

**RINGLING MUSEUM [cont. from p.13]**

The permanent archive will include records and other historical documents of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, the Ringling Museum of Art Foundation, the Ringling Circus Collection, and the personal papers of John Ringling. Currently scattered in various offices in the Museum buildings, these records will be organized and preserved in one central location at the Circus Galleries. Efforts will also be made to solicit lost records to fill any major gaps in these holdings before the documents become available to staff, scholars, and the public for scholarly research.

Ms. Morr hopes that the Museum Archive will serve as a model to the large number of other museums in Florida and the Southeast. The Museum will publish an illustrated guide to the Archive which will be made available free of charge to archival organizations, libraries, and interested groups and individuals.

The two-year grant will help pay for the salary and benefits of a professional archivist as well as for archival supplies. The Museum will advertise nationally in September for the archivist, who will begin work in December or January.

For additional information, please contact Lynell Morr, Librarian, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 5401 Bayshore Road, Sarasota, FL 34243.

**REPORTS FROM RESEARCHERS****UNRAVELLING THE JOSEF ALBERS STORY**

There are few things as exciting in life as moments of revelation. Just when we think we know all there is to be known about the subject at hand, new facts emerge and make us jump. It isn't just information that we have gained; these keys to the past help fulfill our craving to understand how we got to where we are now.

Most often such flashes of awakening occur in the course of family encounters. On the night before her fiftieth wedding anniver-

sary, Mother decides to tell the story she has always kept private. You have a milestone birthday, and Uncle Roger suddenly thinks you are old enough to hear about what really happened on that famous trip to Athens.

Sometimes, though, it isn't people, but sheets of paper or images on microfilm that provide the surprise answers. I had one of the most extraordinary moments of enlightenment of my life when going through file folders in the archives of the Museum of Modern Art. A myth was replaced; truth unveiled. What I thought were absolute facts were, if not replaced, reordered.

My guide was neither a family member nor a party to the action under investigation. She was a person I had only met on two previous occasions. This was MoMA's generous, gracious archivist, Rona Roob. What Rona was doing was selflessly and imaginatively leading me to any information that might shed light on my area of research. I was at the Museum because I am working on a book for Alfred Knopf about some of the pioneering art patrons of the 1930's. One of my key figures is Edward M.M. Warburg. As director of the Josef Albers Foundation, I am also particularly interested in Josef Albers. Naturally, Rona Roob was eager for me to be aware of the Warburg-Albers connection. She therefore urged me to read Eddie Warburg's letters to Alfred Barr; she remembered that, somewhere in those letters, he referred to Anni and Josef Albers coming to America.

This is a story about which I have written a great deal: in a Smithsonian Press book about Anni Albers, in a Guggenheim Museum/Abrams catalog about Josef Albers, and in assorted essays and articles. The tale always was that Philip Johnson invited the Alberses to leave Germany in 1933, and to teach at Black Mountain College. I had discussed this event with Anni Albers, Philip Johnson, and Eddie Warburg--in conversations and interviews--and always heard it pretty much the same way. But the archives taught me something further. The Black Mountain people hadn't just approached Philip Johnson when in looking for an art teacher; they also went to Eddie Warburg. Both were at MoMA in 1933. Warburg's

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letter to Barr tells all. Warburg and Johnson had both recommended Albers, but there was a major hitch. Funds were needed to guarantee a salary of \$1500; without that guarantee, the immigration authorities would not permit him to come to the United States. Eddie's letter rings of his passionate commitment. He clearly wanted both to advance the new style of art, and to help someone emigrate and enjoy freedom. To obtain funds became a personal cause.

Having learned all of this, I did some further investigation. I spoke with one of the founders of Black Mountain College, Theodore Dreier. From him, and further archival material at MoMA, I learned that Eddie Warburg himself had come up with the necessary money. But I hadn't learned this from Eddie Warburg or from Anni Albers. The Alberses were unaware of the financial maneuvering that paved the way for their exodus from Germany; they only knew that things had gone more easily than they expected. They thought that it was only Philip Johnson's idea that they come here and didn't know that the idea came jointly from Philip and Eddie. (Johnson has since concurred that the idea was Eddie's as well as his.) Eddie Warburg, who never likes to give himself too much credit for anything, and was busy with many other projects at the time, certainly never claimed such a seminal role for himself. But Ted Dreier confirmed that not only was Eddie Warburg pivotal in the Alberses coming over, but it was because his (Dreier's) mother was a friend of Margaret Lewisohn's that the Black Mountain people first went to the Museum of Modern Art. Sam Lewisohn, Margaret's husband, was both Eddie's cousin and one of his fellow trustees at MoMA.

So, a letter told more than people's memories, and I learned that three of the people most important in my own life--Eddie Warburg and Anni and Josef Albers--were more connected than any of them realized or remembered. Research, abetted by angels like Rona Roob and facilities like MoMA's Archives, can offer startling truths.

Nicholas Fox Weber  
Josef Albers Foundation

When I was approached in 1954 by E.P. Richardson, then director of the Detroit Institute of Arts, to donate my records as an artist to the newly-formed Archives of American Art, I had no idea that thirty years later I would myself be using the resources of that very institution to write a biography of J.B. Neumann. I first met J.B. in 1929 when I wandered into his gallery, the New Art Circle at 9 East 57th Street in New York. J.B., as he was called, became my mentor as he was for so many in the art world.

I decided to call my biography The Artlover after J.B.'s own publications and since the name most truly described him. Subsequently, I discovered that in 1957 the Museum of Modern Art dedicated a catalogue of Edvard Munch's prints to J.B. Neumann as an "early champion" of that artist and added, "What better title could one find for a biography of J.B. Neumann than that of one of his own publications - The Artlover?"

At the Archives of American Art in New York, guided by William McNaught and Jemison Hammond, I began to study five rolls of microfilm (NJBN 1-5) with hundreds of frames of correspondence. Arranged in alphabetical order, I jotted down the names I found: Josef Albers, Milton Avery, Alfred Barr, Max Beckmann, Oscar Bluemner, Alexander Calder, Joseph Cornell, Albert Einstein, Alfred Flechtheim, Emil Jannings, Lee Gatch, George Grosz, Marsden Hartley, Wassily Kandinsky, Richard Lippold, Isamu Noguchi, Max Reinhardt, Georges Rouault, Galka Scheyer, Maurice Sterne, Alfred Stieglitz, Curt Valentin, Max Weber, Marion Willard, all the way to Stephen Zweig.

At first I was embarrassed at my avid voyeurism, but this feeling rapidly gave way as I came to the conclusion that J.B. had saved these bits and pieces of his life for me (or someone else) to assemble into some sort of order. A framework began to appear.

Left in limbo since his death in 1961, this extraordinary and self-educated art dealer began life as a Galicianer in Austro-Hungary, and went on to transform himself into

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