

REVIEWS

Photos: Courtesy the Metropolitan Museum of Art



EXHIBITS

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York has just opened an ancient, mouldy exhibit: their Egyptian collection, consisting of some incredibly good material, some that is mediocre—all incredibly badly housed.

There may be many excuses for this discouraging presentation—shortage of labor, shortage of materials for new cases and backgrounds, shortage of imagination in organizing a plethora of riches. The Met's collection of Egyptian arts and crafts is wonderful beyond compare; but one must be an archeologist to seek out the good pieces amidst the swaddling, smothering mass of indifferent pieces. If only a careful selection had been made, a much more forceful exhibition might have been built around fewer pieces. One cannot help comparing the South Seas exhibition at the Modern Museum, (FORUM, page 97), now on view, the Brooklyn Museum's arrangement of its early American and Peruvian materials, or any number of other collections where there is less material but more educational impact due to careful selection, organization and emphasis—not to mention artful spacing.

At the Met there is now a strange medley of the large and small irrelevantly placed: massively built-up life-size stonework tombs (which give no impression of the world of the ancient Egyptians), and hastily crowded cases filled with row on row of pots and seals and bits of broken shards. The attempt at continuity in the many rooms housing the collection seems to be based on chronology, sub-divided according to types of material. Mummy cases stand, one after another in close sardinelike arrangement. Perhaps this sub-division by types is accountable for grievous offense to the architectural eye, but the greatest opportunity that seems to have been missed is creating a replica of the surroundings in which some of these beautiful pieces were used and seen. The Met knows how to do this: their American wing, some of their French period rooms, the Cloisters uptown, have done an excellent job of this kind. With this overwhelming wealth of Egyptian material to choose from, a dramatic room for instance could be reproduced to display that exquisite enameled gold head-dress seen in the 9th Egyptian Room, the gold mirror in a nearby case, the lovely pottery, perhaps against one of the painted friezes from an adjacent room—all coordinated into a setting such as might have occurred at the time. The Metropolitan is to be congratulated for assembling this vast archeological treasure chest. Treasures become common, however, when jammed hit-and-miss into overcrowded cases. *E.B.*



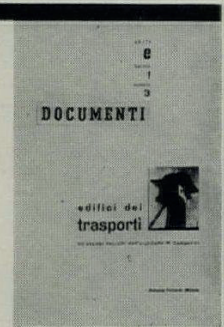
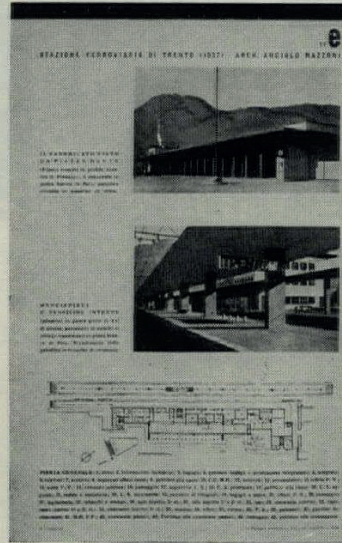
If This Be Not I, Phillip Guston



The 5th Annual Exhibition of American Painting held during February and March at the City Art Museum in St. Louis made one aware that the American artist has not only come into his own but has done so with such vehemence that he must be hard put to keep up with the demand of his borrowers if not of his purchasers. A glance at the seventy odd paintings, many of which are familiar, lead one to conclude that with the Whitney Annual, the Carnegie, the Chicago (to say nothing of the Pepsi Cola Co.) all clamoring for fresh new painting each year, few of the artists chosen have sent recent canvasses to St. Louis. However, the citizens of St. Louis have seen a well rounded view of art in America. The artists invited were for the most part well established ones, although a special Jury of Selection chose a group of six paintings by Missouri artists for inclusion in the show. Art in America has certainly been enriched by the wartime influx of painters from abroad, which possibly accounts for the renewed interest in the abstractionists. *M.T.*

RECENT FOREIGN PERIODICALS... New Italian publication reviews European architecture and engineering of the thirties.

