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Foreward for catalogue of exhibition 28

'Work of Young Architects in the Middle West',
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1933,

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EXHIBITION 28 (Apr. 3 - 30, 1933)

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WORK OF YOUNG ARCHITECTS
IN THE MIDDLE WEST

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK

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WORK OF YOUNG ARCHITECTS IN THE MIDDLE WEST

FOREWORD

It seems appropriate in the year that Chicago is the cynosure of architectural eyes that there should be an exhibition of the work of men whose attitude toward architecture is newer and younger than that of those in charge of designing the buildings for the Century of Progress Exposition. Some of these young men are working for the Exposition but their work will be lost in the midst of the official architecture which dominates the main pavilions.

This exhibition is also a logical successor to the International Exhibition of Modern Architecture held by the Museum in 1932. The younger generation, now beginning their independent practice, have broken away from academic design. They have not as much opportunity to build as their predecessors, but more to observe and study. As a result this exhibition consists mainly of projects, but projects which show not only research into new problems but great strides away from the Beaux Arts classical (not to mention the Beaux Arts "modernistic").

Two trends apart from the general one toward modern design which deserve comment are: first, that toward housing as a sociological study as well as a problem in design; and second, toward the mass-produced house.

The problem in housing goes far beyond architecture into industry, economics, sociology and politics. In the end many experts will have to have a hand in solving it. But it is the peculiar province of the architect, in other words, the artist, not only to co-ordinate the work of city planners, politicians, engineers and economists, but to imagine new solutions of old problems and new ways of living.

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It is the architecture of housing which is particularly emphasized in this exhibition. It may be that one of the three projects shown will prove to be the cheapest or the most practicable solution of the given problem. They remain, however, important architecturally as suggesting an aesthetic direction in which the practical questions can be approached.


ewis Mumford's pioneer writing, the work of Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, the recent developments in housing in Europe, have all contributed toward an interest in housing. The carefully prepared charts of the A.I.A. Housing Exhibition summarized the attempts all over the world to solve this problem and presented the facts to the American public.

Of the seven architectural firms invited to participate in this exhibition, four worked out housing programs. It is encouraging to see the interest of young architects turning to live problems of this kind rather than to the mortuary chapels of our architectural competitions.

The mass-produced house which, through analogy to Model T" the public greeted a year ago with such enthusiasm, has reached a more mature stage. American Houses Inc., of which Robert W. McLaughlin is the architect, has built its first house in Hazelton, a., and General Houses Inc., Howard T. Fisher, architect and engineer, has recently completed its first house near Chicago. Both houses are completely modern in appearance as well as in engineering.

Although the hope of future housing lies rather more in land economics and revised financial structure than in Fordized production, standardization, which had reached every field but this one, has at last converted domestic building from a craft into an industry.

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lord 

It is no accident that the two important fields open to building today (palaces, churches and state capitols will not be so much needed in the future) are the very problems in which modern architects are most interested. We need no longer fear stucco houses masquerading in colonial dress, or large scale housing developments which resemble Cotswold villages.

Modern architecture, so new that two years ago it needed a "Rejected Architects" secession in New York, is today seriously considered by industry, real estate and politics.

Philip Johnson