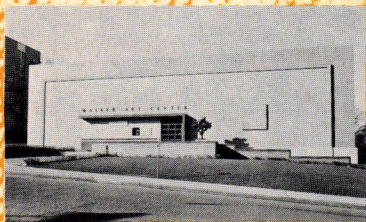


Design Quarterly

36

8 BRITISH DESIGNERS



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Design Quarterly

ISSUE NUMBER 36, 1956

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Hans Schleger *page 29*

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DESIGN RESEARCH UNIT *photographs*

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DESIGN FOR PROSPERITY

VERSUS

DESIGN FOR POSTERITY

On several recent visits to America I have been struck by certain differences between American and British designers. These differences pose a number of questions, some of which are easy to answer, some of which are not.

Are industrial designers better off in America than in Britain? If we are considering only top designers, and if better off means making more money, then the answer is yes. But if better off also means having a higher professional status then the answer is more complicated.

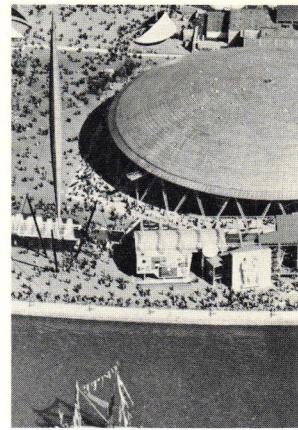
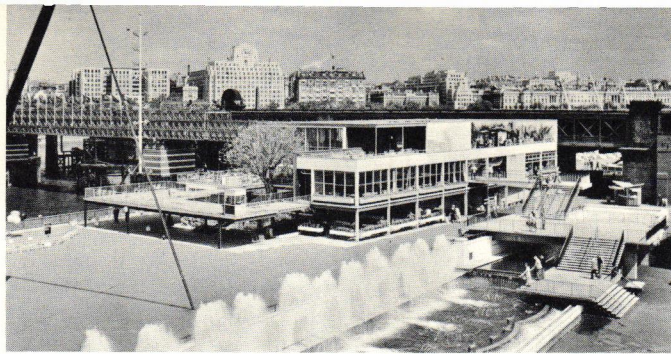
Are industrial designers in America accepted as professionals in the same sense as are doctors, lawyers and architects? Perhaps it doesn't matter, industrial designers in America get along fine whether industrial design is accepted as a profession or not. This constitutes one of the differences between America and Britain. Both may be right. But in Britain it is a great advantage that the Society of Industrial Artists should have come to be recognized. Recognition has taken twenty-five years. As long ago as that a small group of designers, Milner Gray among them, decided the time had come to set up a professional organization which would link together various kinds of industrial artists and look after their interests. It now includes most of the distinguished British designers. Its code of professional conduct, its scale of fees, its representation on Government bodies concerned with design, and on the boards of the main art schools, are positive proof of the recognition the work of its members has

achieved. Its membership is over 1200. One begins as an LSIA (Licentiate of the Society), becomes an MSIA (Member), and may become an FSIA (Fellow).

Perhaps Americans might think that the letters used by designers in Britain is only a form of snobbery. But membership in the Society does give the kind of guarantee that the letters M.D. give for a doctor, and other letters for members of other professions in which it is important that the public should be protected from quacks.

I do not mean to suggest that everyone in Britain without the letters suitable to his profession after his name is a quack. Far from it. Some of the greatest pioneers in all fields had no letters after their names, and some letters after certain names are pretty dead letters. But somehow this kind of status means something. It means a standard of living. It means integrity. It means acceptance of a certain code of honesty. It may be that one ought not need letters and a written code, but there it is—in Britain the status which doctors, lawyers, and other older professions have had for a long time, and industrial designers now have, implies a powerful and good tradition of responsibility towards the public, one's colleagues and oneself. Letters after the name are only the outward sign, they give a genuine security not only to the man who has them, but to those who employ him.

In our profession it ensures that the industrial designer has achieved a certain guaranteed standard. Membership in the Society of Industrial Artists is open to any



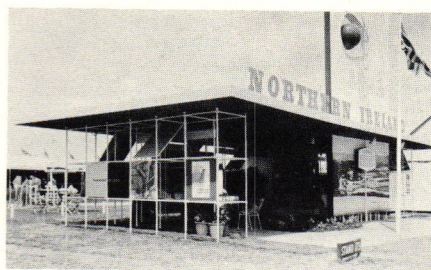
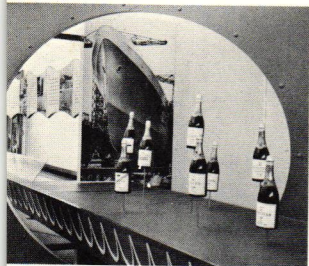
designer who has practised in Britain for at least three years. Applicants and their work are carefully checked by a special Selection Committee.

It is another characteristic of the Society of Industrial Artists in Britain that it brings together designers of all kinds. I believe that in America there is no such united organization, but instead a number of much smaller ones, each of them operating in its special field. The SIA comprises most of the leading designers in the following fields: Illustration, Typography, Display and Exhibition, Packaging, Engineering, Furniture, Textiles, Fashion, and Plastics. Specialists are brought together in specialist groups. We have friendly, informal meetings once a month. We have lectures and brains-trusts, and many other activities. We publish a bi-monthly journal and a bi-annual edition of *Designers in Britain*. We have established a recognized scale of average fees and conditions of contract and employment. Designers of all kinds mingle constantly with one another and exchange ideas, which is helpful and stimulating.

All this—apart from being helpful and stimulating—may very possibly be a real necessity for us in a way in which it is not a necessity for American designers, with the far greater facilities bestowed upon them by the general economic conditions of their country. I never visit America without admiring the work of its top designers or without deep envy for their facilities. Think of a few of them set against ours in Britain.

Most British industries have developed out of traditional crafts. Like most things British they are deeply embedded in the past. Not only millions of pounds but millions of lives are invested in equipment that is becoming ancient and isn't so easy to change. It takes time—a rather long time. How does this affect the industrial designer? For example—I design a new suitcase for the British public. I want a decent looking lock to put on it. I'd be lucky, until very recently, to find anything contemporary in standard stock. I go to the lock manufacturers. But very few are prepared or able to spend money on having a special lock designed, let alone produced. Tooling up would be expensive, and the old ones show no signs of wearing out. But in America most of the industries began from scratch as industries, not as crafts. America doesn't have to shake off the past every morning like a kind of hangover. An American designer would not spoil a fine, new suitcase with an old-fashioned lock. He would have a new one designed and made quickly. America can do that. Britain is just beginning to be able to do so.

At the back of it all is a commonplace factor, but the kind that gets forgotten, the huge American home market—more than 160 million consumers. American industries can produce on a vast scale for a vast assured home market. Britain can't. It is big—50 million—but not big enough. It is compelled by the nature of its economy to think not only of the home market but of exports. "Export" is by now written on every Eng-



FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN 1951

left to right

*Regatta Restaurant—Architects Misha Black
in association with Alexander Gibson*

*The Dome of Discovery
Chief designer Misha Black*

*Farm and Factory Exhibition
Designers W. M. de Majo and L. Bramberg*

*Open Air Exhibit—Royal Agricultural Show
Designers W. M. de Majo and L. Bramberg*

lishman's heart. "Export" is his dying word. To Americans the export market is the icing on the cake. To Britains it is their daily bread. We have to adapt our products to the needs and tastes of a dozen different markets overseas, of which the American is the most important. And this brings up the question—are we in Britain to design to satisfy a perpetual craving for something new? Or are we to design things that shall last?

It is my personal observation that in America great emphasis is placed on what is new, and less importance is attached to permanence. There even seems to be a certain virtue attributed to "expendability." I have become familiar in America with the phrase, "artificial obsolescence," which is, I suppose, the opposite of "growing old gracefully." It means, I gather, that things are made with the deliberate intention, of which maker and buyer are aware, that they shall wear out after a certain shortish period. I do not know if a guarantee is yet given that they will wear out after that period, and that if they don't one can have his money back. But since it is known to everyone concerned that at a certain point all one age group of products will be scrapped and new models brought on the market, designers of all kinds are kept continually at work planning the next model, and the one after that, and so on, conditioning the public to accept them. America's huge and secure home market makes possible these constant shifts and switches. So do the tastes of that home market, less settled than Britain's, and also more adaptable, more gullible and also less

hidebound. And, of course, America has its vast sales organizations, constantly and competitively at work preparing the public for the latest and the newest. At the back of it all, I suppose, is the idea that novelty is one sure way to prosperity—to immediate prosperity.

In Britain things are different. The accent is not so much on immediate prosperity as on posterity, and things are made to last.

I mentioned suitcases. My American suitcases look lovely when I buy them. In a short time most of them become, as they were meant to become, "artificially obsolete." My made-in-Britain luggage looks less flash, but I believe I could lay it in the earth like wine and dig it up intact as a present to my grandson on his twenty-first birthday. I am not saying either is right or wrong, only that the approach is different, and that British designers approaching the American market, have to bear this very big difference in mind. Yet when British designers do get together, and are given the chance they get less often than American designers, to produce something really big and new and young, it is something very big and very new and very young indeed. Some of you may have visited the "Festival of Britain." It was organized to celebrate the centenary of the 1851 Great Exhibition. It was non-commercial and entirely national, and entirely unlike anything anyone would have expected who believed Britain to be conservative and dull. It was a complete departure on a vast scale, brilliant and audacious, planned in a superbly



Farm and Factory Exhibition
Designers W. M. de Majo and L. Bramberg

informal style, and offering surprises at every turn. It had none of the conventional patterns—no monumental avenues—no circular piazzas—not even highly ornate symbols sculptured, as at earlier exhibitions, in butter or some other Imperial product. Conjunctions of steel and glass supplanted the usual piecrust colossus. Cantilevered terraces projected fearlessly far out over the River Thames. There was the largest dome in the world unsupported by inner pillars—and so on. An immense diversity of scale and style created a nursery of new ideas, presenting and discharging many of the problems which today confront, and for long will confront, architects, townplanners, designers. The Festival showed how happily old and new could live together, and was the first occasion, certainly in the history of British design, when a co-ordinated design policy was conceived, adopted, and carried out on so vast a scale. Designers were in their seventh heaven. Drawing board architecture came to life. The imagination of the man in the street was captured, and a sympathy established between the most uninformed layman and the most advanced designer. Those of us who helped to make it now know what it is to have designed from a single vast planned brief, with singularly little official interference—a co-ordinated orchestra of design. It is, I think, in the direction pointed by that dazzling innovation that our minds and effort in Britain will turn for a long time to come.

