

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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FOR RELEASE: FRIDAY
February 11, 1955

Loc + Natl general
Loc + Natl Design

No. 11

The largest exhibition of 20th century American art ever shown abroad will be sent to Paris this spring as part of the "Salute to France" festival of cultural events being presented under the auspices of the American Embassy in Paris at the request of the French government. The exhibition, which will include painting, sculpture, original prints, architecture, typographical design, industrial design, films and photography, was announced by William A. M. Burden, who is Co-Chairman with Robert W. Dowling of the "Salute to France" program and is in charge of the visual arts exhibitions for the festival.

AMERICAN ART OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY exhibition is being prepared under the direction of Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, and will be shown at the Musee d'Art Moderne in Paris in galleries larger than the entire New York Museum from March 30 through May 15. Most of the 500 works of art to be included are from the Museum of Modern Art's world-famous collections. The organization and financing of the exhibition is being carried out under the Museum's International Program, directed by Porter McCray, with assistance from the French government.

More than 200 paintings, sculpture and prints, by 114 artists, selected to reveal the main directions of American art in this century will be shown including a few important loans from Museum trustees and patrons. The architectural section, comprising 17 buildings designed since 1946, will include an actual six by twelve foot aluminum panel identical with those used in the facade of the Alcoa Building in Pittsburg designed by Harrison and Abramovitz, a 26 by 21 foot photo mural of Frank Lloyd Wright's Johnson Wax Company Laboratory Tower in Wisconsin, models, and three-dimensional color slides in stereoscopic viewers.

More than 150 mass-produced articles will be shown in the industrial design section of AMERICAN ART OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY including a special group of American-designed chairs, and kitchen ware, lamps, tools and china. Dramatizing the inherent beauty of machine-made forms, there will be shown such objects as an animated "Slinky" toy, consisting of a steel coil used in industrial production, and which has become a popular toy in this country.

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Large illuminated letters made of a new plastic material and designed by Alvin Lustig will be shown in the graphic design section of the exhibition along with posters, book jackets, advertisements and record album covers. Between 75 and 100 photographs ranging from abstract images to documentary photographs will be shown and panels of stills from American documentary and experimental films will be displayed. It is hoped to arrange a concurrent series of film programs in a near-by theatre.

The 108 paintings and 22 sculptures by 70 artists in the exhibition have been selected by Dorothy C. Miller, Curator of Museum Collections, to reveal four or five principal directions of American art over a period of approximately 40 years. The first section is devoted to the older generation who worked in Europe and who founded the modern movement in the United States. Three pictures by Maurice Prendergast painted before the famous New York Armory Show of 1913 which he helped to organize are included as well as paintings by John Marin, Max Weber, Charles Demuth, Stuart Davis and Yasuo Kuniyoshi, and sculpture by William Zorach, Gaston Lachaise and Elie Nadelman. The next sections are devoted to the realist and romantic traditions, as found in painters of the American scene such as Edward Hopper and Charles Burchfield, in Andrew Wyeth's work, in paintings by Loren MacIver and Hyman Bloom, and in the mystic images of Morris Graves. The development of the last decade in the field of abstract art is illustrated by the work of Mark Tobey, Arshile Gorky, Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, William Baziotes, Mark Rothko, Franz Kline and others. Paralleling the work of these painters is sculpture by Theodore Roszak, Ibram Lassaw, David Hare and Seymour Lipton, and the highly original work done by Alexander Calder as early as the 1930s. A small section of the painting and sculpture show is reserved for the modern "primitives" -- naive or self-taught artists like Joseph Pickett and John Kane.

Eighty-two prints have been selected by William S. Lieberman, Curator of Prints, from the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room of the Museum and supplemented by a few loans. This section surveys the extraordinary renaissance of American printmaking today as illustrated in work done since 1940 by about 48 artists from all parts of the United States. These examples demonstrate three characteristics of recent American prints: use of color and textures, emphasis on large-scale prints, and technical innovation. All traditional graphic media are represented as well as new media such as serigraph (silk screen) and the cellocut (plastic), developed and perfected in the United States. An historical introduction to the print section is made up of the work of six painters who were also active as printmakers between 1900 and 1925: Maurice Prendergast, John Marin, Lyonel Feininger, Max Weber, George Bellows and Edward Hopper.

