Olivetti to Become the Museum’s First Corporate Benefactor

“I think it’s just great!”

It was with this enthusiasm that C. Douglas Dillon, President of the Museum’s Board of Trustees, described Olivetti’s sponsorship of the current Centennial exhibition, Before Cortés: Sculpture of Middle America. In recognition of the international good will created when a multinational company enables an American cultural institution to present a major show, announcement of Olivetti’s sponsorship of Before Cortés was made at the United Nations in Secretary-General U Thant’s office.

This is not the first time Olivetti has supported the arts. In 1968 the firm was responsible for bringing the Rome Opera to the Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center, and in the same year Olivetti agreed to a request from Museum Director Thomas P. F. Hoving for a supporting grant that would make it possible to bring The Great Age of Fresco to New York. “The fresco show suited us perfectly,” Gianluigi Gabetti, President of Olivetti Corporation of America, explains. “It was an opportunity for us to bring to America a significant expression of Italian art, and it was also a way of showing our gratitude to the people of this country who had helped in the rescue of Florentine art after the floods in 1966.”

The combination of Olivetti’s generous gifts for the two shows is well above the mark set for designation as a Corporate Benefactor of the Museum, and thus the firm will be elected by the Board of Trustees to become the first member of that newly established category of contributor. When Gianluigi Gabetti learned...
during the announcement ceremonies about the recognition accorded his com-
pany, he remarked, “It’s marvelous news; I hope it will be an encouragement to
other corporations. We believe that supporting the arts is a service a corporation
should render to society today. By sponsoring an exhibition a company can de-

liver a message to the community in which it operates. Advertising messages are
colorful — sometimes even beautiful — but costly and of little social value. Of
course advertising is necessary, but we are pleased to have this other vehicle of
communication as well.”

Mr. Hoving thinks that Olivetti displayed “unerring judgment in the shows it
has chosen to underwrite,” and Mr. Dillon said, “Olivetti has made it possible
for New Yorkers and visitors to see something truly unique that would never
have happened without its help.” Indeed, one executive, on leaving the company
to go into business for himself, thanked Olivetti for its role in bringing the Rome
Opera and the frescoes to New York, thereby opening a new world to him and
his family.

Like Mr. Gabetti, Mr. Dillon hopes many more companies will emulate Oli-
vetti’s “forward-looking policy.” Business support of the Metropolitan Museum
is a necessity today, he claims, and special exhibitions are only one of many areas
in the Museum for which assistance is needed. Both he and Mr. Hoving have been
pleased with the amount of corporate support received for the whole 100th
Anniversary program. Other business firms have generously supported Centen-
nial exhibitions, among them Xerox, which underwrote New York Painting and
Sculpture: 1940-1970, and the eighteen organizations that are jointly sponsoring
Masterpieces of Fifty Centuries, opening this month. In addition, the Museum
has had welcome contributions from some eighty other companies that became
corporate sponsors of the Centennial program. “The point is,” Mr. Hoving ex-
plains, “that corporations have a certain amount of funds to give away tax free.
We want them to be aware that the Museum merits their involvement and
support.”

Mr. Hoving acknowledges that the urgent social problems of our cities often
take precedence over museums seeking corporate support. “We don’t want to
take money away from projects in desperate need of funds. Let’s face it — job
training and drug addiction are problems more pressing than a museum’s, but
if our cities are worth salvaging, then certainly the key institutions that make
them great must be supported and saved as well. By contributing to museums
the world of business lends its name to something of quality in this shattered
and tattered life.”

JANE SCHWARZ