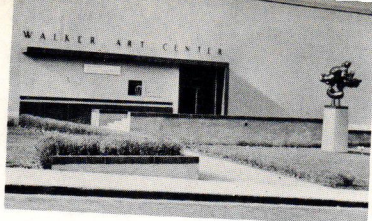




WALKER ART CENTER, MINNEAPOLIS, 1958

DESIGN QUARTERLY



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ISSUE NUMBER 40, 1957

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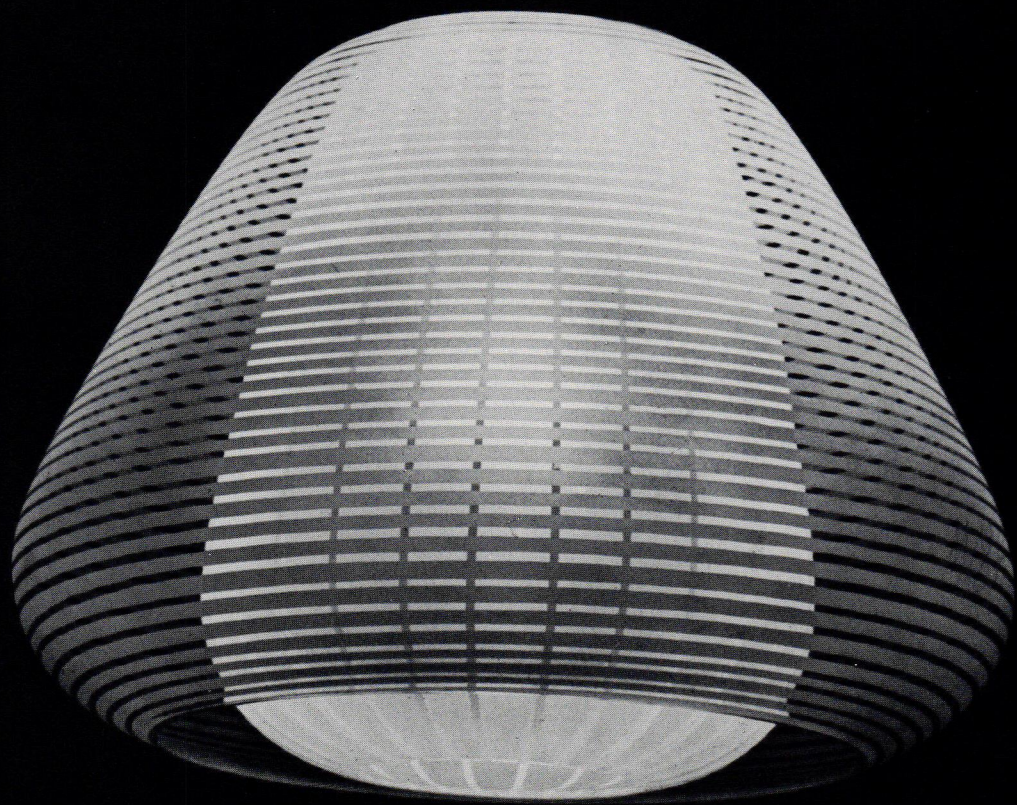
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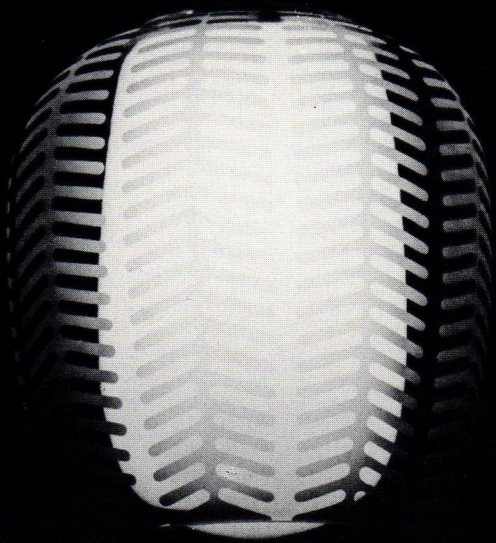
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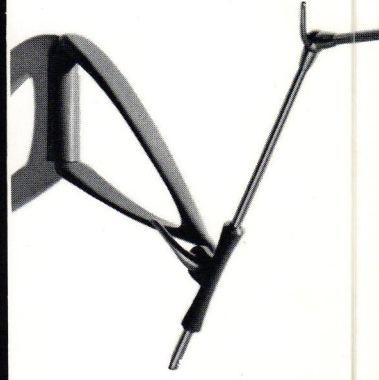
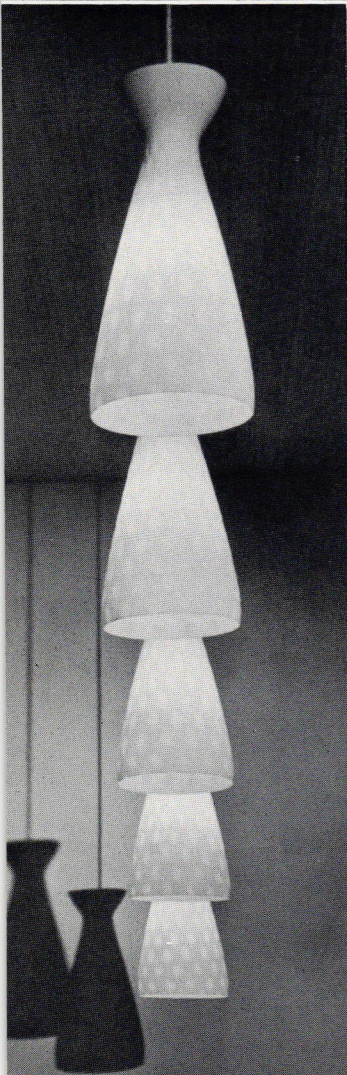