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Modern American architecture, selected by Arthur Drexler, Curator of the Department of Architecture and Design, will be represented by 17 buildings designed since 1946, to be shown in large-scale photo enlargements, plans, models, and three-dimensional color slides in adjustable stereoscopic viewers. Office buildings, a factory, a research laboratory, houses, a hospital, a school and a chapel have been chosen for their excellence as works of art and their significance in the development of American architecture. The United Nations Secretariat Building in New York by Wallace K. Harrison and Consultants; the General Motors Technical Center in Detroit by Saarinen, Saarinen and Associates; and Lever House, New York, by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill are among the buildings included. Models of Mies van der Rohe's Chicago apartment house, of Philip G. Johnson's glass house in Connecticut, and of a house by Marcel Breuer and one by Richard Neutra, will be shown.

Posters, book jackets, record album covers, newspaper and magazine advertisements, brochures and announcements, packaging, street signs and street letters have been selected by Mildred Constantine, Associate Curator of Graphic Design. The more than 70 examples, all executed since the war, place special emphasis on new ideas in typography. Alvin Lustig, Leo Lionni, Herbert Bayer, Noel Martin and Paul Rand are among the noted designers whose work has been selected.

More than 150 objects manufactured by modern techniques of mass-production comprise the industrial design section of AMERICAN ART OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, selected by Greta Daniel, Assistant Curator of Design. A special feature will be a group of modern chairs selected as particularly illustrative of the application of modern industrial technology to American design. Other furniture, as well as lighting equipment, glassware, china, cooking utensils and kitchen equipment, tools, toys and radio sets will also be shown. A wide range of materials, including synthetics, will be represented. This exhibition will also demonstrate that esthetic merit is independent of price and that a 5-cent pill box may deserve recognition as a well-designed object. All items included in this section will be drawn from the unique industrial design collection of the Museum of Modern Art. Photographic panels will illustrate the Museum's educational activities in establishing standards in this field for manufacturers and consumers. (They will represent the Good Design program sponsored by the Museum and The Merchandise Mart in Chicago and directed by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., and the competitions the Museum has sponsored to stimulate new designs in such varied products as furniture, fabrics, lamps and children's playground equipment.

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The American contribution to modern photography will be represented in some 75 to 100 examples selected by Edward Steichen, Director of the Museum's Department of Photography. Ranging from documentaries to abstract images, this section of AMERICAN ART OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY will present a cross-section of the work of mature and widely-known photographers as well as the work of younger men who have only recently found recognition.

The American film will be symbolized in the Musée d'Art Moderne exhibition by two panels of still photographs, one group selected from narrative films and the other from documentary and experimental films. This section is under the direction of Richard Griffith, Curator of the Film Library. Since this medium cannot be adequately presented in an exhibition hall, it is hoped to arrange a concurrent series of film programs to be held outside the museum, each program stressing a particular aspect of the striking contribution made by the United States to the art of the motion picture.

In addition to AMERICAN ART TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, the visual art section of "Salute to France" will also feature an art exhibition of 19th Century French Paintings³⁰ lent by American Museums and private collectors to be shown at the Orangerie. This is being organized by a special committee and was announced by Mr. Burden in January.

The performances of dance, drama and music to be featured in this festival of American cultural events in Paris next spring are under the supervision of Robert W. Dowling, Chairman of the Board of the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA) and Co-Chairman of "Salute to France" for the performing arts. All expenses in the United States for "Salute to France" are being met through private sources in this country, while the French Government is making a substantial contribution to cover the expenses incurred in France. "Salute to France" has the personal endorsement of President Eisenhower, who in letters to Co-Chairmen Burden and Dowling has expressed the belief that the project will contribute substantially to the furtherance of friendship, understanding and esteem between the United States and France. Arrangements in France for the two art exhibitions have been entrusted to the Association Française d'Action Artistique, an organization responsible for the exchange of art exhibitions between France and other nations, and are being worked out in conjunction with the United States Embassy in Paris.