

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
NEW YORK

11 WEST 53rd STREET  
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900  
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

SARAH NEWMAYER, PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

April 28, 1941.

To CITY EDITORS

Dear Sirs:

Tuesday afternoon, April 29, 4 to 7 P.M., the Museum will hold a

Members' preview and reception  
for the exhibition of TVA Architecture and Design  
opening to the public, Wednesday morning.


GUESTS OF HONOR at the reception Tuesday afternoon:

Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia  
David E. Lilienthal, Director of the TVA  
Harcourt A. Morgan, Chairman of the Board of TVA  
James P. Pope, member of the TVA Board  
Chief Engineer Theodore Parker  
Chief Architect Roland Wank  
General Manager Gordon Clapp.

Mayor LaGuardia will introduce Mr. Lilienthal. Both  
the Mayor and Mr. Lilienthal will speak briefly.

You are invited to attend or send a representative. For further in-  
formation please telephone me at Circle 5 - 8900.

Sincerely,

  
Sarah Newmeyer  
Publicity Director

P.S. The Mayor expects to arrive at 6 P.M. . The speeches will  
be made shortly thereafter.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DAVID E. LILIENTHAL, DIRECTOR OF TVA, OPENS EXHIBITION  
OF TVA ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The successful development of architectural design in the tremendous engineering project known as the Tennessee Valley Authority is shown in models, photographic murals, architects' plans and designs, and graphic diagrams which compose the exhibition of TVA Architecture and Design, opening today (Wednesday, April 30) at the Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition has been prepared by the Tennessee Valley Authority in collaboration with the Museum and will remain on view through Sunday, June 8. It will later be sent on tour throughout the country by the Museum's Department of Circulating Exhibitions.

David E. Lilienthal, Director of TVA since the project was initiated in 1933, opened the exhibition and spoke at a members' preview and reception. Honorable Fiorello H. LaGuardia, Mayor of New York City, introduced Mr. Lilienthal and spoke briefly. In addition to the Mayor and Mr. Lilienthal, the other guests of honor at the reception were H. A. Morgan, Chairman of the Board of TVA; James P. Pope, member of the TVA Board; Chief Engineer Theodore Parker; Chief Architect Roland Wank; General Manager Gordon Clapp.

As a supplement to the exhibition the Museum will show a twenty-minute film, TVA, in its auditorium at 3 P.M. daily except Sundays. The film was made in 1940 and shows the entire development and operation of the project throughout the Tennessee Valley, with particularly beautiful sequences on the huge dams.

At the members' preview Mr. Lilienthal spoke as follows:

"We of the TVA are very proud and happy that the Museum of Modern Art should see fit to recognize TVA structures as noteworthy examples of modern American architecture and design. There are some 20,000 men and women building and operating the TVA; all of us, all of the men who at this hour are drilling into bed-rock, operating the huge shovels or bending over drafting boards sense the importance of what is happening here today in New York City, hundreds of miles from our job. And so we express our thanks to the officers and trustees of the Museum because this exhibit of modern

public architecture will have a stimulating effect upon the minds and imagination of many thousands of our fellow citizens.

"In a few weeks it will be eight years since TVA came into being. In June 1933 we were under feverish pressure to rush into the actual construction of what was to be--and now is--the most extensive series of engineering works ever built by the United States. We realized that we were building not for our time alone, but structures that would stand for centuries, a thousand years or more perhaps. The dams must be the finest achievement of modern engineering skill. But what of their esthetic quality, their form? These monuments would reflect for centuries the standard of American culture and the purpose of American life of our time. Should we follow the quite general practice of building the structures, and then add some decorations to make them 'pretty'? Should we raise up monoliths to set their giant shoulders against the floods of a thousand years, and then embellish their strength with the doo-dads and columns of a civilization now gone for a thousand years?

