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# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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## TEN STAGE MODELS SHOWN IN MUSEUM OF MODERN ART THEATRE EXHIBITION

Ten individually lighted stage models, each within its own proscenium and each especially built to show in miniature a different form of scenic art and architecture, are exhibited today, Wednesday, October 15, for the first time in WORLD OF ILLUSION: Elements of Stage Design at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street. These models, together with seventeen panels and five separate enlargements, present a visual analysis of the essential components of stage design through reproductions of some of the great scenic designs which have won fame in various cities of the world including Moscow, Berlin, Tiflis, Darmstadt, Prague, Cologne, Vienna, Leningrad, Paris and New York. The exhibition shows the work of outstanding scenic artists such as Appia, Craig, Jones, Mielzineir, Simonson, Braque, Leger, and Heythum. There is a running text written by George Amberg, Curator of the Department of Theatre Arts, who directed the exhibition.

It will remain on view in the Museum's auditorium gallery and lounge through January 4 and will then be sent on a tour of other cities throughout the country. The exhibition has been designed for circulation and especially prepared to facilitate handling in packing and reassembling. Charlotte Trowbridge, Chief Designer of the Museum's Department of Circulating Exhibitions, has directed the building of the model stage sets and has created the original designs for two of them: Figures in Space and Constructivist Setting. Ruth Vollmer, noted designer of figures in wire, originated the Wire Construction set. In several of the other models Jean Volkmer, of the Museum staff, has made renderings of well-known settings of produced plays.

In the exhibition, stage design is broken down into its basic elements, each section demonstrating the application, in actual stage design, of these elements:

- Contour
- Light
- Color
- Volume
- a) Structural Space
- b) Functional Space
- c) Illusionistic Space

Museum N.Y. Theatre, Modern Art. Press Release

In his introduction to WORLD OF ILLUSION, Mr. Amberg writes:

"The stage setting is a composite work of art, combining a variety of techniques and media, such as painting, architecture, construction, lighting, and so forth. It is an incomplete work of art, depending for completion on sound and movement, and such imponderables as mood, atmosphere and personal magic. It is an ephemeral work of art, assuming full significance only during the limited time of the stage performance. It is a humble work of art, strictly subordinated to the larger concept of the enacted drama which justifies and inspires its very existence.

"Finally, the stage setting is a work of art primarily conceived to fill a function. This complex function is determined by esthetic principles as well as by the specific character of the drama. The esthetic function of stage design is essentially dynamic; properly defined in terms of progress in time and extension in space, stage design is related to architecture and sculpture rather than to two-dimensional easel painting.

"The scenic realization is suggested by practical requirements and the character of the play. Such practical requirements are, for instance, the need for certain entrances and exits and for props and furniture which participate directly in the action. The character of the play poses the problem of establishing a specific locale on period, and of creating a lyric or dramatic climate.

"A careful survey of the examples presented in this exhibition will clearly reveal how the artist solved his complex scenic problems; but beyond its functional perfection a fine stage design owes its lasting significance to the creative genius of the artist."

WORLD OF ILLUSION is an example of an important activity of the Museum which New Yorkers are not often privileged to see. It is one of the many exhibitions arranged especially for circulation by the Museum's Department of Circulating Exhibitions in collaboration with the Museum's curatorial departments. A current list of sixty circulating exhibitions includes many shows never presented at the Museum.

When WORLD OF ILLUSION closes at the Museum on January 4th, it will tour New England, the Middle West, the South and on the West Coast. It is already scheduled for exhibition in

- Columbia, Mo.
- Kalamazoo, Mich.
- Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Manchester