

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OPENS 1947 USEFUL OBJECTS EXHIBITION

One hundred objects of fine design, ranging in price from a black plastic tumbler at 25 cents to a pottery bowl at \$100, have been selected by the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, for the 1947 version of its annual Useful Objects exhibition, which will be held on the third floor of the Museum September 17 through November 23. For this year's exhibition--entitled One Hundred Useful Objects of Fine Design 1947--the number of items has been narrowed to make the choice more selective, and the price range extended to afford greater variety in the objects shown.

The exhibition, selected by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., Director of the Museum's Department of Industrial Design, has been especially installed by Mies van der Rohe, internationally famous architect, in conjunction with his one-man exhibition which opens simultaneously. All of the items shown in the Useful Objects exhibition are for sale in retail shops and stores in New York and other parts of the country. Wherever these objects are displayed each manufacturer is permitted to distinguish his object with the phrase: "Selected by the Museum of Modern Art as One of the Useful Objects of Fine Design 1947."

In commenting on the exhibition and its purpose Mr. Kaufmann has said:

"Every so often the Museum of Modern Art selects and exhibits soundly designed objects available to American purchasers in the belief that this will encourage more people to use beautiful things in their everyday life. This year 100 objects priced up to \$100 were selected from the best modern design now available to American consumers. The Museum of Modern Art has held similar exhibitions since 1938. This year for the first time the number of entries was restricted and the price limit raised steeply. These two changes were made to permit greater variety within stringent standards of design. No preference is given to a special material or price. Emphasis is laid on objects of everyday use.

"Certain handmade pieces here are unique or available only in small numbers, yet they typify large groups of items that can be bought in many shops throughout the country. Swedish glassware and handmade pottery from California are good examples of such things. They are shown here along with machine-made aluminum pots and plastic dinnerware because both groups demonstrate the application of sound modern design to objects of daily use."

In this year's exhibition, furniture plays a more prominent role than formerly. Charles Eames, who was given a one-man furniture exhibition at the Museum in 1946 will be represented by a molded plywood screen, chair and dining table. Alvar Aalto, who in

1938 had a one-man show at the Museum, is the designer of three pieces-- an arm chair, a two-tier table, and a wall desk--imported from Sweden as his furniture is no longer manufactured in the United States. Other furniture includes a hanging metal kitchen cabinet and a radio by Raymond Loewy Associates, a table-bench and ottoman by Hendrik van Keppel, and Edward J. Wormley's flip-top table. In ratio to its size, a "stacking" chair of black-painted aluminum tubing with canvas back and seat designed by Jack Heaney is undoubtedly the lightest object in the exhibition--4 pounds, 4 ounces. Half a dozen of these chairs stacked one on top of another would weigh not much more than an ordinary side chair.

To encourage importers to bring into this country useful objects of superior design the exhibition shows a number of foreign make. Among these are an Italian glass bowl and two sets of glass tumblers, glassware from Sweden, Holland, Czechoslovakia, and Austria and dinnerware of undecorated porcelain comes from Limoges, France. Notable among the domestic objects is the new plastic dinnerware. From Langbein come large bowls of opaque plastic in black or white and black or white dinner plates. Dinnerware of an opaque heliotrope blue, designed by Jon Hedu is extremely heavy with bevel-edged plates, bowls, and saucers. A black plastic tumbler designed by Thomas Higgins has the advantage of a heavy base rounded on the inside and flat on the outside.

Among the miscellaneous objects is a uniquely modern stamp box from Cartier, Inc. Within the severely simple case of sterling silver are three spokes for spools of stamps which can be played out through narrow slits in the side of the box without lifting its lid. The interior of this extremely elegant, practical stamp box is gilt-washed. Something new in the design and use of material is offered in P.E. Camerer's Lazy Susan, its top a 20-inch clear glass disc set to turn on a ball-bearing metal base. Also included are lamps, textiles, bean pots, wooden bowls and platters, vases of glass, pottery and pewter, mixing bowls of aluminum, carving and steak knives, stoneware, a stainless steel pitcher, black metal barbeque fork, and an ice cream spade of chrome steel.