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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
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FOR RELEASE Sunday, November 18,  
1934, or any time during that  
week for the broadcast Saturday  
night, November 24.

In cooperation with the Museum of Modern Art, the American Federation of Arts announces the eighth of its new series of "Art in America" programs, to be broadcast over Station WJZ and national network Saturday, November 24, from 8:00 to 8:20 P.M. Eastern Standard Time. The program will be in dialogue, from material prepared by John Mason Brown, dramatic critic of the NEW YORK POST. Mr. Brown has written and lectured extensively on the drama and has given a course at Yale on the History of Dramatic Criticism. He is the author of the newly published "Letters from Greenroom Ghosts" and several other books on the theatre. The subject of the program to be broadcast Saturday night, November 24, will be "Stage Design in the American Theatre."

Today very little strain is placed upon the visual imagination of a theatre audience. The modern scenic artist, adept in the use of lighting, color effects, design, and technical details, supplies a background illusion for a play that accents its essential quality of realism, fantasy, tragedy, comedy, or romance. So important has the scenic designer become in building up dramatic values and heightening the effects of a play, that he is virtually a collaborator with the playwright and the director.

Stage design did not always play such an important part in the theatre. In the middle of the eighteenth century, when the Hallams, a company of English actors, came to this country, most theatres relied upon five standard sets of flimsy scenery. These consisted of a forest, a street, a parlor, a kitchen and a palace. There were three wings, or side scenes, and borders above. During the nineteenth century stage settings became heavier and more realistic. In America David Belasco was the leader in scenic realism. In one of his productions he duplicated a Childs restaurant to the last tin butter plate.

A réaction against this photographic realism set in toward the end of the nineteenth century. It became known as "The New Movement in the Theatre" and was inspired by the work of Adolphe Appia, Gordon Craig, and a number of Russian painters who turned to the stage. In this country the new movement in stage design first showed itself about twenty years ago in the work of Robert Edmond Jones, Lee Simonson, Norman-Bel Geddes and Joseph Urban. Their ranks were joined by Aline Bernstein, Livingston Platt, Raymond Sovey, Cleon Throckmorton, Woodman Thompson, James Reynolds and other contemporary stage designers. The second generation of the new movement in this country is already well established and is headed by Jo Mielziner and Donald Oenslager. Stage doors are now opening to the third generation, led by Albert Johnston.

The "new movement" is now old, but it has accomplished its purpose in making the modern theatre richer and more stimulating in visual as well as in dramatic art. To succeed today, the scene designer must believe in himself as an artist even though his creative work is framed only temporarily in a proscenium arch.

The "Art in America" programs broadcast every Saturday night from October 6 to January 26 are a continuation of the series initiated by the General Federation of Women's Clubs and made possible through the cooperation of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the American Federation of Arts, the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, The National Broadcasting Company, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Modern Art.

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