The reappearance of once-familiar European architectural publications on the American market is welcomed by the profession. With them has arrived a newcomer, *Documenti di Architettura Composizione e Tecnica Moderne*, published by Antonio Vallardi of Milan, Italy. Since the publishers anticipate only thirteen issues, three of which are now available, it cannot be considered a magazine in the strict sense of the word. The trio on hand covers 1) transportation buildings, 2) housing, 3) doorways. Each volume is handsomely presented as a looseleaf portfolio to facilitate filing. Due to the widespread destruction of public and private libraries in Europe and current difficulties in securing back issues, the editors were prompted to compile this series as a general review of European architecture from about 1929 through 1940. The selection is a careful one representing almost all the western countries of the continent as well as Great Britain and the Scandinavian nations. As might be expected, foreign selections are outnumbered two to one by Italian examples though this in no way detracts from the value of the contents. Floor plans (and in the case of the volume on doorways, details) accompany the photographs. Those who can read the text will find it succinct and informative without being too technical. For its compact and representative coverage, this series should be a great asset to any architectural library.



a
CASA IN LINEA A ROTTERDAM (1937-38) - ARCH. W. VAN TIJEN & H. MAASKANT

La cellula tipo principale ha la stessa misura di quella del fabbricato Bergneider. Le cellule (con 2 locali aggiunti accessibili dal locale di soggiorno) misurano metri 0,30 x 0,20 (mq. 76) e - col balcone - mq. 89. Datto l'invite sembra in verità accennare per la caratteristica semisigillata cui aspirano gli alloggi se si tieno conto degli inconvenienti che nascono dal disimpegno a ballatoio. Note la chiusura a porta scorrevole.

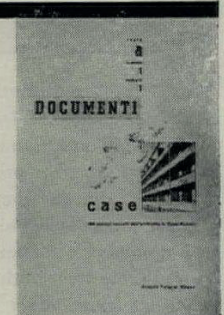
Il fabbricato Ploeten, analogo al Bergneider della scheda 3, sorge in margine ad un grande parco e ne sfrutta la vista! In un quartiere residenziale medio-signorile, quest'opera presenta un maggior costo e una maggiore varietà di finiture, l'impaginamento di metà delle cellule tipo con una di due ulteriori camere da letto (II), il doppio ascensore. Il minor sviluppo planimetrico ha portato a 10 piani (con m. 2,58) e un piano di terrazze arretrate coperte. In legno. Anche qui due ascensori di disimpegno - arretrati a quota media tra piano e piano - a due scale di cui una di emergenza (S) con una colonna di impiccagioni (R). Lungo le fasce sono corsi (io taxi), parcheggi al pianerottolo, convenienti (o parte) immagazzinamenti (cassette) un appartamento di 2 locali (2), un magazzino di vendite (44) e un portiere che ha il suo appartamento in (45) e vigila ingressi (e cassette postali (3).

Cubatura del fabbricato mq. 12.100. Struttura in c.a. con pilastri a salone di larghezza (nel senso della facciata) minima costante di cm. 30 e profondità (misurata nei diversi tra appartamenti) variabile da m. 0,30 (ultimo piano) a m. 1. La struttura in c.a. fu consigliata dalla non perfetta riuscita sotto i riguardi statici dell'esperienza in acciaio del quartiere Bergneider. Pavimenti in legno poggianti su correnti fissati dalla soletta con 2 appoggi sovrapposti di calcestruzzo. Rivelamenti esteri in vetrocemento.

A. Cassi M.
In 1944 *Architettura* Novembre.

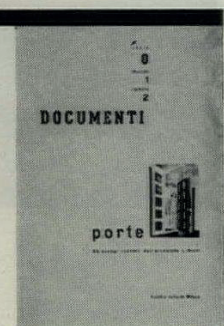
a
CASA A BRESCIA APERTO A MILANO - ARCHITETTI R. LUPICINI & C. TOSCANI

Il fabbricato a tre piani (con piano interrato) ha una struttura in c.a. con pilastri a salone di larghezza minima costante di cm. 30 e profondità (misurata nei diversi tra appartamenti) variabile da m. 0,30 (ultimo piano) a m. 1. La struttura in c.a. fu consigliata dalla non perfetta riuscita sotto i riguardi statici dell'esperienza in acciaio del quartiere Bergneider. Pavimenti in legno poggianti su correnti fissati dalla soletta con 2 appoggi sovrapposti di calcestruzzo. Rivelamenti esteri in vetrocemento.

