

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART HOLDS ONE-MAN SHOW OF PAINTINGS,
WATERCOLORS, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGNS
BY CHARLES SHEELER, AMERICAN ARTIST

On Wednesday, October 4, the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, will open its 1939-40 season to the public with its fifth one-man show of works by a living American artist. It will be an exhibition of the work of Charles Sheeler, American artist, and will be composed of 44 oils, 61 watercolors and drawings, 74 photographs and several industrial designs in table-ware and textiles. Dorothy C. Miller, Assistant Curator of Painting and Sculpture of the Museum, has directed and installed the exhibition which will be on view from October 4 through November 1. It will fill most of the galleries of the Museum's second floor and will remain on view through November 1.

The catalog which the Museum will publish simultaneously with the opening of the exhibition includes an essay on the painter's work by William Carlos Williams. Dr. Williams writes:

"Here for the first time, I think, the paintings of Charles Sheeler have been assembled for a complete retrospective view giving him and others an opportunity to witness them as a whole. This is an important moment for contemporary painting.....I think Sheeler is particularly valuable because of the bewildering directness of his vision, without blur, through the fantastic overlay with which our lives so vastly are concerned,...."

"Any picture worth hanging, is of this world - under our noses often - which amazes us, into which we can walk upon real grass.... Charles Sheeler gives us such a world, of elements we can believe in, things for our associations long familiar or which we have always thought familiar....."

"The exhibits date back approximately a quarter of a century but their quality is singularly uniform, lucid and geometric from the first. It was an early perception of general changes taking place, a passage over from heated surfaces and vaguely differentiated detail to the cool and thorough organizations today about us, familiar in industry, which Sheeler has come more and more to celebrate.."

"Sheeler had especially not to be afraid to use the photographic camera in making up a picture. It could perform a function unduplicatable by other means. Sheeler took it that by its powers his subject should be intensified, carved out, illuminated - for anyone (I don't know that he said this to himself) whose eyes might be blurred by the general fog that he might, if he cared to, see again."

"It is ourselves we seek to see upon the canvas, as no one ever saw us, before we lost our courage and our love. So that to a Chinaman Sheeler at his best should be a heartfelt

recognition, as Sheeler, looking at some ancient Chinese painted screen, would hope fervently to see himself again. A picture at its best is pure exchange, men flow in and out of it, it doesn't matter how. I think Sheeler at his best is that, a way of painting powerfully articulate."

Charles Sheeler was born in Philadelphia, July 16, 1883, of American parents of Irish and Welsh descent. At the age of 17 he began study at the School of Industrial Art, Philadelphia, but three years later he decided to change the direction of his art studies. He enrolled at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia as a student under William M. Chase where he remained for three years.

In 1904 he took a trip to London and several cities in Holland with Chase and other members of his class. The next summer he took a similar art tour to Spain, again under the leadership of Chase. In 1906 he was graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy as an unusually promising young artist in the brilliant, flashing surface style made famous by Chase. But Sheeler's eyes were opened to other methods of painting when he went abroad with a friend in 1909. For the first time he became really aware of the works of Picasso, Braque, Cézanne and Seurat. He abandoned the methods he learned under Chase and for several years became chiefly concerned with abstract painting. At the same time he took up photography to earn his living and reserved his weekends for painting. In 1913 he had six paintings in the big Armory show in New York. He continued very successfully with his work in photography and was included in many exhibitions, both of painting and photography. In 1920 he collaborated with Paul Strand on a motion picture which they called Mannahatta. In 1929 he again reversed his technique of painting and began painting with meticulous realism, with which he combined underlying abstract forms. He has continued and perfected this style to the present day.

Mr. Sheeler divides his time at present between New York and his home in Ridgefield, Connecticut. For more than a year he has been engaged upon a project commissioned by FORTUNE MAGAZINE for a series of paintings under the general title of "Sources of Power." These will be published as a color portfolio by FORTUNE MAGAZINE early in 1940.

Charles Sheeler is represented in the following museums and art galleries, all of which have lent one or more of his works to the exhibition:

The Museum of Fine Arts, BOSTON
William Hayes Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, CAMBRIDGE
The Art Institute of Chicago, CHICAGO
The Cincinnati Art Museum, CINCINNATI, Ohio
The Cleveland Museum of Art, CLEVELAND, Ohio
The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, COLUMBUS, Ohio
University of Nebraska, LINCOLN, Nebraska
Whitney Museum of American Art, NEW YORK
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, PHILADELPHIA
California Palace of the Legion of Honor, SAN FRANCISCO
Springfield Museum of Fine Arts, SPRINGFIELD, Massachusetts
Phillips Memorial Gallery, WASHINGTON
Worcester Art Museum, WORCESTER, Massachusetts

Individual lenders to the exhibition include:

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Edsel B. Ford, Dearborn
Harold Goldsmith, New York
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Thomas N. Metcalf, Boston
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Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., New York
Nelson A. Rockefeller, New York
Mrs. Charles H. Russell, Jr., New York
Harry Scherman, New York
John S. Schulte, New York
Charles Sheeler, Ridgefield, Connecticut
Mr. and Mrs. John S. Sheppard, New York
Edward Steichen, Ridgefield, Connecticut
Robert K. Straus, New York
G. D. Thompson, Pittsburgh
William Carlos Williams, Rutherford, New Jersey
Philip Wittenberg, New York