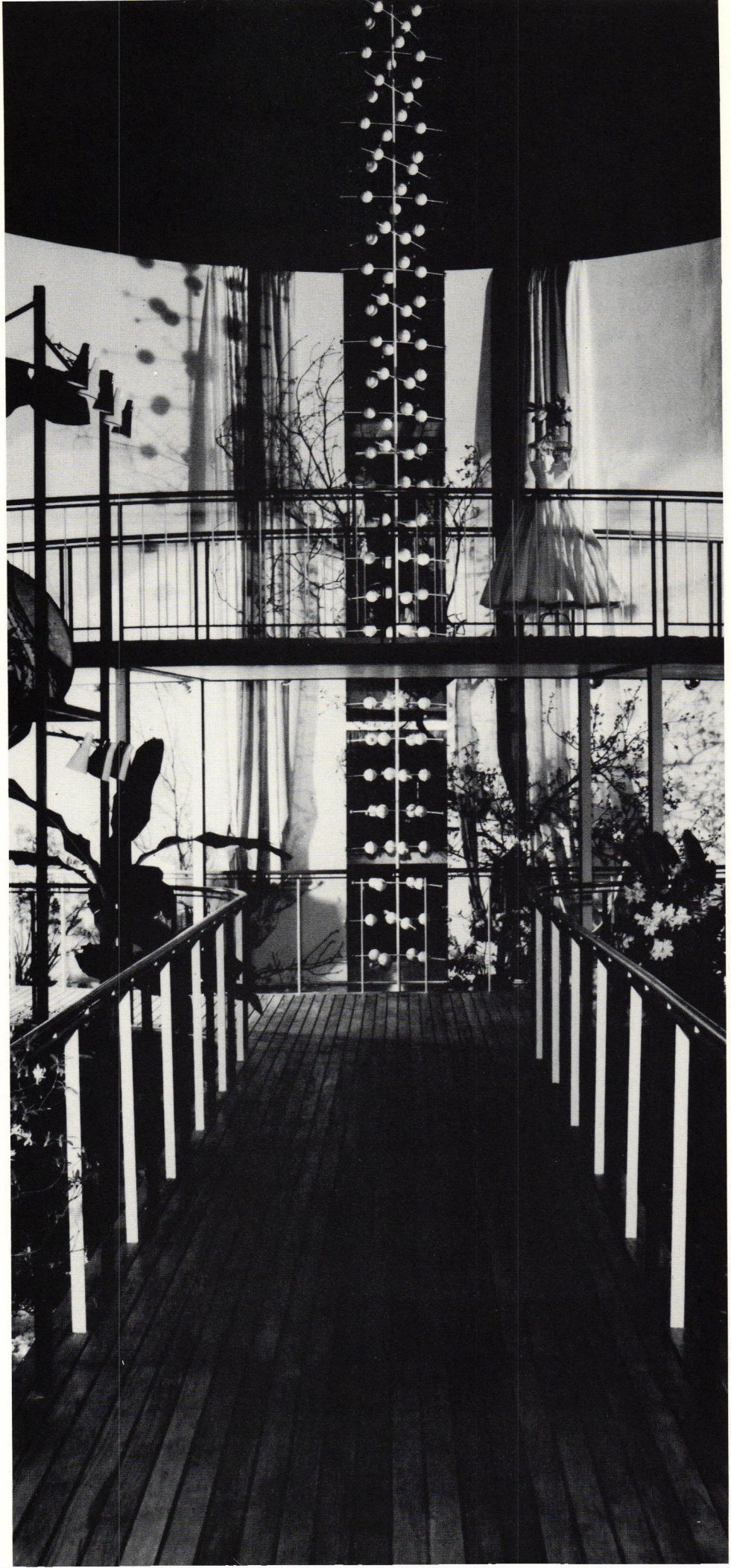
Going back to the point that in America the accent seems to be on what is new, on

immediate prosperity, and in Britain on what is old and lasts—on posterity, I wonder if American designers do not also wish to make things that will last. I feel sure, from the talks I have had with some of America's leading designers, that they do. After all it is not only a question of what is really the nature of the market in America, to which we in Britain have to adjust ourselves. It is not only a question of deciding whether the American market is always going to be one which will insist next year on something different from what it had last year. It is a question of our own role as designers in an industrial society. We call ourselves artists. Our Society in Britain is called the Society of Industrial *Artists*. An artist surely is someone who creates in the hope that what he creates will not only make money but will be esthetically satisfying and lasting. Are we really artists, do we really have the right to call ourselves by that name, or are we all just part of the machine, part of the rat-race? And are the only real artists now, as most often in the recent past, those who stand completely outside and are not part of any race at all?*

W. M. DE MAJO, FSIA

*Taken from a paper given by W. M. de Majo, FSIA, on the occasion of the opening of the DESIGNS FROM BRITAIN exhibition at Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, Jan. 1956.

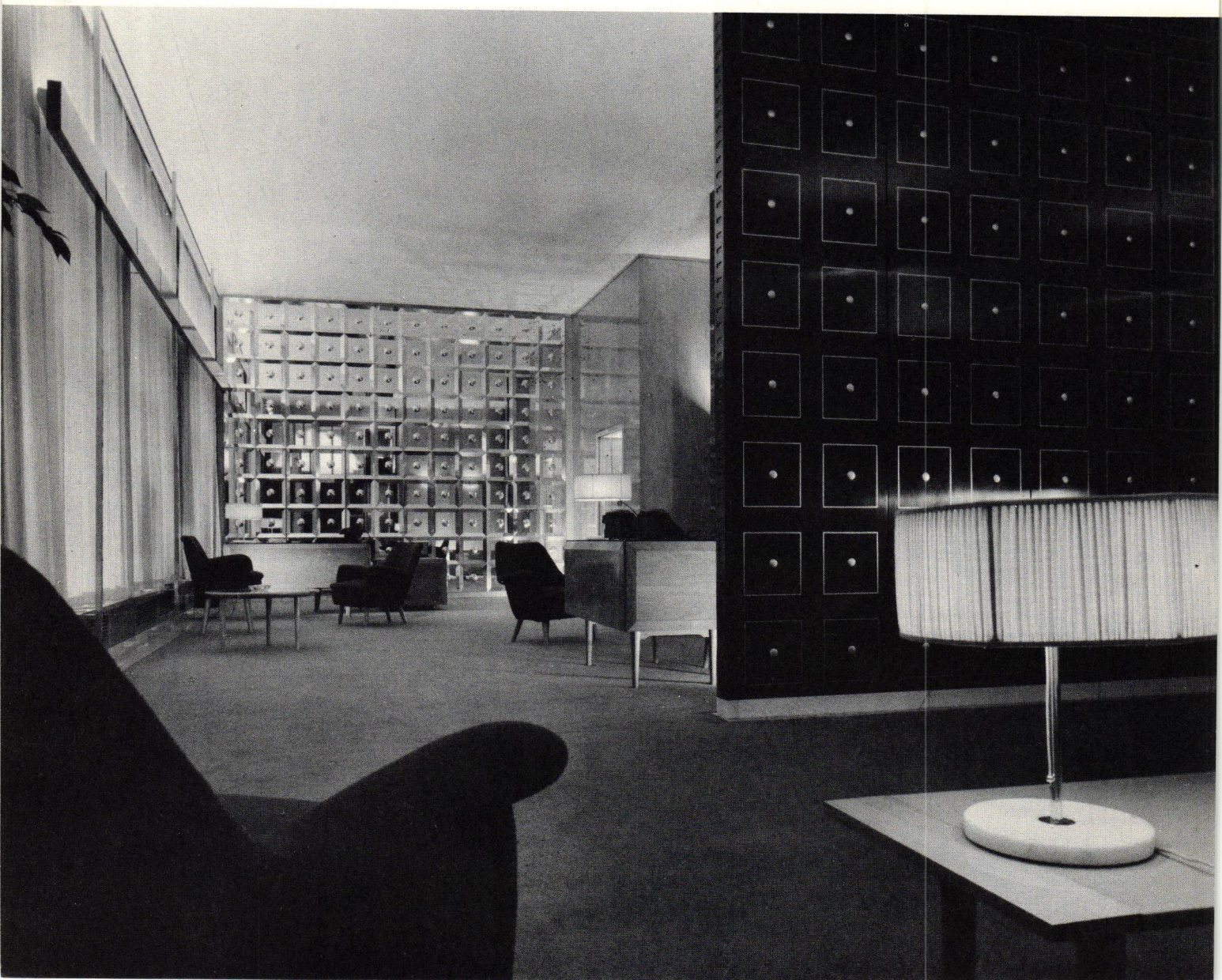
Stand at British Industries Fair, Olympia 1955 Basically a garden with fabrics spreading out from two storey display pavilions among English plants and flowers. Designers Misha Black and Alexander Gibson for British Celanese, Ltd.





Misha Black O B E F S I A

MISHA BLACK is a partner in Design Research Unit, and is Industrial Design Consultant to B.O.A.C. for their new headquarters building, London Airport. He is jointly responsible, with Sir Hugh Casson, for the interior design of the Time and Life Building in London. His work also includes the design of gas and solid fuel appliances, electric light fittings, furniture and other domestic equipment. He is president of the Society of Industrial Artists, a member of the Council of Industrial Design, the Advisory Council of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, and the National Council of the Design and Industries Association. He is the editor of *Exhibition Design* and joint author of *The Practice of Design*.



Desk and storage cabinet—cherrywood inlaid with brass and covered in hide. Designers Misha Black in association with Sir Hugh Casson for Kayser Bondor, Ltd.



above
Workbench—one unit.
Designers Misha Black and Kenneth Bayes
for BOAC instrument shop, London Airport

right
Lingerie Shop—staircase with mirrored
reflection for Jeanette (Nottingham) Ltd.

left
Showroom—mirrored wall with concealed stock
cupboards, green and gold lacquered screen to
the selling areas. Designers Misha Black and
Sir Hugh Casson for Kayser Bondor, Ltd.

