

Life's Networks and the American Art World

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Abstract

Life magazine's vast networks and the connections and collaborations between its editors and museum trustees, collectors, curators, critics, and artists at a wide range of institutions led to some of the most fascinating and innovative exhibitions, magazine articles, and programs in the mid-century American art world.

From 1936 to 1972, *Life* magazine played a key role in the American art world, commissioning works of art, organizing exhibitions and round tables, and publishing works of art in color for its millions of readers.¹ To produce such groundbreaking exhibitions, publications, and programs, *Life's* editors and staff drew upon the magazine's extensive network as well as personal and professional connections with museum trustees, collectors, curators, critics, artists, and colleagues in other industries.

Many in the leadership at *Life* were deeply invested and personally interested in both historical and modern art. Editor-in-Chief Henry R. Luce was an art collector and a trustee of both the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and he and others at Time Inc. regularly corresponded with trustees at those institutions, most notably Nelson A. Rockefeller.² *Life's* executive editor Daniel Longwell was also an art collector, and served as trustee and director of the American Federation of Arts in the 1950s.³ Margit Varga, who served as *Life's* art editor from 1936 to 1956, was an artist who had studied at the Art Students League and National Academy of Design and she exhibited regularly at the ACA Gallery and Midtown Galleries in New York. Dorothy Seiberling, who was art editor at *Life* from 1953 until 1972, had many connections in the American art world, and was also married to art historian and critic Leo Steinberg from 1962 to 1969.⁴

Many in the field were aware of *Life's* ability to generate public interest in the arts. In 1948, for instance, critic and curator Lincoln Kirstein suggested to Varga and Seiberling that *Life* send someone to photograph artist Elie Nadelman's home and studio, as MoMA was about to open an exhibition on his work; it became an art story in the May issue that year.⁵ In late 1949, Sir Leigh Ashton, director of the Victoria & Albert Museum, wrote Longwell: I wish we could have an article in *Life* sometime about our new acquisition—Ham House. It would make wonderful colour plates and is an interesting development in museum life as it is the first large country house in England to be taken over with its Charles II contents entire, to act as a period adjunct to the Museum."⁶ And in 1950, in an effort to publicize its seventy-fifth anniversary, Fiske Kimball, the architectural historian and director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, wrote Longwell to see if *Life* would

cover the upcoming diamond jubilee celebration in Philadelphia, offering *Life* “an exclusive” on the story.⁷

In order to produce such successful spreads on art in its weekly pages, the editors at *Time-Life* had invested early on in technology that enabled the magazine to print color reproductions of art for a mass audience.⁸ In 1934, R.R. Donnelley and Sons, the Chicago-based firm that also printed Luce’s *Time* magazine, developed printing processes that made color printing so fast and cost-effective that *Life* could publish reproductions of art in color in its pages on a weekly basis, not to mention advertisements and other features.⁹ Indeed, from its very first issue in 1936, *Life* published works of art in color.¹⁰ *Life*’s readers wrote in frequently, commending the magazine for its accomplishments in color printing, praising for example, the magazine’s 1937 color cover story on the Frick Collection in New York, as well as its successful series on European paintings in American collections.¹¹

Life also regularly reported on the work of contemporary American artists, producing stories on Georgia O’Keeffe and Charles Sheeler, among many others.¹² In 1940, the magazine expanded its reach by publishing its first book on art, *Modern American Painting*. For this project, the editors enlisted the critic Peyton Boswell Jr., of *Art Digest*, to write a book on “America’s new school of native painting.”¹³ Drawn from the magazine’s regular features, *Modern American Painting* included color reproductions of art from the colonial period through the 1930s.

