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# COLLECTING AND PATRONAGE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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## *Collecting and Patronage in the 21st Century*

**Glenn Lowry**

Director MoMA, New York

What I thought I would try and do is give you a sense of what we are doing at the Museum of Modern Art from the point of view of how we've built our collection and how we function as an institution to try and set in context, if you wish, the way in which at least some American museums function and operate.

[Image: MoMA's building front side]

What you see before you is the renovated façade of our first custom-made building. It was built in 1939 and it projects out into the street with this very clear international-style architecture that was, in 1939, a declaration of the Museum of Modern Art's presence in New York as a place committed and dedicated to the present as opposed to the past. The other thing that's striking about the museum is that its entrance was right on the street. If you think about historical museums, you went up a flight of steps to differentiate yourself from the institution, to step away from the street. What the Museum of Modern Art did is it declared itself part of the city, part of the energy and dynamism of the city.

[Image: Museum room]

And this gives you a sense of what the galleries are like in the new building, which was completed at the end of 2004. It was designed by Yoshio Taniguchi, a Japanese architect. This project that led to the creation of the museum, and I spend a moment on it because I talked to a number of people in the media today and it was a constant question. It's a project that was the result of a very large capital campaign where we raised about 900 million dollars from the private sector. Seventy million of the 900 came from the city and state government, but essentially everything else came from individuals and foundations. It took about seven years to raise the money and of the 900, about 500 million went into architecture, to construction, the rest went into programs, building our endowment, buying some additional real estate. The reason we were able to do this was because we had a community of support in Manhattan that believed in the mission of the Museum of Modern Art and recognized that absent their support, without their commitment, without their willingness to make very substantial gifts to the museum, we would never have been able to grow. In fact most of the works of art that you see in this photograph, this image, I'll talk about this in a moment, are the result of private donations to the museum, either as gifts outright to the museum, or as the result of financial contributions that helped us pay for these works of art.

Now the way we raised these funds was to go back to our origins, we were founded in 1929, to go back to our origins and to invite anyone who wanted to, to become a founder of the new Museum of Modern Art. To become a founder

meant making the financial contribution of 5 million dollars or more. We were lucky enough to find 65 people who did that over the course of our campaign and that's what fuelled our ability to grow.

So let me give you a little sense of what this looks like at an operational level for an American museum before we actually look at art. The project took us from about 85,000 feet of gallery space to about 125,000 feet of gallery space so we grew by almost 50 %. We added, because we acquired a contemporary art center in Long Island City called P.S. 1, which stands for Public School Number One, so we added that during the course of the project, into the museum. We saw our attendance grow from 1.3 million people before the project to today about 3 million people which was our last fiscal year, 2010. We saw our membership base grow from 35,000 to today as we speak 144,000. These are 2009 numbers because that was the last time I did this chart, so we saw an explosion in membership, which was I think was a result of two factors. One, we had more to offer our public and two, we had raised our admission price so the relative value of membership increased substantially. We saw our endowment grow from 204 million to today 780 million, it was 669 two years ago. But in the process we also took on 300 million dollars in debt which is the reason why I used to have a full head of hair and I don't anymore. Our operating budget grew from about 54 million dollars to over 160 million dollars and when you net out retail, because we have a fairly large retail operation, we have a budget of about 113 million. So this gives you a quick picture of what the recent changes to the museum have meant in very real terms for us.

Then if you look at where our fundraising comes from, because it's so different from a European situation, admissions, which means ticket price, is 20%, membership another 13%, other fundraising, where we have about 50 people at the museum who do nothing but look for funding from the private sector, from corporations, from special events, from any kind of effort that we can do in order to raise additional money. Our endowment, of which we are allowed to take 5% a year in interest, provides about 30% of our operating budget; retail provides about 7% of our operating budget, then the rest you see here. The rest can be anything from planned giving where somebody leaves us some money in a bequest, or where we do a special project that produces some funding for us, but every year, except for the money we are going to get from our endowment, we have to raise everything from scratch.

This gives you a chart and a way of setting up for you the different structures of American museums. The Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston essentially get no public support whatsoever. No city money, no state money, no federal money. Then when you look at some of the other museums, take all the way over on the left the National Gallery of Art, most of its funding comes from the government. It's the only museum, art museum, in America that is federally funded. The Cleveland museum gets some city money, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art gets some funding from Greater Los Angeles County, Chicago gets some city funding, so most American museums are a mix of state, federal or local funding plus their endowments, except for places like the Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

How do we get all of that from an operating standpoint? You can see here what the money looks like here in very real terms, from the Chairman's council, one of the core supports of our museum. I'm happy to say that Leopoldo, among other friends, is a member of that. We are huge admirers of what Leopoldo has done here in Spain, and in fact we look to what you're doing, often, for inspiration, and that's one of the reasons that I'm both thrilled and delighted to be here, to be able to spend an evening with you.

