

NEWS RELEASE

National Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.

FOR RELEASE: AMS
March 25, 1944

WASHINGTON: March 25: The National Gallery of Art will open tomorrow its first exhibition of the Index of American Design, David E. Finley, Director, announced today.

This special exhibition will consist of drawings and water colors from the vast collection, now permanently housed in the National Gallery. The Index of American Design is a pictorial record of the development of arts and crafts in the United States.

The present exhibition will show drawings of metal work from the anvils, forges and foundries of this country. Another section is devoted to drawings of hooked rugs. Though only a small selection from the Index is displayed, the drawings illustrate the extraordinarily realistic technique developed by the artists who worked on the project.

The Index of American Design was undertaken during the 1930's by the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project, as part of its program for providing employment for artists. The Index now consists of more than 22,000 documented drawings and water colors, tracing the history of American design from the earliest days to the end of the Nineteenth century. Also included are several thousand photographs and other research material.

Among the fields represented in the Index are textiles, wood carvings, ceramics, glassware, pewter, silver and other metal work, decorative iron work, household utensils, floor coverings, quilts and coverlets, costumes, lighting devices, tools and other groups of objects which, because of excellence in design or perfection of craftsmanship, have enriched American life. The Index, by recording the development of these arts and crafts in different sections of the country, forms a permanent guide and source of inspiration for artists, designers and craftsmen of the future.