Many of the living artists selected for inclusion in *Modern American Painting* appreciated the publicity and recognized what *Life* was doing for American art with the book, and more broadly. Shortly after the book’s release, Thomas Hart Benton wrote one of the editors:

Although I follow painting pretty closely the book was a revelation to me. I don’t think I had ever realized the extent and strength of our American movement. This book brings out conclusively the existence of a great American school, varied, interesting and alive. I am glad to be a part of that school and as a part of it glad also to say that this first pictorial survey of its effect which *Life*, Dodd-Mead,

and Peyton Boswell have organized is going to be of inestimable benefit in setting up closer relationships between the American public and the art which belongs to it.¹⁴

Grant Wood also congratulated *Life* on the publication: “Frankly, the thing that impressed me most was seeing all those beautiful reproductions brought together and realizing fully for the first time what a tremendous thing you folks of LIFE have done for American art.”¹⁵

In his introduction to *Modern American Painting*, Boswell likewise credited *Life* for the “growth of American art appreciation” and for “sagaciously recognizing the presence of an authentic American School even before it became the vital movement it is today.”¹⁶ Later that year, in November 1939, C.D. Jackson, general manager at *Life*, sent Nelson A. Rockefeller, the newly-elected president of MoMA’s board of trustees, a copy of the book and wrote him to see if there would be interest in turning the book into a traveling exhibition.¹⁷ Rockefeller responded, thanking Jackson for the “delightfully interesting and beautifully prepared book” and stated that he found the “idea concerning an exhibition...extremely interesting,” and that he would “take it up with the people at the Museum of Modern Art.”¹⁸ MoMA’s director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., replied to Rockefeller in early December, suggesting that “If *Life* would like to work some time with the Museum on a series of reproductions of which we might show and circulate the originals, we could consider the matter carefully.”¹⁹ While the exhibition never came to fruition, it is an early instance of the magazine exploring a possible partnership with a museum, and also demonstrates MoMA’s interest in the use of color reproductions for exhibitions.²⁰

The following year, in 1940, *Life* did join forces with another institution, organizing a juried show of contemporary American painting at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.²¹ The exhibition, not unlike the book *Modern American Painting*, was “predicated on the belief that the cultural development of the United States over the past quarter century is today culminating in the emergence of an American School of Painting, encouraged by public interest such as has never before been equalled in the United States.”²² The *Cranbrook-Life Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting* featured sixty

works, and ran from May 17 to June 2, 1940, bringing record numbers for the institution.²³ *Life* invited museum directors from across the country to attend the opening, including Alfred H. Barr, Jr. of MoMA, who was “very interested” in the exhibition and Daniel Catton Rich of the Art Institute of Chicago, who viewed the event as “significant” and happily accepted the opportunity to serve on the Committee of Patrons for the exhibition.”²⁴ *Life* also published a color feature in the magazine on the exhibition, which hailed it “as a symbol of America’s increasing responsibility as a democratic world art center.”²⁵

During World War II, *Life* continued to publish stories on art, and also began commissioning artists to document the war in color. Between 1941 and 1945, the magazine sent its artist-correspondents worldwide to sketch, paint, and record every aspect of the war, from preparations at home to battles abroad to the experiences of civilians during wartime.²⁶ After the war, *Life* expanded its art program even further, sending its photographers around the world to photograph historic works of art and architecture, many that were previously inaccessible.

In the postwar period, *Life* not only published stories on historic works of art but also provided a venue to debate contemporary developments in art, as exemplified by its 1948 Round Table on Modern Art.²⁷ Moderated by *Life* staff member Russell W. Davenport, the event opened Friday evening, June 11, 1948, at the St. Regis Hotel in New York City and continued over the weekend in a series of sessions held at the Museum of Modern Art. The event brought together some of the mid-century’s most prominent critics, curators, and intellectuals to discuss “the problems presented by contemporary painting.”²⁸ At the round table, *Life* exhibited a selection of paintings, many from the museum’s collection, to stimulate conversation, and provided participants with a reference file of photographic reproductions of additional works of art for consideration as well. The participants vigorously debated surrealism and abstract expressionism; Pablo Picasso’s *Girl with a Mirror*; and the works of Joan Miró, Henri Matisse, Willem de Kooning, Adolph Gottlieb, and Jackson Pollock, among others.²⁹ Pollock’s 1947 painting *Cathedral* provoked a particularly passionate dispute in which writer Aldous Huxley compared Pollock’s canvas to wallpaper, and curator A. Hyatt Mayor claimed he could have painted such a work himself. In contrast,

critic Clement Greenberg declared *Cathedral* to be "one of the best paintings recently produced in this country," and curator James Johnson Sweeney likewise praised Pollock's painting for its formal sophistication and spontaneity.³⁰

