

November 8, 1971

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

PROJECT PROPOSAL

TITLE: SCULPTURE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

PROPOSED BY: Waldo Rasmussen

DESCRIPTION:

The overwhelming response of the public to the two great exhibitions CEZANNE TO MIRO and 100 DRAWINGS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK is evidence of the need to send masterpieces of modern art in broad historic perspective to countries lacking comprehensive collections or frequent opportunities for temporary exhibitions of this caliber.

For India, climate conditions, transportation arrangements, exhibition facilities and adequate security provisions make it unlikely at present that the International Council could sponsor an exhibition of paintings or works on paper of comparable importance to the two earlier exhibitions. While sculpture presents other problems of packing and transport, with their attendant costs, it is a medium which could be presented with fewer hazards. Moreover, for India, sculpture (along with architecture) is the primary artistic tradition and it would be particularly instructive for the public to see examples of the modern Western tradition.

The exhibition should attempt to define the tradition of modern sculpture, beginning with its predecessors in Rodin and Rosso, up to internationally recognized modern masters such as Calder, Giacometti, Smith, Moore, Caro and Oldenburg. Modern sculpture has received less intensive critical attention than painting, hence the exhibition should be a rigorous examination of key trends of the century, concentrating entirely on those masters who have altered the course of the art form in our times. Such a selection might be limited to the work of about thirty masters, imposing a great burden on obtaining examples of masterpiece quality. Emphasis would be on monumental works suitable for outdoor showing, but the selection would also have to include works which would only be shown indoors, in order to represent the full range of sculptural concepts.

Obviously such an ambitious undertaking could only be achieved through international cooperation on the highest level. The Council should use its offices to organize an honorary sponsoring committee of leading figures from India, Australia, New Zealand and the United States whose endorsement of the exhibition would lend the prestige necessary to its organization. The cooperation of other museums should be enlisted, much as was done in earlier exhibitions such as DE DAVID A TOULOUSE-LAUTREC and FRENCH DRAWINGS FROM AMERICAN COLLECTIONS, where the exhibition was a joint venture on the part of many American museums.

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Although it would be unreasonable to expect the Indian government to participate in the organizational costs of the exhibition, its Ministry of Education and Culture should be requested to support the exhibition with arrangements to make it widely available to the public. Busing to the exhibition site and arranging tour groups of artists and students from other cities should be explored. Because of the difficulties of obtaining loans for an extended tour (especially since transportation would require a great deal of time), it is suggested that only a single Indian showing should be arranged (preferably in Bombay, to avoid additional inland transportation). Timing of the exhibition might coincide with a smaller exhibition of sculptures on a more intimate scale to travel on a more extended itinerary (the long-deferred exhibition CAST IN BRONZE could provide other Indian cities with a smaller survey).

Australia and New Zealand, too, are lacking in comprehensive collections of modern sculpture and an exhibition of this quality would have historic importance. Attempts should be made to secure funds from private sources in those countries to supplement official government grants to the exhibition.

SCHEDULE: India, Australia and New Zealand - 1973 (earliest)

STATUS: First proposal to the Australasian Sub-Committee, November 8, 1971