

Museum of Modern Art
730 Fifth Avenue
New York City

COPY

For release Monday, Feb. 1, 1932

EXHIBITION OF MURAL PAINTINGS BY AMERICAN ARTISTS ANNOUNCED BY
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

To give American artists a chance to express their ideas in mural decoration, the Museum of Modern Art will hold an exhibition of mural painting as the opening show in its new quarters at 11 West 53rd Street, according to an announcement just issued by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., director of the Museum.

The exhibition will open shortly after the middle of April. The direction of the exhibition is in the hands of the Museum's Advisory Committee a group of young men and women many of whom have been interested in the Museum since its inception three years ago. The committee has been working out plans for the show for several weeks.

"The Advisory Committee believes that an exhibition of mural painting will be particularly valuable for the information of many interested architects in New York who are in search of competent decorators for buildings proposed or in construction," says Lincoln Kirstein, chairman of the exhibition committee.

"We feel that mural painting in America has suffered from a lack of opportunity to assert itself. Hitherto, mural decoration has been for the most part in the hands of academic painters. This show will attempt to give younger painters a chance to show their work before a large public.

"We hope the effect of the show will be to stimulate interest in the decoration of walls all over the country. It is expected that it will at least form the foundation for a new interest in decoration which it is hoped will be more vital and energetic than the inheritance of the imitators of Puvis de Chavannes."

A number of American painters, to be announced later, have been invited to exhibit. The list will include contemporary painters of every inclination. The murals will express the painters' versions of a "post-war" subject. Further than this the artists will not be limited to any style or any palette.

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The exhibition will continue through June, according to present plans. Mr. Kirstein is completing arrangements for the show at his office, Room 1208, 545 Fifth Avenue.

The Museum's forthcoming Exhibition of Modern Architecture, which opens February 10, will be the last to be held in the present galleries at 730 Fifth Avenue.

For release Sunday, March 27

Forty-four American painters are now at work on large panels and small sketches, expressing their ideas of wall decoration, for the mural exhibition which will open the new home of the Museum of Modern Art at 11 West Fifty-third Street. The exhibition, which has attracted advance comment throughout the country because of the increasing interest in murals, will open to the public on Friday, May 6th.

The complete list of artists in the show will be announced within a fortnight. All are American born, or hold United States citizenship papers.

"This exhibition marks an important innovation in the program of the Museum of Modern Art," says Alfred H. Barr, Jr., director of the Museum. "So far as I know no museum has ever attempted to assemble such a comprehensive group of large murals so that the public may have a chance to make comparisons."

Each artist will be represented by a small three-panel sketch, the total width of which is 48 inches and the height 21 inches, so that each of the three small panels will measure 21 by 16 inches. Above this sketch will be hung a large panel 48 inches wide and seven feet high which will be an enlargement of any one of the three sections of the sketch.

The murals will portray a "post-war subject." Oil on canvas, tempera on wood panels, mosaic, ceramic and water color on low-relief plaster are among the mediums chosen by the artists. Fresco was discouraged because of the expense of transportation and the possibility of damage by cracking.

"The painters chosen to exhibit are, generally speaking, easel painters," explains Lincoln Kirstein, director of the exhibition and a member of the Museum's Advisory Committee which is responsible for the show. "Up to the present time most of these artists have not

worked on walls but on small surfaces." Painters asked to exhibit are those who have expressed an interest in, or those whose work suggests, that they are capable of composing decorations on a large scale."

The mural exhibition which has been in preparation for several months, comes at a time when there is widespread interest in the problem of who is to paint the walls of the nation's great buildings.

"Too often in the last few years American architects have been at a loss to know where to turn for mural painters," says Mr. Kirstein. "As a result mural decoration has been for the most part in the hands of a limited group of academic painters. Recently, great interest in Mexico and the west have brought the names of Rivera, Orozco and Charlot before us and we find in their large achievements new hope.

"In our own country, Thomas Benton, in the New School for Social Research, in New York, and Boardman Robinson in the Kaufman Department Store in Pittsburgh, are almost the only two ^{unacademic} American artists who have painted murals. ~~But~~ There are many young painters who have never had a chance to express their ideas in wall decoration.

"The need for such an exhibition was made urgent by the problem confronting the architects of Rockefeller Center. After the Museum of Modern Art had begun plans for the mural show, artists in New York protested against the rumored choice of foreign artists for painting murals in Rockefeller Center. While the Museum does not take sides in this controversy, it does believe that American artists of less academic characteristics have not had a fair opportunity to display their possibilities as mural painters.

"It is hoped that this show will interest all architects of the United States responsible for planning large buildings, in calling to their attention painters of imagination and vigorous conception of design."

Plans are being made to send the mural show on tour so that it may be seen by architects and laymen in many parts of the United States. The exhibition will be shown in museums throughout the country, following the precedent set by the architectural exhibition which closed last Wednesday at the Museum and which this week begins a three years' tour from coast to coast.

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Each artist will be represented by a small three-panel sketch, the total width of which is 43 inches and the height 21 inches, so that each of the three small panels will measure 21 by 16 inches. Above this sketch will be hung a large panel 43 inches wide and seven feet high which will be an enlargement of any one of the three sections of the sketch.

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