Benefits play a very big role for us where we go out and do gala events where we ask people to make contributions to be able to spend an evening with us, or more importantly, with someone they admire. So we, the American museum, is driven by having to find all sorts of efforts to generate capital support on an ongoing basis. You can also see that the financial crisis took about 10, I don't have my glasses on, but I think about 10 million dollars out of available funds for us, just as I'm sure it has done here in Spain.

Turning now to the part that's actually fun. How did we get to where we are? The Museum of Modern Art was founded by three remarkable women, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, Lillie Bliss, who has on that wonderful feathered hat, and Mary Quinn Sullivan. They hired a young Alfred Barr, who you see here, in 1929, to be the director of the museum. We were founded by these three remarkable women and some of their friends because, at the time, it was felt that New York City in 1929 needed a place that was looking to the future, that was about the present and the future, rather than the past, which is what great historical museums like the Metropolitan featured.

They got together and rented some space in an office building on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in 1929 not knowing whether the museum would succeed and very rapidly, two years later, Mrs. Rockefeller got her family to lease us this brownstone building at 11 W. 53<sup>rd</sup>, and even though we demolished the brownstone in 1939 to build the building I showed you, we've retained the address ever since. But right from the beginning, right from the beginning, not only where we were brought together by a group of private individuals, but the very space we live in came to us via a private benefaction.

Everything we do is structured around our relationship with individuals who are the lifeblood of the museum. Now Abby Aldrich Rockefeller was a remarkable woman. Unlike her husband, who was the scion of the great Rockefeller family, she was interested in socialist-inspired art, she was interested in modern art, she was interested in artists like Diego Rivera and you see here one of eight panels of portable murals that he made literally in the galleries at the Museum of Modern Art in 1932. He was invited by Mrs. Rockefeller to come to New York and we did an exhibition around these portable murals that he made, that is painting-sized murals as opposed to wall-sized murals. In fact, Rivera was the second person to receive a one-man exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. The first was Henri Matisse. We're about to, later this year in October, bring together as many of these portable murals as will be allowed to travel to reconstitute that first inaugural, or almost inaugural, exhibition.

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller also left us 1600 prints; lithographs, monotypes, and engravings, of which you see one by Picasso here, that became the core of our

print department. The Museum of Modern Art is structured around number of individual departments: prints, drawings, photography, architecture and design, painting and sculpture, media. The prints that she gave us created a legacy of philanthropy at the museum where it was very clear that the only way we would be able to develop an outstanding collection would be through these private benefactions, by individuals like Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. But the person who really established the museum's collection, gave it the definition and breadth that it currently has, and also gave us the means to develop the collection, was Lillie Bliss.

Now Lillie Bliss was the heiress of a textile fortune. She started collecting so-called modern art, what today we would call contemporary art, in the 1890s. She was especially interested in what was going on in France and she built up a very considerable collection. She was quite involved with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but after a show of some of her work, along with some of the paintings that she owned, along with several others, she became disaffected because there was such public criticism of these so-called rude modern masters, like Van Gogh, like Cezanne, like Gauguin, that she became friendly with Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and said, "If no one will appreciate what we're doing in New York, we have to do something nonetheless for the future." She died suddenly of cancer two years after the museum was founded, in 1931, and unexpectedly she left the museum her, virtually, her entire collection: about 100, mostly paintings, and some graphic and sculptural work. Among the things she left us were core works like Cezanne's *Bather* of 1885. Paintings that have become utterly identified and synonymous with the Museum of Modern Art. Paintings that literally helped define what a new aesthetic and a new approach to art could be. Or Seurat's great seascape. Again, utterly iconic works.

But she did something else and this is what really distinguishes the museum and its collection from many other places. She stipulated that anything in her collection that the museum didn't want, it should sell to buy more art. That we should take this great gift that she gave us, and sell as much of it as we wanted with no conditions to buy any other work of art that we wished to have. That has become the template for all of the museum's collecting. That every work of art that we acquire, whether we do it with funds that we own, or by benefaction, gift from someone else, it's unconditional, and thus we're able to sell it in order to buy more art.