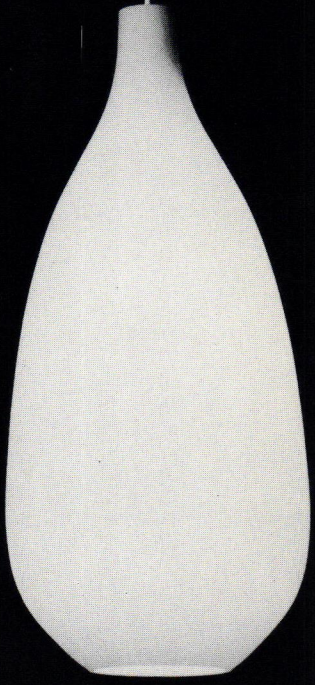
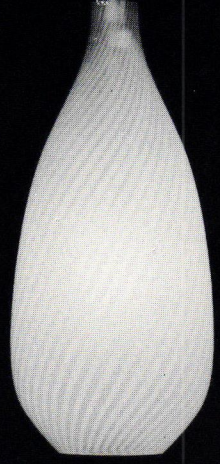
Design Quarterly, formerly Everyday Art Quarterly, is indexed in Art Index. Subscription prices are \$2 for one year, \$3.50 for two years, \$5.00 for three years, single copies 50¢. Design Quarterly is published four times a year by the Walker Art Center, 1710 Lyndale Avenue South, Minneapolis 3, Minnesota. H. H. ARNASON, Director. Copyright 1958 by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN IN POSTWAR GERMANY