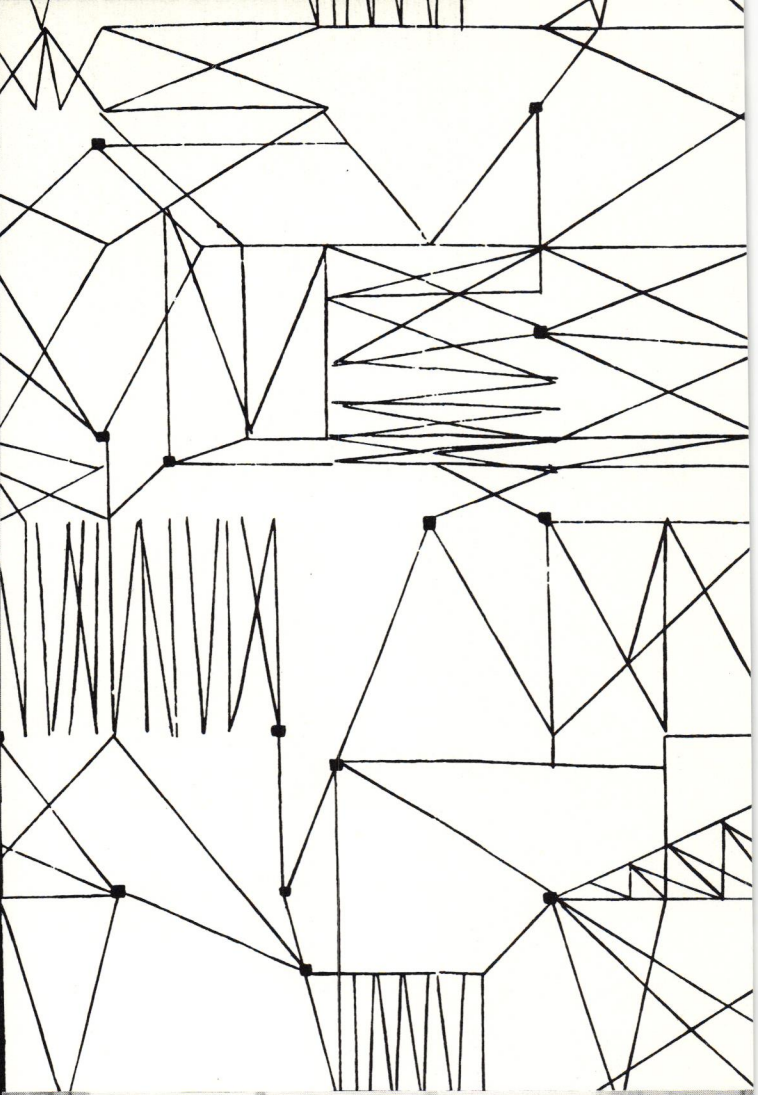
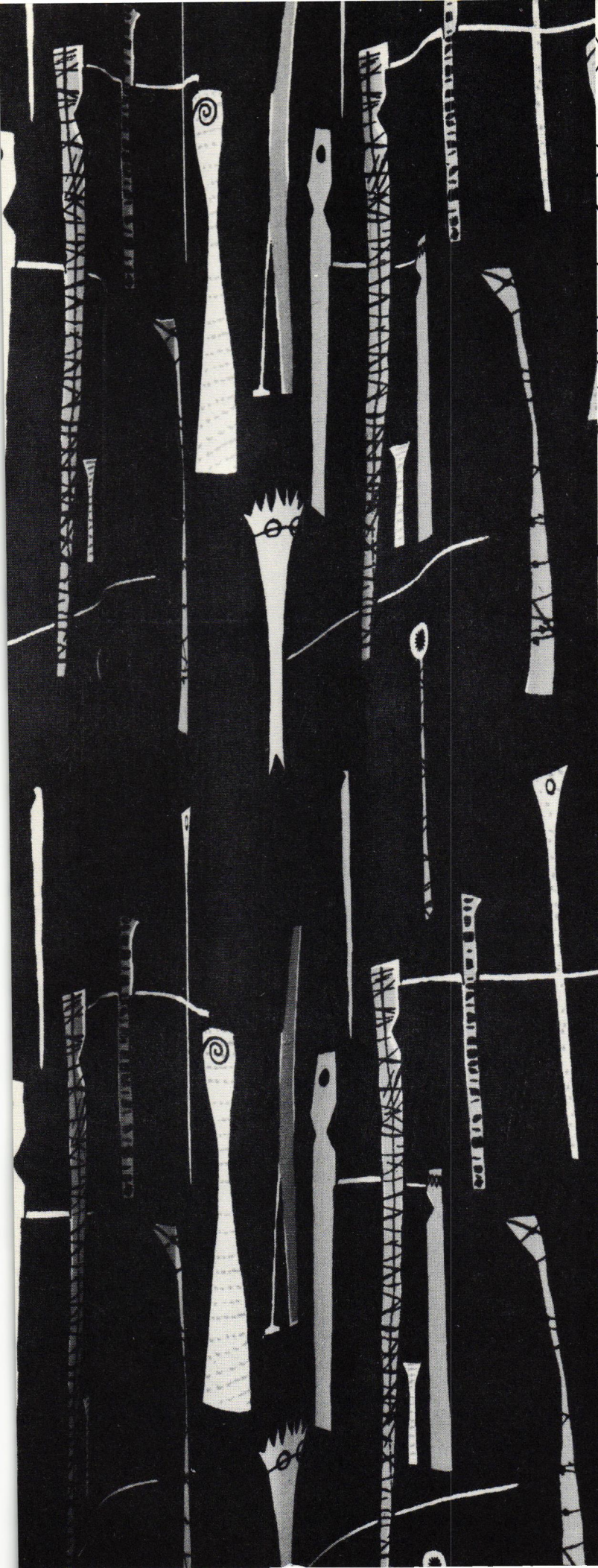




Light fittings—metal shield concentrates the light downward, opal glass allows for sufficient general illumination to avoid dark ceilings for Hume Atkins & Co. Ltd.

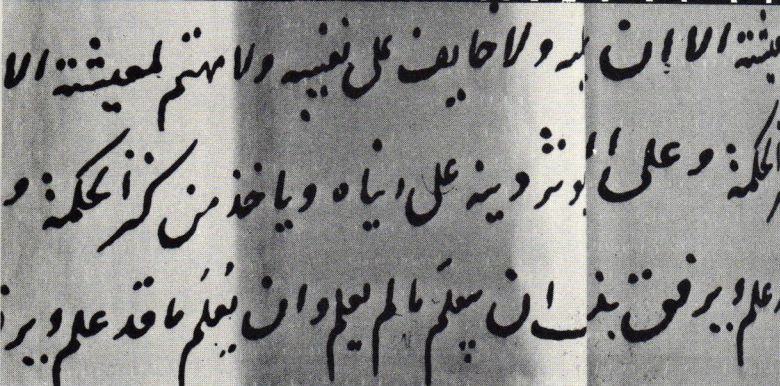
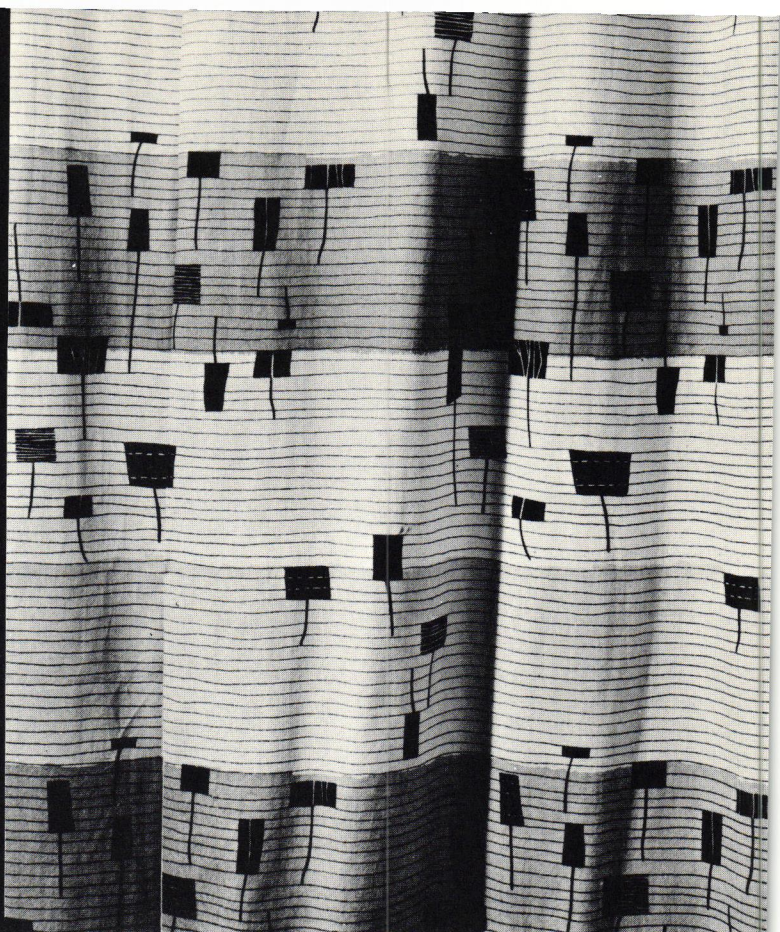


Board room chair—constructed of hardwood with seat and back upholstered in rubberized hair covered with leather. Seat supported by radial springs. Designers Misha Black and Robert Gutmann for Bath Cabinet Makers, Ltd.



Lucienne Day ARCA FSIA





page 9

Fabric—Spectators—screen-printed for Heal's Wholesale & Export Ltd.

Fabric—Graphica—screen-printed cotton for Heal's Wholesale & Export Ltd.
top to bottom, left

Fabric—Linear—screen-printed cotton for Heal's Wholesale & Export Ltd.

Fabric—Script—machine-printed cotton for Heal's Wholesale & Export Ltd.
top to bottom, right

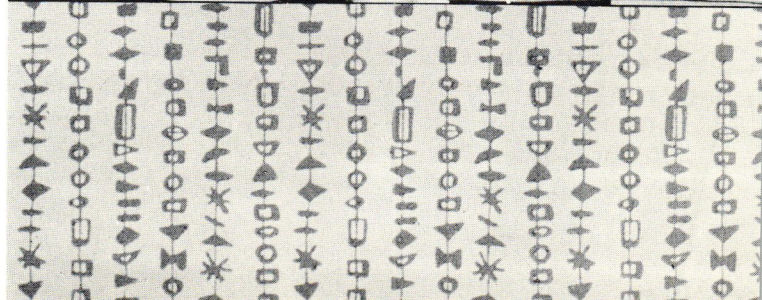
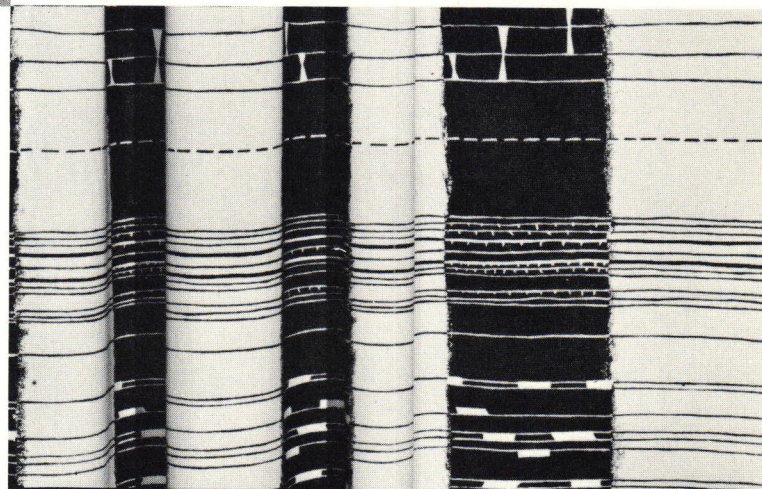
Fabric—Triad—screen-printed on cotton for Heal's Wholesale & Export Ltd.

Fabric—Highway—roller-printed on cotton for Heal's Wholesale & Export Ltd.

Wallpaper—C-Stripe—roller printed for Crown Wallpapers

Lucienne Day ARCA FSIA

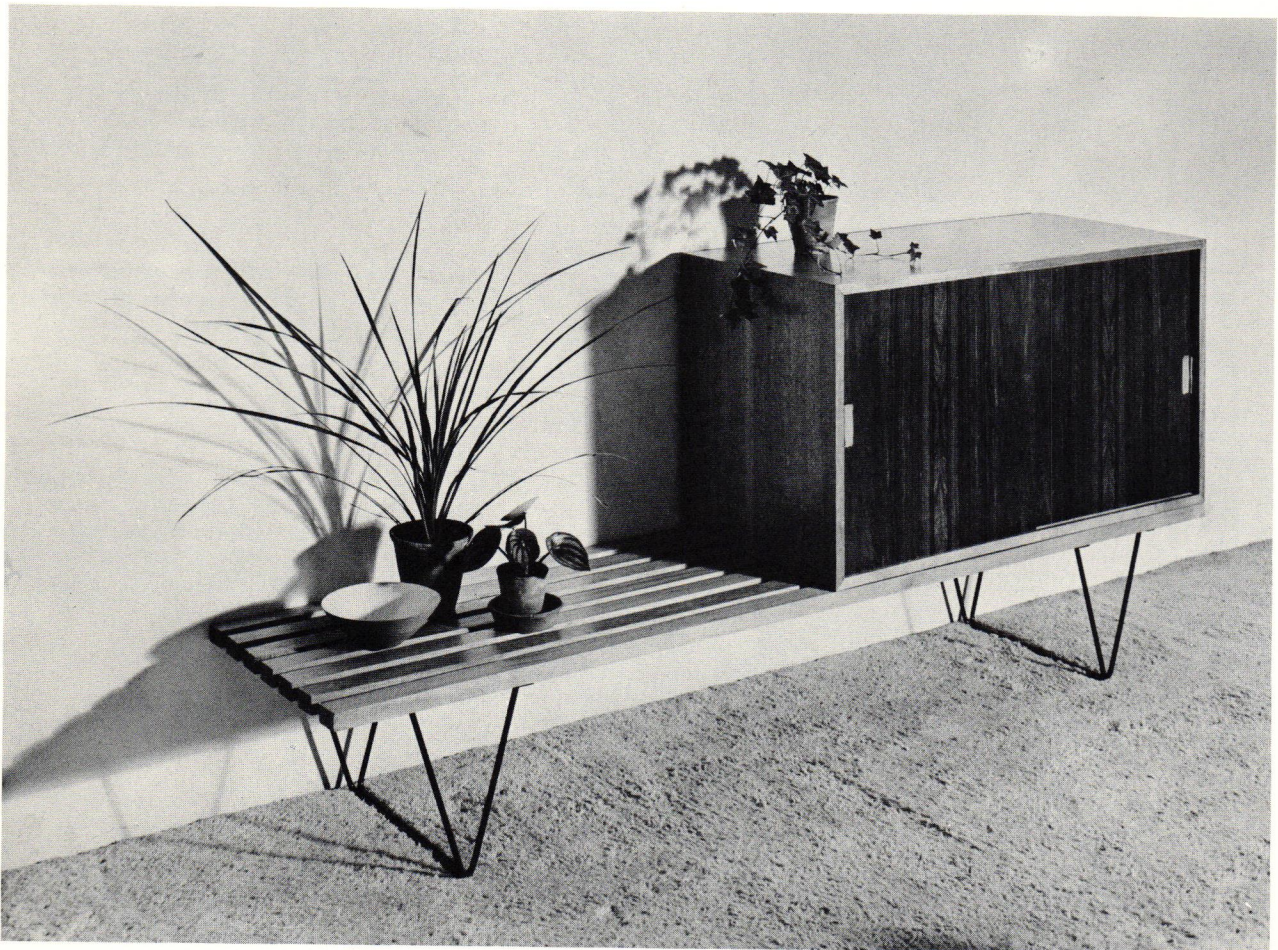
LUCIENNE DAY, after five years of teaching in art schools, has concentrated her efforts on printed fabrics and wallpapers. She is largely responsible for the popularization in England of abstract design in textiles. One of her designs received the A.I.D.'s First Award in 1952, and a gold medal at the Ninth Triennale in Milan. At the Tenth Triennale a group of her designs gained the highest award given by the Triennale Design Jury, the Gran Primo. Many of her designs are available in the U. S. She met her husband, Robin Day, while both were studying at Royal College of Art, London, and attributes much of her success to their initial practice of discussing and criticizing each other's projects at very early stages.



