REVIEW OF THE YEAR 1965-1966

Report of the President

Each year at this time under the Constitution of the Museum, the President has the pleasure of welcoming the Members of the Corporation to the Annual Meeting and presenting the report of the transactions of the Board of Trustees during the past fiscal year. The report of the Treasurer and the detailed reports of the several departments of the Museum appear on pages 65 and 116.

James J. Rorimer, 1905-1966

It is with regret that we report to the Members of the Corporation the loss of our Director, James J. Rorimer, on May 11, 1966. Mr. Rorimer joined the staff of the Museum upon his graduation from Harvard in 1927, and from then to his untimely death he dedicated himself without stint to the Museum. As Director of The Cloisters he created a world-famous museum of medieval art. During World War II, as a Monuments and Fine Arts officer, he rendered invaluable service to the museums and collectors in countries overrun by the Nazis, being personally responsible for retrieving works of art of untold value. In 1955 he became Director of the entire Museum, and during his directorship exhibition areas were increased by over forty per cent, almost half the galleries were renovated and reinstalled, and the new Junior Museum, the Thomas J. Watson Library, and the service building were erected. Public service and public support are reflected in the fact that attendance and membership virtually doubled. The major additions to the collections by purchase and through gift and bequest would fill pages, but special mention should be made of the Chalice of Antioch, the Campin altarpiece, the Bury St. Edmunds ivory cross, and, of course, Rembrandt’s Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer. He will be long remembered as the model of a museum director.

The Administrative Committee

Pending the election of a new Director, the Board of Trustees has appointed an Administrative Committee to handle the day-to-day responsibilities of the Director’s office. The Committee is composed of Joseph V. Noble, Operating Administrator, Chairman, J. Kenneth Loughry, Treasurer, John Goldsmith Phillips, Curator of Western European Arts, Theodore Rousseau, Curator of European Paintings, and Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., ex officio.
At the September 14, 1965, meeting of the Board, the resignation of John W. Gardner, who had been appointed Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, was received and accepted with regret.

On July 1, 1965, C. Douglas Dillon, having returned to private life after twelve years of distinguished Government service, was restored to his former status as an elective Trustee. His return greatly strengthens the Board.

Francis T. P. Plimpton, formerly Deputy United States Representative to the United Nations, was elected a Trustee on October 18, 1965. We are indeed fortunate, as he brings to the deliberations of the Board a wealth of experience as a diplomat, a lawyer, and as an active participant in numerous educational and philanthropic organizations.

On January 1, 1966, the new City administration took office, and the Museum thereby acquired three new ex officio Trustees: John V. Lindsay as Mayor; Thomas P. F. Hoving, formerly Curator of Medieval Art and The Cloisters, as Commissioner of the Department of Parks; and Mario A. Procaccino as Comptroller.

Last April Alfred Easton Poor, a distinguished architect and architectural advisor, succeeded Edgar I. Williams as an ex officio Trustee by virtue of his election as President of the National Academy of Design.

It is our sad duty to report the death of Walter S. Gifford, on May 7, 1966. Mr. Gifford was elected a Trustee in 1945 and served the Museum with great distinction on
the Executive Committee until his resignation as a Trustee in 1950 on the occasion of his appointment as Ambassador of the United States to the Court of St. James’s. On his return to private life he was re-elected a Trustee in 1954 and rendered faithful service until his death.

**Benefactors**

In appreciation and recognition of their generosity, the Board of Trustees elected the following persons Benefactors during the past year:

- Mrs. Albert Blum
- Mary Griggs Burke
- Helena McCann Charlton
- Leonard A. Cohn
- Marion E. Cohn
- Lewis Einstein
- Edward Fowles
- Harry G. Friedman
- Nathan L. Halpern
- Rosina H. Hoppin
- Adele L. Lehman
- J. Clawson Mills
- Dana R. Pond
- Mrs. Ernest G. Vietor
- Mary Hayward Weir

Their outstanding contributions to the welfare of the Museum and the enrichment of its collections are deeply appreciated by the Trustees and staff.

**Membership and Attendance**

Total membership stands at 23,607, a new all-time high and an increase of 1,261 over last year. Although this increase is gratifying, we continue to need a far broader base of public support. We hope that you will all work with us in our efforts to attract new members.

Greatly expanded public service and continued rising costs of operations finally forced the Board of Trustees to increase the rates of membership contributions for the first time in the history of the Museum. We regret having had to take this action, but we take pride in the fact that we were able to maintain our original rates longer than any other major museum in the country. Effective as of July 1, 1966, the annual contributions of the following classes of membership were increased in the amounts indicated:

- Annual Member from $10 to $15
- Family Member from $15 to $25
- Sustaining Member from $25 to $50

No change was made in the annual contribution of $100 for Fellowship Members.