So for instance, we sold this very beautiful Degas painting because in the 1930s, around 1939 to be precise, it felt like it was speaking to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, not to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and of course our collection is really a collection that was foregrounded in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. We came under a lot of criticism when we sold this painting because, how could we sell such an established masterpiece by such a recognized artist in order to buy this painting, the *Demoiselles d'Avignon*. It was the best deal that has ever been done. The Degas sold for about 18,000 dollars, which is almost exactly what it cost us to buy the *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, and this now is understood to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest painting, of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

[Image: *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*. Pablo Ruiz Picasso, 1907]

So there comes risk because we could have sold the Degas and maybe this didn't turn out to be as great a painting as we believed. That is one of the things about the way in which our collection is structured. It inherently embraces risk because every generation of curators has the latitude to go back and look at what their predecessors have done and make selections and say, "You know, today this is just not as important as we thought it was," or "It's wonderful that we have 28 Miros, but do we need every one of them? Maybe we should only have 27?" And so on and so on and so on. We hope that the decisions we make are intelligent and thoughtful and that the results merit it.

[Image: *Starry Night*. Vincent Van Gogh, 1889]

This is another one of the acquisitions that was made by selling one of Mrs. Bliss' Degas': *Starry Night*, which is probably the most popular painting at the museum by Vincent Van Gogh. So this attitude that the collection should be metabolic, those were Alfred Barr's words, our founding director's words, that the collection should be self-renewing. That you give up the past in order to acquire for the future in a kind of circuit of ongoing decision-making is what has given us the collection we have.

That tradition is admirably continued today by a number of important donors. Here you see David Rockefeller, a friend of Leopoldo's and mine, surrounded by two beautiful women, which is exactly the way that he likes to spend his time, when he's not collecting art: Mimi Haas, wearing the white stole and Marnie Pillsbury who heads philanthropy for David. But David took up his mother's, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller's, interest in art and built a very considerable collection, not a large collection, but a very choice collection, which he gave to the museum in this tradition.

You see a portion of that collection installed here, but I just want to give you two highlights of the kind of works of art that we continue to get from donors like David. Here one of my favourite paintings in David's collection, a Paul Signac, who is not generally considered to be one of the great post-impressionist artists, but this painting of Félix Fénéon, who was a bit of a critic and anarchist, I think is utterly ravishing in the way Signac, ascending to a level of artistic production that he probably never achieved again, but what I love about it is not only is it Fénéon as the great grand master almost as if he were unveiling a kind of circus or carnival. Fénéon was a rock-throwing, bomb-throwing anarchist and I love the fact that David Rockefeller, this solid member of the establishment, can admire a painting like that.

[Image: *Boy with a Red Vest*. Paul Cézane, 1898-90]

Or here what is arguably one of the most important paintings in David and Peggy Rockefeller's collection, Cézanne's *Boy with a Red Vest*. Paintings like this are literally out of circulation. Even if we had all the money in the world we could never acquire works of art like this, at least in the United States. The only way that museums can grow at this level is to convince private individuals that they should give works of art. One of the reasons that they can do that is not only because they love the institution, but we have very favorable tax laws that

encourage individuals to give works of art. It's not that they can deduct the value of art against taxes. What they can do is deduct the value of the gift against their income and by doing that they reduce their total income and thus ultimately reduce their taxable income.

The reason that happens, however, is because the American model doesn't depend on state support, so if the state isn't going to fund operations and is certainly not going to fund acquisitions, you have to find some other vehicle, some other instrument that allows these acquisitions to occur if you think that they're largely desirable by society. So the solution is this mechanism of tax incentives that don't compel anybody to give. There's nothing that says you should give a work of art in the United States but it does say if you are going to make a gift, we'll give you a benefit to do so, in a way, to encourage you to giving.

Here is another of our major donors, Ronald and Jo Carole Lauder.

[Image: Ronald and Jo Carole Lauder]

Ronald was the chairman of the Museum of Modern Art throughout our building campaign in the 1990s and into 2000. Probably the most extraordinary collector I have ever met. He's somebody who collects everything from military vehicles, tanks and jeeps and rocket launchers, to the most exquisite medieval ivories, and of course he has built, with Jo Carole his wife, one of the greatest collections of modern art. This is probably the most celebrated painting that he's acquired. It is the great Gustav Klimt *Adele Bloch-Bauer*, that was famous a little while ago, legendary, because he paid 135 million dollars for it and everybody said, "Well how can you do that?" and as he said, "Because it's the greatest painting that I'll ever have."