In its October 11, 1948 issue, *Life* published Davenport's report on the proceedings, with color reproductions of many of the works discussed. Nelson Rockefeller wrote Davenport shortly after it was published, complimenting him for tackling a "tough one with great courage," and "handling the whole subject in a way that can be understood by the layman and can go a long way in bridging the gap between the modern form of expression in painting and the public's understanding."³¹ Adelyn Breeskin, of the Baltimore Museum of Art, also shared her appreciation with the magazine, writing in that it was "the most forceful and timely educational stimulus which I can recall," and requested that *Life* "forward 50 tear sheets of the entire article to send to our board of trustees."³² One *Life* reader, who had previously found "the paintings of Cezanne, Picasso and Matisse...incomprehensible and meaningless," now "realized...they actually had a real and compelling meaning."³³

Not all the letters *Life* received were laudatory. For instance, Thomas Hart Benton wrote in, critiquing the magazine for their "empty formalism utterly incapable of coming to grips with solid cultural meanings."³⁴ And while Peyton Boswell, who had previously partnered with *Life* on the publication *Modern American Painting*, wrote a generally unflattering review of the event for *Art Digest*, bitterly noting that the "press was not invited," he still acknowledged its significance for the field, as well as "*Life*'s success in spreading art appreciation in America."³⁵ The round table made such a mark, that a group of West Coast artists, architects, critics and scholars who were not included in the *Life* symposium, convened their own conference on the topic the following year, in 1949.³⁶

Throughout the 1940s and 50s, *Life* would continue to draw upon its connections in the art world to create a wide range of educational programs, including photographic exhibitions. Beginning in the 1940s, *Life* produced photographic panels for exhibition and display in museums, galleries, and institutions, which were circulated widely throughout the United States and also abroad, by the

American Federation of Arts. For these exhibitions, the magazine reproduced, often at the scale of 24 x 32 inches, whole-page spreads and sometimes single photographs that had already been published in *Life* magazine. Under the supervision of Thomas Mabry, who was active in photography circles and had served as executive director of the Museum of Modern Art prior to coming to work for Time, Inc., *Life* produced thirty such exhibitions, with subjects ranging from the history of housing in America to the activities of the Monuments Men during World War II.³⁷

Of all its photographic exhibitions, *Life's* 1956 *Illuminations* was its most experimental and ambitious.³⁸ Using innovative technology, this exhibition went beyond mere reproductions of page spreads and photographs from the magazine to offer museum-goers a new type of viewing experience. The exhibition featured illuminated color photographic reproductions of fifty great works of art, from Giotto to Mondrian, and concluded with a forty-two-foot scale replica of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel installed on the ceiling.³⁹ *Illuminations* opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1956 and was an immediate success. Over 100,000 people saw the show during its eight-week stay with crowds of as many as 5,500 a day in the peak holiday season, and 9,586 people came to see the exhibition on Sunday, January 6, 1957.⁴⁰ The exhibition then traveled to venues nationwide before it was exported abroad, traveling as far as Japan.

A few years later, in 1961, a selection of "Illuminations" were placed on view in the Time & Life Building for the holiday season, not far from the annual Christmas tree display, as described in a letter to Nelson A. Rockefeller: "The exhibit will feature 25 actual-size 'Illuminations' (the revolutionary technique of reproducing fine art developed by *Life* magazine) of great paintings by Renaissance masters which tell the story of Christ's birth. The paintings vary from a 15 x 15-inch Fra Angelico to a three-panel, 50-foot long reproduction of the Gozzoli frescoes in the Medici palace in Florence."⁴¹