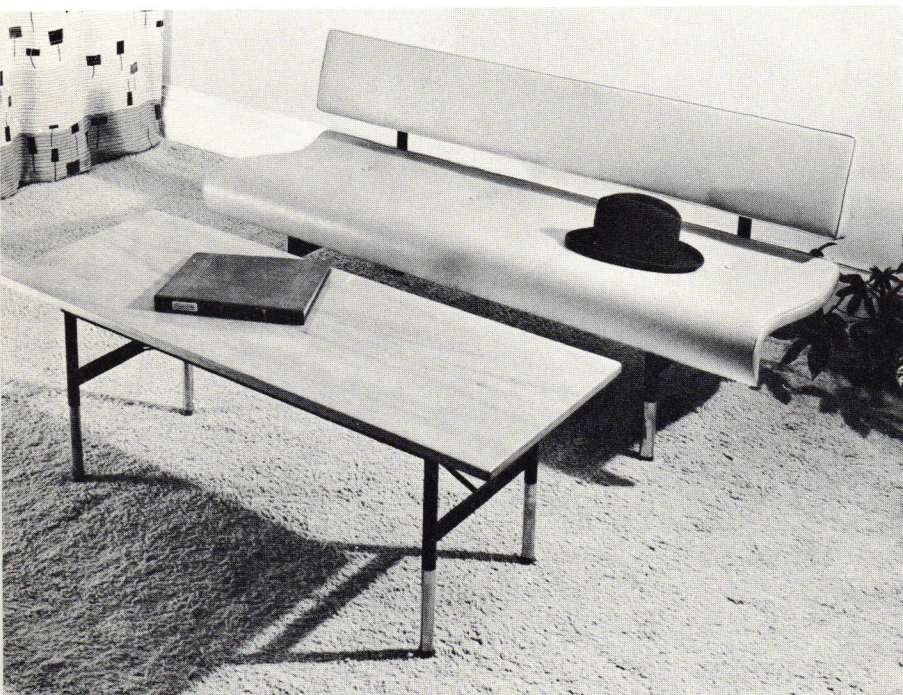


Robin Day F S I A

ROBIN DAY has worked in a number of fields including graphic design, display, interior and product design and still prefers not to specialize. However, he is probably best known for the design of furniture, which he particularly enjoys, perhaps because in his teens he earned a living working in a furniture factory. In 1949 he was co-winner of first prize for design of storage furniture in the Museum of Modern Art Low-Cost Furniture Design Competition. His work has been exhibited at the Italian Ninth and Tenth Triennales and also in many other European countries. He is now designing for manufacturers in Finland and Holland.



Storage unit on slotted bench for S. Hille of London, Ltd.



above

Settee and table for British Railways waiting rooms—frames in stove-enamelled steel, lower part of legs stainless steel with rubber feet. Seats and backs moulded plywood upholstered



left

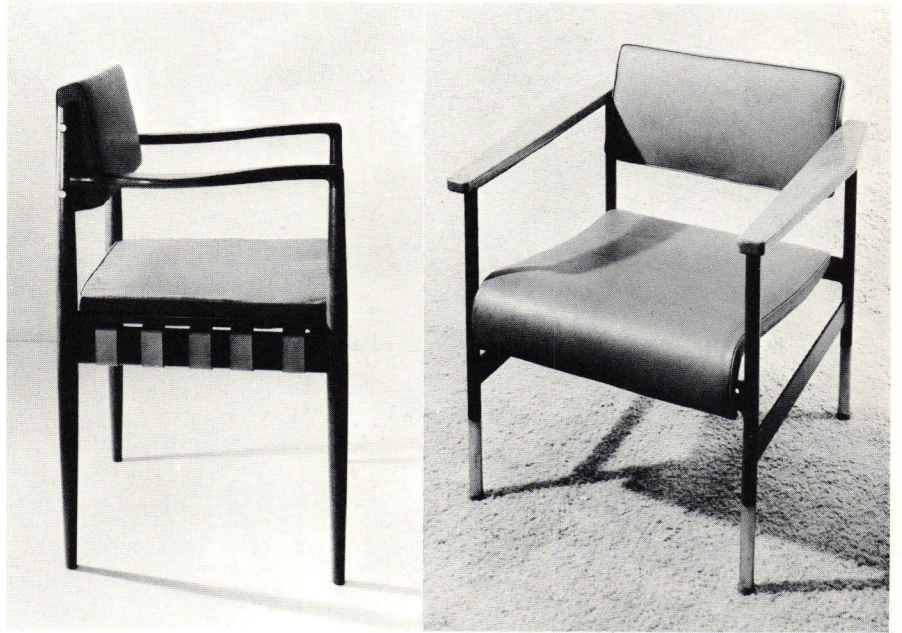
Stacking chair—solid beech and laminated beech veneers, tubular steel legs and formed plastic faced back and seat for S. Hille of London, Ltd.

right

Storage units—low-cost system of demountable shelving and storage space. Verticals are aluminum alloy, shelves in timber and sliding doors in hardboard. No welding or gluing is used in construction, whole system packs flat for S. Hille of London, Ltd.

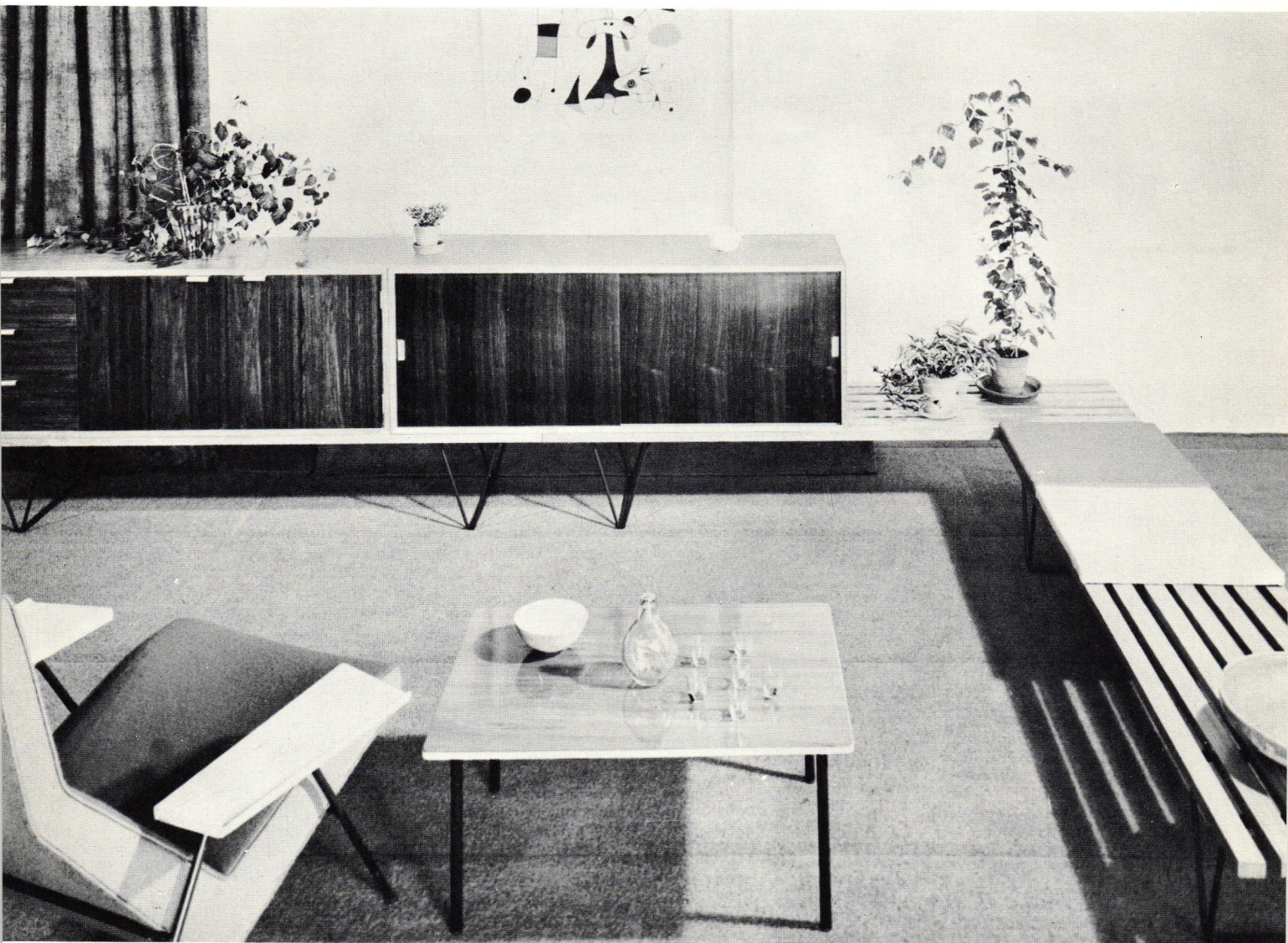
right

Arm chair—timber frame and Latex foam back and seat. Reversible seat cushion supported on leather straps for S. Hille of London, Ltd.



left

Arm chair—seating for British Railways waiting room for S. Hille of London, Ltd.

