

**MoMA CELEBRATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT
WITH AN EXHIBITION EXPLORING THE EVOLUTION OF ITS COLLECTION**

Recent Acquisitions of Drawings by Oscar Niemeyer on View for the First Time

75 Years of Architecture at MoMA

November 16, 2007, through March 10, 2008

The Philip Johnson Architecture and Design Galleries, third floor

NEW YORK, November 9, 2007—In celebration of the 75th anniversary of the world's first museum department devoted to architecture, The Museum of Modern Art presents the exhibition *75 Years of Architecture at MoMA*. Drawings and models from the collection trace the evolution of the department's collecting practice since its founding in 1932. It has been known since 1948 as the Department of Architecture and Design.

Some 50 works, dating from the 1920s to the 1990s, are organized into four thematic sections: Other Modernisms, Urbanism, Visionary Architecture, and The Art of Drawing. Large-scale installation photographs from three of MoMA's most influential architecture exhibitions—*Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* (1932), *Mies van der Rohe* (1947), and *The Architecture of The École des Beaux-Arts* (1975)—add historical context.

75 Years of Architecture at MoMA, first shown briefly in the spring, is organized by Barry Bergdoll, The Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design, and Alexandra Quantrill, former Curatorial Assistant, Department of Architecture and Design, and is on view from November 16, 2007, through March 10, 2008.

For the second installation of the exhibition, the display has been updated to showcase several newly acquired drawings by Brazilian modernist Oscar Niemeyer in celebration of his 100th birthday (b. 1907).

Mr. Bergdoll, who joined the Museum in January 2007, explains, "Any new curator at MoMA wants to plunge into the depths of a rich collection and explore the possibilities it has for new encounters with the history of modern art. MoMA's influential role in defining modernism in architecture has a complex history, several nuances of which are underscored in this exhibition. Each new encounter with modern architecture's past has reverberations both for the present and for the ever-changing contours of our understanding of the historical avant-garde."

MoMA's first director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., had the revolutionary vision of architecture as a vital area of concentration in an art museum, and he proposed the idea for the Department of Architecture in his 1929 plan for the new Museum. MoMA's groundbreaking exhibition of European architecture, *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* (1932), organized by Philip

Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock, defined the unified International Style that shaped both modernism in American architecture and MoMA's theories of collecting architectural works. *Modern Architecture* was the Museum's first traveling exhibition; it was shown across the country in museums and in a department store over a period of two and a half years. The exhibition featured the younger generation of European modernists, such as Le Corbusier, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and J. J. P. Oud, establishing the prominence of their new International Style architecture in the United States. Despite its sweeping influence, the exhibition's criteria marginalized certain strains of modernism, such as Expressionism and Organicism, which have had continued importance in the development of architecture throughout the 20th century and up to the present.

75 Years of Architecture at MoMA is organized into four thematic sections.

Other Modernisms focuses on the 1920s and 1930s, considering the themes of Expressionism and Organicism as seen in European architecture and American technology-driven design. It highlights dynamic ideas of modernism that were overlooked in 1932 in *Modern Architecture*. Two recently acquired drawings, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's *Eliat House* (1925) and Hugo Häring's *Garkau Farmhouse* (1922–26), both of which are colorful depictions of buildings in a natural landscape with vivid greenery, are included in this section. Mies and Häring worked together in Berlin in the mid-1920s; while each developed his own distinctive formal language, these works demonstrate their shared theory of designing simple, functional spaces. Also included is Hermann Finsterlin's project *Study for a House of Sociability* (c. 1920), an exuberant model of a biomorphic dwelling. A painter, toy designer, and architectural visionary, Finsterlin used molded or cast models to best represent the expressive sculptural forms he designed.

Urbanism focuses on architecture in the mid-20th century, especially designs for modern cities that propose cleaner, more efficient environments and resolve problems such as traffic and overcrowding in emerging urban areas. A recent drawing acquisition, Marcel Breuer's project for *Potsdamer Platz, Berlin* (1929), offers a solution for a complicated intersection in Berlin, indicating control of intersecting roadways, underground train lines, and pedestrian movement. Louis I. Kahn's *Traffic Study* (1952) is a drawing that uses symbols—arrows, dotted lines, and spirals—to map out different tempos of traffic through the historic center of Philadelphia. Two large drawings, each measuring almost four by five feet, from Mies's *IIT Master Plan, Chicago, Illinois* (c. 1939–40) are on display. This design for the Illinois Institute of Technology gave him his first experience with conceiving a campus of buildings in an urban setting, working with American steel technology and the grid of the street system.

Visionary Architecture focuses on modern architecture's commitment to experimentation. Visionary proposals to engage cities in creative new ways, such as the "megastructure," a concept for a building containing multiple elements of city life that could serve many purposes, are among works that highlight the revival of utopianism in the 1960s and 1970s.

Ron Herron's *Walking City on the Ocean* (1966) uses collage to present a metropolis made up of mammoth, tank-like vehicles, which its citizens would inhabit.

The Art of Drawing includes work from 1900 through 1994 and focuses on the Department of Architecture's dedication to collecting drawings, which now form the bulk of its holdings. The department was initially less interested in collecting architectural drawings as autonomous artworks, but the collecting philosophy over the last 50 years has changed. Today, the Museum's collection comprises some 20,000 drawings, including nearly 18,000 drawings in the Mies van der Rohe Archive. Architectural drawings, vital in translating concepts into built form, range in type from preliminary sketches to detailed presentation renderings that provide a realistic image of a completed building. Paul Rudolph's Art and Architecture Building at Yale University (1963) is known for its Brutalist corrugated concrete exterior and intricate interiors. A 1958 drawing of this building by Rudolph, included in the exhibition, shows his drafting technique, using ink and closely spaced, cross-hatched lines to render detail and depth of field. In another drawing, *Cemetery of San Cataldo, Modena, Italy* (1971) by Aldo Rossi, the aerial perspective references a traditional convention of 15th-century drawing, and the combination of sepia tones with brick reds and blue-greens corresponds with the cemetery's Northern Italian landscape.

No. 113

Press Contact: Meg Blackburn, 212/708-9757 or meg_blackburn@moma.org

For downloadable high-resolution images, please visit www.moma.org/press.

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free for children 16 and under. Free for members. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs)

Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Film Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)

Subway: E or V train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street

Bus: On Fifth Avenue, take the M1, M2, M3, M4, or M5 to 53rd Street. On Sixth Avenue, take the M5, M6, or M7 to 53rd Street. Or take the M57 and M50 crosstown buses on 57th and 50th Streets.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for Museum information. Visit us on the Web at www.moma.org.