The Gozzoli frescoes had also been the subject of one of *Life's* first full-color art stories printed not long after the war had ended in 1945.⁴² This cover story, featuring color photographs of the frescoes taken by photographer Fernand

Bourges, made an indelible impression on writer James Michener. As he reflected years later in his 1992 memoir:

I cannot recall where I was when I came upon an art magazine that contained a magnificent reproduction of a painting by an Italian Renaissance artist named Benozzo Gozzoli...Sometime later, when I had read all I could about the artist...*Life* published one of those extensive inserts in full color that helped the magazine establish its reputation; this particular section showed the famous frescoes in the chapel of the Palazzo Medici in Florence. Page after big page illustrated how the artist, Gozzoli, had converted the simple biblical tale of the three magi into a glorification of the Medici family, whose members were shown parading grandly against the backdrop of a typical Italian landscape. I cherished those pages.⁴³

Life magazine's extensive art program clearly had an impact. Indeed, for artists and writers, the public and the art establishment, *Life* was a place where they not only encountered art, but also were moved by it. As Henry Luce pointed out in a 1948 memo, *Life* was not just a magazine that one read, but an experience that one enjoyed.

A thing which was said about LIFE was 'everybody likes LIFE.' Each of these three words is important. The tycoon liked LIFE. The intellectual liked LIFE. The truck driver liked LIFE. The housewife liked LIFE. The kids liked LIFE...the phrase wasn't simply that the tycoon, the intellectual, the truck driver, the housewife and the kids read LIFE; they liked it.⁴⁴

Through its vast network, including connections with such prominent figures in the American art world as Nelson A. Rockefeller, *Life* was able to reach a diverse audience around the world and introduce millions to both historical and contemporary art in an array of engaging formats, from dynamic color stories in its weekly pages, to intellectually stimulating forums and innovative museum exhibitions.⁴⁵

Thank you to Rockefeller Archive Center for a generous research grant to support this project, and to RAC staff members Amy Fitch, Camilla Harris, and Lee R. Hiltzik.

¹ *Life's* articles reached millions of Americans. Its first press run in 1936 of 466,000 sold out immediately, and by 1939, it had a circulation of more than two million. In a 1957 letter to Time, Inc. stockholders, the corporation touted that 1956 “was the best year that TIME Inc. and its magazines ever enjoyed,” and the “level of earnings attained by LIFE in 1956 has never been equaled by any other magazine in the history of publishing.” Maurice T. Moore and Roy E. Larsen to TIME Inc. Stockholders, January 16, 1957, Folder 221, Box 219, Series III 4L, Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers, Rockefeller Archive Center (hereafter RAC). By the end of 1956, *Life's* circulation had grown to approximately 5,800,000 and by 1960 it had a circulation of approximately six million. These statistics, as Erika Doss has noted, do not include its “passalong” rate of four to five people per issue, so “each issue reached as many as forty million people.” See Erika Doss, “Looking at *Life*: Rethinking America’s Favorite Magazine, 1936–1972,” *Looking at Life Magazine*, ed. Erika Doss (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 1–3. The magazine’s numbers remained high throughout the 1950s and 1960s, until, in the 1970s, television surpassed it. For a study of *Life's* audience, see James L. Baughman, “Who Read *Life*?: The Circulation of America’s Favorite Magazine,” in Doss, *Looking at Life*, 41–51.

² In 1938, Luce was elected trustee at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; in 1950 he was appointed to the purchasing committee, which he served on until his death in 1967. Luce was elected a member of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee at the Museum of Modern Art in 1940, which he served on until 1950, when he resigned.

Nelson A. Rockefeller was an art collector and closely associated with the Museum of Modern Art, which was co-founded in 1932 by his mother, Abigail “Abby” Greene Aldrich Rockefeller. Rockefeller served as a museum trustee and twice as the museum’s president (1939–41 and 1946–53), and was also a major benefactor of the museum. Rockefeller also employed Rene d’Harnoncourt as head of the art section of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in Washington (CIAA) in 1943, and brought him to the Museum of Modern Art in 1944. D’Harnoncourt became director of the museum in 1949. The Rockefeller Archive Center contains the records of Rockefeller’s papers from when he was Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in Roosevelt’s administration. See Nelson A. Rockefeller Personal Papers, Washington, DC Series, CIAA subseries, RAC.

