



One of the stars of "The Inner Circle" preview at the Milwaukee Art Center Thursday night was John Singer Sargent's "Por-



trait of Elsie Palmer," who was admired by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Schilffarth, 12500 Wrayburn rd., Elm Grove.

Art Fans Applaud Opening of 'Inner Circle'

By CONSTANCE DANIELL
Of The Journal Staff

THE Milwaukee Art Center raised the curtain on its first production of the season Thursday night with an invitation preview showing. Judging by the comments of an audience of more than 500 first nighters, it was a hit.

The production lived up to its advance publicity. "The Inner Circle," a collection of 101 portraits of families and friends of major artists which is insured for an estimated three and a half million dollars, was greeted with warm and enthusiastic approval. Because of the expense of gathering the collection—a job of two years' duration—plus the cost of insurance rates, it will be necessary to charge a \$1 admission fee. The admission charge, a first in art center history, prompted Tracy Atkinson, the center's director, to quip in his welcome speech, "I hope you enjoy it, profit from it, encourage your friends to see it—particularly those who have a dollar."

Thursday night's showing, which was given for members of the art center, began with a cocktail party in the upper gallery. A glittering group of 340 guests—men in black tie, women in both long and short evening dresses although a slight preference for the short dress was evident—arrived early for an eagerly awaited glimpse of the show.

Later, the party moved down to dinner in the lower gallery, and were replaced by an additional 200 art fanciers who skipped the cocktail party and dinner and viewed the art works at a leisurely evening reception.

But whether they arrived early or late, the guests had one thing in common: A delighted appreciation of the stars of the show. Atkinson described the portraits as "more unorthodox in approach than standard portraits, yet having qualities of warmth not found in regularly commissioned likenesses."

His comments were seconded by a rather disappointed art center "regular" who complained to her companion, "I haven't heard any arguments here tonight. Everybody likes everything. Maybe because all the pictures look like someone we know in our own families."

Paintings in the exhibit have been borrowed from galleries in the United States and Europe, private American collections and private Milwau-

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A representative of the Knoedler Galleries in New York city, Miss Elizabeth Clare (left), pointed out a detail of Alexander's "Portrait of Rodin" as she talked with Mr. and Mrs. Harry Bloch. The Blochs live at 8050 Grey Log la., Fox Point. More than 500 people attended the preview, the opening show of the art center's fall season.

"The long and short of it" in formal fashion is illustrated by the silhouettes of Mrs. Merrit Hayes (left), 3715 N. Lake dr., Shorewood and Mrs. Robert L. Christiansen, 9370 N. Lake dr., Bayside, as they studied the painting "Summer Cocktail Party," by Alex Katz. Both husbands of the young women are members of the Milwaukee Art Center's board of trustees.

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