"Millions of Americans, we told ourselves, will see these structures. They will see in them a kind of token of the virility and vigor of democracy, of its concern for living men and generations yet to come. We wanted these dams to have the honest beauty of a fine tool; for TVA was a tool to do a job for men in a democracy.

"There were practical difficulties to overcome. We had to search for architects who were not in a constant delirium of nostalgia for the past, men who could interpret the functional strength the engineers would build into these structures; and we had to find engineers willing to collaborate with architects with open and eager minds. The exhibit you have seen tells how well that union succeeded.

"We like to think of the building of the TVA as an anonymous undertaking. This is not to say that individuals have not touched it with their special talent and genius. Without the great abilities of such men as Chief Engineer Theodore Parker, or Chief Architect Roland Wank, or General Manager Gordon Clapp the result would have been quite different and doubtless inferior. But you will search in vain for bronze tablets on any TVA dams, tablets listing the names of engineers or architects, or members of the board of directors for that matter. Nor is this undertaking built to glorify the fame or augment the power of any man. There is one phrase and only one you will find written over the doors of these structures; in large letters is this simple legend: BUILT FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES."

Through TVA a chain of lakes, ten great dams, a continuous series of nine-foot navigable channels and huge artificial reservoirs now control and make useful to an area larger than England the 700-mile Tennessee river. The success of the vast project in architectural terms has been achieved through a remarkable unity of concept and purpose among its engineers, architects and designers.

The constructions illustrated in the exhibition will include the ten huge dams: Chickamauga, Guntersville, Hiwassee, Norris, Kentucky, Fort Loudon, Cherokee, Watts Bar, Pickwick, Wheeler; the control buildings, power plants, visitors' buildings and defense housing. Graphic diagrams will show how dams and locks function; and photographs will indicate the extent to which navigation has

been improved and an attractive vacation land created. The exhibition will include five scale models of the Powerhouse at Chickamauga Dam; Lock Operations building at Kentucky Dam; Powerhouse at Gunterville Dam; Crane at Hiwassee Dam; and Pickwick Dam.

The exhibition has been installed by the Architecture Department of the Museum of Modern Art, which has made the following statement regarding the architectural significance of the TVA:

"Distinguished by sober yet imaginative design, the architecture of the TVA is worthy of careful study. It represents a close cooperation of architect and engineer with an understanding of each other's skills on a scale unmatched since the great utilitarian building campaigns of imperial Rome.

"The chief purpose of the TVA is of course the many material benefits which it brings to millions of people, and in this it has succeeded. This exhibition, however, has been planned to show other virtues, less tangible but none the less real. It shows the fine high level of design in the hundreds of structures. It shows that a huge government project can produce fine architecture, a gratifying truth we often forget when looking at much recent work for housing, park service, or, now defense; these structures handsomely combine dignity, logic and beauty - from the minor buildings built around them to the colossal dams themselves."

Stuart Chase, noted author and economist, has long been a supporter of the things which TVA represents. He writes of the TVA as follows:

"From the great Smokies to the lowlands of Kentucky, over a basin as large as England, the Tennessee River runs.

"Our pioneer fathers discovered it, settled it, loved it, and began its destruction. With plow and fire, the careful balance of nature was destroyed. Soils ran bleeding to the seas. Forests were sacked and burned. The wealth of waters was cast away in man-made floods.

"Eight years ago the people of the valley and the Government of the United States joined in an effort to reverse this tragedy and come to terms with nature again. The Tennessee Valley Authority was their agent for this task.

"In no other land has a great river been harnessed from source to mouth in one beneficent control. See, at their dials, engineers who can halt seven hundred miles of flood, release a million kilowatts of energy.

"To hold the river harmless for a thousand years requires dams like pyramids anchored into the bedrock of the hills. No architect, dreaming of Athens or of Chartres can alter the designs which this great press of waters demand.

"A new architecture, bold as the engineering from which it springs, is rising in the valley. Nothing like it has ever been seen before. Look at it and be proud that you are an American."