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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

WILL HAVE GLASS WALLS

The new five-story-and-penthouse building for the Museum of Modern Art now rapidly nearing completion at the Museum's former address, 11 West 53 Street, New York, will be a departure in many ways from traditional museum buildings.

Primarily in the matter of light is the departure from tradition evident. Glass walls will admit as much natural light as is possible without sacrificing too much of the insulating properties of the ordinary wall. The three gallery floors are built without partition walls, like huge lofts. Instead, to a large extent, demountable interior walls will be used, to be taken down and put up differently to form changing gallery arrangements. For even greater flexibility of arrangement there will be no stationary ceiling lights. The lighting fixtures come in strips that can be "buttoned" on and off the ceiling in different locations as desired.

Philip L. Goodwin and Edward D. Stone, associated, are the architects for the building, which is of modern reinforced concrete construction throughout. The long front facade is almost entirely of glass — the first floor, plate glass and metal; the second and third floors walled entirely in a new type of glass, thermolux, never before used in this country. The two office floors above are lighted by wide horizontal bands of windows and the entire front of the penthouse is chiefly plate glass.

The rear facade of the building, opening on a sculpture garden, is largely of plate glass, glass brick and bands of windows. The third floor gallery, reserved for sculpture, is walled on the garden side by white marble and lighted from above by a skylight the length of the building.

The south side of the penthouse, plate glass from floor to ceiling, is shaded from glare by a cantilevered slab pierced by eleven circular holes. Although the purpose of the overhanging slab is to shield from glare, it would cast too dark a shade were it not for the circular holes. These admit a pleasant amount of light and enlarge rather than obstruct the view, giving the entire upper structure somewhat the effect of a modern pergola.

There will be 7,500 square feet of plate glass in the building, 2,222 glass bricks, and 3,500 square feet of thermolux, which may be described as a sandwich of spun glass between two sheets of clear glass, the edges hermetically sealed. Thermolux is being used to wall the Museum of Modern Art galleries because it has only about one-third the heat conductivity of clear glass; because of its sound-reduction
properties; and because of its qualities of light diffusion and distribution — it actually transmits light farther into the room than does clear glass, yet the light is singularly easy on the eyes and illuminates evenly the paintings and objects shown, without deep shadows or sun patches.

Another innovation employed in the new Museum is a nailable wall plaster developed by Walter A. Troy, owner's representative in the construction of the building. This plaster is used as the coating on the cinder blocks that form the party walls, windowless because of adjoining buildings. It may also be used on the Museum's demountable walls. The plaster will not crack when a nail is driven in; when it is withdrawn the neat hole is filled with plastic wood, leaving the wall in perfect condition. The plaster will be surfaced with a waterproof lacquer on which the Museum can paint and remove backgrounds of different colors to suit changing exhibitions.

Other innovations and unusual interior features are now in the final stage of development. As previously announced, the lobby of the building will be floored with terrazzo, the galleries and offices with linoleum, the library with cork. The lounge and lecture hall, below the street level, will be carpeted. The building will be ready for occupancy early in the spring of 1959.
For the use of those who may be interested, a list of the firms and individuals concerned in the construction of the new building for the Museum of Modern Art is given:

George E. Strehan
Clyde R. Place
Edward B. Kirk
S. K. Wolf
John Lowry, Inc.

Demolition & Clearing Site
Excavating & Rock Work
Foundations & Concrete
Structure
Concrete Foundations, Concrete
Structure and Mason Work
Waterproofing
Demopохрану
Stone Work
Exterior Marble
Interior Marble
Tile Work
Terra Cotta
Architectural Terra Cotta
Composition Roofing, Tile,
Sheet Metal & Waterproofing
Metal Lath & Plastering
Architectural Metal
Hollow Metal Work
Elevator Fronts
Elevator Cabs
Windows
Glass

Electric Contact
Elevators
Heating, Ventilating & Air Conditioning
Plumbing
Sprinkler Work
Hardware
Mailable Plaster