizing museums today, we almost unconsciously seek to find or train an expert to handle the problem. Toward this attitude, I also have misgivings. It seems to me there is a place in museums for all kinds of people who have the interest, the intelligence, and the enthusiasm

for knowledge about the nature of man and the world. In this rapid survey of museums I found museum personnel like men of good will in any other walk of life, only distinguished by their interest in the things of the museum. To me, the willingness and the interest is more important than the expert training, granted of course that certain skills and learning are required for some specialized tasks. It is very easy to find an expert; much more difficult to find the person who can fire the imagination.

Currently, one of the most successful developments in art museums, both in America and in Europe, is the arrangement for instruction in the arts and crafts available to everyone, regardless of skill. It is fascinating to watch the enthusiasm of the average person, given the facilities and the means to express himself in the arts and crafts. This is individual participation at its best. Something similar now occurs in many of the science museums where children or adults can work in shops to create models, machines, and experiments. Thus, for example, the science fair of the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia which gives a marvelous opportunity to the children with a mechanical or scientific bent.

These are some of the happier developments in the field of museum education in its broadest sense, and they point the way toward a much greater use of museums by the individual. In a similar way, the natural history museums reach the individual through their nature groups for young and old alike. It is a curious fact that modern communication technique tends to make spectators rather than performers of all of us. With films, television, radio, and so forth, both sports and intellectual activities become passive rather than active and individual. Perhaps the success of many of these particular activities now being introduced into museums indicates a growing revolt against the passive life in an age of fantastic electronics.

I think most of us in the museum world would be happier if we could see more children's holiday carnivals like those of the Museum of Modern Art in New York or more museum games such as Eleanor Moore introduced at the University Museum some years ago.

ADMINISTRATION

Management is today almost as much of a concern to museums as it is to industry and, as anyone might guess, the prevailing ideas about management are not very different. In America, management experts are called in to make their surveys of museums just as they are for industry. But, the results and the recommendations are sometimes surprising. In a recent survey of this kind at the University Museum, the personal recommenda-

tion of the expert, an accountant, was that greater efficiency could be achieved by exhibiting many more objects in each gallery. It was very difficult to explain that all museums, for at least twenty years, have been systematically *reducing* the number of objects in each gallery in order to meet the demands of changing public taste. Another recommendation was to reduce professional personnel and add a business manager. At least one large museum in America has discovered after two years that it can not afford the efficiency which experts installed after their survey.

A generation ago it was generally agreed that a museum should be directed by a renowned scholar. Today, there are some who believe that a large museum is much too complex for any one scholar to handle and perhaps even too complex for any one person to manage. And as in industry, the board of governors searches for that paragon who is a diplomat, an executive, and a learned man of great stature. This is a measure of the change in ideas about the functions of a museum but also, it seems to me, of the current confusion about the nature of a museum, confusion which is not unnatural in a period of great change. Since there is at present an abnormal confidence in the expert and since no one is quite sure what the museum of tomorrow will be, we search for the expert in all things to manage it. Among the working personnel of museums there is apparently more general agreement about management. There must be highly specialized experts in the departments, but a scholar with extremely broad interests and abilities at the top—a scholar who is also very good at raising money. This opinion applies in Europe, where funds are obtained almost exclusively from government, as well as in America where considerable funds are still supplied by private gift.

Actually, the men who manage museums, both in America and in Europe, seem to me to be a good cross-section of the more capable executive-professional group, not unlike those in industry or government, and distinguished only by their enthusiasm for the arts and sciences which overrides any desire to make money. Certainly they are not the stereotype of the museum director and curator which survives in the mind of most people from the late Nineteenth Century. That stereotype is as much out of date as the cartoon of the museum gallery with its dinosaurs and stuffed birds.

In many countries museums are essentially national institutions under the authority of the Minister of Education and as such function as part of the normal governmental system. This is in sharp contrast to the American scene where the majority are at least semi-independent of government and much more dependent upon individual financial aid and upon private boards

of trustees. Because of this difference, I had expected to find different points of view about the function of the Museum. But if there is a significant divergence of opinion, I have failed to find it. Even in France, where the post-war reorganization of all the national museums, metropolitan and provincial, has been carried out on a thoroughly planned and nation-wide basis at very considerable expense to the national government, objectives are much the same as in America. Moreover these museums appear to have as much individual freedom of action as the American institutions.

Ultimately what museums do and what they attempt depends upon the kind of people who man them. I have been struck by the fact that these people are much the same in all the western nations. National frontiers really mean very little in the museum world.

FINANCE

One trend in the financial affairs of American museums is very clear. Public funds are replacing private gifts as the principal support for maintenance costs. These funds may be supplied by the city, the state, or the nation and in this trend the American museums are approaching conditions which have prevailed in Europe for many years. A familiar explanation of this transition is that the "tax structure" during the past twenty years works against the accumulation of large fortunes and, hence, few people are in a position to make substantial gifts to institutions like the museums as was the custom during the first two decades of this century.

