

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Museum of Modern Art announces a small Exhibition of Government Posters to open to the public Tuesday, November 16, and to remain on view for two weeks. The exhibition is under the direction of the Museum's Department of Architecture and Industrial Art and will be shown in the architecture gallery in the Museum's temporary quarters on the concourse level of 14 West 49 Street. This is the fourth poster exhibition given by the Museum although there have also been poster sections of several large exhibitions, such as the Exhibitions of Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism and of Cubism and Abstract Art.

The posters to be shown in the exhibition opening Tuesday are in two groups. One is composed of 13 posters executed in 1936-37 for the Spanish government by the following artists: Melendrera, A. Bisquert, Jesus Lozano, Oliver, Canavate, Subiate, Mauricio Amster. The media used are photography, photo-montage, gouache and lithograph. The other group consists of six posters by Lester Beall issued in the summer of 1937 by the Rural Electrification Administration of the United States in a program to increase the use of electricity by farmers. The American posters are done in gouache and reproduced by lithograph.

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of The Museum of Modern Art, comments on the two groups of posters as follows: "Because of their official and bureaucratic nature governments ordinarily are inclined to be timid and conservative or even indifferent to artistic values in official design whether expressed in paper money, postage stamps or posters, etc. These two groups of posters, one published by the Spanish government, the other by the United States government, are, however, far more worthy of serious consideration as works of art than can usually be accorded official designs. Though they vary in quality and purpose these posters display three conspicuous virtues in common: a sense of vigorous design, a modernity of style, and a boldness of symbolism.

"In spite of civil war the Spanish government has succeeded in enlisting first rate talent for its posters just as, more than

any other country, it has been able to make use of its foremost artists, Picasso and Miro, to paint the murals in the Spanish Pavilion of the Paris Exposition. The American posters shown in the exhibition, although dry and geometrical in comparison with the Spanish posters, mark a great advance over the general level of taste displayed by our government in official design. Posters have not in the past been much used by government agencies in this country. During the past year, however, posters have been issued by the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Resettlement Administration as well as by the Rural Electrification Administration."

It is impossible for the Museum to obtain in the short time at its disposal anything more definite than the names of the artists who designed the Spanish posters--and not in all cases was even the name of the artist obtainable. The American posters are by Lester Beall, a designer of New York City. He was born in Kansas City, Mo., on March 14, 1903 and was graduated from the University of Chicago in 1926. He worked in Chicago until two years ago, when he came to New York. He designs brochures, direct-mail layouts, magazine and newspaper layout, illustration and packaging. He painted murals in the Crane Building at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933. He has received four awards for advertising designs in the 1937 Art Directors' Show.