

55
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW YORK 19

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

SARAH NEWMAYER, PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

April 5, 1945

To City Editor
Art Editor
Drama Editor
Film Editor

Dear Sir:

You are invited to come or send a representative to the

Press Preview of
STAGE DESIGN
by Robert Edmond Jones

Tuesday, April 10
2 to 6 P.M.

at the Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street

The exhibition will open to the public Wednesday, April 11, and will remain on view through June 24. It will be the first exhibition in the small gallery on the Auditorium floor of the Museum which has been assigned as permanent exhibition space to the Department of Dance and Theatre Design.

For further information please telephone me at CI 5-8900.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Newmeyer
Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OPENS THEATRE AND BALLET DESIGN GALLERY

A retrospective exhibition of scene and costume designs by Robert Edmond Jones has been chosen to inaugurate a small permanent gallery which the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, is setting aside on its auditorium floor for the continuous display of material related to the visual art of the theatre and the ballet. The exhibition, a selected survey from thirty years' work by this dean of American stage designers, opens Wednesday, April 11. It consists of approximately fifty drawings showing the wide range and the great variety of Mr. Jones' work indicated by stage and costume designs for O'Neill's Desire Under the Elms, Camille, the pioneering color movie Becky Sharp, and the extremely successful and effective La Cucaracha, the first Technicolor musical short.

Of particular interest are the little-known early records which show designs for the first full-sized ballets of modern conception attempted in this country: Skyscrapers and Birthday of the Infanta with books and music by John Alden Carpenter; and sketches for the only ballet ever designed by an American artist in the Diaghileff tradition: the Strauss-Nijinsky ballet Til Eulenspiegel. The great ~~Shakespearean~~ performances of John Barrymore in the Arthur Hopkins productions are represented by drawings for Richard III and Hamlet. O'Neill is remembered with Mourning becomes Electra. There are drawings of the memorable Oedipus Rex by Strawinsky, and sketches of the Macbeth of 1921, one of the few examples of the so-called "expressionist" theatre. Recent drawings include projects for new scenic solutions, making use of simplified scenic elements or projections.

George Amberg, Curator of the Department of Dance and Theatre Design, who has directed the Robert Edmond Jones exhibition, comments on it as follows:

"This exhibition honors an American artist of stature who helped to establish and to keep alive a truly American tradition in the world of the theatre. It is an expression of due honor for a distinguished artist; distinguished both for noteworthy achievements in theatrical creations and for the uncompromising dignity of his artistic attitude. In Jones' whole oeuvre is not one example of those easy concessions to the commercial spirit of public success.

57

This moral attitude, as much as the perfection of scenic solutions, account for the consistency and coherence of Jones' work."

When the Robert Edmond Jones exhibition closes June 24, it will be succeeded by others related to the theatre and the ballet such as a selection of theatrical models by Norman Bel Geddes, selections from the Museum's Collection including work by Berman, Rivera and Watkins, and an exhibition of new acquisitions to the Department. In assigning permanent gallery space to the Department of Dance and Theatre Design, the Museum indicates its significant interest in the theatre arts, and thus assures the public of a comprehensive policy which extends into every field of contemporary artistic activity. The theatre gallery is not dedicated to a rigid program or set principles. An informal meeting place for the scenic artists and spectators, it is organized to keep a continuous pictorial record, to parallel the trends and achievements of the living stage.

Robert Edmond Jones was born in Milton, New Hampshire, December 12, 1887. He was graduated from Harvard University in 1910 and the following year began theatrical designing in New York. In 1925 he became associated with Kenneth Macgowan and Eugene O'Neill in the production of plays at the Greenwich Village Playhouse and staged many of O'Neill's plays. He is the author (with Kenneth Macgowan) of Continental Stagecraft (1922), of Drawings for the Theatre (1925), and The Dramatic Imagination published in 1941.