

September 30, 1932

T H E M E

RE PAINTING IN GREAT HALL OF NO. 1 BUILDING

ROCKEFELLER CENTER

They should not be "Illustrations." The philosophical or spiritual quality should dominate. We want a vision suggested.

We want the paintings to make people pause and think and to turn their minds inward and upward. We are not interested in having these paintings re-tail facts or events, but rather, we hope, they may stimulate not only a material but above all a spiritual awakening.

Our theme is "NEW FRONTIERS."

To understand what we mean by "New Frontiers," look back over the development of the United States as a nation.

The beckoning of geographical frontiers had a vital effect on the growth and shaping of American civilization. As long as there were new geographical frontiers, people always could find a transient escape from old problems, economic, political and even spiritual, by "moving on." The story of two centuries of American civilization can be told in terms of its unfolding physical frontiers — from the Appalachian Mountains, through the Great Plains and the Great American Desert, to the Pacific Ocean.

Today our frontiers are of a different kind. There are no new physical territories to explore and settle. Man cannot pass up his pressing and vital problems by "moving on." He has to solve them on his own lot. The development of civilization is no longer lateral; it is inward and upward. It is the cultivation of man's own soul and mind, the broadening and deepening of his relations with his fellowmen, the coming in to a fuller comprehension of the meaning and mystery of life.

For the development of the paintings in this hallway, these frontiers are -

(1) Man's New Relation to Matter.

That is man's new possibilities from his new understanding of material things, and

(2) Man's New Relation to Man.

That is man's new and more complete understanding of the real meaning of the Sermon on the Mount.

In the North hall will be four (4) canvases by Sert. These will express man's new mastery of the material universe; (1) His Power; (2) His Will; (3) His Imagination; and (4) His Genius. This last being the divine spark which uses the power and the will and imagination in broader fields and greater ways than ever before.

In the South hall will be four (4) canvases by Brangwyn. Expressing man's new relationship to society and his fellowman: (1) His Family Relationships; (2) His Relationships as a Worker; (3) His Relationships as a Part of Government; and (4) His Ethical or Religious Relationships. The fourth being the dominating and controlling factor, without which the first three can only fail.

In the East hall we have asked Rivera to paint one (1) panel, with the two returns, showing man at the crossroads and looking with uncertainty but with hope and high vision to the choosing of a course leading to a new and better future.

It is exceedingly important that all these canvases be in New York ready for erection on April 1st, 1933. We will erect same.

We hope, however, that the artists will be in New York at that time to direct the erection and to make or superintend whatever changes or touching up may be necessary.

The paintings will be done in black, white and gray, and after completion each artist is to have them "fixed," as we plan after erection to give them two or three coats of varnish.

We will keep the paintings insured against fire or other loss.

Sketches are to be prepared immediately at one-quarter full size. It is hoped that these sketches can be ready for approval on or before December 1st, 1932. They are to be on the same canvases as the final paintings and with the same colored background.

The scale of the drawings will be 8' 6" for the human figure in the front plane.

It is not our intention that the painting should cover the entire canvas, but such part of same as will produce the best effect, probably between sixty and seventy-five percent. That is a matter for the artists to study in their sketches.

Each canvas is to be signed by the artist with his name and date, and far enough away from the borders so that there is no danger of its being cut off in erection.