More than 180 fabrics manufactured by 111 firms and craftsmen have been selected for the exhibition TEXTILES USA, which will be on view at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, from August 29 through November 4. The selection was made by a seven member jury from more than 3000 entries submitted by firms in all parts of the country. The exhibition will be a tribute to American design in this important field. All fabrics were produced within the past ten years.

Apparel fabrics, home furnishings textiles and industrial fabrics were selected by the jury on the basis of esthetic qualities. Examples were drawn from the workshops of handweavers as well as from the giant plants of the industry serving a mass-market. Brilliantly colored cottons, silks, and fine woolens are included as well as fabrics demonstrating the versatility of many synthetics and the new fibers. Of particular interest should be fabrics used in industry which are seldom seen by the general public.

Notices have gone out to all manufacturers whose fabrics were selected asking them to send samples for the catalog of the show which will be sold at the Museum and also published in the Fall issue of American Fabrics Magazine. Letters from the Museum requesting lengths of the fabric for the exhibition itself will be sent out by the Museum as soon as installation plans are completed.

Bernard Rudofsky is designing an unusual installation which will take up the entire first floor galleries as well as a garden terrace. The exhibition is under the direction of the Department of Architecture and Design. Greta Daniel, Associate Curator, is Project Director. The original announcement and request for entries was sent out January 20, 1956.

The exhibition will present a selection of beautiful and significant American fabrics," Greta Daniel says. "We have not attempted to present a complete cross-section of the industry, nor to include examples of all types of materials, but have emphasized the characteristic beauty of American textiles. Within the three categories established in the original announcement--apparel, home furnishings, and industrial uses--the jury has chosen the best it could find from the point of view of quality and esthetic appeal.

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Although the Museum of Modern Art has exhibited contemporary fabrics in many exhibitions, such as the Useful Objects shows and the Good Design series of exhibitions, as well as rare old textiles in "Textiles and Ornamental Arts of India" and "Ancient Art of the Andes," this will be the first major show devoted entirely to modern American textiles. It is hoped that the exhibition will travel after the New York showing.

Jury members who selected the fabrics for the exhibition were René d'Harnoncourt, Arthur Drexler, Philip C. Johnson, William C. Segal, Anni Albers, Claire McCardell, and Mary Lewis.

They were assisted by technical advisors including Ann Mulany, Women's Wear Daily; Ralph M. Gutekunst, Hollwig Dyeing Corporation; Milton Rubin, American Silk Mills; and Walter Scholer, American Viscose Corporation.

During the past few months, an Industry Committee, headed by Daniel Fuller, President of Fuller Fabrics, has been actively engaged in obtaining the widest possible support in the industry for the show. At a luncheon meeting on April 18, held for the Industry Committee, Mr. Fuller said:

TEXTILES USA is the first attempt to my best knowledge and belief to secure public recognition as an industry. This attempt is being made under the best possible auspices. The previous exhibits of the Museum of Modern Art have a notable success record...It is difficult to over-emphasize the importance of this kind of public presentation, and its far-reaching influence. To start with, TEXTILES USA is national, not local. It is a completely non-commercial, non-profit project. It glorifies the fabrics of America in a way that is far beyond the capacity of individual mills or groups of mills. It focuses the attention of all manufacturers and merchants on the importance of fabrics in American life. Above all it gives the consuming public, at long last, a picture of the great fabric world.


For further information contact Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York 19, N. Y. Circle 5-8900.