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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART EXHIBITS NEW RUGS BY AMERICAN ARTISTS

Eleven new rugs designed by ten American artists at the invitation of the Museum of Modern Art will be shown in an exhibition opening at the Museum Wednesday, July 1. In addition to the rugs the exhibition will include the original designs, and a section which will show the technique of making the rugs. The exhibition will be on view through August 9.

The installation of the exhibition has been designed by Alice of the Dep't. of Industrial Design and M. Carson, Director of the Exhibition. The reason for and purpose of the exhibition Miss Carson explains as follows:

"It is the work of this department to bring together in a practical way the talents of leading modern artists and the best industrial techniques in such a way that the result shall satisfy the requirements both of beauty and use. Similar projects have been undertaken in Europe where many of the outstanding painters have been commissioned to design rugs and tapestries. Several of these have been seen at the Museum in connection with painting exhibitions. In 1937 some American artists designed a group of rugs which were executed by the Crawford Shops and were shown at the Museum. All the rugs in the present exhibition have been made in the workshops of V'Soske, who has interpreted the artists' designs with such imagination and skill that he has produced masterpieces of rug making."

Most of the designs for the rugs are abstract. Coral Sea, the rug designed by Marguerite Zorach, is, however, a fanciful and colorful design of fish and other undersea creatures disporting themselves at the bottom of the ocean amid branches of coral and other marine flora. Hopscotch, the rug designed by Loren MacIver, is exactly what its name implies, the representation of a pavement on which is roughly chalked the numbered squares and home base of a child's game of hopscotch.

The designs for the nine other rugs in the exhibition are by the following well known American abstract artists: Stuart Davis, John Ferren, A. E. Gallatin, Arshile Gorky, Charles Howard, E. McKnight Kauffer, George L. K. Morris and I. Rice Pereira. Two rugs have been designed by Charles Howard; one of these is the smallest in the exhibition; the artist calls it The Spot. Stuart Davis has to say of the design for his rug, which he calls The Flying Carpet:

"My rug design is a pure invention but its shapes, colors and composition are directly related to sensations

connected with airplane views. Several years ago I was a member of a jury to judge some murals for an airport. The jury was composed of politicians, professional people and artists. The murals were in a style commonly referred to as abstract and there was considerable reluctance on the part of the politicians to accept them. As a final suggestion toward making a decision an airplane pilot was called in for his opinion. He professed himself ignorant of art but said that if the meaning of reality of the forms was in question he could accept them because he had seen similar shapes and colors very often in his flying experience."

The rugs vary in size from one small rug 3 feet in diameter to several large ones 8x10 feet. All will be for sale.

The rugs have been hand made in the V'Soske workshop. Some are carved or cut in relief, and in one instance--the rug designed by Pereira--a new technique has been developed. The V'Soske workshop has one of the largest palettes ever used for rugs--a collection of well over 25,000 color tufts, each one of which represents an exact and carefully developed formula. After studying the design V'Soske makes preliminary selections from these tufts. After many experiments and adjustments the final combinations are determined.

V'Soske was born in Michigan in 1899 of Russian-Polish parents. He studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Art, the Art Students League under Garber, Henri and Bellows. Watching his wife make a rug from commercially available wools V'Soske was outraged at the crude color and quality of the yarns. As a result he began to make experiments in dyeing wools, creating special needles, tools and looms. He gradually developed his own manufacturing process for hand-tufted and carved rugs.

V'Soske has executed rugs shown in Paris at L'Exposition Internationale 1937, the Architectural League Exhibitions of 1936, 1937 and 1938, and the New York World's Fair. His rugs have been exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Dayton Museum of Fine Arts, the Wilmington Museum of Art, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Detroit Institute of Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago.

After the exhibition closes at the Museum on August 9 it will be circulated to other museums, art galleries and colleges throughout the country.