



**MICHELANGELO
AND HIS WORLD**
WITH DRAWINGS FROM THE BRITISH MUSEUM
THE PEABODY MORGAN LIBRARY
29 EAST 36TH STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016
APRIL 26-JULY 28, 1979

The exhibition has been made possible in part by support from Philip Morris International and the New York Foundation for the Arts. Further support has been provided by the Friends of AM and Artists to Indemnify the Arts.

George Weissman, chairman of Philip Morris Inc., talking to Jasper Johns, right, at opening of Mr. Johns's exhibit at Whitney Museum of American Art. The company also brought drawings of Michelangelo to the Morgan Library.

Philip Morris and the Arts

By SANDRA SALMANS

In recent months Philip Morris Inc. helped bring an Edward Hopper exhibition to the Whitney Museum of American Art and a show on German Expressionism to the Guggenheim Museum. Next year it will help bring works by Kandinsky to the Guggenheim and manuscripts of Lewis Carroll to the Morgan Library.

Following recent cutbacks in Federal spending on the arts, education and social welfare, President Reagan has called on business to increase its support of such things. In many re-

spects, Philip Morris, the maker of Marlboro cigarettes, Miller beer and 7-Up, has long been a model of corporate philanthropy.

"In support of the arts, Philip Morris is one of the most progressive companies," said Michael d'Amello, vice president of the Business Committee for the Arts, an organization that promotes company giving.

The fact that some of the finer things of life are being supported by products associated with afflictions ranging from littered landscape to lung cancer, however, has stirred criticism.

"No sortie into the arts, no Edward Hopper exhibition, no orchestra tour

can deflect public attention from the fact that the company's primary product is cigarettes, and cigarettes kill," said James Swomley, managing director of the American Lung Association.

Other people question the propriety of corporate philanthropy. Some corporate gadflies contend that management has no right to give away money because it is rightfully the shareholders'. Other critics say that such decisions should be made by government, not by companies.

"On the one hand, I wish that the public money for taste-shaping activi-

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COMPANY NEWS

How Philip Morris Supports the Arts

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ies were disbursed by elected servants of the public," said Robert Heilbroner, economics professor at the New School for Social Research. Still, he conceded, government — with its bureaucrats and lowest-common-denominator mentality — may not always be the best disbursing of funds.

Philip Morris, for its part, sees no incompatibility between its role in underwriting the arts and its role in marketing the cigarettes, beer and canned drinks that support it. Nor do its executives find any impropriety in a corporation's helping shape public taste in art as well as in smoking.

Exploring the Avant-Garde

"We find no conflict between our private economic obligations as a business and our public duties as a corporate citizen," George Weissman, the company's chairman and chief executive officer, has said. "What does exist, happily, is a broad commonality of interest."

Unlike many corporate donors who finance performances of established works such as "Swan Lake" and "Carmen," Philip Morris seeks out the experimental and avant-garde. In addition to Hopper and German Expressionism, there has been a Jasper Johns retrospective, shown at the Whitney and subsequently in Cologne, Paris, London and Tokyo. And there has been a photography show at the Museum of Modern Art. The company has also underwritten Michelangelo at the Morgan Library, North American Indian art at the Whitney and a traveling show of American folk art.

"We're looking for the innovative show, not for the blockbuster," said Barbara Reuter, a former art history professor who has been Philip Morris's contributions manager for the last five years.

Philip Morris declines to disclose the exact amount of its contributions, fearing that some shareholders might regard it as too generous while others might think it niggardly.

The company does, however, acknowledge spending approximately 1 percent of its pretax domestic income. According to Wall Street analysts, that would indicate contributions of ap-

proximately \$7 million in 1980. (The company's net income last year was \$578.8 million on sales of \$9.8 billion.)

This does not approach the magnitude of such giants as the Exxon Corporation, which gives about \$38 million a year, or the International Business Machines Corporation (\$35 million), nor does it qualify Philip Morris as a member of the "5 percent" club — the share of pretax earnings given by some smaller companies with large social consciences.

