

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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## DESIGNS FOR BALLET SOCIETY SHOWN AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Under the auspices of its Department of Theatre Design, the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, will open on January 21 an exhibition of the designs for costumes and scenery commissioned by Ballet Society of New York for its productions during the past year and a half. The present exhibition includes approximately fifty original drawings for costumes and scenery, several scale models, and the original masks worn by the four characters of Renard. Artists represented include Kurt Seligmann, Joan Junyer, Horace Armistead, Estaban Francés, Isamu Noguchi and Corrado Cagli. The exhibition will remain on view through April 18.

Ballet Society, an educational institution dedicated to creating new works in the field of the dance and lyric theatre, stages only the first performance of new or unfamiliar works. Following the precedent established by Diaghilev in the first quarter of this century, it has commissioned works from many outstanding artists, hitherto unknown in the theatre, and has presented stage design by leading easel-painters of the new generation.

George Amberg, Curator of the Museum's Department of Theatre Arts, comments on the exhibition as follows:

"It is always extremely interesting to compare an artist's original sketches with the costumes and settings as they are finally seen on the stage. Sometimes theatrical drawings appear uninspired because they merely provide accurate technical information for the craftsmen who are going to execute them. In the case of easel artists working for the theatre, however, the immediate artistic appeal of the sketches is very strong. The present exhibition reveals an extraordinarily high level of achievement on the part of the artists and it is significant because it introduces to the world of the theatre talent which has never served it before. Whether the designs are spontaneous suggestions or drawn in meticulous detail, they all reflect a fresh and provocative approach to the problems of theatre design."

"The work of the artists shown confirms again the soundness of Diaghilev's principles, if applied with taste and discrimination. Kurt Seligmann had already experimented in the dance field with his fantastic costumes for the Hanya Holm production, The Golden Fleece. For Ballet Society's, The Four Temperaments, (Music by Paul Hindemith; Choreography--George Balanchine) he has conceived a backcloth of overwhelming dramatic power and unforgettably weird costumes. Estaban Francés was unknown in the theatre until he designed the exquisite setting and costumes for the Haeff-Bolender ballet, Zodiac. Joan Junyer, already known to the ballet public for his designs for The Cuckold's Fair, realized an interesting experiment for the Carter-Taras ballet, Minotaur. Horace Armistead, a well known designer of long standing, created a theatrically unforgettable environment for

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the Gian-Carlo Menotti opera, The Medium, which was also very successful on Broadway."

Ballet Society encourages the work of younger musicians as well as younger dancers, who collaborate with the painters whose work is now shown in the Auditorium Gallery of the Museum of Modern Art. The repertory of works commissioned or first performed by Ballet Society include Renard the Fox by Stravinsky; The Spellbound Child by Ravel; The Four Temperaments by Paul Hindemith; The Medium by Gian-Carlo Menotti, and The Seasons by John Cage, as well as The Minotaur by Elliott Carter, Jr. and Punch and the Child by Richard Arnell. These works were staged by the choreographers George Balanchine, Merce Cunningham, John Taras and Fred Danielli.

