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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW YORK

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

SARAH NEWMAYER, PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

October 18, 1940

TO Art Editors
City Editors
Feature Writers

Dear Sirs:

You are invited to come, or send a representative

to a PRESS PREVIEW

on Tuesday October 22, 1940
from 2 to 6 P.M.

of Three Exhibitions from the
Museum's Collection of Painting
and Sculpture and from its
Dance Archives

Each of these exhibitions will include a considerable number of
new acquisitions. Photographs will be available.

For further information will you please telephone me at Circle 5-
8900.

Sincerely,



Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director

SN:bt

P.S. The Frank Lloyd Wright and David Wark Griffith Exhibitions, scheduled
to open October 30, have been postponed to November 13.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RUTH ST. DENIS GIVES HER DANCE COLLECTION
TO MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, opens three new exhibitions today, Wednesday, October 23, selected from the Museum's Collections. The exhibitions, all of which include new acquisitions, are Modern Sculpture; Modern Painting; and American Dancing and the Denishawns. The painting and sculpture exhibitions will remain on view until January; the dance exhibition until November 17.

The new acquisitions in the Dance Archives include a gift from Ruth St. Denis of her entire collection of dance memorabilia--pictures, programs, costumes, etc.--and an anonymous gift of invaluable material relating to American minstrelsy, dance and the theatre from the famous Albert Davis collection of theatrical iconography, which constitutes an important documentary record of American theatrical activity from 1840 to the present time.

In addition to items from the Denishawn and the Albert Davis collections, the exhibition of American Dancing and the Denishawns will include other examples of the dance in America such as Burlesque and Extravaganza, Precision Dancers 1890-1940, and famous Irish Jig and Clog Dancers. The exhibition will be composed of costumes, statuettes, photographs, paintings, drawings, scene and costume sketches, lithographs, woodcuts, old programs and other items.

The Denishawn Collection

The individual and collaborative careers of Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn have contributed a brilliant chapter to the American dance of our time. Her career as a dancer began in the late 1890's when she appeared in the Belasco production DuBarry, which starred Mrs. Leslie Carter. While on tour with the company she realized what must be her life work. In his book Pioneer and Prophet, Ted Shawn writes of the woman who was later to be not only his wife but

the partner in his own career: "One day in Buffalo, while looking for a boarding house, she passed a drug store and saw in the window a cigarette poster depicting the Egyptian goddess Isis sitting in a niche in the temple. Something which had been growing unconsciously in Ruth St. Denis through these years of revolt waked in her mind at the sight of the picture." This was the spark that set off the long career which carried her around the world in such outstanding successes as Radha, the Cobras and many other dances created on oriental themes.

With their marriage in 1914, the careers of Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn merged in the formation of a large dance company known as Denishawn, which included Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman and other now-famous dancers. A series of concert tours was arranged which took the company throughout the world. At the conclusion of this collaboration Ruth St. Denis began a third phase of her career as a religious dancer, and Ted Shawn organized successfully the first all-male dancing company.

The material on exhibition includes a composite chronology of the work of Denishawn. The original poster of Isis is shown with photographs from the stage production. Also on exhibition are items from other works in the St. Denis oriental cycle and other costumes including her famous Indian Nautch.

On view also are the first photographs taken of Ruth St. Denis as a vaudeville artist and examples of her Siamese, Greek, Hindu and Japanese productions. Many of the world's outstanding photographers have made studies of this artist. Those whose photographs are shown include Arnold Genthe, Edward Weston, Baron de Meyer, Francis Brugiere, Burr McIntosh, Oscar Pach, Sarony, Hoppe of London and Bert of Paris, as well as studies of Miss St. Denis from the best ateliers of Japan and India. With these will be exhibited oil paintings and drawings by Kaulbach, Herter and Bernice Oehler. These will be supplemented with a number of costumes worn in oriental productions. The exhibition culminates with examples of Ted Shawn's photographic portraits and studies of his all-male dance group, and photographs by Barbara Morgan of some of the more famous Denishawn pupils, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and

Charles Weidman.

The Albert Davis Collection

Albert Davis was an old-time minstrel, for many years a member of the famous song and dance team known as Kelly and Davis. His collecting career began simultaneously with his theatre work, in 1878. His collection, covering the past 60 years of American minstrelsy, dance and theatre, is unusually complete.

From this collection the Museum of Modern Art Dance Archives has acquired more than 880 items. Among the most notable are an original watercolor, c.1890, of a Negro Cake Walk group, a large colored lithograph of the dance scene from the production of Uncle Tom's Cabin, 38 pieces of minstrel music, 69 colored woodcuts of famous minstrel performers, 478 cabinet photographs of theatrical personalities of the 19th century, as well as numerous documents, play-bills, and photographs relating to such American extravaganzas as The Black Crook and The White Fawn.

In the collection of photographs are a number of interesting examples of the first burlesque performers in this country: Lydia Thompson, Pauline Markham and their troupes, and photographs of early clog and jig dancers; also a number of rare photographs of the variety theatre performers, music-halls and revues. These are supplemented with unusual photographic studies of the early twentieth century ladies of the dance: Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller and Ruth St. Denis.