

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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OLMSTED EXHIBITION ON NATIONAL SCOPE
TO OPEN IN NATION'S CAPITAL IN FALL

WASHINGTON, D. C. Friday, August 11, 1972. The National Gallery of Art will hold a major exhibition this fall illustrating some of Frederick Law Olmsted's finest aesthetic achievements in city planning and landscape architecture, it was announced today by J. Carter Brown, Director of the Gallery.

The exhibition will be national in scope and will cover Olmsted's visionary work in the West with natural parks as well as his work in numerous major cities throughout the country. It will be on view at the Gallery from October 21 through January 7, 1973.

Entitled "Frederick Law Olmsted/U. S. A.," the exhibition will appear simultaneously with another at the Whitney Museum of American Art which will focus principally on Olmsted's work in and around New York. Organized for the National Gallery by the American Federation of Arts and the Olmsted Sesquicentennial Committee, it will subsequently be circulated to major museums

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nationwide by the American Federation of Arts.

Olmsted is most known for his successful landscape architecture, best expressed in city parks from Boston to San Francisco, and his advanced theories on city planning, widely used in urban community development today.

Motivated by a passionate humanism and as deeply concerned with preserving the city as the center of civilization, Olmsted was nevertheless looked upon in his own day as an artist with a fashionable picturesque view of nature, complete with bosky dells, rippling streams, meandering drives, promenades, meadows and lakes.

Less well known but of comparable significance, are Olmsted's pioneering efforts for national parks which began with Yosemite and led to the founding of the National Park Service; also, his enhancement of the United States Capitol's west front and his many private commissions, such as Arnold Arboretum in Boston and the Biltmore House gardens in Asheville, North Carolina.

"The intent of the National Gallery's exhibition," Mr. Brown said, "is to emphasize Olmsted's extraordinary contribution to the Nation's visual heritage. We wish to salute Olmsted during his sesquicentennial year as one of America's most prescient and sensitive artists.

"This show will mark the eighth exhibition in our series honoring American artists, and will be the first devoted to a

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designer/landscape architect," he added.

In addition to drawings and other original Olmsted materials, the exhibition will dramatically focus attention on his work in parks and cities by means of Circle-Scan photography. More than 50 panoramic images of Olmsted's work will be projected on a screen 34 feet in diameter and ten feet high.

David W. Scott, Consultant to the National Gallery's East Building project, is coordinating the exhibition for the Gallery. The exhibition director is William Alex, programmer and designer of numerous exhibitions on architecture and urban design and an ardent Olmsted student. Mr. Alex's last major exhibition, Back Bay Boston: The City as a Work of Art, opened the Boston Museum of Fine Arts centennial celebration.

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