The arts are not the only recipient of Philip Morris's "socially beneficial payments," as the company's accountants describe them. Like other companies, Philip Morris contributes to the United Way, to colleges that serve the communities where the company has offices and plants and to a host of worthy causes. Philip Morris has also provided money for some unconventional good works, such as a scholarship program in its four major plant communities for women over 25 who would like to return to college on a part-time basis.

Emphasis on Visual Arts

About 30 percent of Philip Morris's contributions budget goes to the arts, compared with 10 percent for the average corporate donor. And of Philip Morris's support of the arts, upward of 85 percent is devoted to the visual arts.

How Philip Morris came to focus on the visual arts was mainly accidental. At first the company began buying art to refurbish its New York headquarters. That led to the sponsorship in 1963 of a well-reviewed exhibition on Pop Art and Op Art. Its success eventually led the company to concentrate on the visual arts. "We saw that our art patronage was a good fit with our corporate image," Mr. Weissman said, "and we built on it." For developing Philip Morris's "creative personality," he added, "art looked like the right medium."

Undoubtedly a major factor was Mr. Weissman himself, a former public relations executive who has a personal interest in the arts and is currently a trustee of the Whitney museum. But stressing the visual arts was a natural development for Philip Morris. Its corporate strength lies not so much in manufacturing as in the marketing of



Children at the New York Historical Society's show, "Small Folk: tics of Childhood in America," sponsored by Seven-Up.

packaged goods.

"Graphics are very important here," Miss Reuter observed. "People here were already concentrating on shapes, colors, lines."

Local art programs, like donations to local colleges and hospitals and local public-service television stations, are an integral part of the contri-

butions program. A number of the shows have traveled to communities such as Richmond, where Philip Morris manufactures cigarettes and also conducts research and development, and Milwaukee, where Miller brews beer. The company also buys art to decorate its workplaces, such as local crafts for its new factory in North Carolina's Carrabass County. "The minute we are established in a community, making a product, we take a hard look at what needs to be supported," Miss Reuter said.

With the exception of a tobacco museum at Richmond, the art exhibitions include little indication of where the money that made them possible came from. The company treads carefully to avoid offending sensibilities. When it recently underwrote "Small Folk," a display of children in folk art from the 17th to 19th centuries, Seven-Up was designated as the sponsor.

Analyzing the Benefits

In keeping with the spirit of the Government's ban on cigarette commercials, Philip Morris does not associate its name with specific programs on public television, said James Bowling, a senior vice president and chairman of the contributions committee.

Precisely how does Philip Morris — and the shareholders — gain from its ambitious art exhibitions? The company says its community programs substantially enhance the quality of life locally and help attract a higher caliber of employee. It also says supporting the arts improves its corporate image and builds good will.

"Certainly, we've thought, 'If we show ourselves to be good citizens, people — including politicians — will think well of us,'" Miss Reuter said, adding, "That is only one of a number of concerns."

The company prefers to dwell on intangible benefits. "It takes art to make a company great," its corporate advertising says. "We believe that you can't separate what we do from our success," Mr. Bowling said. "If we just manufactured cigarettes and beer, Philip Morris wouldn't be the same company."

A New Day, a New Patron

Philip Morris executives express a fundamental interest in helping to develop the arts and shape public taste. "The future will see an ever-closer partnership between business and the arts," Mr. Weissman said in a speech at Lincoln Center shortly after the company began financing exhibitions. The day of the "giant private patron" is over, he said, and now it is the turn of the corporation, with its "potential and responsibility for enlightenment."

Some social critics disagree, arguing that corporations, with their traditional emphasis on the bottom line, are an unlikely source of enlightenment. But virtually nobody suggests that the financing of exhibitions should stop.

"Sure, there are contradictions," said Ivar Berg, a former business professor who now teaches sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. "Clearly the profits from cigarettes help them support the arts. But it would be even worse if all they gave were the cigarettes."