

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, announces that the scope of its first exhibition for the 1936-1937 season, New Horizons in American Art, will be greatly enlarged, and that the exhibition, which opens to the public Wednesday, September 16, will be on view through Monday, October 12. Outstanding work by artists all over the country on the Federal Art Project has been selected by the Museum and will include not only paintings, sculpture, murals, graphic arts and children's work but also a large selection of work done by artists on the Index of American Design. The exhibition will be comprised of 435 objects and will fill three and one-half floors of the Museum. Although selections have been made on the basis of quality alone, without regard to regional representation, all sections of the country will be represented. Most of the exhibits will be the work of artists unknown or little known to the New York art world. The Museum had not planned an exhibition of Federal Art Project work for its new season; in fact, its 1936-1937 exhibition schedule had been announced, when the quality of the Project work so impressed both the President of the Museum, A. Conger Goodyear, and its Director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., that they decided to revise the schedule to make room for New Horizons in American Art.

"This is the third exhibition of 'Government' art which the Museum has shown," said Mr. Barr. "In the fall of 1934 the Museum exhibited a selection of work done under the Public Works of Art Project; in June 1936, an exhibition of Architecture in Government Housing; and now the selection of work done under the Federal Art Project, which was organized just a year ago in August 1935. I am convinced that the work to be exhibited in New Horizons in American Art shows a remarkable increase in quality over preceding work done under government patronage, and this includes not only projects created under recent emergency measures but also previous projects for public buildings and their decoration during the past one hundred years. I feel that one very important result of the recent expansion of Government participation in the artistic welfare of our country has been the improvement in official taste, which has

heretofore been dominated by a comparatively small group of academic artists and architects.

"I am very glad indeed that such an exhibition can be held at the Museum of Modern Art. Mr. Holger Cahill, Director of the Federal Art Project, is to be congratulated upon the results of his year of sympathetic and discerning work. I believe that the Federal Art Project has won the confidence of artists throughout the country and in so doing has made possible a great advance in the art of our country, not only in mural painting but in easel painting and graphic art and, what is most important, in the public understanding and appreciation of art.

"The Federal Art Project supports the art of the present; but another very important part of it is devoted to documenting American art of the past. This is the Index of American Design. The drawings and watercolors of the Index are technically beautiful in themselves and reveal the extraordinary wealth of American traditions in the useful arts."

The purpose of the Index of American Design is to depict in line drawing and watercolor the rise and development of the decorative arts in this country. It will consist of portfolios illustrating handmade furniture, pottery, silverware, glassware, iron work, toys, clothing, dolls, leather work and other objects of use and decoration. The finished Index will not be a dull compilation of facts, figures and photographs. It will show the objects in their true colors and textures and will grow more valuable with passing years as an authoritative and illuminating picture of the setting and accessories of American life from the earliest settlement of this country on up through the 19th century.

Individuals and museums all over the country are allowing the finest pieces from their collections to be reproduced in the Index. In addition, research workers on the project are discovering and rescuing choice treasures neglected or forgotten in out-of-the-way places. From New England and upper New York come the beautiful and chaste furniture designs and glowing textiles, handmade by the remarkable craftsmen of Shaker communities. New England also supplies designs in crewel work, quilts and dolls. From New Mexico come reproductions of native paintings on wood made by early New

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Mexican artists. Some of these paintings are on ordinary pieces of furniture; others are small wooden plaques on which the figures and faces of saints have been painted in what might be called the Spanish-American Colonial style. In Pennsylvania the project workers have recorded the highly individual painted chests, pottery, iron work, toys and wood carvings of the Pennsylvania Germans. Project workers in Louisiana have copied the exquisite and delicate iron work of that region, showing the early French influence. California presents painted and hand-wrought leather saddles and stirrups as well as magnificent grill work--all showing the Spanish-American Colonial influence. New York's great treasures in the line of decorative arts are silverware and furniture designed and made by early American craftsmen.

It is only in the past half century or so that European countries have established museums of decorative art--in Vienna, Munich, Moscow and in the South Kensington Museum in London. The Index of American Design, organized less than a year ago, is doing very much the same work in American but is doing it on a much more comprehensive scale.

The current summer show at the Museum, which includes two floors devoted to an exhibition of Modern Painters and Sculptors as Illustrators, one floor of Modern Exposition Architecture and a floor of modern paintings from a Private Collection and from the Museum's Permanent Collection, will remain on view through September 6. The Museum will then be closed until Wednesday, September 16, when it will open to the public with New Horizons in American Art.