NINA CULLINAN PAPERS

Filmed by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Lent for filming by Miss Nina Cullinan, Houston, Texas in March, 1979.

NINA CULLINAN PAPERS

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1959 Clippings Nina Cullinan

$625,000 Museum Wing Honors J. S. Cullinan, Former Limaite

The new $625,000 Cullinan wing on the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, pictured and described in the Feb. 2 Time Magazine art section, is the result of a donation by Miss Nina Cullinan, daughter of the late Texas oilman, Joseph Stephen Cullinan who lived in Lima in the 1890s and married Lucy Halm, a Lima native.

C. L. (Mac) McCray, 430 S. Rosedale Ave., visited the Cullinan family at their estate in Houston in 1926. His father, the late Michael McCray, one-time superintendent of the Buckeye Pipe Line Co., went to Texas at Cullinan's invitation and worked for a short period as head of Cullinan's Texas Co. Pipe Line, until illness forced McCray's resignation.

Nina was named after her mother's best friend in Lima, the late Mrs. Nina Purtscher Stueber, whose daughter, Mrs. Martha Stueber Fisher, now living in the southwest, still visits here in the summer.

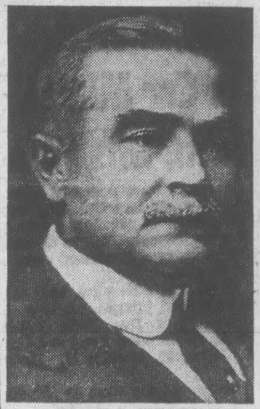
Time Magazine's article pointed out that one of the world's most famous architects, Chicago's Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 72, whom fellow architects rank with Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier, designed the Cullinan wing for the museum, based on Mies' unique principles of what a museum should be—a floor slab, columns and a roof plate.

The new hall is supported by four 82-foot girders above the roof, leaving 10,000 square feet of column-free space beneath a 30-foot ceiling. Opening to the north is a curving facade of gray-tinted glass which has become the main museum's entrance.

There are a few touches of elegance, the article points out: Roman travertine on the entrance stairs and terrace; green Venetian terrazzo floors.

Museum director Lee Malone says: "All this space is so majestic, so flexible." The first exhibition of 60 ultra-modern paintings was hung from the ceiling on picture wire to provide an installation as nearly invisible as the museum's own structure.

McCray, who has done considerable research on the life of Nina's father, adds that Cullinan and his own father were best of friends, having worked in Pennsylvania together before coming to the Ohio oil fields in the late 1880s. They roomed together in Findlay in the 1890's.



JOSEPH S. CULLINAN

The late A. T. MacDonell, father of James A. and A. D. MacDonell of Lima, also was a good friend of Cullinan and the two men courted their future wives together in Lima.

He and his family left Ohio in 1895 for Texas, where Cullinan formed first the J. S. Cullinan & Co., then the Corsicana Petroleum Co., then the Texas Fuel Co. and Producers Oil Co. With several other financiers, he organized the Texas Co. (Texaco), later resigned and on his own formed the American Republics Corp. and headed Galena Signal Oil Co. until his death in 1937, at the age of 77.

Findlay Pair Fined For Theft Of Auto

Two 17-year-old Findlay youths were found to be juvenile delinquents after a hearing on charges of auto theft in Allen County Juvenile Court.

Judge Paul J. Rockey ordered Harold Eugene Ritter and Raymond Carl Thomas to pay fines of $50 each. The fines were suspended, providing each make restitution for damages to th car.

The two still face charges in Hancock County. The boys admitted stealing a car belonging to Margaret F. Singlar from in front of 687½ S. Main St. Jan. 25.

The Big Room

What form should a museum take in mid-century? There is the palace—a grand gallery with lofty, vaulted skylights. There is the closed box—an exhibition space sealed off from outside light and divided into cubicles where displays can be lighted with the calculated drama of a stage set. Chicago's Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 72, whom fellow architects rank with Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, accepts neither form. In Mies's view, a museum should be composed only of "three basic elements—a floor slab, columns and a roof plate."

In essence, Mies's concept goes back to the Japanese house, in which anonymous space can serve as living room, dining room or bedroom, depending on what furniture is brought forth. In the same way, Mies's museum area can be divided by partitions to take on the character of whatever is displayed within it.