[Image: *Adele Bloch-Bauder*. Gustav Klimt, 1907]

It will reshape a new museum that he built; it's called the Neue Gallery in New York. If you haven't visited it I urge you to do so. It is an utter gem of a museum. But he is the kind of donor who can not only support a private gallery that's open to the public that he has created, but through works like this great Sigmar Polke or this very beautiful Ellsworth Kelly, has made literally hundreds of gifts to the Museum of Modern Art. He's probably numerically our single most generous donor. In part because there's never been a work of art that he's seen that he didn't want, and he is a naturally philanthropic and generous man.

Another kind of condition that's interesting is what happened with Donald Marron, who you see here, who for many years was the head of an organization, a financial investment company, called Paine Webber which was subsequently bought out by UBS, the great Swiss Bank.

[Image: Donald Marron]

Don, who on his own collects modernist art like this very beautiful drawing of a guitar by Picasso that is now in an exhibition that we have on at the museum, *Picasso: Guitars 1912 – 1914*, gave us this drawing.

[Image: *Guitars*. Pablo Ruiz Picasso, 1921-1914]

More importantly, Don over the years built up an enormous corporate collection for Paine Webber, which was subsequently absorbed and sold to UBS. He posed the very interesting question, which is, “How does a corporate, a publicly owned corporation, transfer its assets to a place like a museum?” Because if you think about it, corporations, especially publicly owned corporations, don’t have the latitude to give away their assets the way a foundation or an individual might.

So we worked with him for almost five years to come up with a structure that would allow his corporation, then Paine Webber, to take 44 works of art that were the most important in the collection, transfer them to the Museum of Modern Art, as a gift, and it all was perfect until Paine Webber was bought by UBS and UBS said, “Why would we do this? We have our own art collection. This is not something we necessarily want to do.” And we said, “Well, these are very important to the museum.” It was a way of building a relationship that would be forever with UBS. You see in the background a very beautiful Philip Guston late painting. We had to go, a couple of us had to go, to several board meetings at UBS to convince these very straight-laced Swiss bankers that making a gift to the Museum of Modern Art made sense. Let me show you another, this is Dan Flavin that as part of the UBS collection, or part of the Paine Webber UBS collection, came to the museum.

[Image: *Monument 1 for V. Tatlin*. Dan Flavin, 1964]

It was actually very complicated to do. What we realized is that, for all of the generosity that corporations have in terms of supporting special exhibitions, it’s extraordinarily difficult for them to give away art because they have to take it to a shareholder vote, which is what took place at Paine Webber. We were given, in a sense, permission to take possession of these key works of art.

Maybe the most interesting recent major acquisition that has affected the museum came from the Judith Rothschild Foundation. Judith Rothschild, who you see in the photograph, was an artist - you see one of her paintings next to her, who at her death left a sum of money to a foundation that had the stipulation that the foundation had to spend through all of the money in a fixed period of time. Many foundations are self-perpetuating. They only spend a little portion of their total capital and they use the rest to keep on going. She said you have to spend down the capital; you have to go out of business. And the executor of her estate became the head of her foundation. First he spent a lot of time and money developing a collection of illustrated Russian manuscripts from the early teens into the ‘20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, which he gave to the Museum of Modern Art.

[Image: Judith Rothschild]

Then he decided that he wanted to build the greatest collection of contemporary drawings in the world, which he did in a matter of about three years. He worked very closely with curators at the Museum of Modern Art and travelled around the

world, helped identify key drawings that we wanted. He of course bought voraciously on his own, and made a gift of about 2800 drawings to the museum that transformed our drawing collection. First of all it added about 30% to the size of our drawing collection, so we went from about 6000 drawings to almost 9000 drawings. But more importantly, we went from a very modest collection of contemporary drawings to now an extraordinarily broad collection. Many asked at the time, “How can you take so many drawings?” Almost 3000 drawings. “How do you know if any of them will be any good in 25 or 50 years?” And of course the answer is we don’t. We believe that the vast majority will be extremely important. But because we have this practice of what we call de-accessioning, selling works from our collection, over time generations of curators will go through these drawings and eventually prune them down. Focus in on the ones that matter. Part of the gift was about 20 drawings by Joseph Beuys, doubling our Beuys holdings. There were 30 or 40 drawings by Franz Vest, an artist at the time hardly represented in our drawing collection. I think in total there were 360 different artists who became part of our collection because of this gift.

And here you see a beautiful drawing by Carol Walker, an American artist who does these silhouettes, these cut out paper or silhouettes often dealing with issues of race, gender, and especially slavery. This is just a small, little one but she’s also done giant, giant ones and because of this one gift, again, from the Rothschild Foundation, we went from having a handful of drawings by Carol Walker to having one of the largest collections of her work in the United States.

