

FOA to Hear Atkinson

By Constance Daniell
of The Journal Staff

Tracy Atkinson, director of the Milwaukee Art Center, will be the major speaker at the annual Friends of Art dinner-meeting on May 15 in the center's lower gallery.

It is a break with tradition, for in former years FOA imported a guest speaker. R. D. Hevey, president of FOA, explained the reason for the change: "The choice of a speaker was certainly clear cut this year. With so many exciting things in prospect we felt that Tracy Atkinson was the single person who could properly outline our plans and goals for the future of the Milwaukee Art Center. It promises to be a great evening."

Bradley Gift

A subject of obvious interest in Atkinson's talk will be the gift of the \$11 million art collection of Mrs. Harry Lynde Bradley and the need to build an addition to house the art works.

The intended gift was known to Atkinson and board members long before its public announcement two months ago, so determining how and where to display the collection has been a major concern.

The art center has experienced vast changes and growth since Atkinson came to it as director in 1962. "In many ways it was inadequate then, because it was designed as part of a war memorial building rather than an art museum," he said.

Then the director listed a few of the pressing needs:

Greater space for hanging the permanent collection. The storage areas are crowded, Atkinson said, "with works that should be on per-

17th century art that we can't show."

A collectors' gallery for Wisconsin artists. There should be display space for both new and established local talent.

A larger children's art gallery. "We have thousands of kids who visit here each year on school tours and we don't have enough room for them."

More office space. "Our staff has grown and the available space for offices has remained the same. We need to add another member right now but I don't know where we'll put him."

The Bradley gift itself, plus the challenge to build new facilities, is a tremendous opportunity, Atkinson believes. "I regard it as the most important thing that has happened here since Frederick Layton," he said. "And the fact that Mrs. Bradley is willing to make a substantial personal contribution of money to house the collection, puts her in the tradition of the grand patrons."

On the evening of the dinner the Friends of Art will present the art center with

five contemporary American works for their permanent collection purchased with money from the FOA acquisition fund. The selections will not be announced until that night.

No Honor

This year the entire membership of the art center will be invited to attend the dinner, rather than limiting the guest list to FOA members.

In another departure from tradition, there will be no Friend of Art named for the year. The FOA board considers it an anachronism. As a member put it, "We have so many friends of art now that it's unfair to single out one person."



—Journal Photo

Tracy Atkinson, director of the Milwaukee Art Center, was photo-

graphed before a contemporary painting in the art center's gallery.