

MR. JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY'S INTRODUCTORY SPEECH AT THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
ART CRITICS LECTURE ON AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE GIVEN BY MR. PHILIP
JOHNSON, PROFESSOR JORDY AND MR. JACQUES GUITON AT THE
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, MAY 21, 1959

Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you the co-architect of the handsome Seagram Building which you so much enjoyed visiting yesterday morning (and whom some of you have already met): Mr. Philip Johnson. Here, too, we have Mr. Jacques Guiton participating Associate of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, the firm responsible for the gratification we had in our visit to the Manufacturers Trust Company at 43rd Street and Fifth Avenue; and Dr. William Henry Jordy, Associate Professor of Fine Arts at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, one of our leading historians and critics of contemporary architecture.

In order not to trespass on the speakers' time I will say just a few words about such: Mr. Philip Johnson you know from his perhaps most ambitious work, the Seagram Building. You will also have the privilege of seeing two other creations of Mr. Johnson on Sunday next: his Boissonnas House and his own residence, both in New Canaan. In addition to these many of you have already seen the Museum of Modern Art Annex and the Sculpture Court of the Museum of Modern Art, and tomorrow evening we will be honored with a reception in the Guest House of the Museum of Modern Art, which is also a work of Mr. Johnson. But these are only a few—he has built residences at points as far apart as Houston and Minneapolis and Cambridge. He has planned and begun the realization of the Campus of the University of St. Thomas in Houston. He has in work at least two museums and I trust he will mention several other achievements and projects I have omitted mentioning.

In Mr. Jacques Guiton, a participating Associate of the internationally known firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, we are fortunate in having a representative of that organization who is at work now as Senior Designer for the new Chase Manhattan Bank in Wall Street. This is one of the most ample projects ever undertaken in the United States towards the marrying of painting and sculpture

with architecture. And I trust that Mr. Gupton will expand generously on his plans and those of his colleagues for that monumental undertaking as well as point out the problems encountered in the Lever House design, and the happy collaboration and sympathetic patronage which made the Manufacturers Trust Company possible.

Finally Professor Jordy, well known for his work on Henry Adams, Scientific Historian, will give us an illustrated survey of contemporary American architecture into which he plans I believe to draw the building of Mr. Philip Johnson and the firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill with many other works with which you are already familiar by reputation.

In order to keep our attention close to the expositions of each speaker, I am going to suggest that at the close of each exposé the discussion be thrown open to the audience. As these exposés are for your benefit I hope you will take full advantage of the opportunity without hesitation or reluctance. Our interpreter, Mr. Piraud, will be glad to translate the questions from the floor to the speakers - and in turn the replies of the speakers to the interrogator.

Now "les jeux sont fait": let us go.

Mr. Philip Johnson

Mr. Johnson, Mr. Guiton, Professor Jordy

Permit me on behalf of the International Art Critics Association to express our deep appreciation, admiration and gratitude for your generosity in joining us, addressing us and submitting to our questioning. One of the principle *raison d'être* for meetings such as this general assembly of ours is the increase of knowledge and sympathy for arts in lands other than our own. And I know that all will agree on the invaluable contribution your friendly and instructive talks today have made.

Again, all our deep thanks and gratitude.