

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

530618-50

FOR RELEASE: FRIDAY
June 19, 1953

Mr. Frank Lloyd Wright recently published a statement under the title: IN THE CAUSE OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE, in which he denounces the International Style of architecture as an "evil crusade" and a manifestation of "totalitarianism." He then goes on to accuse the Museum of Modern Art of having made a "sinister attempt to betray American Organic Architecture," and offers the Museum's exhibition and book, BUILT IN U. S. A.: POST-WAR ARCHITECTURE, as a proof of the Museum's activities as a "professional publicist" for the International Style. This calls for rebuttal and factual clarification.

It is self-evident that Mr. Wright speaks as a leading exponent of what he defines as organic architecture. It is therefore worth noting that the Museum, far from betraying Mr. Wright and what he stands for, has always acknowledged him publicly as America's greatest architect. The Museum has held fourteen exhibitions in which Mr. Wright's work was represented - six of these were devoted exclusively to his work and one was the largest architecture show given at the Museum of Modern Art. Thus the Museum has given him more one-man shows than it has given not only to any architect, but to any creative artist. In both its exhibition and its book on American post-war architecture, Mr. Wright again was given the place of honor which he deserves. It also is pertinent to point out here that all the architects whom Mr. Wright associates by name with organic architecture - namely Richardson, Sullivan and Root, have been honored by the Museum since the inception of its Department of Architecture.

The Museum's responsibility is to help the public to know and appreciate the work of the creative artists of our time, and to bring to its attention significant trends in modern art. Unlike Mr. Wright, we believe that the International Style was such a trend. Twenty years ago the Museum first applied the term International Style to a kind of architecture which, partially under Mr. Wright's influence, was emerging simultaneously in several different countries. As described by the Museum, the International Style was characterized by

light and spacious volumes rather than by heavy masses, by fresh exploration of function and structure, and by a sense of order enriched by beauty of proportion and perfection of technique rather than by superficially applied ornament. The Museum believes that several architects associated with it have done highly individual and magnificent work.

We strongly deny the sinister motives Mr. Wright ascribes to the International Style and we will, of course, continue to present the work of the architects who carry on its tradition together with distinguished work by other architects. By the same token, Mr. Wright's attacks will not diminish our admiration for him as a great artist and builder.

(signed) Rene d'Harnoncourt
Director
Museum of Modern Art