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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW YORK

11 WEST 53rd STREET
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SARAH NEWMAYER, PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

August 6, 1942

TO Art Editors
City Editors

Dear Sirs;

You are invited to come or send a representative to the

Press Preview of
a Circulating Exhibition
CAMOUFLAGE FOR CIVILIAN DEFENSE

Tuesday, August 11
from 2 to 6 P.M.

The exhibition has been prepared by the Museum in collaboration with Pratt Institute, and will be sent on tour throughout the country by the Department of Circulating Exhibitions after its close at the Museum September 13. The exhibition opens to the public Wednesday, August 12.

If you wish any further information, will you please telephone my office (Circle 5 - 8900).

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Newmeyer

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Publicity Director

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAMOUFLAGE FOR CIVILIAN DEFENSE SUBJECT OF CIRCULATING EXHIBITION
AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Camouflage for the civilian in a war which carries destruction to his very doorstep is the subject of a new exhibition Camouflage for Civilian Defense which opens at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, on Wednesday, August 12, to continue through September 13.

The exhibition, designed by Carlos Dyer of the Museum staff, has been prepared by the Department of Circulating Exhibitions in collaboration with Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, which furnished basic material, photographs and models. Numerous photographs and diagrams were also contributed by the U. S. Army Engineers Board at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

This is the third exhibition on the subject which the Museum has prepared during the last eighteen months. The first was the highly popular camouflage section of Britain at War, held in the summer of 1941, and the second, a civilian defense camouflage exhibition arranged by the Department of Circulating Exhibitions in collaboration with the Addison Gallery of Art, Andover, Mass., where it was first shown before going on tour. The present exhibition which has just been completed, is also primarily concerned with camouflage for civilian defense, although the methods employed in industrial and military camouflage are in many cases identical. The exhibition, therefore, will inform the visitor of the complex tasks with which army camouflage units are faced.

The exhibition consists of twenty-five illustrated panels and ten models showing current methods of protective concealment which should interest both the layman and the serious student of camouflage. The panels, employing photographs, diagrams and text, illustrate methods of camouflage that range from the skillful use of paints which can make a target blend with its natural surroundings, to the construction of elaborate superstructures which may obscure the actual shape and shadow of a vital factory.

The opening panels show examples of the most subtle camouflage of all--that of nature. It is from nature that man has learned the intricate secrets of concealment by visual deception. Man's problems,

however, differ greatly not only in scope and complexity, but also because he must accomplish deception by artificial methods.

The next section of the exhibition deals with the aerial bombardier's problem of locating and sighting his objective. Air attack is the major destructive threat upon civilian objects such as power plants, munitions factories, storage tanks and docks; therefore camouflage of these vital points is primarily against precision aerial bombing. Aided by aerial photography with super-speed cameras, telescopic lenses, infra-red film and the revealing use of stereoscopic photographs, all but the most skillful camouflage may be detected.

The camoufleur's main objective, however, is not complete concealment from camera observation but the delay of the bombardier's recognition of his target in actual attack. Camouflage accomplishes its purpose if it confuses the bombardier who must sight his target at a certain distance before a certain time, if he is to make a direct hit. Through diagrams the process of vision is analysed to show the optical problems involved in deceiving the eye and the mind of the observer.

Subsequent panels deal with the problems of camouflage design; the basic materials and devices utilized by the camoufleur to obliterate a conspicuous object by means of special paints and applied textures; elimination of tell-tale shadows by the use of screens of various kinds; and the disguise of an object by means of superstructures. Other panels deal with the use of decoys to supply false targets and false clues to divert attention from real ones; still others show how blankets of smoke or artificial fog may obscure a large target area.

Practical solutions for specific problems are shown on actual models constructed in the Camouflage Research Laboratories of Pratt Institute, which is now sponsoring an extensive training program of industrial camouflage for professional architects, engineers and designers. Particular emphasis is placed in the exhibition upon the necessity of serious investigation by such professionals in order that they may be qualified to deal with the practical problems of camouflage design and construction. Only such individuals who have made a thorough study of the principles and methods of protective concealment can be entrusted to camouflage for civilian defense, and in every case approval of regional army headquarters must be obtained. Further stress is laid upon the need for broad regional planning if such camouflage is to be really effective.

Following its New York showing the exhibition will be sent on tour to museums and galleries throughout the country, including Cornell University, Ithaca, the Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, the City Art Museum of St. Louis, and the Art Institute of Chicago.