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4 5 6



The following observations and comments
on design in postwar Germany
are made by DR. LORENZ EITNER, art historian
born in Czechoslovakia, doctorate from Princeton University
since 1949 Associate Professor of Art, University of Minnesota
Guggenheim Fellow, Germany, 1956-57



INDUSTRIAL DESIGN IN POST-WAR GERMANY

For all the publicity which "modern design" has received in Germany, industrial products designed with originality and a sense of beauty continue to be rare and expensive. In industrial design, as in other forms of art, modernity remains the prerogative of the unusually discerning or the unusually rich. Within the average city-scape, the well-designed, modern building constitutes an aristocratic exception, and among the profusion of articles offered by department stores and mail-order houses, few deserve to be called modern or beautiful. Popular taste evolves with massive slowness; it requires the life-span of a generation to catch up with true innovations, and more than that to develop an awareness of quality. The "World of Tomorrow" which the great fairs of 1939 promised for the near future has not yet materialized.

Only disasters of catastrophic impact can, it seems, give a sudden impetus to the normally slow evolution of design and reduce the time-lag between the new and the accepted. In Germany, for example, the Second World War and its consequences have compelled an entire nation to concentrate on immediate physical reconstruction, on the replacement of the old with the new. The obliteration of cities, the homelessness of millions, and the enormous loss of property which the War brought about revolutionized ingrained attitudes and upset every

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form of stability. The decision to make a fresh start was a precondition for survival. Cities had to be replanned, new buildings put up over the ruins of the old, the whole huge breakage of an older order had to be swept away. Changes, which in the normal course of wear and obsolescence would have required decades or centuries, resulted from the rain of bombs and fire of a single night. The old towns with their well-remembered silhouette of steeple, dome, and high-pitched roofs are no more, and in their stead the traveler discovers, not necessarily with pleasure, a mushrooming welter of steel, glass, and concrete.

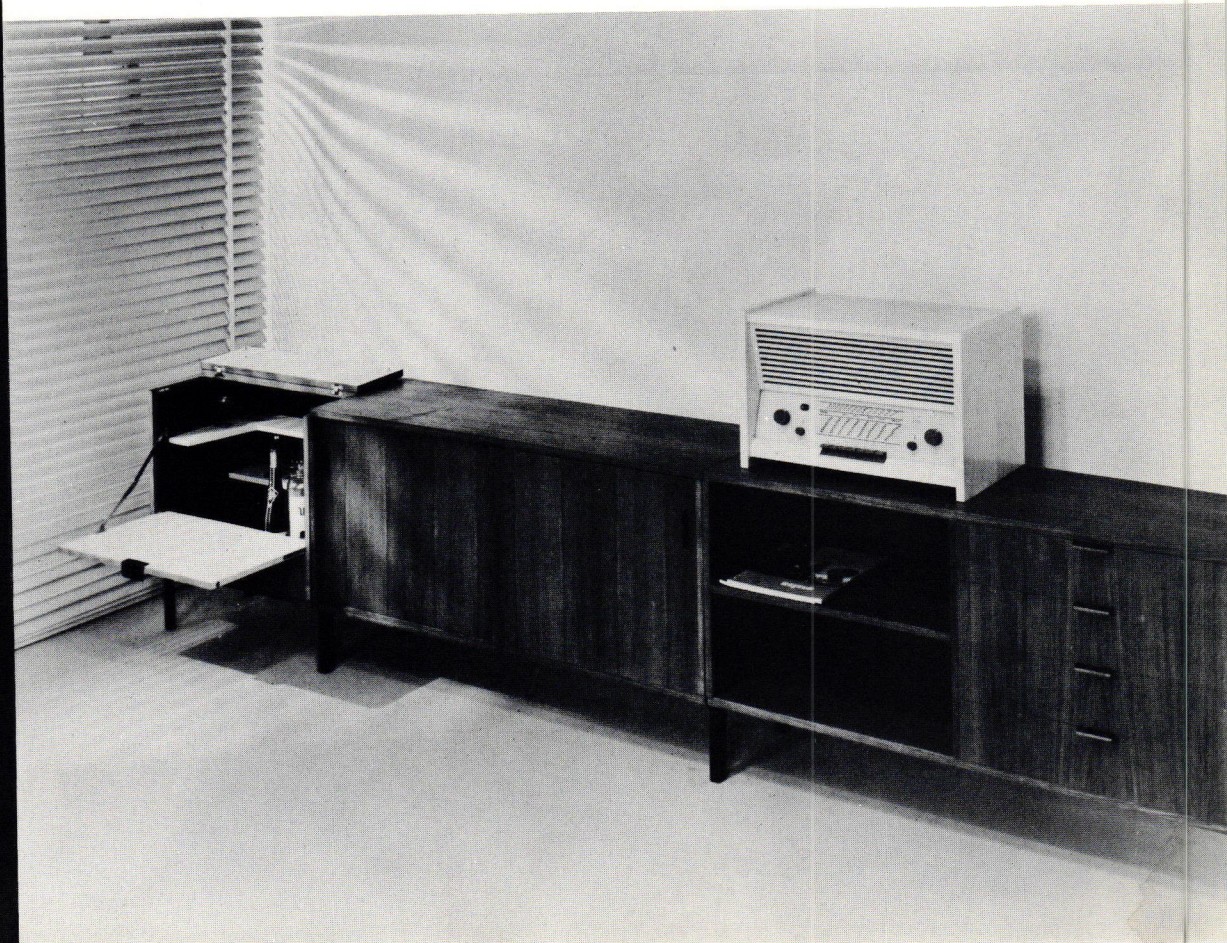
This is not to say, of course, that post-War reconstruction has radically modernized the face of urban Germany. Plenty of scarred, patched-up buildings remain, a dark foil to the garish whiteness of the new constructions rising around them. Nor does it mean that all or even the majority of the entirely new buildings are modern. Flamboyantly "modernistic" structures alternate with neo-Biedermeier ones. We find all possible variations of architectural expression, from cool functionalism to frowning pomp, from deliberate eccentricity to cringing tameness. Every modern idiom is represented; there is no unifying style. Even without the smell of fresh concrete which hangs over the streets, the haste of planning and execution, the newness and rootlessness of this architecture would be evident from its uneasy eclecticism. It reminds us that an anomalous sequence of events has produced this rapid growth: a holocaust followed by an economic boom.