In numerous conversations about museum finance, however, it struck me that this is only a partial explanation. One harassed museum director observed that he would have no difficulty at all in raising substantial private funds for a museum for crippled children, but his museum for just normal children was giving him all kinds of trouble. Perhaps this is a cryptic way of explaining a significant shift in the direction of private philanthropy during the last two decades. Medical research, mental health, juvenile delinquency, health foundations, and such related activities must certainly appeal more strongly to the emotions and to the prevailing philosophy of our times than institutions of culture and learning. The social conscience must be more active in 1955 than in 1900. This is not an age for the founding of universities and museums. It is rather an age in which many of us are engaged in trying to find ways to keep alive those which were founded in the last century.

Fortunately the American public in general now appears to accept the idea that museums, like schools or public parks, are at least in part a public responsibility. No one watching the rising attendance records at museums

all over the country, can doubt that public interest in museums is rising, even though there are fewer large private grants now available to maintain them. Perhaps this is only another reflection of the current trend in the western world toward democratic socialism with its inevitable concentration of responsibility in government rather than in the hands of private individuals.

I know of no major museums in Europe which are maintained exclusively by private funds. There are now very few in America. Many Europeans as well as Americans undoubtedly regret the shift from private to public responsibility with all its political implications, and many are fearful of the effect upon the individual freedom of the institutions. But it is a fact that I have found no one in charge of a museum financed largely by public funds who does not stoutly maintain his freedom from interference by public officials. In America, at least, the very strong feeling against any control or limitations of the freedom of thought which we all associate with museums and schools, apparently discourages any significant interference with the management of museums by state or city administrations.

Proportionately there is undoubtedly much more public investment in museums in Europe than in America. There are many more of them for one thing, but in most European countries there is very great national or city pride in the museums and monuments which compels a high level of public finance. Also in many cities there is a very practical necessity for the investment because of the tourist trade. Nevertheless, as an American, I have been astonished at the amount of tax money now going into the rehabilitation and remodeling of museums in such countries as France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Italy. I do not believe it is only a matter of the tourist trade. It must go much deeper in the public consciousness of what they want in their nation or city, in the general public interest, and in the philosophy of the intellectual leadership. It seems to me there are now signs of the same thing in some American cities.

In America at the moment there is much discussion about the advisability of charging admission to museums. Admission charges are very general in Europe, fairly rare in America, but there is no agreement about this on either side. Charts kept at the Museum of Man in Paris show clearly that attendance there since the war has risen steadily with a rising admission fee, and interestingly enough, appears to jump up with each rise in the fee. Georges Salle, the Director of the National Museums of France, would much prefer, however, to see French museums free of charge like the public parks. In Rome one museum director told me that the per person fees were so small that they were not worthwhile except to discourage some of the undesirable attendance.

In New York the Museum of Modern Art obtains a large part of its operating costs from admission fees at the entrance, but in Chicago the Director of the Museum of Science believes that more funds can be obtained by small charges for individual exhibits and services supplied by the museum. Currently many museums in America are introducing a system of temporary exhibitions in special galleries to which there is a special charge. Charges may also be made for films, lectures, concerts, and other special affairs.

Museum membership dues are a very significant source of income in many American museums and I have noted that several European museums are now introducing this arrangement for the first time, perhaps as a result of the recent UNESCO conference on museums. A large museum membership today probably depends upon the number of social, cultural, or educational activities the museum provides and upon a systematic campaign for members.

Some museums, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, were founded originally to encourage and improve the designs of industrial products, and others, like the Brooklyn Museum, have done much to aid industrial designers in recent years. It is reasonable to suppose that they should provide a significant financial income from industry but so far as I can determine such aid to industry has as yet done little more than support itself. The prospects for this are now perhaps better than before. Industry has, however, been of very great financial assistance in carrying the cost of establishing exhibitions in many of the science museums. Currently many industries install exhibitions for advertising or public relations purposes in the science museums. Some are also using such museums for research projects. It is not unlikely that the museums, like the universities, will turn increasingly to industry for financial aid.

SPECULATIONS

The great public museums of today are a product of the Victorian age—an age with supreme confidence in progress, the scientific method, and the importance of collecting knowledge and material things. To the Victorians we owe our vast collection of art objects, natural history specimens, and historic relics.

