

39421 - 10
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
14 WEST 49TH STREET, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 7-7470

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY,
APRIL 25, 1939

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART MOVES INTO NEW BUILDING
WILL HOLD LARGE ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION

The offices, galleries and art collections of the Museum of Modern Art are moving this week (Tuesday and Wednesday) from the temporary quarters the Museum has occupied in Rockefeller Center for nearly two years to the new building of the Museum at 11 West 53 Street. On Thursday, May 11, the Museum will open its permanent home to the public with a tenth anniversary exhibition: Art in Our Time. Wednesday evening, May 10, the Trustees of the Museum will hold a private reception and preview for members and invited guests.

The exhibition, largest ever given by the Museum, will include painting, sculpture, graphic arts, architecture and town planning, industrial art, photography and motion pictures. But the new building itself will probably excite more interest than anything exhibited within its glass walls and under its toggle-bolted lights. To make plain to the visitor the many new construction features of the building, a detailed model of it will be shown, with wall charts, plans and explanatory placards.

The model of the new building will be part of the tenth anniversary exhibition. The large architecture section of the exhibition will be devoted chiefly to modern houses and housing. It will have two main divisions:

- (a) Single Dwellings: Fine examples, here and abroad, of modern country and suburban houses ranging in cost from \$5,000 to \$150,000.
- (b) Multiple Dwellings: Modern apartments and housing developments, both here and abroad, with a special section on the housing projects to which the United States Housing Authority is allocating the eight hundred million dollars recently authorized by Congress--unquestionably the largest sum ever devoted at one time to architecture. If full and intelligent advantage is taken of the magnificent opportunity provided by Congress, before the end of the next decade this country will begin to enjoy the widespread benefits of a living and handsome architecture for the first time in a century.

The Museum proposes to show through its exhibition the best

19

dwellings that modern architecture has achieved, whether in houses, apartments or housing, both here and abroad. Conditions of individual and of group living have changed so greatly in the last two or three decades that the past can no longer supply workable models for dwellings of today and tomorrow. Although its essential nature is continual progress and the assimilation of new materials and technics, modern architecture within the last ten years may be said safely to have passed its initial trial period and to have become the reasonable and natural way of building for our time. In the exhibition the great practical advantages and esthetic enrichment which it can contribute to modern living will be graphically pointed out.

The exhibition will include ten models of separate houses and housing developments. It will also show a prefabricated one-piece bathroom, the entire room and all its fixtures being stamped out of metal much as an automobile body is. It will indicate dramatically the tremendous advantages, to individual as well as multiple dwellings, of prefabrication and standardization all the way from doors, windows, cupboards, heaters and other equipment, up to entire sections of houses and even small houses themselves.

Many nations will be represented in the works of their finest architects: Le Corbusier of France, Lubetkin of England, Aalto of Finland, as well as Wright, Gropius, Neutra, Stone, Lescaze, Holabird and Stonorov of America, and many others. The brilliant contributions made to multiple housing development by Sweden, England, Germany, Denmark, Italy, Spain, France and Switzerland will also be shown.

The Architecture Section of the Museum's tenth anniversary exhibition, Art in Our Time, has been assembled by the Department of Architecture of the Museum of Modern Art in collaboration with the United States Housing Authority. In the catalog which the Museum will publish simultaneously with the opening of the exhibition, the Architecture Section reads in part as follows:

Two thousand years ago the Roman architect Vitruvius pointed out that good architecture must be built well, work well and look well. In modern architecture there is particular emphasis on the second. Construction, audacious and complex as it has become, is usually but a means of carrying out the demands of function.

The form a house takes may be influenced by its environment, by the contours of the ground or by the direction of the view, the sunlight or prevailing

winds. Today an architect can choose from a range of materials that would have dazzled his forbears. New types of construction also influence design. A whole house made at the factory is no impossibility. Prefabrication and standardization are having two main effects on design. First, the individual architect designs less and less detail because he can find wonderfully efficient and well made equipment in his catalogues. And second, standardized door, window and wall units introduce a regular rhythm.

Because architecture is an art and the modern architect a modern artist, his forms and colors are conditioned by the "cultural climate" he lives in. His forms are often an architectural embodiment of certain forms in contemporary painting and sculpture. The collaboration of Miro and Léger, Calder and Arp with Paul Nelson has resulted in a house stylistically as homogeneous as Raphael's Villa Madama in which great Renaissance painters and architects worked together.

In domestic architecture, nothing today is more important than public housing. As the skyscraper is the typical American monument of the boom of the 20's, public housing may well be the true monument of the 40's. More systematic thought has been spent on the design of the minimum-cost dwelling in the last twenty years than in the previous five thousand. A generation's work in housing in Europe has stored up an accumulation of experience for which the American architect may well be thankful. Though conditions often differ the housing problem is so similar the world over that substantial gains in one country can soon be made to benefit another.

Few things are as vital to the future of our country and of every city in it as the proper solution of the housing problem. And good design is a vital part of that problem. The future of public housing rests with the architects, with the local authorities who choose them and set the problem and with the public which supports the movements and will live in the houses.

In connection with the architecture exhibition, the Museum's activity in industrial design will be represented by a small exhibit of well-designed modern chairs including an American soda-fountain chair, the first tubular metal chair, designed by Marcel Breuer in 1925, and Breuer's 1935 plywood reclining chair, the spring armchair and the Pavilion "X" chair designed by Mies van der Rohe, a bentwood armchair by Thonet, an armchair by Aalto and one or two others.

The entire exhibition, Art in Our Time, will be open to the public from May 11 to October 1. Museum hours will continue to be from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. weekdays, including Saturdays, and from Noon to 6 P.M. Sundays. The admission fee for adults will be twenty-five cents weekdays and ten cents Sundays. Admission for children will be ten cents at all times.