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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

14 WEST 49TH STREET, NEW YORK

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Museum of Modern Art, 14 West 49 Street, opens to the public on Tuesday, June 28, an exhibition of sixteen of the architectural designs submitted in the recent competition for a proposed art center for Wheaton College, Norton, Mass.

In this important competition 253 unsigned designs were submitted anonymously by 243 individuals and firms from all over the United States. The winning design, by Richard Bennett and Caleb Hornbostel of New York, and the second prize scheme by Gropius and Breuer of Cambridge, Mass. will be shown, together with the designs awarded the other prizes and honorable mentions.

Thomas Dabney Mabry, Jr., Executive Director of the Museum of Modern Art, made the following statement in regard to the competition: "Wheaton College is to be congratulated," he said, "not only for the splendid design which won the competition for the proposed art center, but for the courage to select an architect through national competition. One has only to look at most of the buildings erected on college campuses during the past two decades to realize what a progressive spirit Wheaton has shown.

"Not infrequently, those responsible for college as well as government buildings have seemed to believe that only the designs of ages past are suitable for students and citizens of the present and the future. Often such buildings solemnly imitate the golden age of Greece, lavishly multiplying columns, expense and inefficiency; and our college boys study modern engineering in medieval campus cathedrals and our college girls strain their eyes behind the mullioned windows of their pseudo-Tudor dormitories. Wheaton has avoided all this mock medievalism by giving contemporary architects an opportunity to design a college building adequate and suitable to the needs of modern college students. It is to be hoped that other colleges, large and small, will follow Wheaton's lead."

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The jurors for the Wheaton Architectural Competition were Dr. Walter Curt Behrendt, former state architect of Prussia, now Director of Research Station of Buffalo (N.Y.) City Planning Association; John Wellborn Root, Chicago architect; Edward Stone, New York architect and Professor at New York University; Roland Wank, chief architect of the TVA; Stanley R. McCandless, Professor in the Yale Drama School; Professor Esther Isabel Seaver, Wheaton College; and John McAndrew, Curator of Architecture, Museum of Modern Art and Professor at Vassar College. George Nelson, of the Architectural Forum was Professional Advisor; and the Competition was conducted jointly by the Museum of Modern Art and the Architectural Forum.

Commenting on the need for intelligence in selecting designs for college buildings, Mr. McAndrew, Chairman of the Jury, said: "Recent college building in America has been chiefly pseudo-Gothic or pseudo-Colonial. Neither style is fitted to solve the contemporary problems of recitation hall, gymnasium, or dormitory. True Colonial architecture rarely had to deal with large-scale buildings of complex function comparable to those our colleges need today, and the old style loses a majority of its virtues when 'adapted' to meet conditions unsuited to it. With Gothic it is even worse, for this style was developed from a special type of construction and whole way of life so foreign to us that any attempt to build in the style today is a pathetic travesty. We have new ways of building and heating, for example, which make thick Gothic walls and small windows a costly masquerade--bad Gothic and bad for its purpose.

"Let our college building committees cease their nostalgic romancing with times and places not our own, and let our architects cease seeking 'inspiration' in their libraries and try to meet contemporary requirements with honest contemporary buildings."

Requirements for the art center, which might be either a single building or a related group of buildings, included an auditorium seating five hundred, a smaller theater for concerts, lectures, etc., a music and art library, exhibition galleries, studios for music and art, workshops, and classrooms. Bennett

and Hornbostel's winning design embodied these requirements in a single building, the auditorium block fan-shaped, with the classrooms and library in a long wing. The many diverse needs of the art center are provided for and related to one another with a maximum of efficiency and beauty and a minimum of cubic space and maintenance expense. One of the best features of the plan is that it allows for the individual operation of any single unit apart from the others. For example, the library can be kept open at night with the rest of the building closed off, unlighted and unheated. This can be done with other units, such as the theatre, lecture rooms, etc. The advantages of this architectural plan, in administrative supervision and operating expense alone, are obvious.

Among the designs to be shown in the exhibition opening at the Museum of Modern Art Tuesday, June 28, are plans submitted in the Wheaton Architectural Competition by the following architects:

- 1st: Richard M. Bennett and Caleb Hornbostel, NEW YORK
- 2nd: Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
- 3rd: Paul Wiener, John W. Stedman, Jr., and Pierre Bézy, NEW YORK
- 4th: Alexis Dukelski, NEW YORK
- 5th: Percival Goodman, NEW YORK
- Lyndon & Smith, DETROIT
- Eero Saarinen, BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MICHIGAN

Honorable Mention

- Robert Green & Gordon Bunshaft, NEW YORK
- Robert T. Handren, NEW YORK
- Carter Edmund Hewitt, PEORIA, ILLINOIS
- George Howe, PHILADELPHIA
- Richard J. Neutra, LOS ANGELES
- G. Holmes Perkins & Frances W. Hartwell, BOSTON
- John B. Rodgers, William T. Priestley, Jr., and Carl F. Brauer, NEW YORK

Oscar Stonorov, Rudolf Mock and Louis Kahn,
PHILADELPHIA

William E. Lescaze, NEW YORK

The exhibition will remain on view through Labor Day. The Museum's current exhibition, Masters of Popular Painting, will also remain open until after Labor Day with the exception of about twenty of the paintings, which will be removed to make room for the Wheaton Architectural Exhibition.