³ Longwell came to *Time* as a special assistant to Luce in 1934 and was one of the key players in the formation of the new “picture magazine” which would become *Life*. For more on Longwell’s art collection, as well as his commissions from and collaborations with artists Peter Hurd and Tom Lea, see Renn, “‘An Enduring Record’: Peter Hurd’s Art for *Life* Magazine,” in *Magical & Real: Henriette Wyeth and Peter Hurd, A Retrospective*, ed. Kirsten M. Jensen (Doylestown, PA: James A. Michener Art Museum, 2018); and Renn, “From *Life*: Tom Lea and the World War II Art of *Life* Magazine,” in Adair Margo and Melissa Renn, *Tom Lea, Life Magazine, and World War II* (El Paso: Tom Lea Institute, 2016).

⁴ For more on Seiberling’s work at *Life*, see Melissa Renn, “*Life's* Pioneer Painters: Dorothy Seiberling and American Art in *Life* Magazine, 1949–1968,” in *The Mediatization of the Artist*, ed. Rachel Esner and Sandra Kisters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

⁵ Dorothy Seiberling, interview with Melissa Renn, September 9, 2006. See “Rediscovered Genius: Elie Nadelman’s Sculpture Emerges from Two Decades of Obscurity,” *Life*, May 24, 1948, 119–122.

⁶ Sir Leigh Ashton to Daniel Longwell, November 23, 1949, Box 11, Daniel Longwell Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

⁷ Fiske Kimball to Daniel Longwell, November 8, 1950, Box 14, Daniel Longwell Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University. The following year, *Life* did a color story

on the museum featuring photographs by Arnold Newman. See “The Philadelphia Museum,” *Life*, September 3, 1951, 67–74.

⁸ In a 1952 lecture at the American Federation of Arts, Longwell disclosed that the magazine “had spent something over 23 million dollars in the last 15 years . . . photographing and printing reproductions of contemporary art and the art treasures of the great museums and collections.” Lecture, May 28, 1952, American Federation of Arts, Box 10, Daniel Longwell Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

⁹ For more on *Life* and its investment in color reproduction technologies, see Melissa Renn, “*Life* in Color: *Life* Magazine and the Color Reproduction of Works of Art,” in *Bright Modernity: Color, Commerce, and Consumer Culture*, ed. Regina Lee Blaszczyk and Uwe Spiekermann (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). *Fortune* magazine, another Luce publication, also regularly featured art in color in its pages. In 1938, for instance, Richardson Wood wrote Nelson A. Rockefeller about an upcoming story in *Fortune*. The article reproduced in color twelve works by modern European and American artists, including Paul Cezanne, Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, Jose Clemente Orozco, Peter Blume, and Grant Wood, and featured captions written by MoMA’s director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and a story on the museum. See Richardson Wood to Nelson A. Rockefeller, November 23, 1938, Folder 1203, Box 123, Series III 4 L, Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers, RAC.

¹⁰ The first issue contained a four-page, full-color feature on the art of John Steuart Curry. See “Curry of Kansas,” *Life*, November 23, 1936, 28–31.

¹¹ “The Frick Home becomes \$40,000,000 Art Museum: First Reproductions in Color,” *Life*, December 27, 1937, 30–39.

¹² See, for example, “Georgia O’Keeffe Turns Dead Bones to Live Art,” *Life*, February 14, 1938, 28–30; and “Sheeler Finds Beauty in the Commonplace,” *Life*, August 8, 1938, 42–45. For more on *Life*’s coverage of O’Keeffe, see Melissa Renn, “*Life*’s Pioneer Painters: Dorothy Seiberling and American Art in *Life* Magazine, 1949–1968.”

¹³ Peyton Boswell Jr., *Modern American Painting* (New York, 1940), 5.

