

40 EAST 78

December 26, 1963.

My dear :

Everywhere, as always, you are all about our home in radiant beauty - in Chris' exquisite, loving photographs, which sing of your soul and reflect your teaching; in the fragrant bough; in the entrancing Marie Angel "Bestiary"; in the "Mother and Child"; and in the all-enveloping cloud-like stole, with its magnificently woven texture. I know not how to thank you for all the intangibles and tangibles, which bring me overwhelming joy, and boundless delight. The animals and the alphabet are an art expression that has always captivated me, and this talented young artist compares favorably with my adored Toulouse-Lautrec's treatment of the subject. And your Chris has captured the spirit of you and of "Villa Serena"... And the off-white glowing warmth of the weaver's mastery... I am all gratitude and ecstasy!

We are having a Christmas vacation,*

*until January 2nd (but I'm working at home)

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by way of bonus, and because of the reworking of the heating system, but before the holiday I read proof of the little article, which will make the grade only by virtue of your glorious photography.

As I wrote Chris, I wish it were not too late to reproduce one of his works, to stand for your portrait (although the one you sent is lovely, too - how could it be otherwise?).

And René kissed me by way of blessing, so I am indeed as fortunate as I am undeserving of the love of beautiful people like you, like him and like Mr. Steichen and Mother. It makes up for other things - and, again, thank you for being so understanding of my problem. I so hate to dislike someone - it is a constant - humiliation to be so immature!

As you probably know, Mr. Steichen's cataract-operation is happily and successfully behind him, and he left the hospital in good time to enjoy this holiday, insofar as it is possible to enjoy anything

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at this sad year end. Two days p. o., he snatched René Barre's "Les Allemands" from me and read it all the way through, and on my next visit he escorted me to the elevator. Joanna has a large part in this miracle. And what will be the next triumph? It will not be long in coming, and it will be larger than the last.

Thank you for the ultimate in beauty. Deep gratitude and deep love -

Grace