

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

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FOR RELEASE Saturday afternoon,
September 15, and Sunday morning,
September 16, 1934

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, announces a National Exhibition of Art to open to the public Wednesday, September 19. The works shown will be a selection from the painting, sculpture and graphic art done under the Public Works of Art Project and exhibited in Washington, D. C. during May, 1934. It will include about thirty paintings selected by President and Mrs. Roosevelt to be hung in the lobbies of the White House Office Building.

The Public Works of Art Project was organized December 8, 1933, as a Federal project under the Civil Works Administration. It was put under the general supervision of the Treasury Department, as that Department is concerned with Federal Buildings. The work done by the artists employed in the Project was intended to embellish buildings supported wholly or in part by tax funds, such as Federal and State administrative buildings, buildings on Indian reservations, parks, public schools, hospitals, land-grant colleges, customs houses, court houses, municipal libraries, museums, zoos, and other public structures.

Four days after the Project was initiated artists and craftsmen all over the country began to be employed in its work. The Project was discontinued April 28, 1934, after a total expenditure of \$1,408,381, at an average weekly wage of \$34 to each artist or craftsman employed.

Commenting on the results of the Project, Mr. Bruce, Secretary of the Public Works of Art Project, said: "The Project has been a recognition of the value of culture and the arts in American life. It is the first completely democratic art movement in history.

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A great Republic has accepted the artist as a useful member of society and his work as a valuable asset to the State. That the artists of the country have accepted the challenge by giving their best is, we believe, proved by this Exhibition. That the work done under the Project has been a genuine contribution to the enrichment of the life of the people has been indicated by the well-nigh universal approval it has received and by the response of the public to it. This response has shown itself not only verbally but by the substantial contributions made by communities all over the country in providing the material costs and expenses incidental to the mural and sculptural work undertaken.

"The Project, in the short time it has operated, has definitely increased the art interest in this country. It has gone far to take the snobbery out of art and make it a part of the daily life of the average citizen. It has blazed the trail in getting rid of the drabness of our public buildings and parks, and has had an important influence on the artistic and cultural life of the people."

The artists were selected for the Project on the basis of their artistic qualifications and their need of employment. The subject assigned them was the American scene in all its phases; within that scope the artists had entire freedom of expression. During the four and a half months of the Project, 3,521 artists were employed, about five hundred of whom were women. A number of negroes were included in the Project and some thirty Indians. The Indians did not confine themselves entirely to mural and easel painting, but worked in their accustomed media such as weaving and pottery. In all, more than 15,000 works of art were produced consisting of murals, sculptures, oil paintings, watercolors, etchings, lithographs, and work in various crafts. All the works of art became the property of the Government and were allotted to public buildings and parks throughout the country. In addition to the paintings chosen by the President and Mrs. Roosevelt for the White House office, selections were made by Government officials for the purpose of decorating their offices.

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L. W. Robert, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, headed the organization for administering the Public Works of Art Project and Forbes Watson was its technical director. The Advisory Committee to the Treasury on Fine Arts included Charles Moore, Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission, Chairman; Dr. Rexford G. Tugwell, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture; Harry L. Hopkins, Federal Works Administrator; H. T. Hunt, General Counsel for the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works; Frederic A. Delano, Director of the National Planning Commission, and Edward Bruce, Secretary.

The Exhibition will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art through Sunday, October 7.