

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MODELS OF PRIZE-WINNERS IN LOW-COST FURNITURE COMPETITION ON VIEW AT AMERICAN FURNITURE MART IN CHICAGO

Full-sized production models of prize-winning furniture designs from the International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture Design, sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art and Museum Design Project, Inc., are on view in The American Furniture Mart in Chicago. They are exhibited in a special space set aside for them in the Johnson-Carper Furniture Co. space in the Furniture Mart.

The storage units by the British designers Robin Day and Clive Latimer which were awarded first prize in the storage category are being manufactured by the Johnson-Carper Furniture Co. of Roanoke, Virginia. They are of conventional plywood veneer combined in light and dark tones and were designed to be used either as unit furniture freely grouped or in more conventional suite arrangements. This combination of characteristics keeps the flexibility of unit furniture without incurring the expense usually involved in such a system. Because the individual cases are fairly large sized, expensive corner construction and finished side surfaces are not repeated wastefully. Since the designs originally submitted by Day and Latimer were created to meet British manufacturing procedures, the designers supervised and approved certain modifications to make their pieces conform with American production techniques. The Johnson-Carper Furniture Co. will also show models of a standard adaptation of the prize-winning design which they will manufacture. This adaptation, carried out by Edmond J. Spence, Inc., is recognized by the Museum of Modern Art as a standard version of the prize-winning design suited to a wide American market.

The American winner of half the first prize in seating units, Don R. Knorr, has produced one of the most ingenious chairs in the repertoire of modern design. Being manufactured by Knoll Associates of New York, it combines two elements already explored by modern designers,

namely compound curves and flexibility, but achieves this quality through a skilful use of flat sheet metal. The chair will be marketed in a variety of colors sprayed on the metal in a new elastic paint. In another version a thin cushion gives additional comfort to this chair.

The second prize for seating was divided between 2 American designers, Charles Eames, already well known for his furniture design, and a relative newcomer Davis J. Pratt. The Eames design which is being produced by the Herman Miller Furniture Co. of Zeeland, Michigan, continues to develop the themes first presented to the public by this designer and his associate Eero Saarinen in the Museum of Modern Art's Organic Design Competition of 1940. After the last war a further development of this chair was manufactured in molded plywood and has become exceptionally well known.. Besides many refinements of shape and construction, this chair is presented in an extraordinary new plastic, somewhat flexible, slightly translucent and exceptionally durable. This chair will also be available in a choice of colors and with 3 standard bases. Mr. Pratt's design, manufactured by the Bunting Glider Co. of Philadelphia, not only can be shipped in a small carton but is exceptionally easy to assemble. Employing the principle of pneumatic cushions, it will provide one answer to the long-felt need for reasonably priced modern furniture analogous to conventional overstuffed pieces. At the present time no production model of this design is yet available, but drawings of the chair are on view.

These designs will be shown this spring in an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and simultaneously in exhibitions elsewhere in the country, and at the same time they will be available in retail stores throughout the country. No photographs will be released until that time.

Furniture stores from coast to coast have been franchised for exclusive showings and presentation of this furniture. Other franchises are still available through the office of the Museum Design Project, Inc., in the Johnson-Carper space at The American Furniture Mart.