



Cincinnati Collects

A Record of Its Taste in 20th Century Works of Art

"Although not generally known to be one of the centers for collecting the art of this century," writes Allon T. Schoener, Curator of The Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center, "Cincinnati is one of the most active and discriminating."

His opinion is expressed in the Introduction to *Cincinnati Collects*, the handsome catalogue of the exhibition of the same name shown last year in New York. The exhibition contained selected 20th Century works of art from private collections, presented for the benefit of The Endowment Fund of the Arts Center.

Mr. Schoener wrote further: "The quality of the works in this exhibition is a tribute to all Cincinnati collectors, and in particular to the twenty-four who have lent to it. From both the exhibition itself and the directory of collections which appears in this catalog, 'civic enthusiasm' is apparent in the number, the range and the size of the collections. The occasion of this exhibition in New York City has provided an opportunity to assess, evaluate and document three

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decades of collecting activity in Cincinnati. If any Cincinnati collector were to be asked why he or she acquired a particular work of art, the answer would generally be, 'I bought it because I like to look at it and live with it.' There are no Cincinnati collections in which works of art do not function as an integral part of the home environment. . . .

"Cincinnati's collections of 20th century art are part of the city's cultural continuum. Collecting works of art has been a civic tradition for one hundred and forty years. The quality of the public art collections (Cincinnati Art Museum and Taft Museum), which have been assembled primarily from private collections formed during the last seventy-five years, testifies to knowledge, discrimination and selectivity. Thus, the city provides a climate in which collecting flourishes. The first evidences of collecting 20th century art on a broad scale did not appear until the 1930s . . . In 1939, The Cincinnati Modern Art Society was founded; in 1954, its name was changed to The Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center. From its inception this organization has been a catalyst, stimulating its members to collect. . . . In addition to the encouragement of collecting, for more than twenty years The Contemporary Arts Center has presented a regular program of exhibitions and activities which have enlarged the horizons of the community."