At the March 8, 1966, meeting, the Board of Trustees unanimously voted to recommend to the Members of the Corporation for action at this meeting amendments to Article I of the Constitution, whereby the amounts of contributions required to qualify persons for election to membership in the corporation would be increased from $50,000 to $100,000 for Benefactor; from $5,000 to $10,000 for Fellow in Perpetuity; and from $1,000 to $2,000 for Fellow for Life.

Attendance at the Main Building for the calendar year 1965 was 4,879,833, and at The Cloisters 1,401,329, a total of 6,281,162. That total is well over the 1964 total of 5,873,678, and exceeds all prior years except 1963, when the temporary exhibition of
the Mona Lisa resulted in an unprecedented attendance of 6,968,673. During the first six months of 1966 we had 2,257,881 visitors at the Main Building and 698,052 at The Cloisters, a total of 2,955,933.

An outstanding event of the past year was the Seventh General Conference of the International Council of Museums (icom, 1965) from September 22 to October 3, 1965. It was the first time that the Council had met in the United States. The Museum was the host institution, and our late Director, who was a Vice President of icom and President of the U.S. National Committee, planned and carried out a varied and extensive program for 598 delegates from fifty-nine countries. For the occasion seventeen recently acquired major works of art were presented in the Room of Recent Accessions, and masterpieces from the print collection were exhibited in the new prints and drawings gallery in the Blumenthal Patio adjacent to the Thomas J. Watson Library.

In November we opened a commemorative exhibition of the works of John Singleton Copley, consisting of over 125 paintings, pastels, miniatures, and drawings, which continued through mid-January 1966. During the same period we presented Italian Renaissance Drawings from New York Collections, the first of a series of exhibitions of master drawings organized by the Museum and the Pierpont Morgan Library. Other exhibitions are reviewed in detail in the departmental reports and on page 99.

The September 1965 issue of Apollo magazine was dedicated to the Museum, with articles by members of the staff handsomely illustrated in color and in black and white.
On December 14, 1965, a group of Trustees held a reception for Colonel C. Michael Paul in connection with the opening of the magnificent new gallery of French eighteenth-century garden sculpture, dedicated as a memorial to the late Josephine Bay Paul.

In addition to the popular annual Party of the Year for the benefit of the Costume Institute, on October 7, 1965, the world premiere of The Agony and the Ecstasy, the film biography of Michelangelo, was held as a benefit performance followed by a reception at the Museum. Our Trustee and Vice President Robert Lehman was instrumental in securing the film and theater. The untiring efforts of Mrs. Sheldon Whitehouse, a Trustee, in supervising the many details of the benefit made the evening a memorable one and an unqualified success, and added $80,855 to the general funds. We extend our cordial thanks to them and to all those who contributed so generously.

Our friends in the fashion industry contributed $73,273 to the Costume Institute through last year’s Party of the Year. After a long series of disappointments caused by circumstances beyond our control, we are pleased to be able to report that the plans for the new Costume Institute have received final approval from the City, and that provision for the City’s share of the cost has been made in the City Capital Budget. We are still shy of the full amount to cover the Museum’s share of the cost, but now hope that construction will begin next January as an integral part of the rehabilitation of the north wing of the Main Building.

Fellowship Program

Through the generosity of the late Chester Dale and the late J. Clawson Mills, the Museum has been able to establish a well-rounded program “to bring scholars from this country or abroad to the Museum for research” in our collections and “to send members of the staff abroad or elsewhere in this country for research or further training.”

During the past fiscal year Chester Dale fellowships for research in the collections were awarded to Marilyn Johnson, Diane Hauserman, and John K. Howat for studies in American art; to Colin Streeter for studies in Western European arts; to Malcolm Delacorte for research on our collection of pre-Columbian art; and to Morrison H. Heckscher for research in the Print Department. In the same period J. Clawson Mills fellowships were awarded to Aschwin Lippe, Research Curator of Far Eastern Art, for research on Indian art; to Labib Habachi, formerly of the Department of Antiquities in Cairo, for research in our Egyptian collection; to Heribert Seitz of Stockholm for research and study in the Department of Arms and Armor; to Father Cornelius P. Chang, a distinguished Korean scholar, for research in our collection of Oriental paintings and screens; to Phyllis Dearborn Masser for research on Della Bella’s etchings in the Print Department and other collections; and to M. A. Marzouk of Baghdad University for research in the Museum’s collection of Islamic art with special emphasis on epigraphic studies of Islamic metalwork.

