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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OPENS SMALL ARCHITECTURE SHOW

Masterpieces of the greatest figure in American architecture of the nineteenth century will be shown at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, in a small review exhibition, Henry Hobson Richardson Architectural Masterpieces, which opens February 5 and continues through April 6.

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., Associate Professor of Art at Wesleyan University, has selected from the Museum's historical collection photographs of eight of the most important of Richardson's buildings. In greatly enlarged form--most of them five by six feet--these will be hung in the Museum's Main Hall accompanied by an introductory text and captions edited by Professor Hitchcock. This will be the first of a series of brief reviews which the Museum will present from time to time to refresh the memory of the older generation and familiarize the younger generation of gallery-goers with the historical foundations of the modern movement.

Henry Hobson Richardson is the first of the great triad of American architects of recent times: Richardson, Sullivan, and Wright. Like Wright today, Richardson was distinguished as an individual creator rather than as a member of a national or international school. Reacting against the derivative surface decoration and shoddy construction of the mid-nineteenth century, he revived the sense of architecture as sound building. Above all a master of architectural synthesis, function, structure, and design are not separable in his best works.

In an age of superficial grandeur, Richardson alone stands out, in his honest monumentality, from the mass of contemporary decorative revivalists. He had a taste for the strong, the simple, and the rough. Hence his interest in the Romanesque and his predilection for rock-surfaced walls, linteled openings, and broad low arches. He designed rugged exteriors that were directly expressive of functionally planned interiors. Fenestration he improved through emphasis on more and larger windows and the use of the continuous ribbon window. He

handled materials with a sensuous appreciation of their intrinsic qualities, and although he used ornament, it was always controlled by his superb sense of balance and proportion. He was never guilty of over-decoration or mannered stylistic imitation.

Reformer rather than innovator, Richardson reestablished standards of architectural quality when they had been largely forgotten. It is the quality and not the particular forms of his architecture which have value for us today. His reform was more than a protest and corrective, it was the basis of a markedly personal expression such as only the greatest architects of any age are able to achieve.

The enlarged photographs which comprise the exhibition are as follows:

1. Brattle Square Church, Boston, Mass., 1870-72
2. Brattle Square Church, side window detail, Boston, Mass., 1870-72
3. Fenway Bridge, Boston, Mass., 1880-81
4. Crane Memorial Library, Quincy, Mass., 1880-83
5. M. F. Stoughton House, Cambridge, Mass., 1882-83
6. Marshall Field Wholesale Store, Chicago, Ill., 1885-87
7. J. J. Glessner House, Chicago, Ill., 1885-87
8. Allegheny County Courthouse, court, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1884-87