Similarly, Gil and Lila Silverman, collectors from Detroit, decided years ago, 25 or 30 years ago, that even though what they really wanted to collect was impressionist paintings, because that was they loved, they couldn’t do it because they weren’t wealthy enough. But they had the collecting bug. They wanted to collect. So Gil started to think about what was available, what could he collect that could be interesting, that nobody else was looking at, so that he could build a great collection. And he came upon the idea that he could collect Fluxus material. Fluxus was one of those art movements of the ’60s in particular that dealt with all sorts of social and political issues and tried to disseminate art in new ways. Through performance, but also through printed material, through happenings, through a variety of events. Over the years Gil and Lila built the greatest collection of Fluxus-based material in the world. He didn’t know what to do with it in Detroit, he had it in a giant warehouse, and he was looking for a home.

[Image: Gil and Lila Silverman]

He came to the museum several years ago and we started a conversation and at the time we couldn’t believe that he would ever give such an important collection to an institution out of Detroit because he’s a very loyal Detroit member. But he got excited about what we were doing at the museum. He got excited about the fact that we had a whole new generation of curators at the museum who explained to him the many different ways that Fluxus material could be incorporated into the museum. Here you just see a sampling of some of the 3000 different bits of ephemera, installation, drawings, recordings, that constitute this body of material that he gave us.

What excited him about the museum was that he felt that his collection would not only be used but that it would be seen by a large public. And I think that's also very important. We often talk about the fact that in the ideal museum you would be alone with a work of art and I think that is very important and that if every museum tries to create a condition in which an individual can have a direct, meaningful engagement with a singular object, but museums are also social places. They're places where you go to be with other people looking at art and what he got very excited about at the Museum of Modern Art was that suddenly there was a large audience. That maybe thousands, or tens of thousands or maybe even hundreds of thousands of people would be able to see this material that he cared so much about that he'd committed several decades of his and his wife's lifetime to assemble it. The reason I think this is so interesting is up until we got this collection, just like until we got the Rothschild drawings, we had virtually nothing. We had a handful of Fluxus material. We've suddenly become, with this one major gift, the center, certainly in North America, and one of two places in the world where you can really see this material in any depth.

The amount of time and energy that went into building the relationship with Gil once he first came to the museum was enormous. Because we had no way of knowing whether he would ultimately make a gift to the museum but we realized that the first thing that we had to do was make him fall in love with the museum. People don't give because they think they should give, by and large, they give because they want to, because they have some deep desire that really is akin to falling in love. They want to feel that they've done something meaningful and satisfactory and that enriches and ennobles an institution, but getting someone to understand just how they could fit into the museum is a long and obviously very complicated process.

So now I want to switch gears and talk about two different ways that we have built the collection. I talked about how various donors over the generations have helped us, talked about a policy that allows us to sell works of art in order to buy more works of art. But several years ago, five or six, it hit me that we had a problem collecting the most contemporary art, the kind of art that's being made on the edge right now. The way it hit me was one day I was in an acquisition meeting where we were about to spend north of 20 million dollars to buy a Matisse painting. In five minutes we made the decision to spend that kind of money on a Matisse, which was exhilarating.

The next day I was in a meeting where we were looking at the work of an artist at that point barely known in New York, not represented in the museum. Her name is Elizabeth Peyton. She happens to now be very well represented in the museum and a major artist, but it took an hour and a half of conversation to convince our trustees to spend thousands of dollars, not tens of thousands of dollars. It hit me that it's the edge, it's not the value of the art, it's the unfamiliarity of the art that's so difficult. So we created something called the Fund for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which is a fund that 15 or so donors commit to every year. They give us 50,000 dollars a piece and it buys art made by emerging artists on a rolling five year basis so when we started we were looking at 2000 to 2005. Now we're looking at 2006 to 2011, next year we'll look at 2007 to 2012, so it has to be art that was made during this period by artists at the inception of

their career, at the beginning of their career. I asked Cathy Albrecht, who joined the museum three years ago from the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, one of the great curators of contemporary art, if she would be, if she would oversee this program for the museum.

