

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

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DESIGNING PROGRAMS/PROGRAMMING DESIGNS:

An Exhibition by Karl Gerstner

Karl Gerstner's methodological approach to solving design and visual problems is explained in this exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art by means of three audio-visual presentations specially designed for the occasion. DESIGNING PROGRAMS/PROGRAMMING DESIGNS will be on view at the Museum in the Philip L. Goodwin Galleries for Architecture and Design from February 5 through March 20.

In the Preface to the exhibition, Emilio Ambasz, Curator of Design at the Museum and director of the exhibition explains:

The exhibition's title means: inventing rules for arrangement and is a didactic presentation of a mode of beholding and acting programmatically upon visual reality. It renews the author's programmatic claim, that rather than pursuing solutions to specific problems, he is seeking a general program valid for many solutions: a systematic approach for analyzing in design terms the conceptual and emotional aspects of form and color.

This claim is the methodological backbone of Gerstner's work. It represents a general method for questioning and structuring: a way of de-composing and combining. Convinced of its universality, the method takes a wager on reason, yet includes the notion of choice. Whether the method is used by the designer or the layman, it is only the complexity of the discourse which is modified; the structuring approach remains the same. The generative properties of the method do not change, it is the results which are as diverse as the players who give them form.

Karl Gerstner is a well-known Swiss graphic and typographic designer, theorist and artist, whose work is widely represented in the Museum's Design Collection. It also was included in "The Responsive Eye" and in the "Word and Image" exhibitions at the Museum in 1965 and 1968. As a theorist, he is a pioneer of what he calls "Designing Programs" on which subject he has published several articles and books.

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DESIGNING PROGRAMS/PROGRAMMING DESIGNS is presented in three parts:

1) The Explanation -- a slide presentation with eight different points of view concerning systematic research in visual problems. 2) The Experience -- a movie on the programming of five pictures with sequences of the infinite interchangeability; and 3) The Experiment -- a slide projection from three apparatus which can be operated by visitors to the gallery.

The exhibition is made possible in part by a grant from the Pro-Helvetia Stiftung, a non-profit organization based in Zurich.

Additional information available from Linda Gordon, Associate Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. Tele: 956-2648.