Mies put his principles into classic but temporary form at the 1929 Barcelona International Exposition with his German Pavilion, a building that proved to be one of the most influential structures of modern times. But for a long time Mies found no time or opportunity to build a permanent museum. His opportunity came when Nina Cullinan, daughter of Texas Oilman Joseph Stephen Cullinan, offered the Houston Museum of Fine Arts $625,000 to build a new wing.

Last week Texans walking through the new Cullinan Hall found it good. The building is supported by four 82-ft.-long girders above the roof, leaving 10,000 sq. ft. of column-free space beneath a 30-ft. ceiling. Opening to the north is a curving façade of grey-tinted glass which has become the main museum entrance. In such stark simplicity, the touches of elegance —Roman travertine on the entrance stairs and terrace, green Venetian terrazzo floors —take on a rich but restrained resonance.

Museum Director Lee Malone says: "All this space is so majestic, so flexible." To prove it last week Director Malone put on a display of 60 ultramodern paintings (*e.g.*, France's Hans Hartung and Manhattan's Mark Rothki), hung each picture from the ceiling on picture wire to provide an installation as nearly invisible as the museum's own structure. Donor Cullinan said happily: "The new wing is like a great stage which faces the city. Another might have built a nice, safe building. I wanted something that would be contemporary for generations to come." Touring the building in a wheelchair to spare an ailing hip, Mies agrees: "Buildings last so much longer than any function, and you must design with that in mind. Good design does not grow old."

The Corcoran's Century

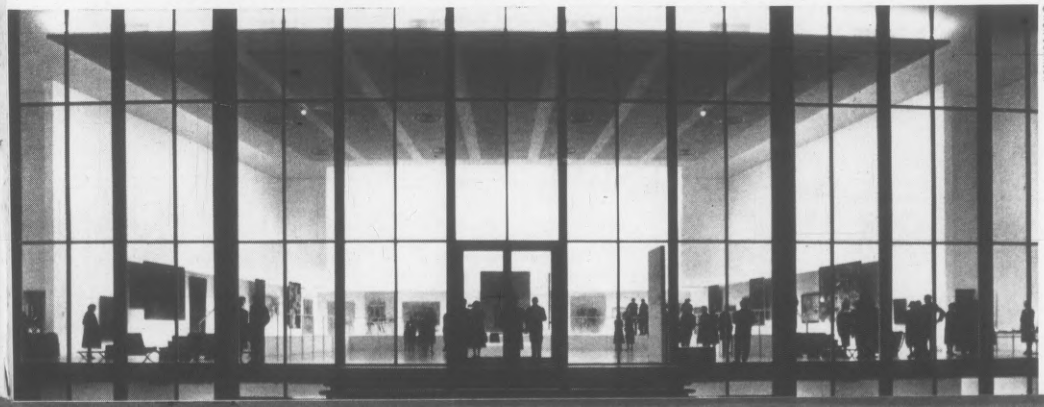
For a century, Washington's Corcoran Gallery has been a staunch patron of American art. This week it marks its 100th birthday with a two-city celebration: a loan exhibition at Manhattan's Wildenstein Gallery of outstanding pictures drawn from its collection and its regular biennial roundup of contemporary U.S. paintings in Washington. Founder William Wilson Corcoran was a Washington banker so rich and so well connected financially that he could and did underwrite much of the cost of the Mexican War (1846-48). While new-rich American collectors of the 19th century were turning almost exclusively to European art, Corcoran himself chose to concentrate on the new American painters. Stabs and grabs at Europe by later benefactors have filled the Corcoran (on Washington's 17th Street, near the White House) with surprise items ranging from Sienese altar panels to French impressionists. Yet the heart of the Corcoran is its American collection, to which it adds every year.

The changes those years have wrought in American painting were made dramatically clear by the shows. In Manhattan, the standout exhibits were Seth Eastman's *Lacrosse Playing Among the Sioux Indians* and Albert Bierstadt's *The Last of the Buffalo*—both brown, spacious, romantic and unabashedly illustrative. The Washington show was long on flat, bright abstractions that would have meant no more to Eastman and Bierstadt than so many Indian blankets. First prize of $2,000 and a gold medal went to Walter Plate, 33, for *Hot House*, a big, lush bouquet of thick colors, which thus became the Corcoran's latest acquisition. An ex-marine who studied painting in Paris under the G.I. bill, Plate thinks of himself as "a strictly American painter," by which he means an abstract expressionist. The $1,500 second prize went, oddly enough, to a bouncy figure painting: Jack Levine's lighthearted *Girls from Fleugel Street*.

