

The Museum of Modern Art

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Twentieth Century Engineering, with an introduction by Arthur Drexler. 96 pages. 140 black and white photographs. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. \$2.50 (paperbound).

Twentieth Century Engineering, the catalog accompanying the exhibition of that name (on view at The Museum of Modern Art through September 13), includes 140 black and white photographs of the 193 projects represented. The projects illustrated cover the various structures in the exhibition which are grouped by functional types: instruments (radio telescopes, radar antennae, television antennae), buildings (enclosures for work and storage), towers, columns and roofs, vaults and domes, bridges, roads, tunnels, dams, spillways and earthworks.

The information in the book is based on statements made by engineers, contractors and architects in the process of collecting material for the show. The introduction to the catalog is by Arthur Drexler, Director of the Museum's Department of Architecture and Design, who selected and installed the exhibition.

"Although engineering has been regarded as an art in the craft sense only," Mr. Drexler writes, "In the twentieth century the art of architecture has sought to emulate its rigorous efficiency and the boldness of its forms."

Because engineers must solve many different kinds of complicated technical problems their decisions must be rationally determined. However, there is not just one solution to a technical problem. "No matter how rigorously objective an engineer may be, he must still make some decisions independently of demonstrable fact. It is in these subjective decisions that he will reveal his personal preferences, his sense of form, and those individual responses that make up taste." Such individual characteristics may be noted in the catalog in the work of Pier Luigi Nervi, Buckminster Fuller, Claudio Marcello and Robert Maillart.

"The problems engineers solve cut across economics, politics, science and art, affecting the lives of all men - on this planet now and eventually somewhere else as well," summarizes Mr. Drexler. "Engineering is among the most rewarding of the arts

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not only because it produces individual masterpieces but because it is an art grounded in social responsibility. Today, we lack the political and economic apparatus that would facilitate a truly responsible use of our technology. But it may be that a more skillful and humane use of engineering depends on a more knowledgeable response to its poetry."

Review copies and additional information available from Sharon Keene, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N.Y. CI 5-8900.