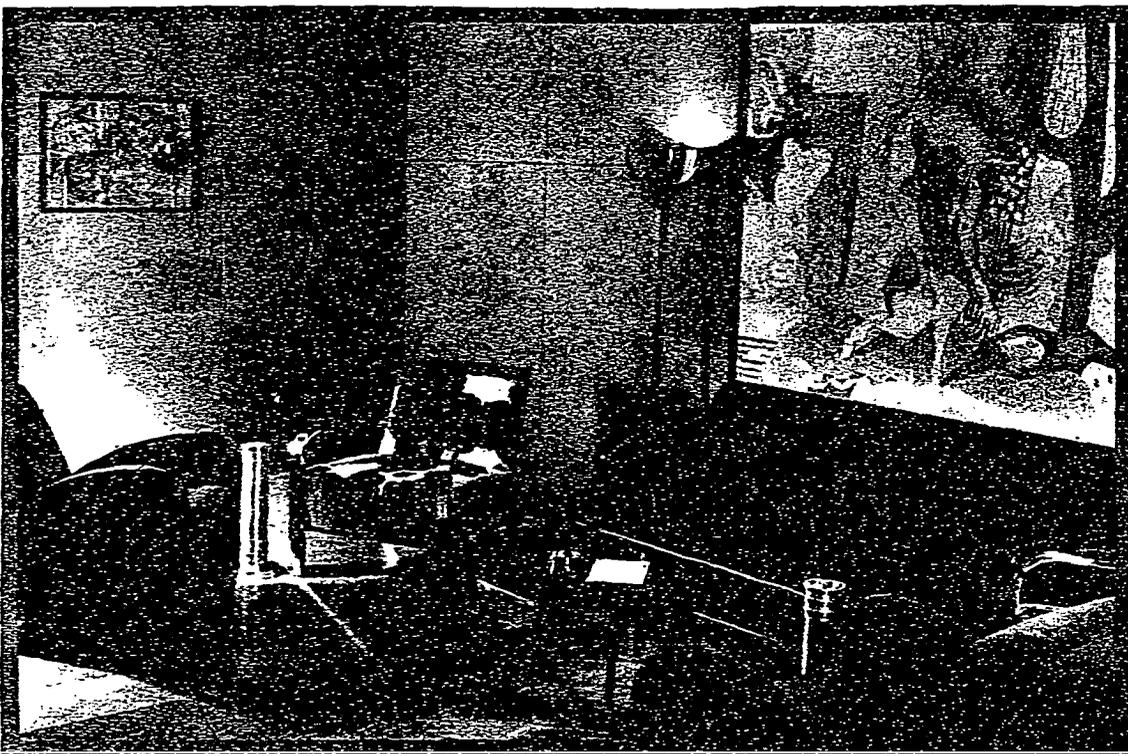


MODERN DECORATIONS ON A GRAND SCALE

The Rockefeller Center Theatres Produce Striking Effects by New Materials and Designs



Mural by Buk Ulreich. Decoration and Furniture by Donald Deskey.
A Corner of the Men's Smoking Room in the Radio City Music Hall.

By WALTER RENDELL STOREY
IN the decoration of theatres the fullest expression of the modern style is achieved. Here furniture, wall and floor coverings and murals make use of daring combinations of color, material and design. Since the auditoriums, men's lobbies, smoking rooms and women's lounges are used for a few hours only, decorative schemes are appropriate in them that would be too dramatic for a home. Gayety, luxury and unusual decorative effects easily become an integral part of the atmosphere naturally associated with theatres.

Thus in the Radio City Music Hall and the RKO Roxy Theatre at Rockefeller Center, opening this week, the architects and interior designers present what are undoubtedly the most advanced ideas in furniture and decoration on a scale that surpasses previous achievements.

