

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
NEW YORK 19

DEPARTMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHY

11 WEST 53rd STREET
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

November 23, 1963.

Nell dear:

Your letter came by the afternoon mail yesterday, just as the world's loss came over the air. Therefore, I carried the envelopes home, and was immediately drafted by a friend on Project-Twenty (N.B.C.), who had to assemble 1,500 photographs of America for use on a memorial program of four hours' duration. After we had added our small bit to this large whole, I tried to reach you by telephone, in the early afternoon.

The violence all about gives added meaning to the beauty you bring to life and to all of us who love you and the artist in you (inseparable, of course). I hope that you will find solace in the family reunion, and will come back to us refreshed.

It is characteristic of you to think of Mr. Steichen, and of me. Again and again, through the years, he has demonstrated his respect and admiration and love for you and for your work. You know how I feel about it - and you must never doubt its truth and beauty, or its high place in our hearts. John, too, shares in our appreciation.

of the miracle of "Mother and Child." I think you have misunderstood the reasoning - the fear (in the light of past experience) that the prints will cause the prints to deteriorate. Of course, I can only speak in my capacity as your friend (for you are one of those I hold most sacred and most dear), but I am confident that a goodly number of your works will be chosen to live with us always. It is a wonderful and a beautiful thing that you have done, and an honor to Mr. Steichen in the highest. And you are not alone, for I am with you, and thinking of you and feeling for you, and suffering with you. Nothing you do could place us in what you feel is "an awkward position." Your photography has earned the full measure of the highest regard of your peers - young photographers like Lee Friedlander, young women like Jodie Bradley (our newest staff member), people of all kinds everywhere feel that "Mother and Child" is a prayer of surpassing tenderness and beauty, the highest expression of the greatest love. Please believe me - from you I would conceal nothing, and you are what makes me thankful in a thankless world. And I am one among many.... It is I - and not you - whose heart should be filled with despair, for maybe in some way I could have spared you a hurt in which I have

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no part. I am incoherent.

Thank you for the permission to use the Botticelli image in the little article which does you such feeble justice. We can furnish a print for "Infinity," from "The Family of Man" file. And I will find out about the Sandburg portraits for which Mr. Steichen asked, and the "Mother and Child" for Planned Parenthood, and send these beautiful pieces of you to the proper places.

Please be happy in your Thanksgiving, insofar as it is possible at this tragic time, and believe that you have given the world countless reasons for which to be thankful -

Love always,
Grace

Best to Chris, and bless him for carrying on a great tradition.