Weeding through 1,600 entries, Corcoran Director Hermann Warner Williams concluded that the pendulum may at last be swinging back to Levine's (and Bierstadt's) way. So far, Williams finds this trend toward more representative subjects only partially successful. Says he: "There is a more or less lost generation of young painters who turned up their noses at the basic disciplines of draftsmanship and just jumped into abstraction. Although they are now trying to use figures, they can't make the switch because they haven't had those early disciplines."

"GIRLS FROM FLEUGEL STREET"

MIES VAN DER ROHE'S NEW CULLINAN WING AT THE HOUSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS



Owen Johnson

ROOM WITH A VIEW—*Mrs Ben Yeager throws the first shovel load of dirt on one of the six oak trees presented to the Museum of Fine Arts by the Garden Club of Houston. The trees will add distinction to the landscaping outside the museum's Cullinan Wing, and Mrs Yeager will get full enjoyment from the planting, herself, since her home is across the street from the museum.*

Junior League, Press Club Parties To Be Zany

By BOBBE LENTZ, Post Women's Editor

Disregarding the adage, March is guaranteed to go out like a lion instead of a lamb—noisily Monday night at the Junior League's talent party, roaringly Tuesday night at the Press Club's gridiron dinner.

And April will take it from there, kicking up her heels indoors and out at dances and luncheons, golf tournaments and swimming parties.

The league members will let their hair down and don zany costumes Monday night, gathering at the Junior League clubhouse to invent the skits they'll present April 18 at their annual Charity Ball. They will be minus their bee-busy information chairman, Mrs C. Pharr Duson. She, Mr Duson and daughters Betty and Molly will spend the Easter holidays in Hunt, returning April 2.

AS FOR THE gridiron dinner, the Standing Room Only sign could go up any minute as an avalanche of table reservations is pouring in for the Press Club's annual fun-poking Tuesday night in the Rice Hotel's new ballroom.

The patrons' list includes the Harris Mastersons, Howard Tellepsens, Oscar Holcombes, E. D. Cummings, Gus Worthams, R. E. Smiths, R. H. Abercrombies, Earl Stoneciphers, Les Tarrants, E. J. Corleys, the Roger Daileys and their guests, the Emmett Mattsons.

Entertaining large groups of guests at the show will be Mr [illegible] Riggins, the and Mrs Clarke Polk. They will be hosts for a buffet supper in Memorial Drive Country Club and a theatre party at Theatre Inc.

Two parties will end the month for the Ed Rose family. Son George and his fiance, Sharon Smith, will be honored Sunday evening with a cocktail supper given by Mr and Mrs Howard Stafford in their home. And on Tuesday, Mrs Rose will entertain with a luncheon at The Mayfair honoring Debutante Mary Lou Green.

ANOTHER BRIDE-ELECT, Carol Ann Allen, will be honored Saturday at two parties.

Mrs R. L. Harper and her daughter, Ann, will be hostesses at a Briar Club luncheon, and Mrs Rex Meador and her daughter, Lynn, will honor Carole Ann with a kitchen shower that afternoon in their home.

The bride-elect, whose marriage to Robert Evans Dailey will be April 3, has named their wedding attendants.

Her sister, Beth Allen, will be the maid of honor, and her brother, Donald Allen, will be a groomsman. The intended groom's brothers, Jack Dailey Jr and Jim Dailey, will be best man and groomsman, respectively.

Their attendants also include Mrs Bradford Crowley, Ann Harper, Mrs Jack Dailey Jr, Mr and Mrs Harold Kingery and Jim Boyles.

Mrs J. W. Dailey Sr of Ripley, Tenn, the groom-elect's mother, will honor the pair with a dinner party at Memorial Drive Country Club April 2 following the wedding rehearsals.

Mrs Dailey Jr and Mrs Kingery will be hostesses for the bridesmaids luncheon April 3 at the Shamrock Hilton.

Old Kentucky Home To Be Southern Museum

LEXINGTON, Ky — (AP) — Ever wish you could turn back the clock and live in the Kentucky of 100 years ago?

Dr Hambleton Tapp will help you do it.