Where whole cities must be built and furnished within the space of very few years, individual architects and designers carry an unusually heavy responsibility. Whether the new cities will be a delight or a horror depends on the aesthetic judgment of a relatively small group of professionals. Their errors can take on gigantic proportions and an extraordinary permanence. This is also true, to a degree, of the designers of durable consumer goods. The furniture, household appliances, lighting fixtures, carpets and curtains, porcelain and glass now being manufactured to replace the wreckage left by the War will determine



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the character and level of German domestic civilization for many years to come. Modern design, considered against this background, assumes a social urgency not always recognized under more normal circumstances.

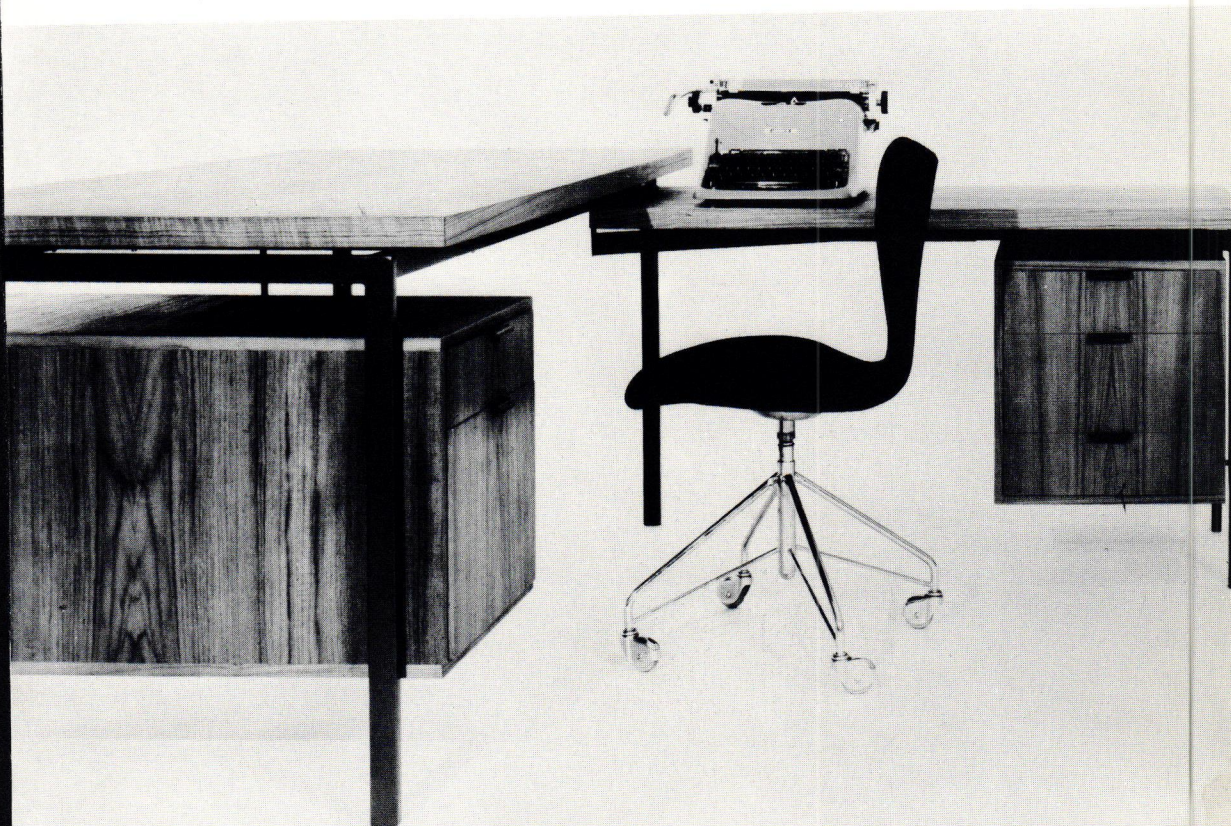
In addition to the purely material difficulties of large-scale reconstruction, German designers and architects have had to overcome a special, ideological handicap. Twelve years of cultural isolation under Hitler had severed Germany's tradition in modern art and design, and had cut her off from the broad mainstream of international development. Between 1933 and 1945, modernity was proscribed as un-German or positively Bolshevik. To be sure, industrial design as such was not among the primary targets of the Party ideologues, who preferred to concentrate on the "fine arts" proper (though they also took care to close the Bauhaus). As the handsome Autobahn bridges and the durable Volkswagen (designed in 1934) remind us, some good work was done even in those dark years, mainly by engineers, but the sterility which overcame painting and architecture inevitably engulfed design as well. In the stifling atmosphere of cultural jingoism, all the arts petrified; German artists withdrew from the Twentieth Century into an exclusive world of nationalist fantasy, a marble and bronze Arcadia beyond time. The more durable remnants of this interlude — colonnaded Party palaces and heroic bronze nudes — can still be found among the rising steel and glass of the new cities.

