

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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NEW SCULPTURE GARDEN OPENS AS ADDITION TO MUSEUM

The first garden in America designed for the exhibition of modern sculpture will open to the public as a permanent addition to the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, on April 29. The sunken garden with reflecting pools, trees, flowers and shrubs, and paved with marble, will be called the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden in honor of the late Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., one of the founders of the Museum.

Philip C. Johnson, Director of the Museum's Department of Architecture and Design, was in charge of the design of the garden. Associated with him were James Fanning, landscape consultant; George Hopkinson, architect; Landis Gores, designer; Robert Anderson, supervisory architect; Richard Kelly, lighting consultant; Tuck & Eipel, structural engineers. JOHN D. DILLON, MURPHY-BRINKWORTH CONSTRUCTION CORP. - GENERAL CONTRACTORS

The garden covers an area of 110x202 feet, most of which is paved with unpolished gray Vermont marble blocks, 4'6"x30". It is bounded on west by a 100x25-foot terrace extending from the Whitney Museum building, now under construction, on the north by a 14-foot gray brick wall, on the east by planting which screens the space used for exhibition houses and on the south by a terrace extending from the glass walls of the Museum of Modern Art's first floor galleries. Both terraces and the sunken area are paved with marble provided by the Marble Institute of New York.

The terrace on the Whitney side has been planted with European hornbeam trees and will become an outdoor dining area overlooking the sunken sculpture garden when that building is completed. The gray brick wall, which matches the brick used for the Whitney facade, is pierced by a permanent 13½-foot peephole grille of reddish brown fir wood and brass rods toward the eastern end and by a smaller similar grille at the western end. This smaller grille will become an entrance gate from 54th Street. Both grilles were designed so that people can look into the garden from the street.

The garden has been sunk four feet below street level. Broad marble steps lead down myrtle-covered banks from the Whitney terrace and from the Museum of Modern Art terrace. In the sunken garden four kinds of spaces or outdoor sculpture galleries have been created by the arrangement of pools and trees. Two rectangular reflecting pools, one 96 feet long, one 50 feet long, run parallel to the brick wall on 54th Street and are bisected by a grove of Japan cedars, greenbriar and honeysuckle planted parallel to the eastern boundary of the garden. Thus a series of vistas has been created and four spaces delineated: one long rectangular space bounded by the larger pool, the brick wall and the cedar grove; one small intimate space bounded by the trees, the brick wall and the smaller pool; a large open area seen clearly from both terraces, and a medium-sized area east of the Museum of Modern Art terrace.

In this way various backgrounds for sculptures are provided by the different kinds of trees and plants, by the gray brick wall and its wooden grilles, by the reflecting pools and marble paving. Different levels, angles and vistas for viewing the sculpture are made possible by the arrangement of terraces, steps and bridges over the pools.

Trees which have been planted include 10 European hornbeams on the western terrace and a grove of European birches more than 20 feet tall at the western end of the sunken garden with creeping roses and winter jasmine as ground cover. Against the gray brick wall along 54th Street two plane trees with an evergreen ground cover of pachysandra, two Hankow willows and a small Japanese styrax have been planted. On the south side of the garden are two weeping beeches with lily of the valley ground cover. The eastern boundary is planted with ailanthus, gray birch, rhododendron, azalea, grape hyacinths and Geneva bugle. Flowers in the garden are planted in large portable earthenware pots so they can be changed according to the seasons. For the opening exhibition, "Twentieth Century Sculpture," Jackson and Perkins have donated pink roses of the "Floribunda Rose Fashion" variety.