The foyers and lounges of the two theatres exemplify the latest ideas in color schemes, furniture and fabrics, in many cases introducing new techniques in contemporary arts and crafts. Murals are incised on linoleum, walls are cast in aluminum, walls are covered with cork, parchment, aluminum and pigskin, while exotic woods are used in the furniture, which is upholstered with new fabrics, specially designed and woven.

AN impression of the modern artistry of the whole decorative scheme of Radio City Music Hall is afforded the visitor as he enters the main lobby. Tremendous dimensions characterize this interior, its ceiling rising above the highest balcony. Each side is lined with tall mirrors, and at one end is the great stairway, above which is the large wall painting by Ezra Winter of the "Fountain of Youth." For the structural details the architects of Radio City, Reinhard & Hofmeister, Hood & Fouilhoux, and Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray, are responsible. The decorating of the interiors of the Music Hall, including the selection of the mural painters and other artists, was in charge of Donald Deskey.

The henna and gold hues of the foyer—made up partly by the soft suede cloth that covers the walls, by the carpet designed by Ruth Reeves and the lighting fixtures by Edward F. Caldwell Company—are carried into the inner lobby with its walls of block-printed linen in

brown and cream. This wall fabric, also designed by Miss Reeves, pictures the arts of entertainment, from the circus to the radio. Among other specially designed fabrics are hangings by Marguerite Mergentine. The terra-cotta upholstery of the auditorium seats and the dull gold walls rising to a gray-domed ceiling, which may be made any color by the play of light, become increasingly brilliant as they lead up to the spectacle on the stage.

DESCENDING the broad stairway from the foyer, the visitor enters the main lounge, strikingly decorated in black and silver. The walls are covered with a black fabric on which are painted five large vignettes by Louis Bouche depicting the past and present of the stage. Huge circular mirrors framed in gunmetal ornament other parts of the wall. Metal

is employed also as accents on the furniture or to form glistening supports for small tables. The furniture and the carpet in this and other lounges were designed by Mr. Deskey.

While the decoration of many of the lounges—there are two on each floor—is more dramatic than that of a private home, there is an agreeable air of restraint. Some of the rooms offer suggestions for home interiors. For example, a men's lounge whose four walls are completely covered with an imaginative map of the world by Witold Gordon suggests a treatment for a library. Chairs and sofas, novel yet comfortable, harmonize in their brown leather upholstery with the browns of the wall ornamentation, and tables with bakelite tops and shiny chromium supports introduce a black and silver note.

A room with walls of cork has a

hand-knitted rug on the floor has an Indian motif.

Other rooms are still more varied in treatment, especially a ladies' powder room in chartreuse yellow. This is circular, with glass dressing-table shelves in front of wall mirrors and white leather upholstered stools placed on a circular carpet in tones of blue. In another powder room the walls are covered with huge exotic flowers painted by Yasuo Kuniyoshi. An interior developed in very pale colors has on its walls a "History of Cosmetics" by Witold Gordon. In still another room walls of a brown and white fabric, block-printed in a primitive pattern, are the background for a mural by Henry Billings.

In all the interiors are table lamps of metal by Mr. Deskey and others of pottery by Henry Varnum Poor.

The RKO Roxy Theatre loses nothing in decorative effect by be-

ing somewhat smaller than the Music Hall. The opulent note of the golden walls and the fountains of the entrance become subdued and restful in the silver and brown of the main lobby. A decidedly modern air has been bestowed on it by the designer, Eugene Schoen, Professor of Interior Architecture at New York University, who was in charge of all the interior decoration.

The main lines of the grand foyer, like those of all the rest of the theatre, were worked out by the same architects who designed the Music Hall. To them is due the striking contour of the room, with a curved wall on one side following the line of the mezzanine lounge. Into this setting Professor Schoen has introduced a smooth, unbroken wall covering of light-hued natural mahogany, vermilion pillars and curtains of champagne-colored rough silk at the ceiling-high windows with their decorative opaque Corning glass.

