

Without Lillie Plummer Bliss, MoMA would not be the museum it is today. A century ago, when modern art was generally met with suspicion or ridicule, Bliss fought for an artist's right to create work in new and experimental ways. In 1929, after many years of energetic advocacy for modern art in New York, Bliss, together with Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and Mary Quinn Sullivan, founded The Museum of Modern Art.

Fascinated by the work of artists such as Paul Cézanne, Georges-Pierre Seurat, and Pablo Picasso, Bliss built a remarkable collection of paintings and works on paper by them and many others. When she died at sixty-six in 1931, just two years after MoMA opened, Bliss left a will instructing that a large part of her collection be given to the Museum. Until then MoMA had primarily been a place for presenting temporary exhibitions. Her visionary bequest officially established the Museum as a collecting institution, forever changing the course of its history.

Nearly a century later, Bliss's singular contribution to the history of modern art in the United States remains under-recognized. This is partly explained by the measures she took to maintain her privacy: at the end of her life Bliss requested that all her personal papers be burned. Her extraordinary legacy, in contrast, endures. This exhibition illuminates this crucial figure through archival documents from MoMA's first decade and, of course, the works of art that she loved.

Organized by Ann Temkin, The Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture, and Romy Silver-Kohn, coeditor with Temkin of *Inventing the Modern: Untold Stories of the Women Who Shaped The Museum of Modern Art*, with Rachel Remick, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture.

Support for the exhibition is provided by the Annual Exhibition Fund. Leadership contributions to the Annual Exhibition Fund, in support of the Museum's collection and collection exhibitions, are generously provided by Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, the Sandra and Tony Tamer Exhibition Fund, the Kate W. Cassidy Foundation, Alice and Tom Tisch, the Marella and Giovanni Agnelli Fund for Exhibitions, The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art, Eva and Glenn Dubin, Mimi Haas, The David Rockefeller Council, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz, Kenneth C. Griffin, The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, and Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder. Major funding is provided by The Sundheim Family Foundation.

The Bloomberg Connects digital experience is made possible through the support of Bloomberg Philanthropies.

We invite you to explore the related publication *Inventing the Modern: Untold Stories of the Women Who Shaped The Museum of Modern Art*, which is available in the Museum Store.

For related content and programs, visit moma.org/lilliebliss.