

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

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FOR RELEASE Thursday, March 1, 1934.

Walls are moving, ceilings dropping, lights changing as a day-and-night shift of workmen transforms the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street into a completely new modern background for the Exhibition of Machine Art, which opens Wednesday, March 7. For the first time, the Museum is giving as much importance to the installation as to the Exhibition itself. The background against which the objects will be displayed is not general but specific and has been designed to concentrate maximum attention on each object individually, yet to give a certain coherence to a display of more than a thousand items. In this way the diffusion of interest so confusing in the usual museum display will be avoided. As the installation has been planned from the point of view of the observer, the Museum is keenly interested in the reaction of the public.

False ceilings are being constructed of muslin, through which overhead lighting will diffuse evenly. The entire floor plan of the Museum and the surfaces of the walls are being changed by movable screens, panels, and spur walls of aluminum, stainless steel, and micarta, and by coverings of oilcloth, natural Belgian linen, and canvas painted pastel blue, pink and gray. Stands and display tables are being built of aromatic cedar and Circassian walnut, shelves of black and white Carara glass.

Three methods of display will be employed: isolation--a water faucet, for example, will be exhibited like a Greek statue on a pedestal; grouping--the massing of series of objects such as saucepans, water glasses and electric light bulbs; and variation--a different type of stand, pedestal, table and background for each object or series of objects.

Springs, gears, cables, chemical capsules, carpet sweepers, and kitchen cabinets are among the useful objects that will be shown. They have been selected for the Exhibition not on the basis of their usefulness but for their beauty of form, finish and material. On the third floor will be a "jewel room" ^{where} shining precision instruments, sections of wire, watch springs, and tiny ball bearings will be displayed on black velvet.

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Mr. Philip Johnson, Chairman of the Architectural Department of the Museum, is directing the Exhibition of Machine Art. He is responsible for the creation of the installation, all of which is being built by the Museum's own workmen. Mr. Johnson is widely known for his original ideas in museum display. His installations of previous exhibitions, notably "Objects: 1900 and Today" held at the Museum of Modern Art in the Spring of 1933 and "Modern Architecture" in 1932, have had influence not only in the museum field but in commercial display as well.

The Museum will be closed to the public until the opening of the Exhibition of Machine Art on March 7, which will continue until April 16.