

The Museum of Modern Art

50th Anniversary



NO. 16
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUSEUM EXHIBITION GIVES ADVANCE LOOK AT NEW YORK'S FUTURE EXPOSITION AND CONVENTION CENTER

Models and drawings of New York's new Exposition and Convention Center, the largest and most important public building undertaken in New York in decades, will be on view in the Goodwin Galleries of The Museum of Modern Art, February 21 through March 30, 1980. Directed by Arthur Drexler, Director of the Department of Architecture and Design, this exhibition presents the plans drawn up by architects I. M. Pei and Partners, with James Ingo Freed as Partner-in-charge of design, in association with the Lewis, Turner Partnership. The \$375 million Center will be located between 11th and 12th Avenues and 33rd and 39th Streets in Manhattan. The largest exposition center under one roof in the U.S., it will include over 750,000 square feet of exhibition space in an 18-acre building on a 22-acre site. The building will accomodate a population of up to 80,000 people.

The New York Exposition and Convention Center, scheduled for completion in 1984, will enable New York to assume a leading position in the highly competitive convention and trade show industries. Moreover, as a major work of contemporary architecture, it is expected to become a landmark attracting the attention and interest of both visitors and native New Yorkers. The Center is being developed by the Convention Center Development Corporation (CCDC), a subsidiary of the New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC), which is a joint venture of the UDC and the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority. Construction will begin this spring.

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The exhibition at the Museum will feature a large cut-away model of the Center's galleria level and its main exhibition hall; a model of the Center's "core buildings" for shops and offices; a model of its steel space-frame structure, and a model of the building on its site showing how it is integrated with its urban surroundings. There will also be plan drawings for each of the Center's levels, as well as elevation and perspective studies.

The multi-level Exposition Center will have a total floor area of 1.8 million square feet, containing two major exhibition halls. Located on the upper level will be the largest single exhibition hall in the country to be built on one floor. This 500,000 square foot exhibition hall is adjacent to a sky-lit central entrance hall. On the lower level will be a 250,000 square foot exhibition hall and an additional 100,000 square feet of meeting and special events rooms which can accommodate a variety of show modes. Also included on the lower level will be 35,000 square feet of restaurant facilities. The floors will be horizontal layers pierced by large round openings and narrow slots for escalators.

A 90-foot wide concourse level runs north-south for the length of the building and is located at a level equidistant from both exhibition halls. A sky-lit galleria, running the full length of the Center's east-west axis, will form a mezzanine bridge overlooking the upper level exhibition hall and will culminate in a panoramic view of the waterfront. The galleria, an enclosed pedestrian boulevard, will be lined with restaurants and shops housed in "core buildings."

The Exposition Center will present a shimmering facade of lightly reflective glass behind which can be seen the delicate pewter-colored latticework of its steel space-frame walls and roofs. The roof over the central hall and galleria will be formed by faceted cubes piled one on top of the other, ranging in

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height from 100 to 180 feet.

In addition, a one-acre plaza, on the east side of Eleventh Avenue between 35th and 36th Streets, will serve as an urban open space for visitors to the Exposition Center as well as community residents.

Arthur Drexler notes: "All three components of the composition -- the space-frames sheathed in glass, the pierced floors and bridges, and the core buildings -- respond to each other by inflections in geometry and scale. As James Freed describes it, his architectural intentions were comparable to those of a Bach fugue, in which separate voices interweave without ever losing their identities.

"Not least among the gratifying aspects of this building is its confident, resourceful use of structure and function as the determinants of design. But these alone do not account for something extra -- a quality of public space that is at once lively, dramatic, and perhaps even mysterious. It should be a beautiful building."

This exhibition has been partially supported by a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts.

The Museum's overall exhibition program is supported in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

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