[Image: Cathy Albrecht]

Just to give you a sense of the kinds of things we've acquired recently: Lucy Raven, a very young artist working in New York created this incredible multichannel video called *Chinatown*. It looks at the circulation of goods from rare earth to minerals to steel to construction and it traces them from how they come out of the ground in places like the United States and are shipped to places like China to be converted to steel, to how they're shipped back to the United States to be put into buildings. Or Elad Lassry a very young artist whose work deals with the appropriation of found images in photography that he then manipulates. He'll cut a background out or he'll add a new background in order to create these very strange and often seriously weird juxtapositions. Or Qiu Anxiong, again a very young Chinese artist who decided to reinvent the Chinese scroll painting but instead of telling a story about nature or scholars on a rock, his story is all about how man has destroyed his natural environment, actually a strangely prescient narrative given what's just happened in Japan. In fact one of the things, you can begin to see in these images from the scroll, that he talks about is how seawalls divert nature and have a counter effect when there are things like tsunamis that come along and then the sea wall makes the water rise even higher and wipes out whole cities. So in a funny way, or in a sad, tragic way, he was anticipating some of the things that happened. Or here an artist Tabaimo who's better known for her video work. She does animations. She's Japanese. But she also does these utterly beautiful prints that are all about the peeling away of layers so what she imagines is, much as in her video work, so if this is a room with wallpaper, what she sees is not the wallpaper, what she sees is behind the wallpaper, the organisms and life that could exist behind. Or Haegue Yang, a young Korean artist who did this large-scale installation. All of these are works that would be extraordinarily difficult... as is this Artur Zmijewski, *Democracies*, a multi channel video piece. They'd be very hard to bring into the museum initially because people are unfamiliar with the work. So we created, if you wish, a collector's group that acts as our avant-garde to help us acquire these works.

In a similar way Patty Cisneros, who some of you may know, one of our great trustees and an ardent advocate of all things Latin American, and who's made many, many, many important personal gifts, she and her husband Gustavo, to the Museum of Modern Art.

[Image: Patty Cisneros]

I show you one of my favourites, a Torres García of the late '30s that really makes you think about how García looked at cubism but reformatted it in a very different kind of way.

[Image: *Black and White Construction*. Joaquín Torres-García, 1938]

Or this Oiticica, a box that feels like a nuclear reactor almost in its intensity. So she made many, many large-scale personal contributions, but I asked her if she would help us create a fund dedicated to the acquisition of Latin American Art because as you saw from that beautiful Rivera fresco, the museum has, from its beginning, been committed to Latin America.

[Image: *Box Bolide 12, "archeological"*. Hélio Oiticica, 1964-65]

So we created something called the Latin American and Caribbean fund that Patty chairs and what it has done is allow us to have dedicated dollars to support the acquisition of material from Latin America.

I show you a very beautiful conceptual piece that Luis Camnitzer, Uruguayan but lives in New York, made and that was acquired through our fund. As you'll see from the tag line, sometimes members of the fund, and there are about 20 members of the fund, in addition to the fund buying the work of art, a member will contribute special funds. In this case Estrella Brodsky helped with this acquisition. Or these Gasparini photographs that came to us through Gonzalo Parodi, a member of our fund who felt very strongly that while we were acquiring a conceptual art, installation, and much else from Latin America, we had very little photography. So he set out to help us build a much stronger representation of photography. Alfredo Jaar's *The Lament of Images* which is all about the loss of images, like the piece that I think is one of the Chilean artist's absolutely most important works. Or Mateo López, very young Colombian artist who did this complex mis-en-scene. It's an installation piece but every time you put it together, you put it together differently and he keeps adding to it so it will eventually grow to take over whole rooms. Or finally the most recent work of art that we acquired through the Latin American fund, this great Tunga, *Cooking Crystals* of 2008 is very strange. Anyone who knows Tunga knows that anything Tunga does is actually quite strange, but this intersection between bodily fluids, magnets and the circulation of energy. It's our first large scale Tunga to come into the museum although I'm sure that we will continue to acquire more of his work and perhaps even more of his historical work.

We're not the only museum in the world to have dedicated regional funds. Places like the Tate Modern have a series of dedicated regional funds. But the strategy of bringing collectors together who have a shared affinity, much as your group, Leopoldo, does in supporting patronage, who have a shared common vision is a strategy that I think works incredibly well because that common interest, that common energy, allows both something to be shared and it also allows an institution, in our case the Museum of Modern Art, to grow its collection in ways that are unexpected.

If I could end on this image of the Museum which is one of my favourites. It's taken at night because what I like about it is, in the Taniguchi building you see through the museum, so if you're on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, our main street in New York, and you're walking down or up and you look towards the museum, what you see is inside the wall to the collection. In this case you see, on the second floor the red car is our Cisitalia, above that a very beautiful Donald Judd, a late sculpture, and the energy that is generated by the museum is not only an energy that you feel inside the museum, it is an energy that I think projects out into the city and

engages the museum with the city in a very concrete way. It's one of the hallmarks of the museum that from its beginning, and you saw that with the entrance of the 1939 building, that first slide I showed, that opened the museum to the street of the city and said, "We want the energy to come into the museum," but that in that circulation it also has to project back out into the city.