More troublesome than these leftovers are the lingering traces which indoctrination has left in the attitudes of the public and of many practicing artists and designers. It is not surprising that when freedom returned and national isolation ended Germany failed to resume her old position in the vanguard of the modern movement. Time was needed for reorientation and the re-establishment of contacts with the outside world. While the years after the First World War had witnessed an immediate, dramatic resurgence of the arts and of applied design, nothing so spectacular or so sudden happened after 1945, despite a fairly



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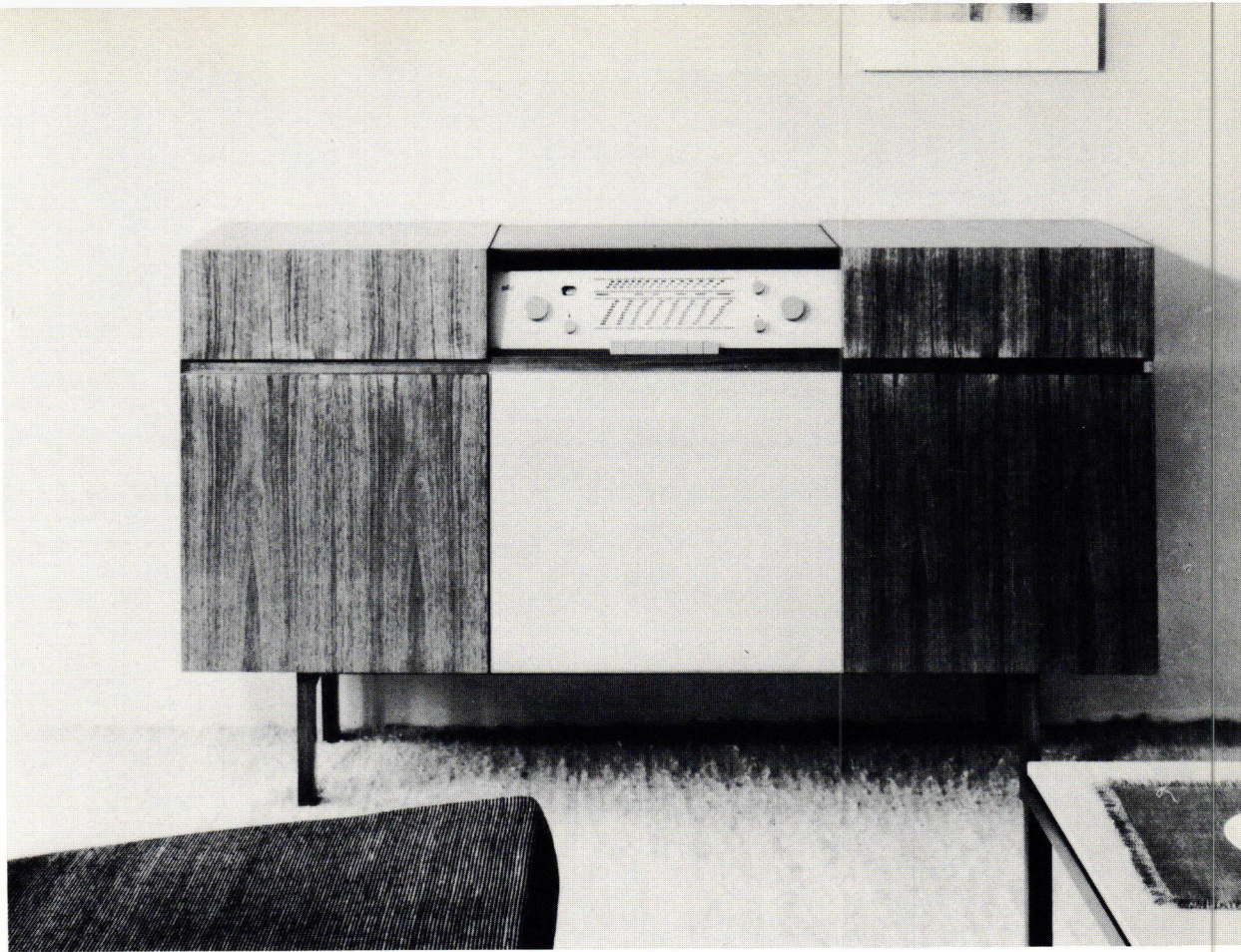


