

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1941.

The Museum of Modern Art held a dinner last night in the penthouse of its building at 11 West 53 Street in honor of the winning designers whose work is on display in the Museum's current exhibition of Organic Design in Home Furnishings. In addition to the guests of honor, guests at the dinner included representatives of the manufacturers and stores throughout the country who have cooperated in making available to the public the work of these designers.

John Hay Whitney, President of the Museum, was unable to be present at the dinner but sent the following telegram:

"I am very sorry that my presence in the Argentine prevents my being at the dinner tonight in honor of the winners of the Industrial Design Competition. Please tender my congratulations to the winners and express my appreciation of the sympathetic collaboration of the manufacturers, retailers and designers which has made it possible to carry into production so many stimulating designs."

John E. Abbott, Executive Vice-President of the Museum, acted as toastmaster and introduced the speakers, who were A. Conger Goodyear, a trustee of the Museum and its first president; Michael Schaap, President of Bloomingdale's, Inc.; and Wallace K. Harrison, Chairman of the Museum's Trustee Committee on Industrial Design, and Director of Cultural Relations of the Office of Inter-American Affairs.

Mr. Goodyear said in part:

"In the absence of the President of the Museum, Mr. Whitney, who is now in South America, and of the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Clark, I am permitted to welcome you on this occasion. It marks an important step for the Museum, --its first incursion in the field of industrial design, though by no means its first in industrial art.

"When the Museum of Modern Art was founded, the charter provided that the Museum was established 'to encourage and develop the study of modern art and the application of such art to manufacture and practical ~~art~~ life.'

"In 1932, two and one-half years after the Museum's founding, the Department of Architecture was established as the first of the separate curatorial departments. In this department was included the field of industrial art, and two years later the first considerable exhibition in this field was presented under the name of Machine Art.

"This exhibition included examples of the best industrial design in house furnishings, kitchen ware, lighting fixtures, adding machines, gasoline pumps, glass and porcelain, springs and propellers; a long procession of the necessities of life.

"In meeting the impact of that then startling show, one critic proclaimed that it was 'calling the stuff "art" that clouds the issue.' Well, we still call it art,--we

still believe that it is within the province of a museum to show the public that beauty can be made a part of our daily lives, that it can be brought within the reach of those of modest incomes, that the fundamental thing is the design and the means of bringing that design into being, whether it be human hands or a machine is immaterial.

"I may quote the remarks of another more generous critic of Machine Art eight years ago: 'When we emerge from the present economic crisis, we shall find ourselves at the beginning of a new era. Much of its happiness depends upon our cultural point of view. And surely an essential part of it must be a new austerity and simplification of living'.

"I cannot quite agree that austerity is essential but certainly simplification is, and it seems to me that it is toward simplification combined with beauty and utility that all of the winners of this competition have successfully directed their efforts."

Michael Schaap, President of Bloomingdale's, said:

"I hope I may be pardoned if I confess to a feeling of more than pleasure - a sensation of actual pride, in coming to this home of beauty and of art, to say a word on behalf of the stores that have been privileged to cooperate in this enterprise with this splendid institution.

"Trade has for ages been looked down upon as too sordid for the active participation of the educated and the cultured. Here in this dynamic home of modern art the answer has been given on behalf of the Museum, and here in the cordial cooperation of these stores and in the entwining of their restless energies with this Museum's Exhibition of Organic Design, the answer has been given to the reproach that the department store is capable only of the sole pursuit of gain.

"From this joint enterprise we hope that people will benefit by a new conception of how the greatest beauty and artistry may be combined, not alone with novelty and modernity, but with physical comfort and mental satisfaction.

"On behalf of Bloomingdale's and of the great stores in other cities which have been privileged to have a part in this unique undertaking, I want to express our sincere thanks to the Museum of Modern Art, and our earnest hope that this is but the beginning of a better understanding and a more continuous cooperation between art and industry."

Mr. Harrison's remarks were in part as follows:

"When the Department of Industrial Design started in the Museum some people were confused by the possible combination of culture and commerce. They forgot that the Museum of Stockholm forty years ago had started a Department of Industrial Design which later made it possible for Sweden to spread its culture around the world through the media of its furniture and fabrics. They also forgot that Colbert had ordered France to establish mills to make the tapestries of Gobelin and the porcelain works where Sevres porcelain was manufactured for the following three hundred years. There is another relation, however, which goes deeper than art for profit's sake in the work of the Industrial Design Department of this Museum.

