

World's Fair Reflects Modern Trends in Art

By SYDNEY KELLNER

NEW YORK, May 6. — A concrete expression of modern art's contribution to 20th century civilization was revealed last week at the opening of the New York World's Fair. No exposition in recent years has enveloped itself in a form that so thoroughly reflects the ordered mechanical beauty of our times as this one. The architecture, the mural and sculptural embellishments, both indoor and out, the educational exhibits and the commercial displays, while not completely satisfying, together present a significant effort toward a union of the "fine" and "practical" arts. In fact, it is difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins.

No one can fail to sense the artistic heritage of those modern innovators. From the design of the perisphere and trylon, magnificent abstract theme center of the Fair symbolizing "The World of Tomorrow," down to the layout and typography of the smallest advertising placard, are the unmistakable influences of the chief contemporary artists. Here are the reinterpretations and imitations—some perhaps unwitting—of Picasso, Arp, Leger, Braque, Miro and Kandinsky, among others. The fantasy of Dada and Surrealism also finds a clearly appropriate place in the exposition arts—to attract and dazzle.

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MURAL paintings, most of them rich and brilliant in color, dress up the individual buildings they adorn. Key to the electric style of the Fair is the huge semi-abstract outdoor mural by William de Kooning in the Hall of Pharmacy which is a thoughtful combination of the design inventions of Picasso, Miro and Arp applied to the representation of chemistry's uses in modern life.

Detroiters will be interested in the novel "mobile" mural by Henry Billings in the Ford exhibit which utilizes painted surfaces in combination with moving, mechanical forms in high relief describing, in

a sort of pictorial "montage," the harnessing of solar heat and light and its rapid transformation into industrial energy.

Among the innumerable wall decorations, few are more impressive than these Federal Art Project murals which embellish the Public Health Building and the WPA Building. Fourteen of them in all, they illustrate dramatically the constructive aspects of the government-sponsored projects in relation to health, unemployment and relief.

Outstanding in quality among them is the mural in the Health Building on "The History of Medicine" by Abraham Lishinsky and Irving Block, designed for permanent use. When the Fair closes this painting will be reassigned to the new Health Museum located on New York's Welfare Island. In its portrayal of the great men and achievements in the evolution of medical therapy, from primitive times to the present, its design stands out noticeably as being more sober and contemplative than most of the typical "exposition" murals.

That the art of today has reached fruition with a broad mass appeal is now evident by the place it has been given in the New York World's Fair.