

Design & Imitation
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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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COMPARISON OF EARLY AND LATE MODERN DESIGN

ITEMS TO SHOW HOW STYLE HAS CHANGED

"New Design Trends," an exhibition of 11 pairs of comparable objects illustrating changes in design during the past 20 years, will be on view on the first floor of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from March 26 through June 1. The exhibition, which will include a variety of objects from typewriters to furniture, is being organized and installed by Greta Daniel, Assistant Curator of the Department of Architecture and Design.

Comparison of today's design with that of the 'thirties - a period of great maturity in the modern movement - readily shows how emphasis has shifted from pure geometric forms to greater fluidity of line and shape. Through the use of expressive forms and rich play of textures, there is today a much more marked decorative quality than was current in the geometrical precision of 20 years ago.

An armchair by Le Corbusier designed in 1928 illustrates how the new architects of the day endeavored to achieve the same new freedom for their furniture as they had evolved in their architecture. The tendency was towards lightness and rigidity of structure. By contrast, a recent armchair by the Danish architect Finn Juhl with its rich display of wood and fabric textures and its sculptural contours, seems to protest against the simplicity of the earlier chair.

A comparison of two wooden platters shows interesting divergences both in shape and in the use of material. One, the work of James Prestini in the mid-'thirties, has the clarity and symmetry of form characteristic of Machine Art, although Prestini works with craftsman's tools. The other is a recent design by Tapio Wirkkala using a solid block of wood strips from which an asymmetrical shape is carved.

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Through these and the other comparative exhibits in this display, most of which come from the Museum's own Design Collection, the evolution of the modern style and the constant emphasis of the designer on the idiom of his own time may be observed.

The pairs of items to be shown are as follows:

Armchairs: Le Corbusier, 1928
Finn Juhl, 1946

Cocktail tables: Mies van der Rohe, 1930
Edith and William Hernandez, 1949

Floor lamps: Peter Pfisterer, 1940
Ostuni, 1951

Flower containers: Alvar Aalto, 1937
Paolo Venini, 1950-51

Vases: Frank G. Holmes, 1908
Carl Harry Stålhane, 1951

Bowls: A. D. Copier, 1930
Vera Liskova, 1948

Ashtrays: Frederick Carder, before 1934
Luigi Fontana, 1947

Platters: James Prestini, 1934
Tapio Wirkkala, 1951

Fowl shears: Henkels, before 1940
Grasoli Werk, post-war

Typewriters: W. A. Dobson, 1927
Marcello Nizzoli, 1947

Fabrics: Anni Albers, 1926
Virginia Nepodal, 1951