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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW YORK

11 WEST 53rd STREET
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

OFFICE OF THE PUBLICITY DIRECTOR
SARAH NEWMAYER

April 10, 1940.

TO: City Editors
News Photo Editors
Newsreel Editors

Dear Sirs:

You may want to send a representative to

Arrival of huge MEXICAN ART Exhibition, which will open
the middle of May at the Museum of Modern Art.

It will come in at:

Pennsylvania Freight Station, 37th Street and Hudson River, at
10:30 - 11:00 A.M., Thursday, April 11.

In three box cars will be thousands of works of art--strange,
beautiful and curious.

Box cars were guarded by a platoon of Mexican soldiers as
far as the border. At Laredo, Texas, two Texas
Rangers with six shooters, took over. They are
bringing the cars up from the border and apparent-
ly sleeping on top of the cars at night.

Crates and boxes will be immediately removed from freight
cars and taken at once to the Museum of Modern Art,
11 West 53 Street, where they will be opened by
Customs' inspectors.

For further information, please call me at Circle 5-8900.

Sincerely,



Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director

SN:lf

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Probably the largest shipment of art ever to cross an international border arrived this morning, Thursday, April 11, in three box cars on the Pennsylvania railroad. It was brought from Mexico City and was guarded to the border by a platoon of Mexican soldiers. At the border the guard duty was taken over by two Texas Rangers, Lawrence Matthews and Robert (Bucker) Edwards, who rode in the caboose of the freight train during the day and slept on top of the box cars at night. The cars contain the entire exhibition of Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art which will open at the Museum of Modern Art on May 15 and will remain on view throughout the summer.

For more than three months a staff of one hundred and two people has been working in Mexico to assemble, catalog and pack the exhibition under the direction of Dr. Alfonso Caso, who was appointed Commissioner General of the exhibition. The Executive Committee of the exhibition consists of General Eduardo Hay, Mexican Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and John E. Abbott, Executive Vice-President of the Museum of Modern Art, who spent two months in Mexico arranging details for the showing of the exhibition. Mr. Abbott saw the shipment across the border and then took a plane to New York.

In the three box cars are 2,800 "lots," composed of between five and six thousand individual pieces covering Mexican art in all phases and periods from before the birth of Christ to last month, when the paint on the latest of the modern paintings was hardly dry. The exhibition divides into four natural periods, each under the direction of an authority on Mexican art. In addition to supervising the entire exhibition, Dr. Caso has given his personal attention to the Pre-Spanish art section; Manuel C. Toussaint supervised the section of Colonial Art (1521-1820); Roberto Montenegro assembled the section on Popular, or Folk Art; and Miguel Covarrubias, noted modern artist, the section on modern art.

The largest object in the exhibition will be a cast of Coatlicue (goddess of the Earth and Death). As the sculpture itself weighs two tons it could not very well be moved to New York, so a cast was made in sections and packed in three large boxes for shipment. Except for Coatlicue and several other figures too large to be moved except in the form of casts, all the sculpture to be shown in

the exhibition--more than one hundred pieces--will be originals, some of them two thousand years old, some too old to be fixed by any date or period.

The popular, or folk art, section will be the gayest of the exhibition. It will cover all periods, as it is the colorful and indestructible art expression of the people, persisting through every period and age. Shown in this section will be feather mosaics; textiles in marvelous colors; utensils of carved wood, bone, copper; ceramics; fibre-paper painted and cut into amazing ornaments for fiestas; sarapes; baskets; lacquer trays and bowls; masks; figures of straw, plaster and wood; toys and innumerable other objects beautiful, gay and useful. In this section will be shown a large collection of retablos, or ex-voto paintings on tin. These are painted as expressions of humble gratitude for deliverance from danger, illness, death or any troubles to which mankind is heir. The retablo is painted for the one who has prayed for deliverance, and is hung in a church or a shrine. Some of the retablos to be shown in the exhibition date back almost two hundred years; others were painted only last year.

The Colonial (1521-1820) section of the exhibition will give a rich and varied picture of the effect of the Conquest on native Mexican art and architecture. Models and enlarged photographs will show the magnificence of the Mexican baroque in polychromed and richly carved churches and the sumptuous palaces built during the period. The Colonial paintings and sculptures in this section, like the architecture, show how the European tradition brought in by the Spaniards was not superimposed upon but rather absorbed by the native Mexican art. In addition to the architecture, painting and sculpture in this section, there will be embroideries, ceramics, objects in carved wood, silver reliquaries and censers, lacquerware and other items.

The modern period in Mexican art is represented not only by the paintings of Mexico's greatest contemporary artists but by enlarged photographs of frescoes, including the great series painted recently by Orozco in Guadalajara. Paintings by Orozco and Rivera will also be included in the exhibition. A few of the other painters represented are: Charlot, Frieda Kahlo, Covarrubias, Best-Maugard, Siqueiros, Galvan and Leal.