

The Museum of Modern Art

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THE ARCHITECTURE OF SIR EDWIN LANDSEER LUTYENS (1869-1944)

An exhibition of works showing the many-faceted career of Sir Edwin Lutyens--a major figure in 20th century English architecture until his death in 1944--will be on view from October 13 through January 7, 1979 in the Goodwin Galleries of The Museum of Modern Art. This is believed to be the first American retrospective of the architect's work. Sixteen works representing the scope of Lutyens' activity have been selected by guest director Allan Greenberg, a practicing architect who has written widely on Lutyens. These works include, among others, private homes, government and commercial buildings, gardens, and war memorials. Featured are multiple views of Lutyens' best-known work, The Viceroy's House in New Delhi.

Lutyens, according to Greenberg, "was England's greatest architect since Wren and the twentieth century's most innovative artist working in the classical language of architecture." Because Lutyens continued throughout his lifetime to elaborate only on the Gothic and Classical architectural modes, many modern architects and art historians have ignored him or viewed him with hostility. Still, his work was admired by Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Kahn, and Le Corbusier. This retrospective will enable architects and the general public alike to become acquainted with Lutyens' work.

Lutyens began his independent architectural career in 1889. His two most significant formative influences were Richard Norman Shaw and Gertrude Jekyll. Shaw's houses were the models for Lutyens' initial

works, but it was Jekyll, the great horticulturist, who inspired him to exploit local vernacular elements in increasingly formal settings. Two results of Lutyens' collaboration with Jekyll were Tigbourne Court (1899) and Deanery Garden (1901), both of which possess architectonic properties Greenberg calls "magical."

Folly Farm (1901-1912) reflects Lutyens' growing preoccupation with the work of Christopher Wren, while Castle Drogo in Devon and Lindisfarne Castle on Holy Island show Lutyens' active involvement in England's continuing romance with its medieval past. Both the "Wrenaissance" and Lutyens' personal medievalism with its unique love of architectural paradox are represented in this exhibition.

In 1911 Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker were appointed to the Delhi Planning Commission. Built over nineteen years, New Delhi has been called the greatest architectural undertaking of the British Empire. Yet in The Viceroy's House, Lutyens goes beyond imperial architecture in western Classical modes to include local Moslem, Hindu, and Buddhist elements. Later in the century the achievement of New Delhi was recognized by Louis Kahn who visited it before planning Dacca. And before planning Chandigarh, Le Corbusier did the same, writing of Lutyens' city that it showed "extreme care, great talent, and . . . true success."

In the 1920s and '30s, Lutyens continued designing private houses, commercial and government buildings, including the British Embassy in Washington. He was also the architect of war memorials at Villers-Bretonneux, Thiepval, and Etaples in France. Greenberg says of them that they "convey a sincerity and depth of emotion rarely encountered in commemorative architecture."

In this last period, Lutyens also began the Metropolitan Cathedral in Liverpool, the dimensions of which were to be comparable to St. Peter's in Rome. The architect's mastery of scale would have culminated in this work, but World War II halted its construction, when only the crypt was completed.

A lecture on Lutyens' work will be given by Allan Greenberg on November 27.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF SIR EDWIN LANDSEER LUTYENS (1869-1944) has been organized by The Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition has been made possible by generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C., and is co-sponsored by the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

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