[Image: Taniguchi building night time]

And the reason I think that's so important for us is that at the end of the day we are a privately funded institution, we depend on people to believe enough in us to be willing to not only share their art with us, but to be willing to share a great deal of capital resource with us. But that energy has to come back out and attract. It has to make a statement into the city that we are part of your life within the city and that there's a fabric, a social, cultural, and artistic fabric, to the civic life of the city in which the museum is inextricably woven. If we're able to make that connection then we can continue to build the private investment, and I don't mean financial alone, I mean psychic, emotional and programmatic, that enables an institution like ours to continue to survive and thrive.

I have already talked far too long, so I thank you for indulging me. I just hope you know how thrilled I am to be here, how much I admire what you do, Leopoldo, and how much I hope all of you will come and visit us at the Museum of Modern Art. Thank you.

LR: Any questions?

Q: Thank you very much for his conference. I wanted to know if there are any projects of development between the MoMa and other museums, such as sharing collections, implanting models of collaborations and others.

A: Yes, it's something we think about all time, and it's a responsibility that most museums have, which is not only to do the great programs that you can do on site, but to think a little bit about how to work with colleagues. Of course we try to lend as generously as we possibly can.

We've just completed, not completed, just agreed to and are beginning a three year relationship with the High Museum in Atlanta. The High is one of those very strong regional museums that has a growing audience but a very small collection. What we've done is, for the next three years, agreed with the High to generate exhibitions out of our collection for the High. We're making the exhibitions together; it's not just the Museum of Modern Art sending art to the High. Curators from the High are working with curators from the Museum of Modern Art to produce six exhibitions over the next three years. So that's one way of sharing the collection.

But more importantly we're also working with the High to show them and work with them on how we deal with development and fundraising, how we deal with marketing, how we deal with education, in a sense, to transfer as much of our knowledge to them as we can. We're in the midst of trying to put together several more multi-year partnerships like that.

We've also recently created something called Contemporary and Modern Art Perspectives: How to Deal with Art in the Global Age, which is a series of research initiatives on abstraction in Latin America, on performance in Asia, on Fluxus in Europe, for instance, where we are working with colleagues from around the world to do deep research in these areas, that might or might not lead to publications or exhibitions. That's really not the purpose. The purpose is to grow our knowledge and understanding of these areas. I think at some point we'll probably even look at long-term loans to institutions in order to share our collection in a more thoughtful way. It's a real challenge for all of us.

**Q:** Thank you for your talk, it's been very inspirational. One question. Regarding de-accession, what is your position regarding de-accession to invest in ongoing expenses in this crisis time in the museums? We know there's been quite a polemic way of thinking about many museums doing de-accession to invest in building.

**A:** I don't think there's any one right answer and certainly one of the ways out of economic crises is investment. I mean you obviously have to retrench, but you also have to go forward. You can't just get smaller and smaller and smaller without investing in infrastructure and personnel.

There was a moment in the United States around 2007-2008 when the crisis, the crisis I think hit the United States faster than it hit in Europe, and for cultural institutions in the United States, we had to react very quickly because we didn't have a more reliable source of funding like government funding to depend on. There was a conversation for a while in the United States over whether or not art should be sold in order to pay for salaries and operational expenses. In the end there was a consensus that that was a very bad idea for the following reason: the art is permanent. It exists, it's there for the duration. If you sell something for one-time expenses, what do you do next year? What do you do the year after that? What do you do the year after that? So the general consensus was that, while it was permissible to sell art to buy more art, that is, trading it to upgrade, the idea of selling it, selling art, to support basic operations was much too problematic.

I actually believe that cultural institutions, in times of economic crises, become catalytic engines for a lot of communities. One, they're a place you can go that's safe, where you can be inspired, you can think. But two, at least in the United States, the cost of creating a job in the arts is a fraction of the cost of creating a job in business or in manufacturing. I'm pretty sure I have these numbers right. The basic cost of creating a job, let's say in a museum, we're talking base cost, is about 25,000 dollars because you don't need any infrastructure. To create a similar position in a manufacturing company is about 100,000. So just think about it. You can generate more jobs more quickly in the arts than you can in manufacturing. There are other issues that come along after that because the return on investment is maybe much greater in a manufacturing position than it is in a cultural position. But in an environment where you need to keep people employed, which certainly is a huge problem at the moment in the United States, and where you're looking to shift the paradigm, the model, away from manufacturing because the cost of manufacturing is too high in the United States anyway, you have to look for alternative areas where you can create jobs. So even

at a very base level, I think culture is a very smart investment to make. Both at the level of government investment and also at the level of private investment.