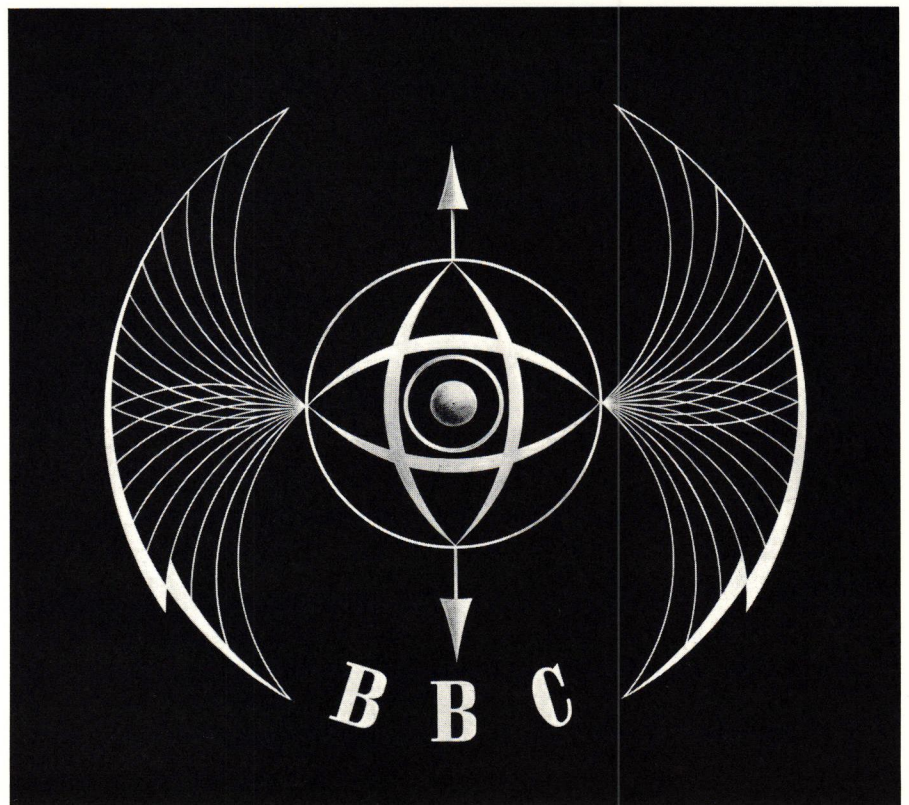




Abram Games FSIA

ABRAM GAMES was born in London in 1914. An infantry private in 1940, he was called to the War Office in 1941. As War Office Designer, he was responsible for nearly one hundred posters for military use. He has had one-man shows, by invitation, in Stockholm, Brussels Palais des Beaux-Arts, Jerusalem National Museum and Tel Aviv Museum, London, São Paulo Museum of Art, Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte, Brazil. He was one of eight British designers invited to exhibit at the National Museum in Stockholm in 1952, and was invited by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, to represent Great Britain in an exhibition of four European poster designers in 1953. He was lecturer in design at the Royal College of Art 1946-1953. He is married and has three children.

*Symbol of vision and the power of vision
for British Broadcasting Corporation*





Poster for Jersey Holiday Resort

Let there be Light

BRaille CENTENARY EXHIBITION
 11th of June - 5th of July 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
 NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND
 224 GREAT PORTLAND STREET LONDON W1
 To be opened by H.R.H. THE DUKE of EDINBURGH
 ADMISSION FREE

WILLS'S
CUT GOLDEN BAR
 Ready for the pipe

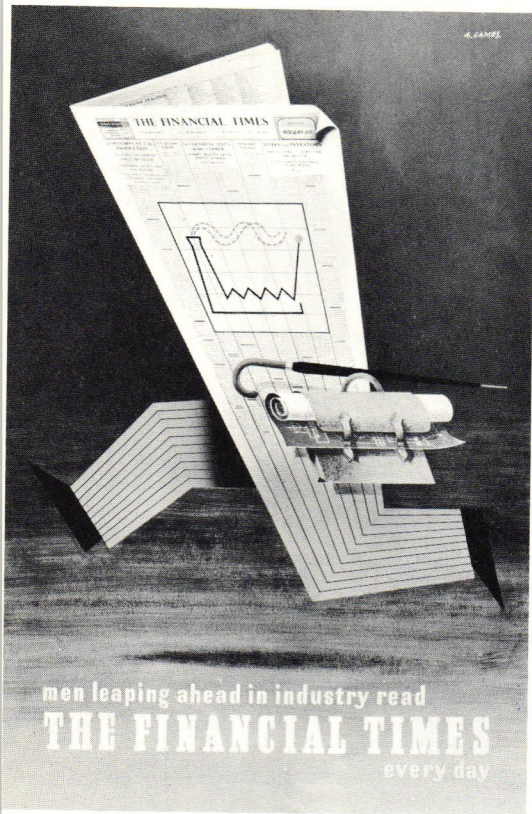
**WILLS'S
 CUT GOLDEN BAR**

FLY TO BRITAIN BY
B.O.A.C.

ATLANTIC OCEAN INDIAN OCEAN

Stratocruiser *Speedbird*

murphy television

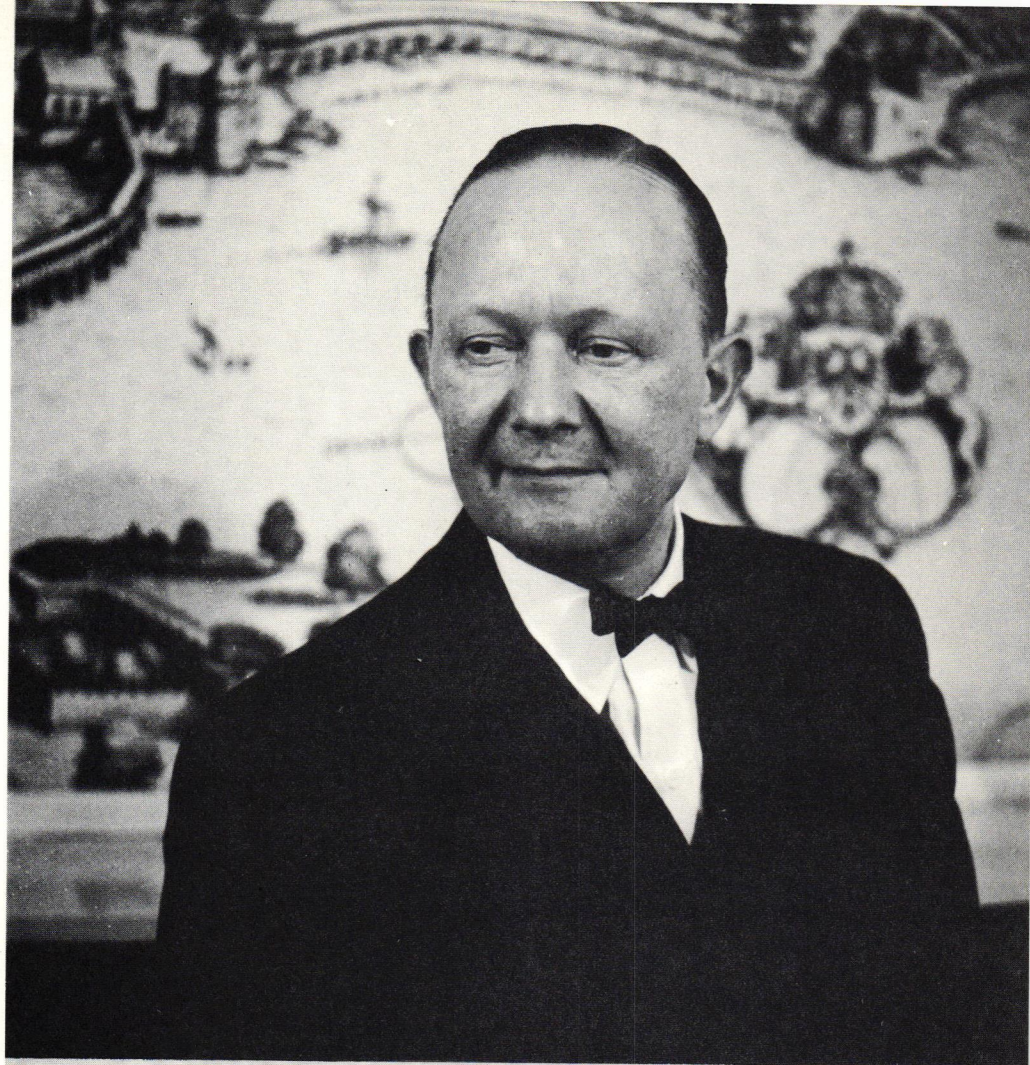


- left to right
- Poster for National Institute for the Blind, London*
 - Poster for Imperial Tobacco Company, Ltd.*
 - Poster for The Financial Times, London*
 - Symbol for Festival of Britain*
 - Poster for British Overseas Airways*
 - Poster for Murphy Television*
 - Poster for United Nations World Health Organization*



Milner Gray R D I F S I A

MILNER GRAY is Master of the Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry and one of the two senior partners in Design Research Unit of London and Dublin. His influence and work is seen over a wide field of present day industrial and graphic design. He has worked as an illustrator and heraldic artist; in the fields of packaging, exhibition and interior design, and in silver, pottery and glass. He designed the Royal Coat of Arms for use at the Coronation of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, and the glass screen for the Royal Box at the Royal Festival Hall. He is a founder member, a past president and present member of the Council of the Society of Industrial Artists, advisor to the B.B.C. Schools Broadcasts, and has lectured and broadcast for the British Council, the B.B.C. and other organizations throughout Europe. He is author of *Package Design* and *The Practice of Design*, and has contributed extensively to design books and journals.



left
Glass screen at the entrance to the Royal Box in Royal Festival Hall—executed on the reverse side of the screen in brilliant cutting, wheel cutting and stone cutting deeply engraved into the 5/16 inch glass for Royal Festival Hall, London

Labels for Courage & Co.



