

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

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FOR WEDNESDAY RELEASE

THREE MODERN STYLES - ART NOUVEAU, CUBIST-GEOMETRIC AND FREE FORM -
TO BE EXHIBITED AT MUSEUM

THREE MODERN STYLES, a Museum of Modern Art Circulating Exhibition, will be on view in the Auditorium Gallery of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from July 12 through September 4. Twenty-seven original works of art characteristic of the Art Nouveau style of the turn of the century, the Cubist-Geometric style of the 'teens and 'twenties, and the currently popular Free Form will be shown with photographic panels illustrating almost a hundred examples of related architecture, interiors, typography, textiles, jewelry and other works.

The curvilinear Art Nouveau is presented in paintings, prints and sculpture by van Gogh, Gauguin, Redon, Munch, Toulouse-Lautrec, Rodin and Maillol. Accompanying photographs show the same linear, decorative style in Hector Guimard's stations for the Paris subway no less than Lalique jewelry and Tiffany glass. After a long period of the imitation of historic styles, Art Nouveau spoke in a meaningful and expressive contemporary idiom; at its best, especially in the work of the Belgian architect Henry van der Velde, there was a subordination of ornament to the reshaping of the object itself that was a step toward the machine style of the 20th century.

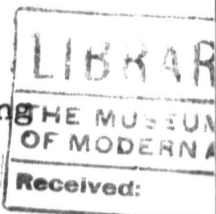
The more familiar Cubist-Geometric style, with its emphasis on simple geometric and machine shapes as opposed to the shapes of nature, is introduced with paintings by Picasso, Braque, Léger, Mondrian and others. Photographic panels show that this same esthetic governs the concrete, glass and metal buildings of architects like Le Corbusier and Gropius, the early modern furniture of the de Stijl movement in Holland and the German Bauhaus, as well as the pipe-stem feminine silhouette of the 'twenties.

The Free Form style, a present-day reassertion of the organic and spontaneous, is represented in paintings by Kandinsky, Miro and Gorky; and in sculpture by Arp, Moore and Calder. These introduce shapes found again in photographs of the popular Hardoy, Lames and Saarinen chairs; buildings by Aalto, Niemeyer and Nelson; a Paul Rand book cover; recent textiles and window displays.

The exhibition was prepared by Libby Tannenbaum, Assistant Curator in the Museum's Department of Circulating Exhibitions, who notes:

"These three styles pervade not only the fine arts, but every aspect of popular design. Each is equally international, with its own national variations. Roughly consecutive in time, in retrospect each begins to characterize the whole atmosphere of a period. Style is the signature of an era in the same way that handwriting is the personal mark of an individual."

Shown at Williams, Wellesley, Vassar and Skidmore Colleges; at the Baltimore Museum of Art and the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Gallery of Springfield, Mass., during its tour last season; the THREE MODERN STYLES exhibition will begin its tour for the coming season at the Art Gallery of Toronto in September following its showing in New York.



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