

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MODERN RELIEF EXHIBITION TO BE SHOWN AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

MODERN RELIEF, an exhibition of original works and photographs of reliefs in their architectural setting, will be on view at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from June 20 through July 15 in the Auditorium Gallery.

The exhibition, designed to circulate to other museums and schools throughout the country, was arranged by Jane Sabersky, Assistant Curator in the Department of Circulating Exhibitions.

Examples of reliefs done in various media that will be shown include Gaston Lachaise's bronze Standing Woman (1920), Aristide Maillol's Victory (1920), Jacques Lipchitz' cubist Still Life with Musical Instruments (1918) and Picasso's wood Relief (1913).

Another early work, rarely seen in public exhibitions, is Alexander Archipenko's Still Life, done in 1915, in which the artist has combined a variety of media including oil, sandpaper and veneer on wood in a trompe l'oeil effect.

More recent work to be shown in the exhibition includes: a relief by Ben Nicholson; a composition by Jackson Pollock in which the artist has applied oil, wire, string, pebbles and other material to glass; a magnesite, string and cork Lunar Landscape construction by Isamu Noguchi; Amity, a bronze open-work frieze by Mary Callery; and Spring Forms Placed According to the Laws of Chance, a painted wood relief by Hans Arp.

Enlarged photographs of Egyptian, Assyrian and Greek reliefs introduce the exhibition. Other photographs show contemporary reliefs in their actual setting. These include: the bas relief in wood on the apartment house by Le Corbusier now under construction in Marseille; early experimental constructions in industrial materials by Tatlin, Gabo and Pevsner; Duchamp's glass wall in a private collection in

Connecticut and Archipenko's movable glass wall installed in a house in Illinois; Noguchi's ceiling decorations for the American Stove Company in St. Louis using artificial light; and Arp's wood wall decorations for the new dining room of the dormitory center at Harvard.

Photomontages in the exhibition show the unexecuted project of Gabo for the Esso Building in New York, in which static reliefs and mobiles made of stainless steel, wire and plastic are used.

In the introductory wall label Miss Sabersky says:

Until the beginning of the 20th century, relief was an integral part of the building, specifically designed to function and to be seen in relation to its background or wall, and even if detached, like a figure in a niche, it was always conceived in relation to its background.

Today, new building techniques and construction in steel have created a new esthetic with less emphasis on the wall, which is no longer a supporting element but an enclosing screen.

Thus, contemporary relief, now often deprived of its traditional background, may play a somewhat dual role. On the one hand, it has begun to move away from the surface of a wall as an independent space defining element. On the other, even attached to the wall in traditional fashion, it may nevertheless be the decisive factor towards the visual destruction of that background.