[illegible] will be labeled and placed in its proper setting in the old house.

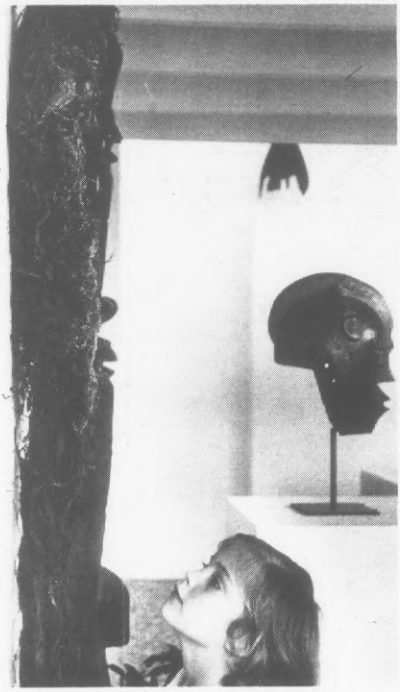
Dr Tapp hopes to complete the house by summer. Then he plans to restore slave quarters behind the mansion.

After that, he says, various

Opening Of "Totems Not Taboo"

CAA Show In Cullinan Hall

Miss Ima Hogg and Rene d'harnencourt, director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York attend the opening.



"It's so-o-o-o tall—"

Miss Nina Cullinan studies the catalogue.

All Photos By Eve Arnold of Magnum Photos, New York

THE LADY AND THE HALL

In a rare photograph Nina Cullinan is seen poised at the foot of the stairs which lead up to a second level in the handsome exhibit, "Totems Not Taboo," on current view in Cullinan Hall at the Museum of Fine Arts. Miss Cullinan gave the hall as a memorial to her late parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph S. Cullinan. The exhibition, which will continue on daily view through next Sunday, has been a notable success and has attracted hundreds of gallery viewers. It was staged there by Dr. Jermayne MacAgy of the Contemporary Arts Museum, which has an invitation to use the hall from time to time.

TOTEMS NOT TABOO FOR 5,000

The Contemporary Arts Association's "Totems Not Taboo" exhibit had its 5,000th visitor Wednesday in the Museum of Fine Arts Cullinan Hall. Pushing the visitor list to 5,000 were three Galena Park High School students, Jimmy Thompson, left, a junior; Mallery Hubbard, a senior, and Bob Summers, a sophomore. This is the largest group to attend an exhibit in the gallery which opened last October. The exhibit of primitive art from all over the world opened last Thursday night.—Post Photo

Nov. 7, 1959

Architecturally Successful But the Paintings Died

By Katharine Kuh, *Art Editor, Saturday Review*

THOUGH the phrase "form follows function" appears often in connection with contemporary architecture and design, two controversial new buildings by two renowned modern architects firmly deny this credo. I refer to the late Frank Lloyd Wright's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York and to Ludwig Miës van der Rohe's soaring Cullinan Hall, an addition to the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. Both structures, competing frankly with the works of art that they house, pose a familiar dilemma. The question is clear, the answer uncertain—for where is that tenuous line to be drawn between legitimate architectural requirements and the designer's personal signature?

Despite the sheer beauty, the invention and vaulting rhythm of their conceptions, both architects tend blithely to disregard certain fundamental museum needs. For example, in Houston walls forty feet high support a dazzling open structure where scale and space defy the most powerful works of art, even when smaller supplementary partitions are used as installation backgrounds. At the Guggenheim, conversely, hanging areas are sometimes little more than five feet high, creating perplexing problems in an expressly modern museum at precisely the time that painters have turned to extravagant dimensions.

In each case, despite or because of the functional liberties taken, architecture of unique excitement results. The buildings themselves become works of art and monuments to their distinguished designers. But paintings and sculpture often demand submissive surroundings where introspection and privacy are possible, where the process of looking is more important than the experience of seeing.

Both buildings, based on bold projections of space and dramatic juxtapositions of scale, curiously recall but in no way resemble the overpowering palace architecture which familiarly enshrined art museums of the past. What one misses perhaps is a human dimension, an intimacy sympathetic to personal and poignant visual experiences. If the towering scale and imaginative daring of the two plans are similar, their motivating designs are diametrically opposed, as one might expect from architects of such divergent philosophies. For while Miës characteristically depended on a rectilinear structure of classical and impeccable purity, Wright based his intensely romantic architecture on a succession of undulating curves. Indeed, his concrete building itself becomes a vast molded sculpture where clean intersecting planes play against sensuously rounded walls. Wright claimed that "here for first time architecture appears plastic"—an attribute usually reserved for the arts of sculpture and painting.

