

50th Anniversary



ADVANCE FACT SHEET

- EXHIBITION:** MARCEL BREUER: FURNITURE AND INTERIORS
- DATES:** The Museum of Modern Art, New York
July 25 -- September 15, 1981
- SPONSOR:** This exhibition has been generously supported by SCM Corporation and organized with the aid of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.
- DIRECTORS:** MARCEL BREUER will be co-directed by J. Stewart Johnson, Curator of Design at The Museum of Modern Art and Christopher Wilk, Guest Curator.
- CONTENTS:** MARCEL BREUER: FURNITURE AND INTERIORS will be the third in a series of exhibitions on the most important 20th century designers, the first two of which were devoted to the furniture of Mies van der Rohe and Charles Eames. In recognition of the range, scope, and impact of Breuer's work, this exhibition will be the largest to date in the series, and will be of major significance and interest to designers and students, as well as to the general public.

Approximately 45 pieces of furniture on exhibit will include examples of Breuer's early work in wood, as well as in tubular steel, aluminum, and plywood. Original drawings for furniture and interior designs, copies of catalogues and brochures, and enlargements of documentary photographs will be included. In addition, full-scale photographic enlargements of selected Breuer interiors will be installed behind the related pieces of furniture to illustrate Breuer's overall approach to design problems.

Marcel Breuer's seminal influence on furniture and interior design of the 20th century is widely acknowledged, yet no previous exhibition has presented to the public the full range of his design work. As a result, misunderstandings have arisen as to which works were designed by Breuer himself and which were inspired by him. The Museum's exhibition, by presenting loans from European and American collections, including newly found prototypes and unique pieces, will provide a fresh and comprehensive view of Breuer's furniture design.

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Interiors represented in the exhibition, in addition to major commissions executed in Germany and England in the 1920s and 1930s, will include Breuer's own Lincoln, Massachusetts house, which he designed with Walter Gropius, the Geller House on Long Island, and the dining area of the house that was built in the garden of The Museum of Modern Art in 1949. Examples of Breuer's innovative chair designs will include his wood armchair from 1923, the first tubular steel chair of 1925, the tubular steel cantilever chair of 1928, the aluminum armchair of 1933, and the Isokon molded plywood chair of 1935.

Besides The Museum of Modern Art, whose fine collection of Breuer's furniture will be on display, major lenders include: the Bauhaus Archive in Berlin, Staatliches Kunstsammlung in Weimar, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Royal Institute of British Architects in London, The Brooklyn Museum, and the estate of Madame Kandinsky in Paris.

BIOGRAPHY:

Marcel Breuer was born in Pécs, Hungary, in 1902, and attended the Bauhaus from 1920 to 1924, when he was appointed Master of the Carpentry Shop, a position he held until 1928. From that year until 1935, Breuer worked on his own. By 1935 he was ready to leave Germany, since the deteriorating political climate made it impossible for him to continue working there. Two years in England gave Breuer the opportunity to experiment with molded plywood as a material for his furniture design, and also led him to use natural materials in his architecture. His influence on British design was remarkable for so brief a stay in that country. In 1937 he began to teach at Harvard, where he collaborated with Walter Gropius on the design of several major houses. He set up his own office in New York in 1946.

PUBLICATION:

A monograph will be published by The Museum of Modern Art to accompany the exhibition. Written by Christopher Wilk, Guest Curator and co-director of the show, the 224-page book will present a detailed history of Breuer's furniture and interior design from his Bauhaus years to 1959, and will contain 199 illustrations.

TRAVEL:

Upon its closing at The Museum of Modern Art, MARCEL BREUER will travel to: the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, Maryland (October 13 - November 22, 1981); the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Canada (April 1 - May 15, 1982); the Cleveland Museum of Art in Cleveland, Ohio (June 16 - July 25, 1982) and the Institute Chateau du Fresne in Montreal, Canada (September 13 - October 31, 1982). A fifth museum will be announced shortly.

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For further information, please contact Luisa Kreisberg, Director, (212) 956-2648, or Sharon Zane, Associate Director, 956-7295, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019.