"President Roosevelt said at the opening of this Museum three years ago, 'The arts cannot thrive except where men are free to be themselves and to be in charge of the discipline of their energies and ardors.' Years

ago one of the leading modern architects of Germany refused to take Hitler into his atelier because Hitler had not had the necessary six months practical experience on a building. Hitler, being a painter, decided to apply for a job as a house painter, and it was during his work on the scaffold with a Jewish painter that the decision was made that he was not competent to keep his job as house painter. His discharge from this job started his hatred against unions, against Jews and against modern architecture. What happened is history.

"Try to think what would have happened to this Competition if Hitler had been one of its judges. One-half the Competition would have been ruled out because the competitors were not of Nordic blood; the rest of the Competition would have been turned down because the forms of the furniture do not resemble Greek columns or Nuremburg roofs. And finally it would have been decided that there had been no Competition and an announcement would have been put out that Americans, North and South, were degenerates and had no place in the new order. If this seems ridiculous, look at what has happened to modern art in Germany and now in Holland and Paris. But it has not happened here! On the constructive side, this show represents in part the work of your government, for your government has helped bring to this country a certain number of the designers who won prizes in this Competition. Your government is trying to tie the twenty-one countries together as you have done commerce and culture. Only you who have worked on this show know how difficult this is.

"In the furtherance of peace and the constructive arts of the future you have helped weld twenty-one American republics together. This show is part of the answer to Goebbels, who, at Munich said: 'This war is a war for the preservation of German culture.' We Americans intend to preserve our culture of the past, but we are engaged in building our culture for the future with the knowledge and strength that we are fighting to live in a better world, not die for the preservation of a past culture. The page is turned."

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GUESTS AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART DINNER SEPTEMBER 24

IN HONOR OF WINNING DESIGNERS WHOSE WORK IS
DISPLAYED IN ORGANIC DESIGN EXHIBITION

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|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mr. & Mrs. John E. Abbott | Miss Virginia Nepodal |
| Mr. Carl Anderson | Miss Sarah Newmeyer |
| Mr. Alfred Auerbach | Mr. & Mrs. Emrich Nicholson |
| Mr. Benjamin Baldwin | Mr. & Mrs. Eliot Noyes |
| Mr. & Mrs. Alfred H. Barr, Jr. | Mr. & Mrs. Frank Parrish |
| Mr. Harold Burton | Mr. Peter Pfisterer |
| Mr. C. A. Buse | Mr. Norton Polivnick |
| Miss Alice Carson | Mr. & Mrs. Antonin Raymond |
| Mr. Cyrus Clark | Mr. R. S. Reed |
| Mr. Martin Craig | Mr. & Mrs. Sidney Reisman |
| Mr. Neiman Craley | Miss Agnes Rindge |
| Mrs. Marli Ehrman | Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Rudofsky |
| Mr. Robert Ficks | Mr. Beardsley Ruml |
| Dr. & Mrs. Alfred Frankfurter | Mr. & Mrs. Eero Saarinen |
| Miss Emily Genauer | Mr. & Mrs. Eliel Saarinen |
| Mrs. Susan Gleaves | Miss Elizabeth Sacartoff |
| Mr. Philip L. Goodwin | Mr. John B. Salterini |
| Mr. A. Conger Goodyear | Mr. Michael Schaap |
| Mr. Ralph Gray | Mr. & Mrs. Herman Schwartz |
| Mr. Bernard Greenberg | Miss Sylvia Shenbaum |
| Mr. Chalmers Greenlee | Mrs. George Palen Snow |
| Mr. G. Halverson | Mr. Oscar Stonorov |
| Mrs. Paul Hammond | Mr. & Mrs. Walter Rendell Storey |
| Mr. Wallace K. Harrison | Mr. & Mrs. Charles Messer Stow |
| Miss Elizabeth Hawes | Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Stowell |
| Miss Frances Hawkins | Mr. Berthold Straus |
| Mrs. Frances Heard | Miss Marianne Strengell |
| Mr. Ira Hirschmann | Mr. Michael Van Beuren |
| Miss Karen Hollis | Mr. Willo Von Moltke |
| Mr. Edward Alden Jewell | Mr. & Mrs. Ethelbert Warfield |
| Mr. A. C. Kaufmann | Mr. Harry Weese |
| Mr. Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. | Mr. Monroe Wheeler |
| Miss Margaret Kernodle | Mr. & Mrs. Allen Whiting |
| Mr. & Mrs. Herman Kiaer | |
| Mr. & Mrs. Lincoln Kirstein | |
| Mr. Nelson Lansdale | |
| Miss Olive Lyford | |
| Mr. David H. McAlpin | |
| Miss Frances McFadden | |
| Mr. Douglas Maier | |
| Mr. Alfred Mayer | |
| Miss Harriet Meserole | |
| Mr. & Mrs. George Mayercord, Jr. | |
| Mr. Edward B. Miller | |
| Mrs. Frances Miller | |
| Dr. Henry Allen Moe | |