¹⁴ Thomas Hart Benton to Daniel Longwell, October 6, 1939, Box 1, Daniel Longwell Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

¹⁵ Grant Wood to Daniel Longwell, October 14, 1939, Box 7, Daniel Longwell Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

¹⁶ Peyton Boswell Jr., *Modern American Painting* (New York, 1940), 5.

¹⁷ C.D. Jackson to Nelson Rockefeller, November 17, 1939, Folder 1331, Box 136, Series III 4L, Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers, RAC.

¹⁸ Nelson Rockefeller to C.D. Jackson, November 20, 1939, Folder 1331, Box 136, Series III 4L, Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers, RAC.

¹⁹ Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Nelson A. Rockefeller, December 6, 1939, Folder 1331, Box 136, Series III 4L, Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers, RAC.

²⁰ The MoMA had been circulating exhibition of color reproductions of works of art in public high schools in New York City since 1931. See “Circulating Exhibitions, 1931–1954,” *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* XXL, no. 3–4 (Summer 1954), 4. Copy of article in Folder 1336, Box 136, Series III 4L, Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers, RAC.

²¹ See *Cranbrook-Life Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*, exh. cat., Cranbrook Academy of Art (Bloomfield Hills, MI: Cranbrook Press, 1940). The jury consisted of *Life*’s art editor Margit Varga; the artist John Sloan; Clyde Burroughs, Detroit Institute of Arts; Roland McKinney, Los Angeles County Museum (now LACMA); Forbes Watson, art critic and advisor on the Federal Art Project; and Zoltan Sepeshy, Cranbrook Academy of Art. Cranbrook Foundation Records: RGI Office Files, Box 26, Folder 21, Cranbrook Archives.

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- ²² Press Release, c. March 1940, Cranbrook Foundation Records: RGI Office Files, Box 27, Folder 8, Cranbrook Archives.
- ²³ As Richard Raseman, executive secretary of Cranbrook, recounted, “To date the attendance is something over 4000, and with a decent climactic break should pass 5000 before closing. That is not bad for a school in the sticks among the new-mown hay and tomato plants.” Richard P. Raseman to Otis Peabody Smith, May 31, 1940, Cranbrook Foundation Records: RGI Office Files, Box 27, Folder 8, Cranbrook Archives.
- ²⁴ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., to Richard P. Raseman, March 23, 1940 and Daniel Catton Rich to Richard P. Raseman, March 8, 1940, respectively. Folder CAA Exhibitions, Correspondence, Cranbrook *Life* Exhibition, Cranbrook Archives.
- ²⁵ “Cranbrook-*Life* Exhibition: Great Detroit Art Center Holds A Democratic Show of 60 Paintings by Living Americans,” *Life*, May 27, 1940, 64.
- ²⁶ For more on *Life*’s wartime commissions, see Melissa Renn, “The Picture Magazine: *Life* and the Limits of Photography” in *Writing Visual Histories*, ed. Florence Grant and Ludmilla Jordanova (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).
- ²⁷ *Life* organized round tables on a variety of topics, from transportation to the pursuit of happiness. See: “The Michigan-*Life* conference on new technologies in transportation, held November 1–3, 1939 and published as a booklet by Time, Inc; Eric Hodgins, “A Round Table on the Movies,” *Life*, January 27, 1949, 90–110; and Russell W. Davenport, “A *Life* Round Table on the Pursuit of Happiness,” *Life*, July 12, 1948, 95–113. In 1956, *Life* held a round table on segregation and invited seven southern church leaders to speak on the subject. See “A Round Table has Debate on Christians’ Moral Duty,” *Life*, October 1, 1956, 139–162. *Fortune* magazine also hosted round tables. For more on those, see James L. Baughman, *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001): 114, 123, 152.
- ²⁸ Henry R. Luce to James Thrall Soby, May 3, 1948, James Thrall Soby papers, I.21.16, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
- ²⁹ The round table also led to MoMA’s acquisition of its first work by de Kooning, *Painting*, which was exhibited during the round table, reproduced in *Life*’s October 11, 1948 article, and purchased by MoMA that same month.
- ³⁰ Russell W. Davenport, “A LIFE Round Table on Modern Art,” *Life*, October 11, 1948, 62.
- ³¹ Nelson A. Rockefeller to Russell Davenport, October 28, 1948, Folder 1440, Box 146, Series III 4L, Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers, RAC).
- ³² Letters to the Editors, *Life*, November 1, 1948, 11.
- ³³ Philip Scott, Letters to the Editors, *Life*, November 1, 1948, 11.
- ³⁴ Letters to the Editors, *Life*, November 1, 1948, 11.
- ³⁵ Peyton Boswell, “Squaring a Round Table,” *Art Digest*, October 15, 1948, 7. Copy of article in Public Info. Records, PI 37; 72, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York
- ³⁶ Organized by Douglas MacAgy, “The Western Round Table of Modern Art,” included George Boas, Robert Goldwater, Marcel Duchamp, Alfred Frankenstein, Mark Tobey, and Frank Lloyd Wright, among other participants.
- ³⁷ For a list of exhibitions, see “*Life* Exhibitions Listed in Order of Popularity,” Box 6, American Federation of Arts Records, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. See also *Life* Photographic Exhibitions, 1947–49, Folder 25, Box 10, Record Unit 280, Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration, Department of Exhibitions, Records, 1930–1969, Smithsonian Institution Archives, and the American Federation of Arts Archives. For more on *Life*’s photographic exhibition *Fine Arts Under Fire*, see Melissa Renn, “Fine Arts Under Fire: *Life* Magazine and the Display of Architectural Destruction,” in *Architecture and Armed*