The Building Program

Construction work continued during the year, with completion of the new escalator and elevator in the Main Hall. The work also included extension of the Library penthouse to accommodate the prints and drawings restoration studios.

The easterly galleries of the European Paintings Department were provided with
new lighting and new glass in the ceilings, and the gradual elimination of direct current was continued with the installation of new wiring and services to the American Wing and the Morgan Wing.

Construction work is at present going forward on the rehabilitation of the ground floor to provide galleries and corridors for convenient public access between the Costume Institute and the Junior Museum. New ground floor galleries will also be constructed to connect the exhibition areas just mentioned to the Western European Arts galleries and the newly constructed galleries planned for the display of musical instruments.

The final plans and specifications for the Costume Institute and the rehabilitation of the north wing, which includes new Egyptian and Far Eastern galleries, are being completed, and construction is expected to start in the early part of 1967.

As a major step in the building program, plans are being prepared for an extensive improvement of the Fifth Avenue front and the main entrance of the Museum. Conceived as a unified project for both the exterior and the interior, these plans will include new landscaping, the possible creation of a large plaza with fountains, as well as the interior refurbishing of the great entrance hall of the Museum. Widening of the main steps and removal of the wooden vestibule will facilitate the movement of the public in and out of the building, and the installation of an air curtain at the entrance will help considerably to solve the present cleaning problems. An eighteenth-century wrought-iron fence may enclose the newly landscaped lawns and gardens along Fifth Avenue. New flooring and relighting of the domes of the great entrance hall are also contemplated. A special effort is being made to achieve a unified and coordinated treatment that will be apparent to the visitor from his first view of the Museum to his entrance into its interior.

The installation of built-in display cases on the second floor balcony of the entrance hall is expected to start in 1967. The cases will be similar to those installed for the

Dinner at The Cloisters for the delegates to the Conference of the International Council of Museums
Altman Chinese porcelains on either side of the main stairs, and it is expected that they will be used to display additional Chinese porcelains.

Other elements of the building program include planning for a standby emergency power supply, lightning protection, and increased air-conditioning facilities with the installation of an additional refrigeration machine in the service building early in 1967. This will permit air conditioning of the ground and first floors of the central part of the Museum.

The Staff

Warren C. Powers retired this year after twenty years of service to the Museum. He was Assistant Treasurer-Controller and made a valued contribution to the sound operation of the Museum, especially in matters of personnel. A. Hyatt Mayor, who retires as Curator of Prints after thirty-four years of dedication to the Museum, will be sorely missed not only for his scholarship and keen eye but for his charm and cordiality, which made him a friend of all. Another Curator retiring after seventeen years on the staff is Robert Beverly Hale. As the first Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture, he was responsible for some of our most applauded exhibitions and most daring purchases in the contemporary American field. Marcia C. Harty, who diligently maintained records of the hundreds of thousands of objects in the collections, has also retired this year as Supervisor of the Catalogue.

Gary M. Keyes, formerly with the law firm of Milbank, Tweed, Hadley and McCloy, was elected Assistant Secretary.

Robert A. Pierson was elected Assistant Treasurer and Maurice K. Viertel, Controller. Constantine Raitsky's title was changed from Associate Display Manager in Charge to Manager of Exhibition Design Department, and Jean Ashfield's title was changed from Assistant Manager to Manager of Development and Promotion.

The Trustees have made several appointments designating senior staff members to be in charge of curatorial departments. Albert TenEyck Gardner has become Associate Curator in Charge of American Paintings and Sculpture. William H. Forsyth continues as Research Curator and is now in charge of Medieval Art and The Cloisters. John J. McKendry was named Associate Curator in Charge of Prints, and Kate C. Lefferts, Associate Conservator in Charge of the Conservation Department. Thomas Pelham Miller has been made Executive Assistant in Charge at The Cloisters. Linda Lee Boyer was named Curatorial Assistant in the Drawings Department, and Beatrice E. Bodenstein became a Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art.

Alfred B. Cartier, Jr., was appointed Manager of Personnel, and Rebecca Siekevitz has been named Supervisor of the Catalogue.

Conclusion

In closing, the Board of Trustees extends to the entire Staff of the Museum its thanks for the faithful and devoted discharge of their duties throughout the year. The Trustees recognize particularly the splendid and dedicated services of the Staff in the period following the tragic loss of our Director.

For the Trustees

ARTHUR A. HOUGHTON, JR., President

DUDLEY T. EASBY, JR., Secretary

64