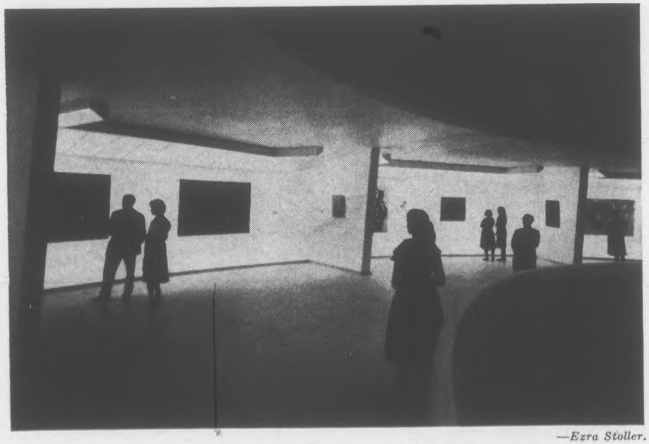
The main section of the new Guggenheim Museum is predicated on six storeys of spiral ramps leading from a spacious lobby and culminating in a great glass dome (which one could only wish had been less obtrusively leaded). A smaller connecting building devoted to administration is based on the same principle, both structures recalling the architecture of ancient ziggurats. With the exception of one large gallery and the entrance lobby (the latter almost too imposing for works of art) exhibition space is limited to the central ramp, an incline of about one-third mile divided into numerous bays. However, elevators are readily accessible.

Like an obstacle race with endless hurdles, the architecture presents an implacable challenge to the museum's director, James Johnson Sweeney. Circumventing five-foot walls, most of which are either tilted or curved, he designed an effective free-hanging installation where paintings projected on iron rods seem to float in unrestricted space. Other practical problems relating to light, adequate storage areas, and possibilities for future expansion were likewise provocative. But it is only fair to point out that Wright's original plans called for free-standing screens to augment exhibition areas and vary spatial relationships. With these mobile units, which for some reason were never built, he hoped to provide more flexible installation facilities. Alterations in his original design may have resulted, of course, in serious dislocations throughout. But though the device of uninterrupted ramps around a vast hollow core fires the imagination and beguiles the eye, as the basis for an art museum it seems exceptionally wasteful and frustrating. For what could be more disturbing than pedestals wedged on continuous inclines (if sculpture is occasionally to be related to paintings) or rectangular canvases cut by a profusion of sloping angles and curves? A sense of uneasiness results, and unnerving insecurity, though, as Wright predicted, the structure has "great repose, like the atmosphere of an unbroken wave" when seen *without* those objects of art for which it was built.

With an eye to quality, Mr. Sweeney chose 134 outstanding works from the Guggenheim collection of approximately 2,000. These he installed with infinite care, tirelessly relating each work to its complicated surroundings. The result is often brilliant, especially where objects of great strength are concerned. Looking across the abyss from ramp to ramp, one feels that the more structural the painting, the better its chance to survive. Assertive canvases based on bold color and shapes (by artists like Léger, Kandinsky, and Mondrian) seem less affected by aggressive surroundings than recessive paintings, which suffer sadly from lack of seclusion.

So here is the age-old quandary. Can architecture invent for the future and still provide for the present? Should functional problems be permitted to interfere with new conceptions? And is it heresy to find fault with museum architecture that flatly denies museum needs but still has far-reaching validity? For Wright's whole idea of uninterrupted ramps extends the possibilities of architecture and suggests numerous modern applications. For instance, where large groups of people in motion are concerned—in department stores, fairs, or at certain types of educational exhibitions—the very openness of the structure, the very flow of its spirals could increase mobility and provide an exhilarating new sense of freedom.

But for an art museum all that is really needed are walls scaled to the works of art, adequate and flexible space, good light, and an architectural design so discreet as humbly to protect and make comfortable both the treasures on exhibition and the visitors who come to see them.



—*Ezra Stoller.*

View of ramp gallery of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.