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. Over-
lapping 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 charcteristics 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.