ARTIFICIAL illumination is afforded by several globular chandeliers of glass and metal and by tall floor lights of black and gold with opaque glass wings, designed by Walter Kantack. The wall fixtures are by the same craftsman in collaboration with W. A. Welden. These are in the form of silver masks, modeled by René Chambellan, which screen a light source in a circular wall recess. On the mahogany wall are inlaid metal silhouettes of classical figures by Hildreth Meiere. From the foyer the patron enters the auditorium where colored light will be the feature of the decorative scheme.

The grand foyer's dignity is foiled by the gay effect of the main lounge which opens out from it. Here parchment-hued leather ornaments the walls, in three-foot sections separated by narrow lines of red leather. Furniture in the browns of rosewood and South American walnut is upholstered in Chinese vermilion leather. Smoking stands have supports of wood or of crystal

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Mural by Maurice Heaton. Room Designed by Eugene Schoen. F. S. Lincoln Photo.
A Women's Lounge in the RKO Roxy Theatre.

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and colored glass, ingeniously combined. In the bakelite tops are inset ash trays that never become full of ashes or slide off. Brightly echoing the hues of the room is a large mural by Arthur Crisp, an outdoor scene, which illustrates the new technique of incising a design on linoleum and lacquering it.

A women's lounge is entered through a small foyer that is itself a gem of color. Against a wall of chartreuse yellow, is placed a piece of sculpture, an abstract form in silver, by Noguchi. The room is dominated by an illuminated and painted glass panel that occupies one entire wall and is reflected in a huge, square, frameless mirror on the opposite wall. This glass mural—another contribution to modern art—is designed by Maurice Heaton and depicts Amelia Earhart's Atlantic flight. Comfortable chairs upholstered in black and white striped haircloth are relieved of severity by a delicate gold thread woven in.

The feature of the men's lounge on this floor is the photo-murals by Edward Steichen. Placed above a low wainscoting and extending completely around the room is a series of scenes depicting aviation from the first flight by the Wright brothers to the latest passenger airplane. These are developed in black and white, which is in harmony with several black marble pillars, the black tops of the smoking stands and the gray-blue leather of the upholstery.

Murals enter also into the decoration of another lounge on the third mezzanine, where on silver walls, Professor Schoen has developed a series of scenes symbolizing the exploits of great men. This ornamentation was inspired by S. L. Rothafel, the director of both theatres. The achievements of such men as Edison, Marconi, Lindbergh and Byrd have been presented as an inspiration to youth. The furniture is covered with a colorful

fabric of modern design hand woven by the Franke Studios.

The new and individual note in all of the interiors is due not only to the decorative composition of fabrics, woods and color schemes but to the use of specially woven carpets, upholstery and curtains.

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POTTERS today are offering a wide variety of pieces of authentic artistry, with especial emphasis on animal figures, which have of late grown so popular. In this field of highly decorative art are the ceramics by Carl Walters on display at the Downtown Gallery until Saturday, where may be seen the largest number of his beautiful and often amusing pottery pieces so far assembled.

Although this pottery is the product of a highly trained craftsman, the pieces have all the naïve and frank air that one associates with beautiful objects of any age. A penguin with its amusing silhouette or a fawn with its delicate one stand ready to make an ornamental accent on a mantel or a table, just as a Ming horse or a Chelsea figure might do. The soft color of most of the pieces aids in harmonizing them with almost any type of interior, thus enhancing their decorative value.

In this exhibition individuality and attractiveness of form enhance the technical excellence of glaze and color. Platters in red, cream and blue and cream are covered with patterns apparently as simply made as a child's drawing or a piece of primitive art. Fishes, four-legged animals and birds are incorporated into these freely drawn line designs; other plates are ornamented with geometrical motifs. One piece shows cottages and a steeped church in dull red or soft cream, with touches of green for the trees. Suggesting the old ware of the Pennsylvania Germans, it recalls old pine furniture and painted chests.