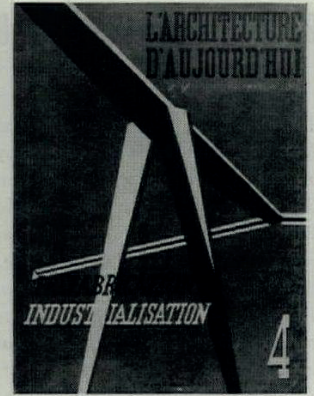
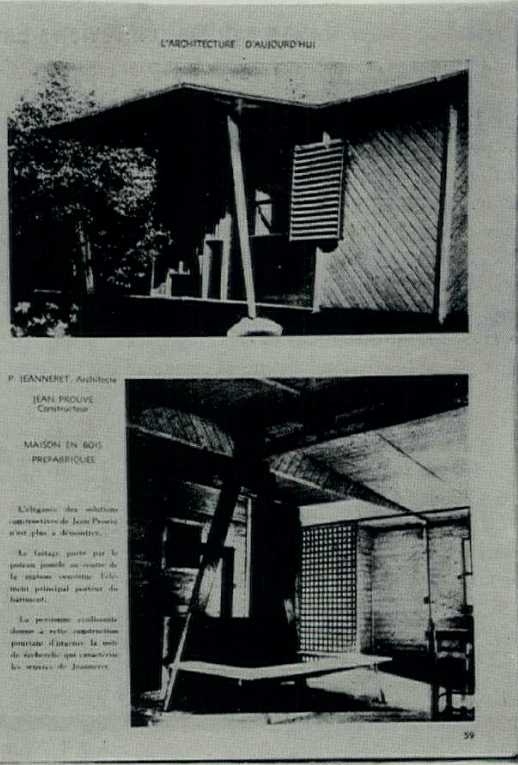
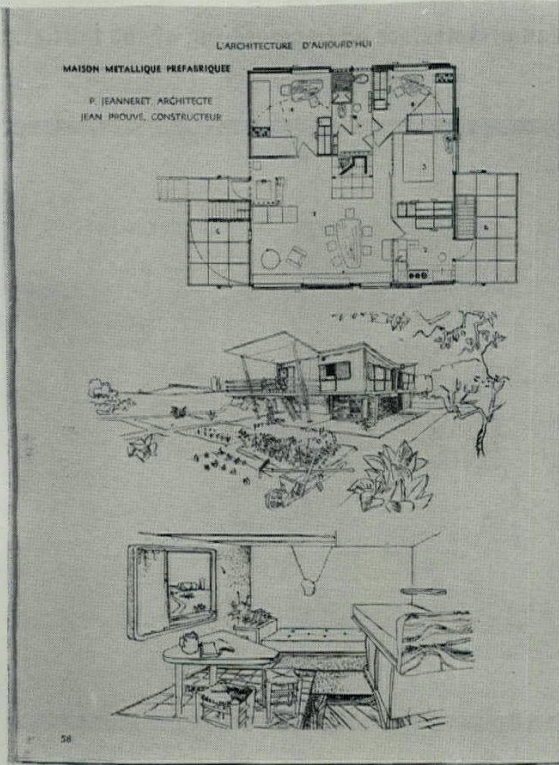


0
INFERRETTA METALLICA A ELEMENTI MULTIPLI IN PROFILATO MIGLIARE - ARCH. G. MARIN

Il sistema con profilo speciale a T, in acciaio, è costituito da elementi multipli in profilato MIGLIARE, che possono essere combinati in modo illimitato di modo da ottenere un numero illimitato di aperture di diverse altezze e larghezze, in relazione al tipo di apertura.



REVIEWS



Due to supply and printing difficulties, the well known French magazine, *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* now appears only on alternate months. The January issue is entirely devoted to prefabrication and industrialized building. From the contents it is evident that France is much preoccupied with prefab, has recently developed a number of systems. Metal appears to be more favored there than in this country. Also included is a somewhat fragmentary review of foreign prefabrication. Five American examples are cited, three of which are not yet in production.

To see ourselves as others see us is usually a good lesson about what not to do. Mirrored in the recent USA issue of *Techniques d'Architecture* published by G. Masse, Paris, France, we're not doing badly. The over-all presentation is an excellent one covering evolution and trends, materials, construction methods, prefabrication, etc. The only whimsical note is struck by a cut of Frank Lloyd Wright's famous columns in the Johnson Wax Factory, inadvertently run upside down. In each issue a loose, supplementary cut is furnished with a note of apology from the editors.

(Continued on page 156)