Conflict: The Politics of Destruction, ed. JoAnne Mancini and Keith Bresnahan (Oxford: Routledge, 2014).

³⁸ For more on this exhibition, see Melissa Renn, “Within Their Walls: *Life* Magazine’s *Illuminations*,” *Archives of American Art Journal* 53: 1&2 (2014): 30–51.

³⁹ In 1949, *Life* produced a twenty-two-page cover story on the Sistine Chapel, publishing the first color photographs of Michelangelo’s frescoes, along with a three-page foldout of the ceiling. The special issue broke all sales records. See “Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel,” *Life*, December 26, 1949, 25–49. According to Longwell, “it was the only art feature I ever knew of that sold out an issue completely . . . [T]he copies all but disappeared from the New York newsstands on the day of publication.”³⁹ Daniel Longwell to Andrew Heiskell, November 29, 1951, 2, Box 28, Daniel Longwell Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University. Many in the art world wrote the editors with their praise. René d’Harnoncourt, for example, commended *Life* for the “beautiful reproductions of the Sistine Ceiling,” acknowledging that he never “believed it possible that so much of its monumental strength could be conveyed through the pages of a magazine.” D’Harnoncourt, letter to the editors, *Life*, January 16, 1950, 6.

⁴⁰ *Life* Press Release, January 10, 1957, Folder Illuminations, Office of the Secretary Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives. The exhibition was such a great success, that it was included in Time, Inc.’s 1956 “Annual Report to Stockholders,” 14. See report in Folder 221, Box 219, Series III 4L, Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers, RAC.

⁴¹ James A. Linen to Nelson A. Rockefeller, November 29, 1961, Folder 786, RCI New Time and Life Tower Building, Box 105, Series III 2C, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Business Interests, RAC.

⁴² “Medici Chapel: A Great Florentine Art Treasure is Photographed for the First Time in Color,” *Life*, December 24, 1945, 43–52.

⁴³ James A. Michener, *The World Is My Home: A Memoir* (New York: The Dial Press, [1992] 2015), 118

⁴⁴ Henry R. Luce to Andrew Heiskell, et. al, November 23, 1948, John Shaw Billings, *Time-Life-Fortune* Collection, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

⁴⁵ Such connections also led to the construction of the Time & Life Building, designed by Michael M. Harris, of Harrison & Abramowitz & Harris, which opened in 1959 and was a joint venture of Time, Inc. and Rockefeller Center.