

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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TWO NEW CITIES RISE FROM SWAMP AND SLUM. MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
EXHIBITS ARCHITECTURAL PROJECTS IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

From a real jungle and from a jungle of slums, railroad tracks and civic decay, two new cities—one in South, one in North America—are rising. Cidade dos Motores, designed by Paul Lester Wiener and José Luis Sert, is a completely new city being built on reclaimed swampy lowland in the heart of a jungle near Rio de Janeiro; the Michael Reese Hospital Project, a slum clearance program for Chicago's South Side, is headed by Reginald R. Isaacs with Walter Gropius as Architectural Consultant and Walter H. Blucher Planning Consultant for the Project.

How the same principles of modern architecture and city planning can be successfully applied to solve such contrasting problems is shown in TWO CITIES: PLANNING IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA, an exhibition of drawings, maps, photographic enlargements and models opening at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, Wednesday, June 25. The exhibition, directed by Susanne Wasson-Tucker, will close September 21 and will then be sent by the Museum's Department of Circulating Exhibitions on a tour of other cities and towns throughout the country.

The cities we live in today were built yesterday, and many yesterdays ago. Although great sections of them have been blighted by industrialization, its benefits have never been applied to serve and improve human life on a large-city scale. Today's planning for the cities of tomorrow, however, concerns itself with the life of men and is based on the human, not on the geographical or political concept. The four basic functions of all communities: dwelling, recreation, work and transportation are coordinated in the community plan.

The two community plans that form this exhibition employ modern principles, yet, due to the different requirements of climate, customs and standards of living, the two cities now rising are strikingly different. Cidade dos Motores, or Motor City, is designed around an airplane engine factory built during the war and a tractor factory to be added. The city will eventually consist of four neighborhoods and a civic center serving a total population of around 25,000. The entire project is keyed to the individual, providing all his daily needs within

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easy walking distance, the average distance to the civic center being less than a quarter of a mile. Each neighborhood unit, in addition to its housing facilities, has its own network of social services, such as kindergarten, school, playgrounds, clinics, cafeteria, and community club for adults.

Cidade dos Motores comprises roughly 250 acres. The redevelopment program for Chicago's once fashionable South Side comprises seven square miles and is a unique and long-term plan for the complete rebirth of a blighted urban area. The difference between the North and South American plans is necessarily as great as the difference in the size of the two communities.

Chicago's South Side has become a slum classic. The inflexible gridiron pattern of the narrow streets, a misguided attempt to create urban order, closes in the crowded old houses with heavy, hazardous traffic. Relics of past grandeur, ghost-houses have been divided and re-divided into cramped, dark, slum apartments, dangerously overcrowded with a constantly increasing, largely Negro population, which is confined within a limited zone because of present restrictive covenants. Scattered throughout this residential squalor are dingy industrial areas, and surrounding the whole is the random network of railroads. The entire section had deteriorated so badly since the founding of Michael Reese Hospital in 1882 that its Board was seriously considering moving to a new site. Unable, however, to find any location that would be proof against future blight, and unwilling to abandon ten million dollars' worth of buildings and equipment, the hospital decided to stay, build a great medical center and improve living conditions in the surrounding area.

To help make possible this program the differing racial, religious and political elements of the area were persuaded to work together by the Michael Reese Hospital and the Illinois Institute of Technology who were largely responsible for the establishment of the South Side Planning Board. This nonprofit community organization is cooperating for a dream of the future: the relocation of industries, railroads and streets, new housing, playgrounds and proper shopping and cultural provisions for the entire seven-square-mile district under consideration--a dream of comfort and beauty in all physical aspects unlike Cidade dos Motores but identical with it in demonstrating that the city is (or should and can be) made for man and not man for the city.