

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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PRESS PREVIEW:

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The building considered by many authorities here and abroad as possibly the most significant example of post-war architecture in the United States will be the subject of an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art from June 6 through July 16. The Alfred Newton Richards Medical Research Building, designed by Louis I. Kahn, and constructed in 1959-60 for the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, will be presented by means of three models, one of the entire complex as it will appear when finished, two study models, and original drawings and photographic blow-ups.

The exhibition is directed by Wilder Green, Assistant Director of the Museum's Department of Architecture and Design.

In the publication accompanying the show, Green says that the impact of Kahn's building, constructed of pre-cast concrete, brick and glass, is derived from its "inventive and rigorous integration of form, function, space and structural technique. More than any other building recently constructed in America it is principled, vigorous, fundamental and exhilarating; it states, teaches and questions."

The building, composed of a cluster of three vertically stacked open studio laboratory towers, roughly pinwheeling about a fourth enclosed service tower, will have two more laboratory towers added to it in the near future to serve the University Biology School.

Green, referring to the influences on Kahn of the three great innovators of modern architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, says that "unlike many of his colleagues, he has not felt it necessary to reject the influence of one of these men in favor of another. He has extracted certain common ideas, redefining these for his own purposes, and he is the first to have accomplished a synthesis of what have seemed to others disparate approaches."

He also says that while Kahn's buildings reveal strong echoes of medieval European town and building complexes and that the quality of direct purposefulness in medieval architecture has always attracted him, Kahn's work continues in the mainstream of the functionalist movement of early 20th century architecture. "By his redefinition and expansion of the limits of the functionalist theory, Kahn has disclosed its continuing usefulness as a generator of meaningful form.

"Whatever the near or distant historical influences may be on Kahn's work, and whatever way they may have been used by him, the Richards Memorial Research Building is as individually authoritative an act of architecture as exists in this country today."

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187

Louis I. Kahn was born on the Island of Osel, Estonia in 1901 and came to the United States in 1906. He has been a Professor of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania since 1957 and has lectured at Princeton, Yale, Harvard and the University of California. As a teacher he has had a great influence on students even before he built a work of first importance. The Richards Medical Research Building, which opened in 1960, is his most recent and largest work to date.

For catalogs, photographs and additional information contact Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. CI 5-8900