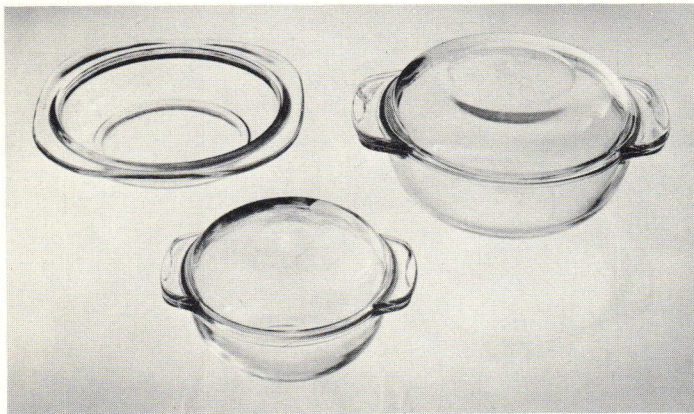
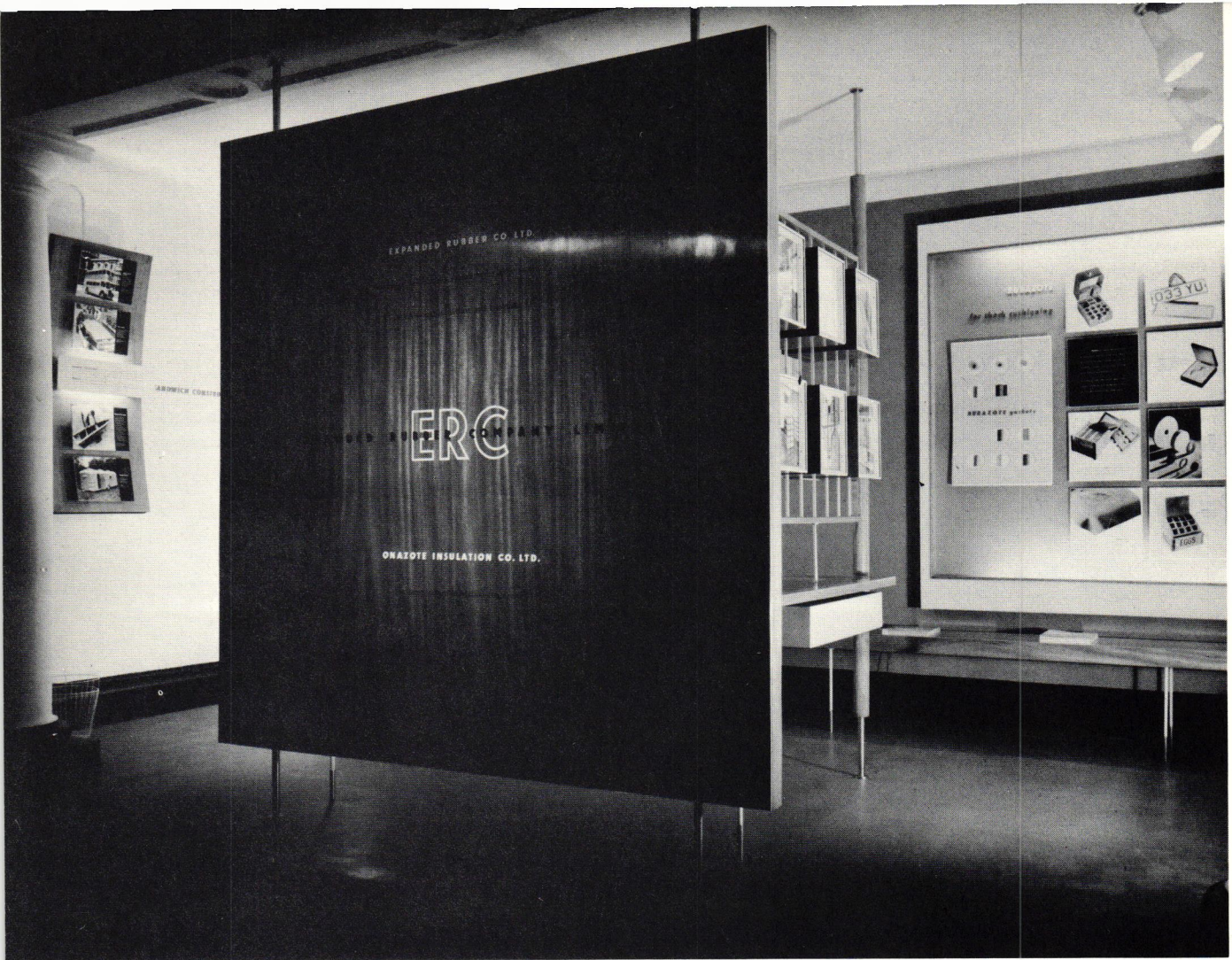


left
Tankards—silver or pewter matt finish
for D. & J. Wellby, Ltd.

Sugar cartons for Tate & Lyle, Ltd.

Bottles and labels for W. & A. Gilbey, Ltd.





top
Office and showroom—Designers Ellis Miles,
Ronald Ingles, Consultant Milner Gray
for Expanded Rubber Company, Ltd.

above
Casserole—Pyrex oven-to-table glass
Designers Milner Gray and Kenneth Lamble
for Joblings of Sunderland

right
Bottles and labels for W. & A. Gilbey, Ltd.

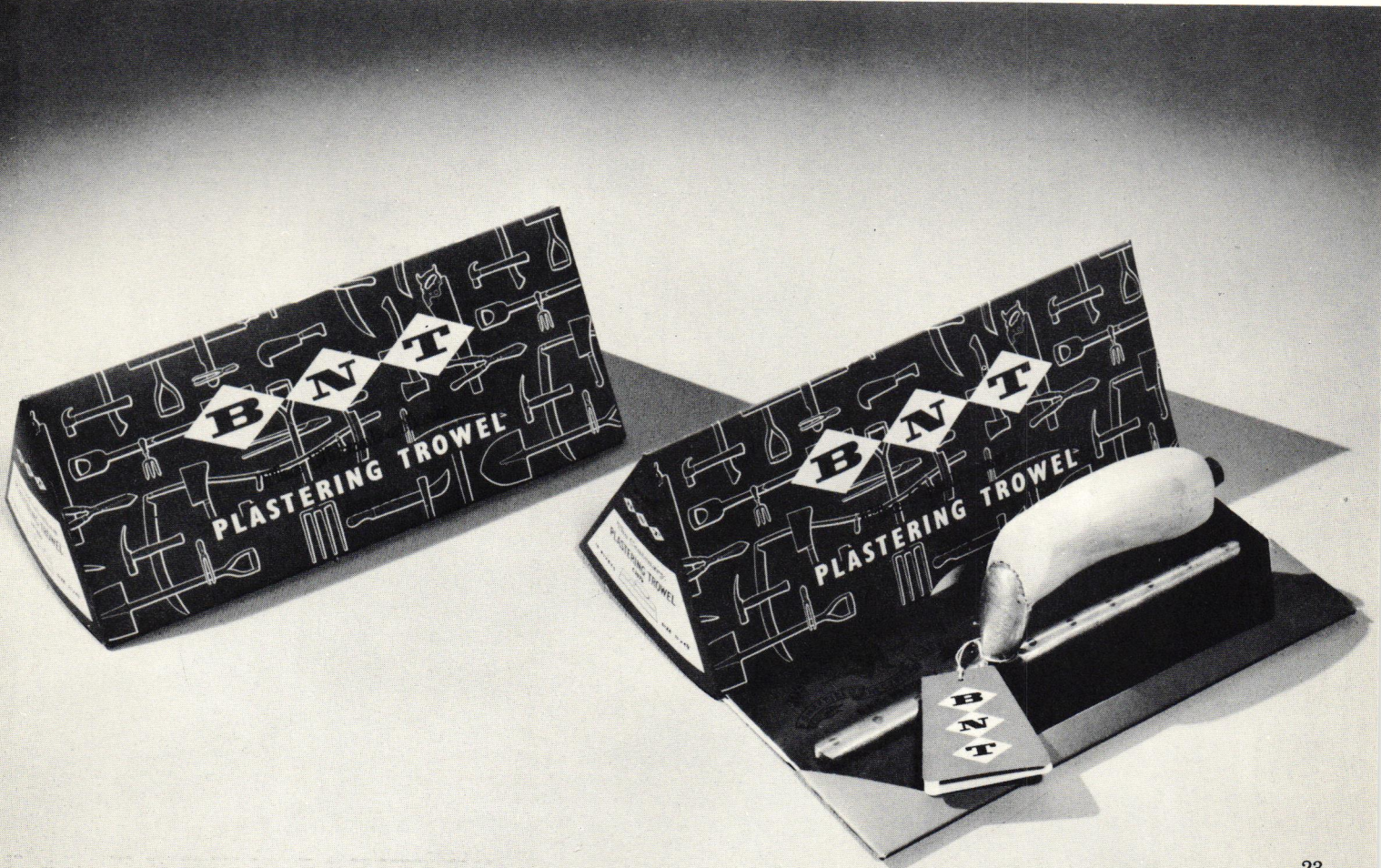




W. M. de Majo MBE FSIA

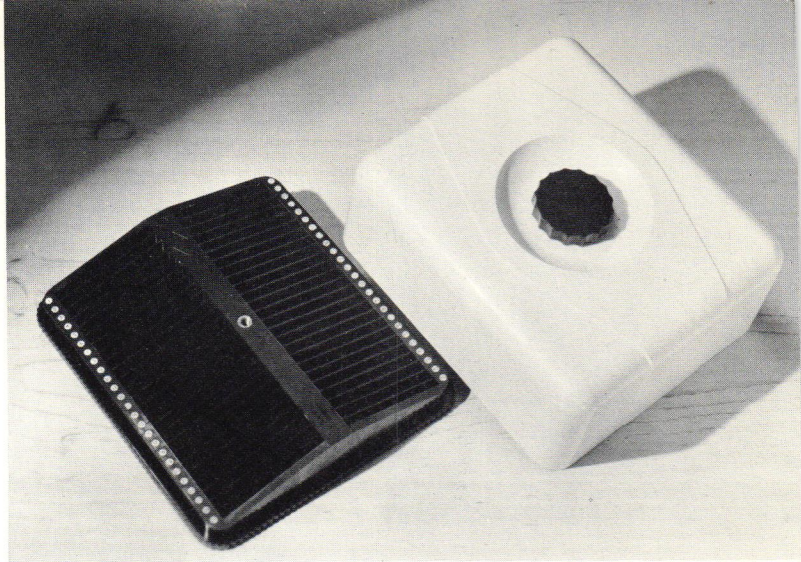
W. M. DE MAJO was educated on the Continent, where he worked mainly as a graphic designer and art director. He is now senior partner in W. M. de Majo Associates with Lars Bramberg and Veronica de Majo. He has designed everything from a visiting card to the interior of a 4-engined airliner—a great variety of items. Best known for his work in the fields of packaging, merchandising, display and exhibitions, he has recently been commissioned to plan and re-design the presentation of some 1200 different products for the world's largest hand-tool makers. He has worked in Europe, Africa and the U.S.A. and has won several national and international awards. He is married and has three daughters.

Plastering trowel pack triangulated construction for Brades & Nash Tyzack





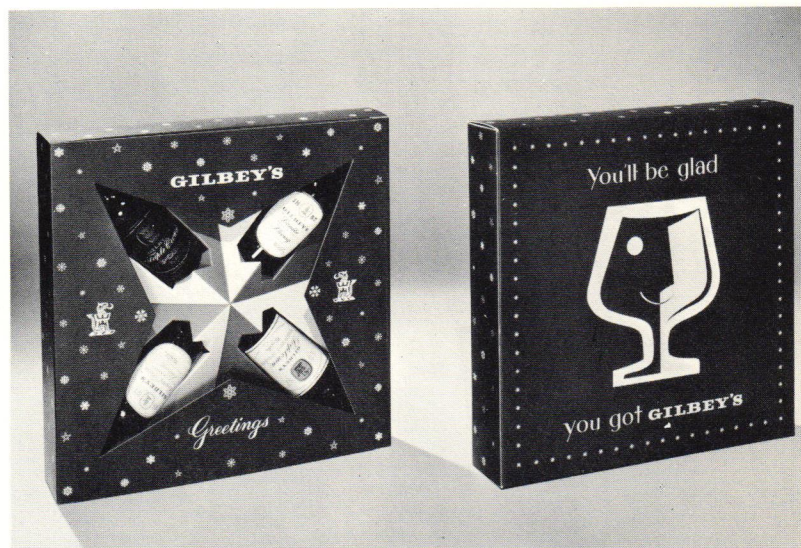
top to bottom
 Cabinet slides—plastic moulded
 in black and beetle
 for Neville Brown Ltd.



Gift pack designed by
 W. M. de Majo and Veronica de Majo
 for W. A. Gilbey Ltd.

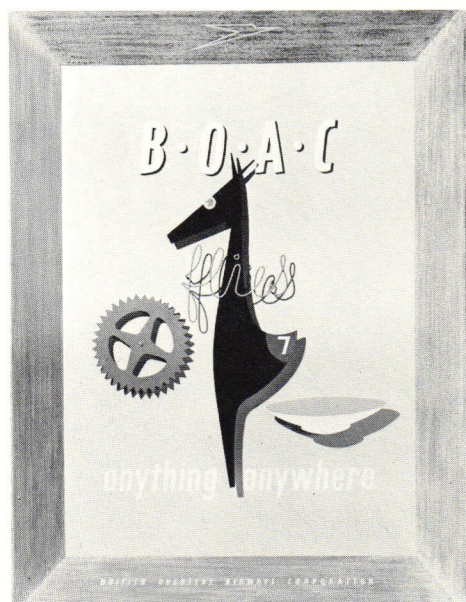
Cocktail glasses
 Whitefriar glass solid base
 for Pierre Smirnoff Fils Ltd.

