

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXHIBITION OF CALIFORNIA HOUSES OPENS AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The flow of exhibitions from East to West will be reversed when the Museum of Modern Art opens to the public on Wednesday, March 17, a small architecture exhibition of Five California Houses. The exhibition was assembled in California by six of the leading architects at the request of the San Francisco Museum of Art, which asked these architects to present characteristic examples of their work for a regional exhibition. Sponsored by the magazine California Arts and Architecture, the exhibition includes the work of John Ekin Dinwiddie and Albert Henry Hill, Hervey Parke Clark, Harwell Hamilton Harris, Richard J. Neutra and William Wilson Wurster.

The Museum of Modern Art has borrowed the exhibition from the San Francisco Museum of Art so that people in the East may have an opportunity to become more familiar with this highly characteristic architecture, indigenous to Western climate and living habits. The Architecture Committee of the Museum of Modern Art felt that many people in the East had not been fully aware of the great progress of domestic architecture on the West Coast. When shown in California, the exhibition was called "Western Living." The title has been changed to Five California Houses to define more clearly the scope of the exhibition.

The genesis of the exhibition, which inspired the San Francisco Museum of Art to ask the six California architects for examples of their work, was a magazine article by Talbot Hamlin, a member of the Museum's Architecture Committee, published in January 1942 in Harper's Magazine. Mr. Hamlin wrote in part:

"Where snobbish ideals persist or where speculative greed controls, there are no more pathetic misapprehensions of architecture; where, on the other hand, American life has been most truly developed along its peculiar and most characteristic lines--let us say roughly along the Pacific Coast, where in general American mores as distinguished from those of Europe are most freely accepted--there is evolving a kind of house architecture that is perhaps the most advanced domestic architecture in the world today. It is characterized by a bold use of available materials, a free handling of spaces, a constant preoccupation with the actual living of its inhabitants.

"The beauty of these long, low, rambling houses with their broad sheets of glass, their free and open spaces, and their abundance of private outdoor living areas is a beauty

that is new in the world because it represents the reaction of sensitive artists to a new ideal of what human living may be--an ideal in which mobility and space, delight in the outdoors and the sun, and freedom from many earlier conventions are important component parts."

Each architect is represented by one house, shown in photographs, plans and, in the case of Harris, a model. There is also a perspective model of the stairway in the house designed by Clark, showing the materials used in the actual construction. Neutra has substituted a newer house for the one originally shown. It is called "The Last of an Era House," designed and built during 1942 of non-critical materials; furniture and landscaping for the house were also designed by the architect with an eye to ease of maintenance, so important during the war.

The original exhibit was organized by Hervey Parke Clark, who has also been in charge of sending the material from California to the Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition is being shown under the auspices of the Museum's Department of Architecture and the installation has been designed by Alice M. Carson, Acting Curator of the Department.

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