Anyone who attempts to study any kind of public institution in the western world in recent years cannot escape an awesome sense of radical change. Museums are in revolt against the Victorian idea which created them. On the surface this is most obvious in the wholesale remodeling of exhibitions, a remodeling which means that great masses of objects (the

Victorian clutter) are removed to storage, leaving streamlined galleries with attention fixed on individual objects or sets. There are no longer long series or systems demonstrating the nice and simple law of order from the simple to the complex. Thought, like a sealed-beam spotlight, is fixed upon the individual object and its meaning in the search for a new kind of understanding. In this respect there is agreement about the "new look" in museums. But the management of museums must look into the future and, with change proceeding at an ever increasing tempo, the future is obscure. We may agree at the moment on a general style of exhibition and yet find it most difficult to find agreement on the basic idea of the museums which will grow out of the present revolt.

After a look at museums in fifteen nations of the west, I have concluded that general public interest in museums increases everywhere; that they have become in recent years a public rather than a private responsibility, financed at least in part with public tax money, and that popularization is the dominant trend in Europe as well as America. There can be no doubt that universal education and the dominating philosophy of social democracy, which places so much faith in mass education, are creating a new kind of institution. I do not know whether the museums themselves have encouraged this trend or whether they have been forced into it, but I suspect it is the latter. Whichever it is, their success is now judged by the numbers of people who visit them. Public or private funds for their support depend upon attendance records. It is probable that those which do not show an increase will not long survive. Practical necessity has turned museums into civic centers for all kinds of activities ranging from nature clubs to popular art festivals organized by the mayor of the city. This revolutionary use of the museum for public and private functions is certainly on the increase and leads some of us to wonder if the exhibitions themselves will not eventually become simply the background rather than the central point of the museum.

Education in its broadest sense is the justification for turning tax funds into the maintenance of art treasures, scientific collections, and historic relics. But I suspect that the people who visit museums are not looking for education in the formal sense, but for intellectual stimulation and entertainment—for ideas and for an answer to the perplexing problems of a society shifting its normal centers of belief.

Static collections of things which were accumulated in another age may no longer satisfy a generation which has discovered startling new methods of communication. Museums must now compete with forms of communication of which the Victorians never dreamed—radio, cinema, television, and



The museum concert is now about standard practice in both Europe and America. It is one of many forms of intellectual entertainment which make the contemporary museum a new kind of institution. Worcester Art Museum also provides cinema for its members and probably because of such activities has developed an unusually large membership relative to the size of the city.

high fidelity recordings. Whether they like it or not they do compete with cinemascope and they will soon compete with color television. There is every reason to believe that the future will see even more startling electronic inventions. If museums are, as I think, one of the best mediums for the communication of ideas about the world we live in, then it would seem inevitable that we shall eventually utilize all available means of communication. To a certain extent this has begun. All of these new techniques are utilized in one way or another but divorced, for all practical purposes, from the static exhibit gallery which still remains, as in the Nineteenth Century, the basic idea of the Museum. It should be possible to combine these techniques with objects and ideas to create a functioning museum. Surely the immediate future will see many experiments in this direction.

In my attempt to discover what is currently happening to the institution of the museum I have been impressed constantly with the way in which it is inextricably bound up with the prevailing ideas and theories of western culture. If there is a revolutionary change in the theory of museums, this only reflects changes in the dominating idea governing the society in which we live. On the surface, what I have been observing is the modification of a Victorian institution to meet the public demands of a mid-Twentieth Century society. In the museums we now accept the pressure toward mass education (with a certain reduction in intellectual standards similar to that in the public schools), the necessity to build up attendance records, the assumption that the maintenance of museums is a responsibility of government, the current idea that museums are to be utilized in some way by the general public as civic centers, and that our concern should be the "average" or the "common" man.

But after studying one educational institution in this mid-Twentieth Century society I have come to suspect that these ideas of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries may be reaching their culmination. Educators, particularly in America, are becoming very much concerned about intellectual leadership in a society which aims at educating everyone—a society which will soon have at least half its college-age youth in the Universities and which must standardize its education on some sort of average to achieve this. Just as many educators are now questioning the ultimate aims of mass-education and seeking some way to develop the exceptional person in our school system, so many of us in the museums are beginning to wonder if attendance records are really the goal. In an age of fantastic scientific and technological discovery and of the specialization which this encourages, intelligent, responsible, people everywhere seek an interpretation and an

over-all understanding of the nature of this new world which the specialized research of the early Twentieth Century has revealed. The alert, intellectually curious people should be able to find in the museums the kind of interpretation of specialized research which answers their urgent questions about this rapidly changing world. They are not the "average man" who is the concern of the museum in this particular period of popularization. It seems to me that the museum, even more than the public school, has an obligation to the exceptional individuals—the intellectual leadership: the obligation to raise its standards of intellectual stimulation and instruction and to attempt the kind of interpretation which these people need. If this is true then the contemporary museum will undergo even more revolutionary changes in the next decade. To effect these changes it will require all of the most modern means of communication, a great deal of thoughtful planning, and the kind of management which is willing to experiment.