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rapid return to economic health. Cultural recovery lagged behind economic recovery, proving that the wounds which Nazism had left were deeper than they appeared on the surface. A spirit of caution and docile imitation pervaded German intellectual life in the decade following the Second World War — very much in contrast to the revolutionary elan and bold experimentation which had lent excitement to the Twenties. This general lassitude has had its effect on industrial design. When, after the currency reform of 1948, production of consumer goods went into high gear, manufacturers were slow to grasp the importance of design and the designers themselves were slow in coming forward with new ideas. Into this vacuum there poured a confused assortment of borrowed forms: American, Italian, and Scandinavian suggestions were eagerly taken up and often applied without much critical judgment. The look of modernity came to be prized, naively, for its own sake; it seemed to embody the new freedom, prosperity, and cosmopolitanism.

These faddish beginnings are about to be overcome. There is evidence of growing discrimination on the part of consumers and even of manufacturers. The desire to trade on style-conscious foreign markets has also prompted certain industries to give more serious thought to the design of their products. Most important of all, perhaps, is the effect which the re-housing of a sizable portion of the German population has had on the demand for home furnishings which will harmonize with the new architecture.

The sudden transplanting of people from cramped, antiquated quarters into modern housing has not, of course, automatically transformed their outlook and their tastes. Many a well-planned apartment is being barricaded with a type of furniture that violently clashes with its style and lay-out. Many of the new tenants fail to understand the flexibility and convenience of modern architecture and consequently are unable to exploit its possibilities. It has been suggested that architects should imitate the manufacturers of electrical gadgets



