

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MUSEUM DESIGNER IN MOSCOW

Would a lady designer from New York's famous Museum of Modern Art and a lady electrician from Moscow have anything in common?

Charlotte Trowbridge Dyer, recently returned from Moscow where she supervised the installation of The Family of Man at the American National Exhibition says "Yes."

The Family of Man, an unusual photographic show, was originally presented at the Museum four years ago. The United States Information Agency bought two copies, and subsequently three more. When the cultural exhibit was set up in Moscow, the State Department decided to send it there, and since Mrs. Dyer had been in charge of production of the copies for Europe, Latin America, Asia and India she was chosen to go to the Soviet Union.

Interviewed in her office surrounded by the materials of her profession as a designer -- paintings, sculpture, photographs, blueprints -- Mrs. Dyer said the great bond between her girl electricians who helped install the show and herself was work.

"I used to arrive at the exhibit very early in the morning and go right to work," she said, "my two girl electricians assigned to the job were already working on a ten foot wall. The first three or four days there were no greetings, but they watched everything I did intently. They never spoke to me, or smiled, but they never took their eyes off me when they weren't busy. Their attitude changed from watchfulness to cordiality when they realized I was working just as hard as they, even though I wore a dress and they wore overalls! Soon there were smiles and greetings. The day they finished their job I gave them lipsticks and they were delighted. Friends and fellow worker!"

Mrs. Dyer, along with others from large American companies engaged in putting on their exhibits, stayed at the Ukraine Hotel, a modern building housing only tourists. Here she also had a chance to observe Russian women at work. There was little time for sight-seeing, but to and from work, plus a tour of the big department store, she had an opportunity to see the Russian people.

"The hotel was thirty-two stories high, rather nicely furnished and comfortable" said Mrs. Dyer, "there were two women assigned to each floor in charge of mail and keys. They worked three shifts of twenty-four hours each, and then has twenty-four hours off. They said they liked this arrangement very much. We were called for early in the morning by car and as we went through the streets, and I think Moscow

more....

is one of the cleanest cities I have ever seen, we saw women working everywhere. This is hard to adjust to at first for they worked at ditch digging and laying cement for the most part. Those who laid asphalt had their feet bound with newspapers. All had on a shapeless garb. Men worked right alongside on the same jobs. We noticed that when a man wanted to show his interest and affection to a fellow woman worker, he didn't hold hands, but instead wrestled with her! There were many lovely flowers at the entrance to the park where the exhibit was shown. They do not seed them, but put them in directly from pots.

"I had a chance to visit GUM, the big department store" Mrs. Dyer continued, "and here I saw men and women from the country as well as the city. It is obvious that the Soviet citizen buys out of necessity and not from whim. For the most part they make their own clothes though there are ready-made garments for sale at high prices. Some of the University students who acted as interpreters for tourists during the summer looked very smart in the clothes they had made themselves. The women are interested in clothes and if they look dull it is only because they cannot afford to spend much. The women in the store observed my shopping and were amused when I bought several meters of the braid with which they trim their clothes. There was more approval when I bought a doll for my twelve year old daughter.

"I also had a chance to ride the subway. It is like a palace decorated as it is with mosaics, sculpture and, most incongruous of all, crystal chandeliers everywhere. There is also a very rapid two story escalator. My feeling is that the Metro can be elegant because there is so little of it, only five lines."

Asked if she had been able to visit the ballet, or any entertainment, Mrs. Dyer said there had been no time. Their chief recreation was dancing at one of the hotels at night. Here there was an all-girl orchestra dressed in blue rayon satin to the ankles.

"When they saw us," said Mrs. Dyer "they would break into American jazz. They had learned it by ear listening to recordings and then trying it out."

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