

NEWS

Arch. Design

FROM

GOOD DESIGN**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART • THE MERCHANDISE MART**

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GOOD DESIGN 1953 TO OPEN AT MUSEUM WITH 250 HOME FURNISHINGS

ITEMS IN SPECIAL INSTALLATION

Selections from the 1953 Good Design exhibitions at The Merchandise Mart, Chicago, will be on view from September 23 through November 29 in an especially designed installation on the first floor of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street. Included in the Museum show will be more than 250 items of home furnishings from among those chosen by the Museum's Selection Committees for the exhibitions that opened at Chicago's January and June home furnishings markets. This will be the 12th Good Design exhibition under the joint sponsorship of The Mart and the Museum, directed for the Museum by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. Alexander Girard, well-known architect who designed the much discussed settings for the show in Chicago, has come from his home in New Mexico to carry out special designs for this installation.

Installation:

Probably the most strikingly simple of all the installations of the Good Design shows since they started nearly 4 years ago, this design by Mr. Girard emphasizes a linear axis running east and west through the entire first floor galleries. There are to be no full partitions; the entire room is one open space. Platforms of various heights run in long parallel lines the full length of the floor for the display of the furnishings items. "There is no attempt to make groupings of the items," says Mr. Girard. "They will be displayed individually without

atmospheric effects. Therefore there is no use of color. All the parallel east-west walls and platforms will be black, with white tops on the platforms where objects are displayed; the north-south walls at the ends will be white. The objects themselves will give color. Overlapping panels of fabrics will run the length of the window-wall to the north, and smaller panels of upholstery fabrics, back to back, will hang from the ceiling. Between two columns will hang some transparent Japanese papers. Lights overhead will run in parallel strips also oriented on the east-west axis. I discarded all the more complicated ideas I had thought of and came back to this direct presentation as the most straightforward way to show the design of the items themselves."

Selection Committees:

The Selection Committees responsible for the 1953 choices were headed by Mr. Kaufmann who was joined, in January, by D.J. Depree, President of the Herman Miller Furniture Co., and Russel Wright, home furnishings designer; and, in June, by Florence Knoll, New York architect-designer, and Harry Jackson, Executive Vice-President of the Jackson Furniture Co. in California.

Characteristics and Contents of Exhibition:

In summarizing the characteristics of the items shown in the exhibition, Mr. Kaufmann says: "The show contains two striking types of design: on one hand, many objects designed in an informal and relaxed tone, with matte surfaces and gently shaped forms, utilizing the natural colors of materials; on the other, an important group of deliberately restrained, elegant designs which feature richer materials, often polished and shiny, crisply shaped and decisively contrasted in tone and color. These two tendencies exist today side by side."

The exhibition will contain large representations in the fields of furniture; fabrics - upholstery, drapery and sheer; tableware and kitchenware. There will be a variety of household gadgets, a number of wallpapers, a few floor coverings. Only 3 lamp designs are to be shown. Three larger electric household appliances are especially welcomed features of the selection this year.

A symposium "IS ORNAMENT GOOD DESIGN?" will be held at the Museum on November 4, sponsored by the Museum's Junior Council. Moderator: Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. Participants: Dr. Suzanne K. Langer, author and lecturer; Paul Mayen, designer; Betty Pepis, editor; Eva Zeisel, professor.