And then finally, what we discovered is that by keeping our program basically untouched, we saw our audience grow. We went from about 2,7 million to about 3 million people in the middle of the fiscal crisis and we saw our membership grow from about 115,000 to 144,000, which said to me that people, even in the middle of an economic crisis, were prepared to spend money for something that they believed in and that gave them a sense of value and reward. Does that make sense?

**Q:** You produce some art, apart from acquisitions. Do you support young artists by producing some works?

**A:** Absolutely. We have several programs that are designed to enable younger artists, or less established artists, to show their work at the museum. Years ago, I think it's now 40 years, which is really quite frightening, we created something called Projects, which is designed specifically to allow younger artists to have a project or an installation at the Museum of Modern Art. Today the vast majority of what we actually do at the museum is geared towards contemporary art, especially younger artists. Then when we acquired PS1, which we've renamed MOMA PS1, that's a contemporary art center that only does, or almost only does, contemporary art with a real focus on emerging artists. Every 5 years for instance MOMA PS1 and the Museum of Modern Art do a survey exhibition called greater New York, which only looks at art made in New York - we have a very liberal definition of New York, anything that's sort of close to New York is New York- in the previous five years. We're really tried to come up with a variety of ways of engaging with contemporary and especially younger artists, trying to keep up with what Lynne did when she was at DIA.

**Q:** Hello. When you were saying that you were considering long-term loans of your collection, were you thinking about new sources of artistic and cultural development such as the [Persian] Gulf, for example?

**A:** I wasn't specifically thinking of new regions, although they interest me a great deal. I think about the energy that's being generated in parts of the Middle East, certainly parts of Asia, but it's an energy that has yet to really be married with any kind of deep knowledge and commitment to the visual arts. The question arises quickly, "Is there a role that we could play that could be beneficial?"

We're not advocates and we're certainly not about to build a Museum of Modern Art someplace else. But when we see organizations and institutions that are embedded in their regional or local environment and that are doing good work it interests us a great deal to see how we might be able to work with them to help them grow their programs and audience because at the end of the day, the larger the audience for modern and contemporary art, the better it is for every institution around the world interested in modern and contemporary art. The Gulf is fascinating, but actually the place that's really interesting is Istanbul, where you have longstanding institutions, and not one but many, engaged in various activities that deal with modern and contemporary art and where they're a kind of pivot point between Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and even Asia.

So it's not just the [Persian] Gulf that's producing, or that one needs to pay attention to at this point. It's elsewhere in the region that's becoming more and more active. There are several institutions in Istanbul with whom we already have good relationships and to whom we've lent works of art and with whom we'll no doubt build even deeper and stronger relationships over the years.

**LR:** Thank you again it was really fantastic, your lecture. I hope you will come back in a couple of years. No later than that.

**GL:** Thank you Leopoldo.

**LP:** Muchas gracias a todos. Gracias a todos ustedes por la presencia. Seguiremos tratando de invitar a personajes, no sé si de este nivel, pero personajes en el mundo del arte para que ustedes puedan escucharles. Muchas gracias.

GLENN LOWRY



Glenn D. Lowry became the sixth director of The Museum of Modern Art in 1995. He leads a staff of 750 and directs an active program of exhibitions, acquisitions, and publications. His major initiatives over the past 14 years include guiding MoMA's \$900 million capital campaign for the renovation and expansion of the Museum, and building its endowment, reinvigorating MoMA's contemporary art program, and challenging conventional thinking about modern art.

He is a Steering Committee Member for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. In 2004, the French government honored Mr. Lowry with the title of *Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*. Mr. Lowry's most recent publications include *Design for the New Museum of Modern Art* (2004); *ARTnews: 'Gained in Translation'* (2006); *Oil and Sugar: Contemporary Art and Islamic Culture* (2009); and *The Museum of Modern Art in This Century* (2009).

Mr. Lowry received a B.A. degree (1976) magna cum laude from Williams College, Williamstown, and M.A. (1978) and Ph.D. (1982) degrees in history of art from Harvard University. He has received honorary degrees from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Pratt Institute, and The College of William & Mary.

He is married to the former Susan Chambers, and they have three children.

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