Three dimensional poster
 for British Overseas Airways Corporation



left
 Carry-pack for garden tools
 folding box board in green and white
 for Brades & Nash Tyzack

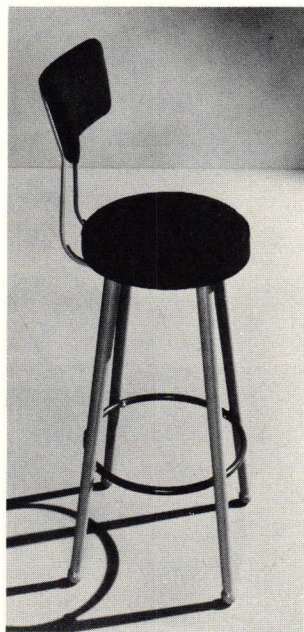
Bottles and labels for Clayton Brothers





Ernest Race RDI FSIA

ERNEST RACE was educated at St. Paul's School, London, and studied interior design at the London University School of Architecture. In 1945 he joined Noel Jordan and A. O. Hayward in founding the firm of Ernest Race Ltd., as Director of Design. Prompted by the post-war shortage of wood, the firm carried out research in the use of alternative materials for furniture construction—aluminum, steel and plastics. In 1953 he was appointed a member of the Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry and is a Council Member and Treasurer for the Society of Industrial Artists, London.



Bar stool—tapered steel tube legs, rust-proofed stove-enamel. Moulded foam rubber seat for Ernest Race Ltd.

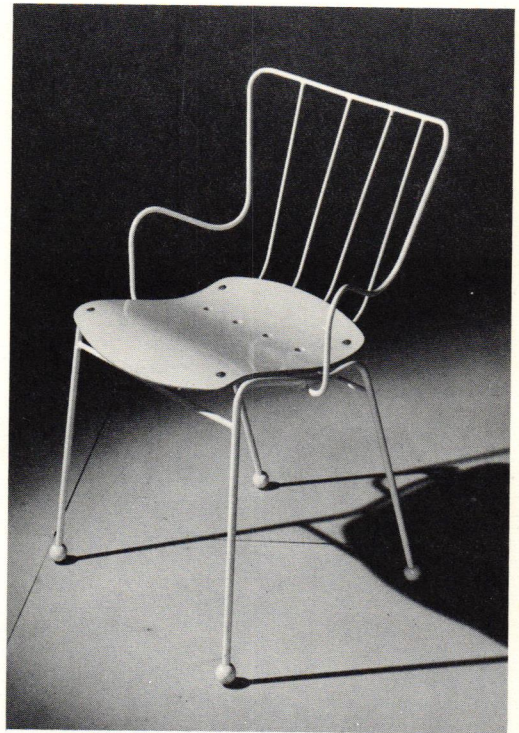
Nesting rocking chair of enamelled steel for Time/Life London headquarters





Neptune chair—resin-bonded laminated beech and woven nylon webbing. Simple folding action. Removable cushions of hair and latex-foam for The Orient Line

Antelope seat—welded steel rod frame, rust-proofed and stove-enamelled. Seat of resin-bonded plywood with enamel finish for Ernest Race Ltd.



Rocking chair—welded steel frame, rust-proofed and stove-enamelled. Wooden arms, removable padded seat and back cushions for Ernest Race Ltd.

Chair for spastics—supports the child at normal table height for meals, play, lessons, etc., and is rendered mobile by slightly tipping forward to bring the swivel caster into play for Ernest Race Ltd.

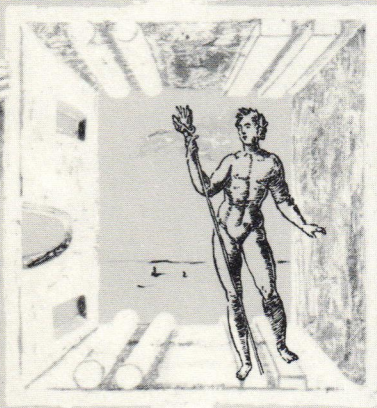




*Easy chair—welded steel frame construction
with plastic foam cushions for Ernest Race Ltd.*

GRAPHIS

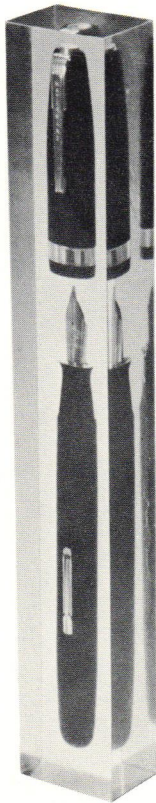
ANNUAL 54 55



INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING ART
ART PUBLICITAIRE INTERNATIONAL
INTERNATIONALE WERBEGRAFIK

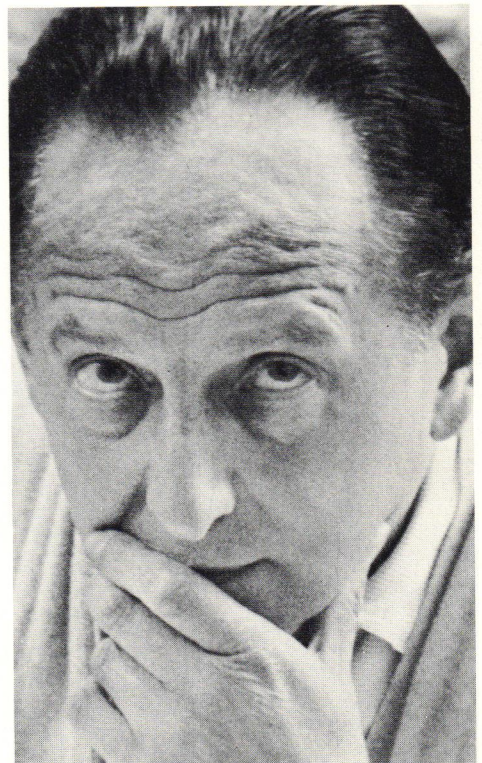
*Magazine cover
for Graphis Press, Zurich, Switzerland*

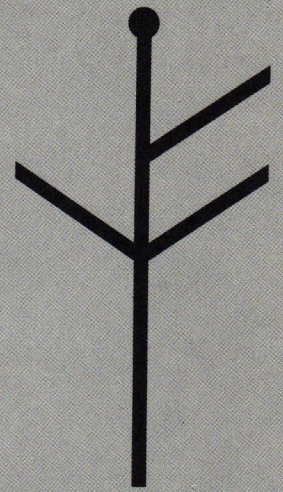
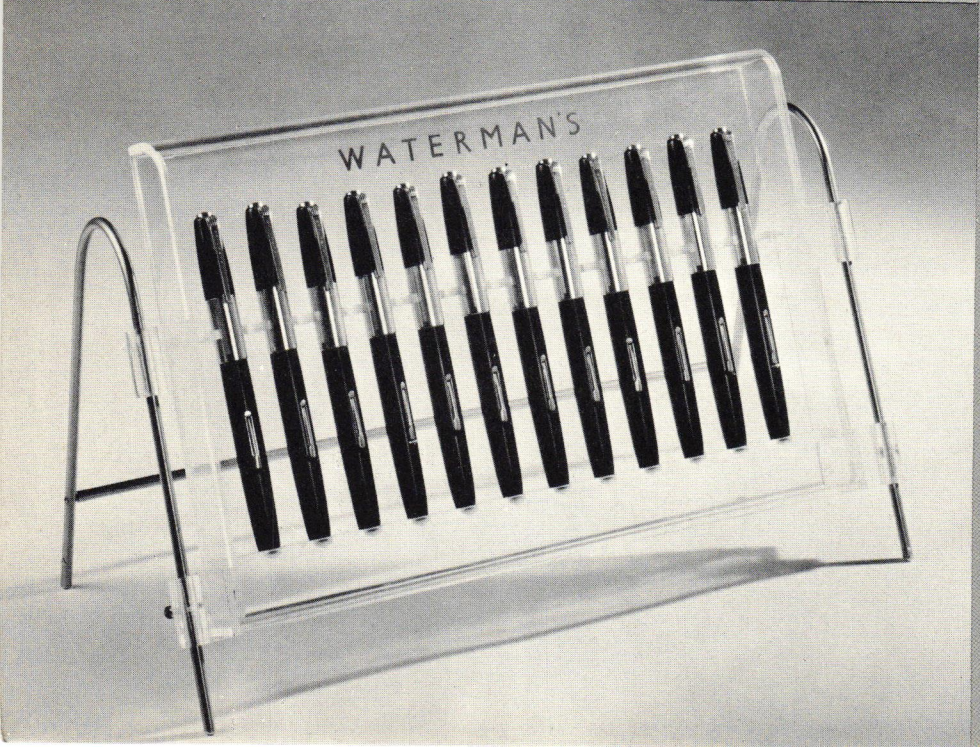
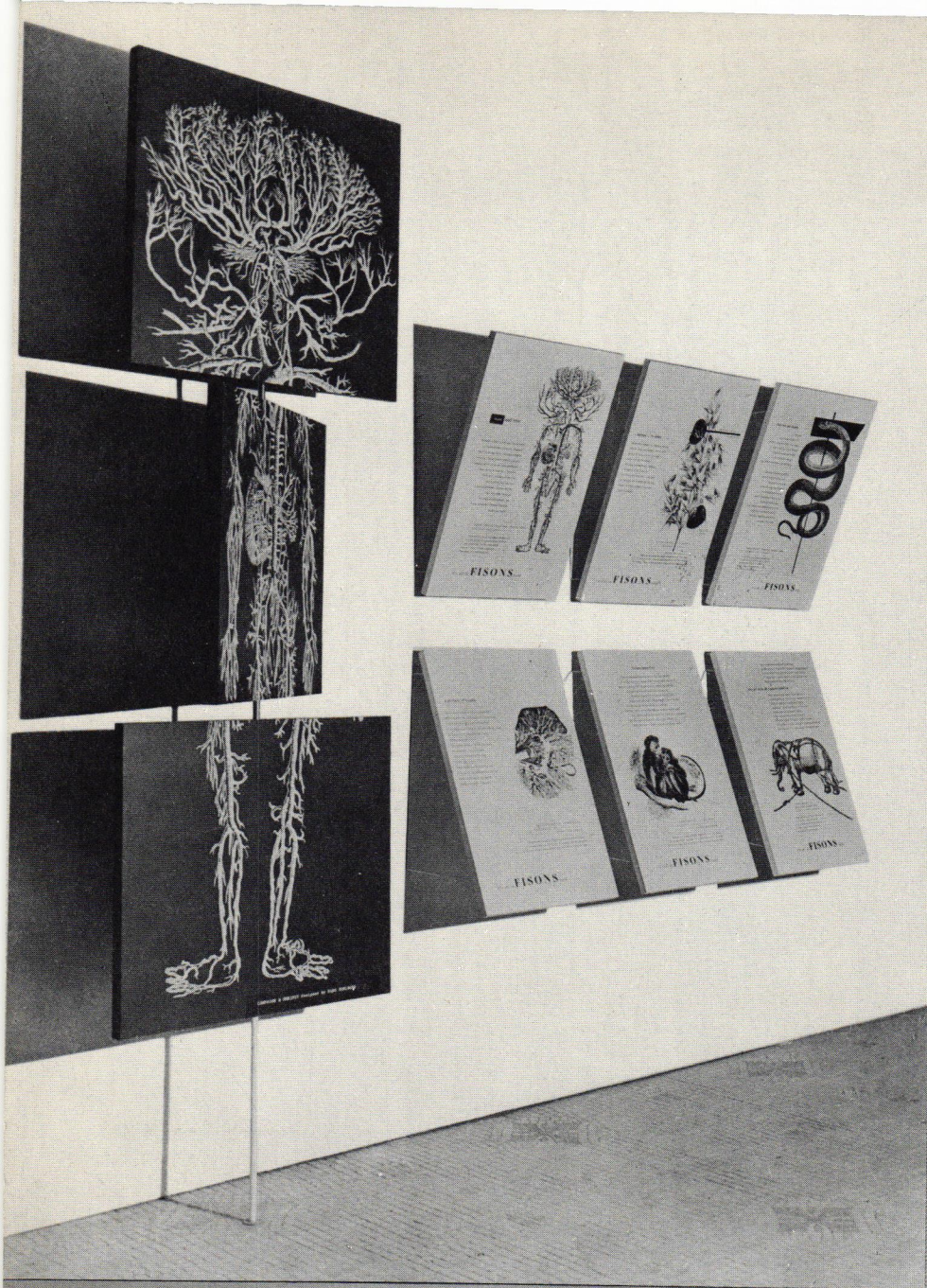
*Resin-encased fountain pen
for Waterman Pen Company, Ltd. London*



