

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TO HOLD ONE-MAN SHOW
OF CHARLES SHEELER'S WORKS

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, announces that on Wednesday, October 4, it will open to the public a large retrospective exhibition of the work of Charles Sheeler, American artist. The exhibition will show approximately a quarter-century of the artist's work in oil, watercolor, drawing and photography. His distinctive contributions to contemporary art are at once unmistakably American and essentially modern.

Sheeler's work has a dual nature. Fundamental abstract forms are the bones underlying the meticulous realism with which he paints, draws or photographs an old German Pennsylvania barn in Bucks County, a cat asleep on a kitchen chair, the stairwell in an austere New England house, a kitchen in Colonial Williamsburg, yachts in full sail, pears on a pink plate, transverse rectilinears of the "El" against the sharp angles of tall buildings in downtown New York, or the severely classic lines of a Ford factory.

This is art that the expert appreciates and the layman enjoys, that the Museum exhibits and the business man buys. Sheeler's works are owned by collectors and museums throughout the country. A little less than a year ago Fortune Magazine commissioned Sheeler to do a series of seven paintings on the modern machinery man has created for the capture and utilization of power. One of the series, soon to be published in Fortune, will be shown in the Museum's exhibition.

Of Welsh and Irish descent, Charles Sheeler was born in Philadelphia in 1883. There he attended the School of Industrial Art but before the end of his course he began to turn toward the fine arts and enrolled at the Pennsylvania Academy as a student of William M. Chase. One of a group of students whom Chase took abroad, he was, like the rest of the group, dazzled by the aura of success which surrounded such artists as Alma-Tadema, Braugwyn, Abbey and Sargent.

After his formal training at the Academy under Chase he had a small early success. In 1909 he again went abroad and for the first time became really aware of the work of Picasso, Braque, Cézanne and Seurat. Upon his return he divided his life into what he thought at first should be two separate compartments. For five days a week he earned his living photographing the work of architects. Country weekends in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, he devoted to art, which at that period he spelled with a capital A. Today he recalls that he felt then that "Art" should be cryptic, a stumbling block to the layman. When some puzzled friend would ask: "What is that a painting of?" Sheeler would explain: "That? Oh, that is my idea of a tree." Then, completely reversing his technique, he became a realist without, however, relinquishing his grasp on the fundamental principles of abstract design. No layman now is ever puzzled by any of Sheeler's work. A tree, a barn, a cat, a brick wall looks like a tree, a barn, a cat, a brick wall and can be mistaken for nothing else.

The exhibition will be composed of 44 oils, 60 watercolors and drawings, 75 photographs and a small group of industrial designs. It will fill most of the galleries on the second floor of the Museum and will remain on view through November 1. Because of the great popularity of the Museum's current exhibition Art In Our Time -- it has been seen by more than a thousand visitors a day since it opened on May 10 -- it will remain on view in all galleries not devoted to the Sheeler exhibition.