Hans Schleger F S I A

HANS SCHLEGER studied in Germany and later worked for five years in New York. His work includes advertising, exhibitions, interiors, films and the establishment of a unified design policy for several companies. He is a Fellow of the Society of Industrial Artists and a member of the Alliance Graphique Internationale. He was Visiting Associate Professor at the Institute of Design, Chicago. He has held one-man shows in London, New York and Chicago. Permanent exhibits of his work are in museums in European and American capitals and his work has been exhibited in Berlin, Helsinki, Paris, Prague and Stockholm.





Trade mark for Finmar Ltd.

Exhibition stand for Fisons Ltd.

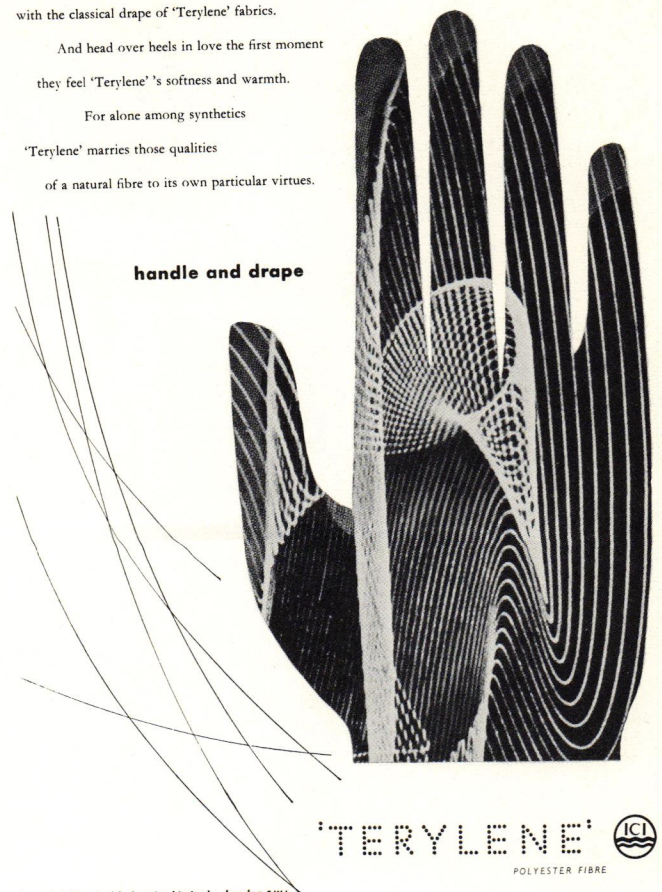
*Display and selling unit
for Waterman Pen Company, Ltd.*

46

Our womenfolk will fall in love at first sight
 with the classical drape of 'Terylene' fabrics.

And head over heels in love the first moment
 they feel 'Terylene' 's softness and warmth.

For alone among synthetics
 'Terylene' marries those qualities
 of a natural fibre to its own particular virtues.



handle and drape

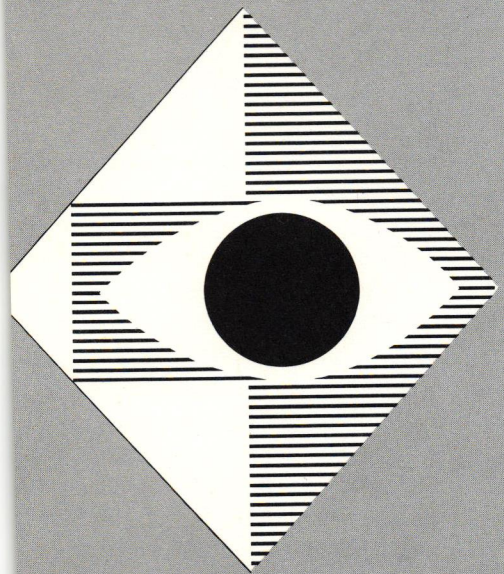
'TERYLENE' 
 POLYESTER FIBRE

Imperial Chemical Industries Limited · London SW1

Advertisement for I C I Terylene Council

Advertisement for I C I Terylene Council

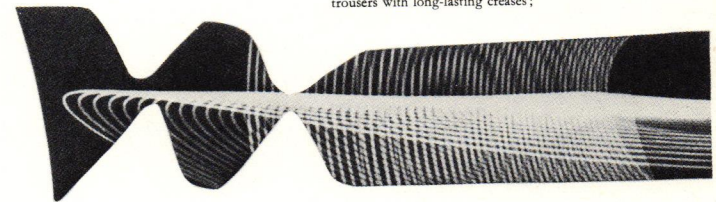
Poster—Housemark for Design Center
for Council of Industrial Design



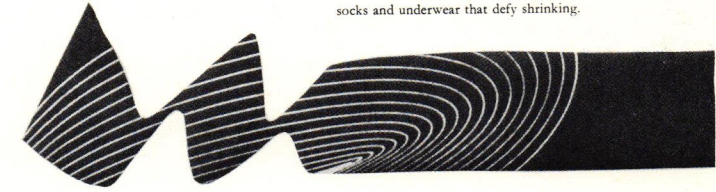
shape retention




Know 'Terylene' and you know
 the possibilities for clothes to come;
 trousers with long-lasting creases;



skirts that hang straight and true;
 jackets that keep their tailored line;
 socks and underwear that defy shrinking.



Pleats and creases, set by heat,
 stay in place even when washed.

'TERYLENE' 
 Polyester Fibre

Imperial Chemical Industries Limited · London SW1



why not get a good **BOOK** about it?

Poster for *Simpkin-Marshall Ltd.*

Book Review

AN INTRODUCTION TO ETRUSCAN ART.
P. J. Riis. New York, Philosophical Library, 1954.
\$10.00.

Etruscan art is one of the last phases of Classical Art to achieve the recognition it deserves. In earlier periods of criticism, its often peculiar and highly expressive deviations from the classical norm made it an uncomfortable companion to either Greek or Roman art. It was apt to be most highly valued, on the one hand, for its technical excellence (as in its metal-work and jewelry) or, on the other, as a provincial reflection of the greater culture of Greece. The Phaidon publication on Etruscan sculpture (1941) was perhaps the first book to place the high qualities of this phase of Etruscan culture before the eyes of the general public interested in art; a recent Skira publication (1952) reveals Etruscan painting with equally dramatic intensity. The accompanying text in both volumes is limited primarily to the fields covered by the illustrations, and is in general less satisfactory than the fine reproductions. Professor Riis' volume has the virtue of considering Etruscan art as a whole, and it is one of the few surveys to make many recent discoveries and opinions available to the English-speaking public.

In his preface Dr. Riis emphasizes the informal character of his book. It grew out of a Danish booklet aimed at "interesting wider circles than the university world. . . ." In a series of essays he presents Etruria and the Etruscans, the origins of Etruscan art, and the various subsequent phases of architecture, sculpture, and painting, treated in their proper chronological order. He ends with a chapter on the relation between Etruscan art and the earlier art of Rome.

His discussion of the material is marked throughout by scholarly knowledge and caution. The Eastern origin of the Etruscans is by now commonly accepted; their closest connections appear to be with the Anatolian region of Asia Minor and the North Aegean. Their migration to north-central Italy was over by the early 7th century B.C. With their appearance in the 8th century, new burial customs, new architectural forms, the first Etruscan inscriptions, and the importation of many objects from Greece and the Near East are found in Italy. From this time into the Hellenistic age, Etruria maintained close contacts with Greek and Hellenistic culture and art.

One of the more unusual characteristics of Etruscan art is the way in which it takes over various phases of Greco-Hellenistic sculpture and painting as developed styles. This means that Etruscan art, with the exception of certain architectural ideas, did not grow consistently within itself in the way that its sources had done. The phenomenon is probably due, in part at least, to the Etruscan political organization. The hegemony of the leading cities was too loose and too temporary to create a tightly-knit, unified culture. The Etruscan economy, based largely upon sea-communication and trade, also reinforced uninterrupted cultural and economic ties with Greece. On the other hand, the relative independence of the various Etruscan cities created local variations in style, and the individuality and specialization of the leading cities, like Caere, Tarquinii, Veii, Vulci, and Clusium, which appeared at an early date, continued to exist as a mark of the vitality of this nation's art.

Dr. Riis is especially sensitive in his analysis of Etruscan art to the problems involved in the connection between Etruscan art and Greek prototypes, and to the basic dependence of the former upon the latter. This attitude must be accepted, since it is a demonstrable historical fact. Riis is most understanding in tracing the Greek sources —

the varying archaic styles and schools responsible, for example, for a particular Etruscan type or monument. In the end, however, his concept gives a one-sided and weak impression of Etruscan art. He does acknowledge the independence of the Etruscans in some areas — architecture especially, and some types of sculpture, such as the realistic portrait-head; nevertheless his definition of the unique characteristics of Etruscan art is neither forceful nor especially profound.

He speaks, at various times, of the "brutal expression of the face," of the "unnaturalistic modeling," and of the "baroque and fanciful" qualities of this art. These terms are hardly adequate to describe, even at the semi-popular level, the variety and personality of an art which ranges from the graceful and yet sonorous dignity of the frescos in the Tomb of the Leopards at Tarquinii to the Giacometti-like distortion of some bronze statuettes, from the decorative elegance and tense power of the Chimaera of Arezzo to the sensuous and gay eroticism of the terra-cotta groups of satyrs and maenads, from the soft, noble grace of the bronze boy in Copenhagen to the almost cubist plastic strength seen in some of the funerary portrait-heads. This is an art of great richness of expression, often concentrating on themes which the Greek world did not exploit. Its sumptuousness and severity, its light-heartedness and its ferocity, are not brought out with sufficient vigor.

It is unfortunate, too, that in a book aimed deliberately at a wide audience the reproductions should be visually unsatisfactory. The subjects have been well chosen; one can be especially grateful for the inclusion of several fine objects from the less well known Danish collections, which seem to be unusually rich in Etruscan material. The plates are, nearly without exception, too small, too gray, and usually too grainy to create in the beholder any positive reaction towards the originals.

On the other hand, the bibliographical lists at the ends of each chapter are admirable in their extent and selection, and constitute one of the best features of the book. It is well printed, insofar as the text is concerned, and is handsomely bound in an attractive Danish paper. For the reader who is attracted to Etruscan art, this book will probably best serve its purpose if the text is read in conjunction with the Phaidon and Skira picture-books mentioned at the beginning of the review.

Hylton A. Thomas

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1956

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