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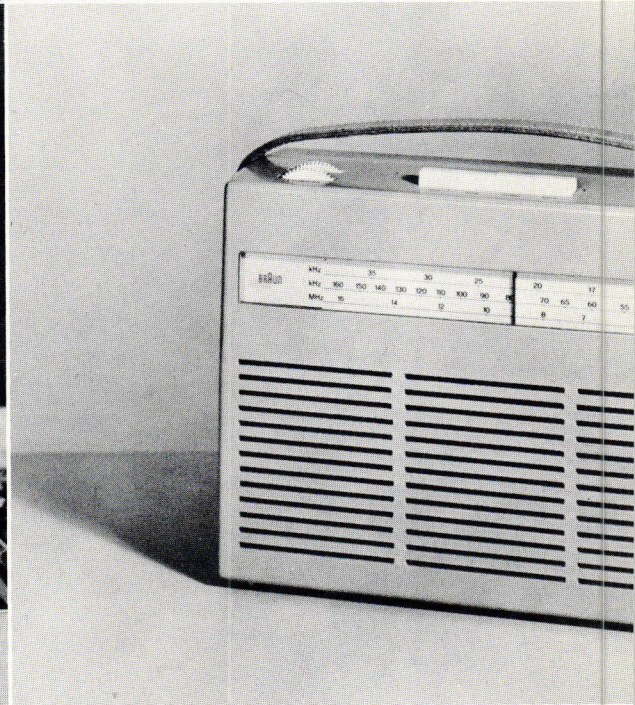
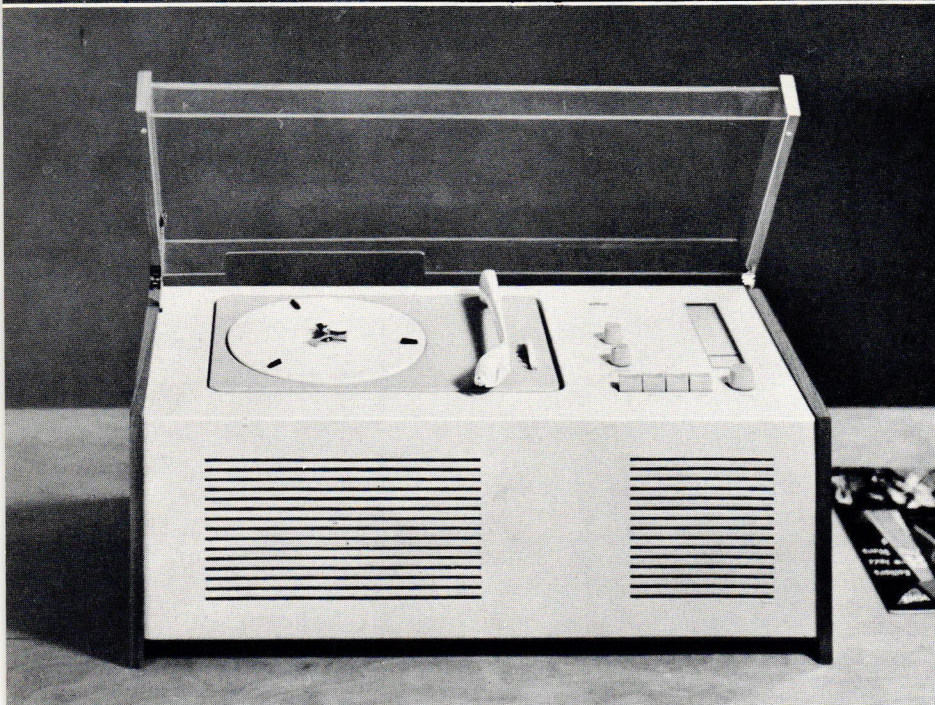
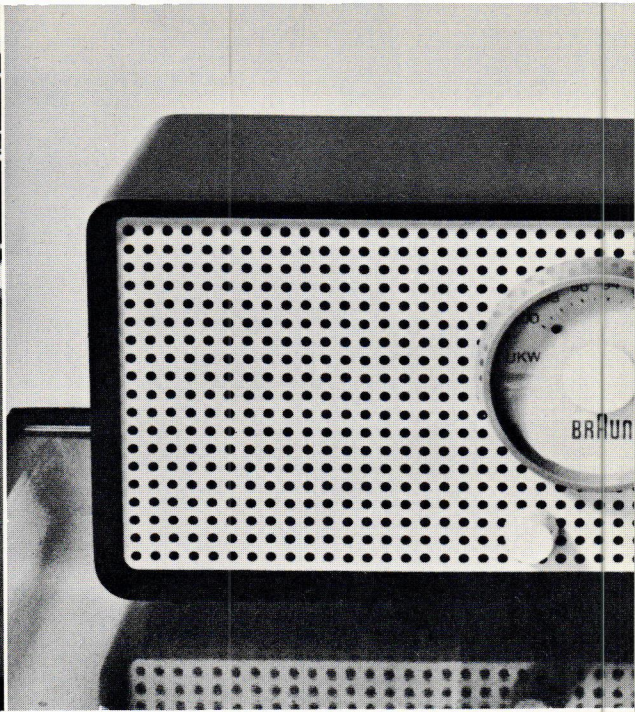
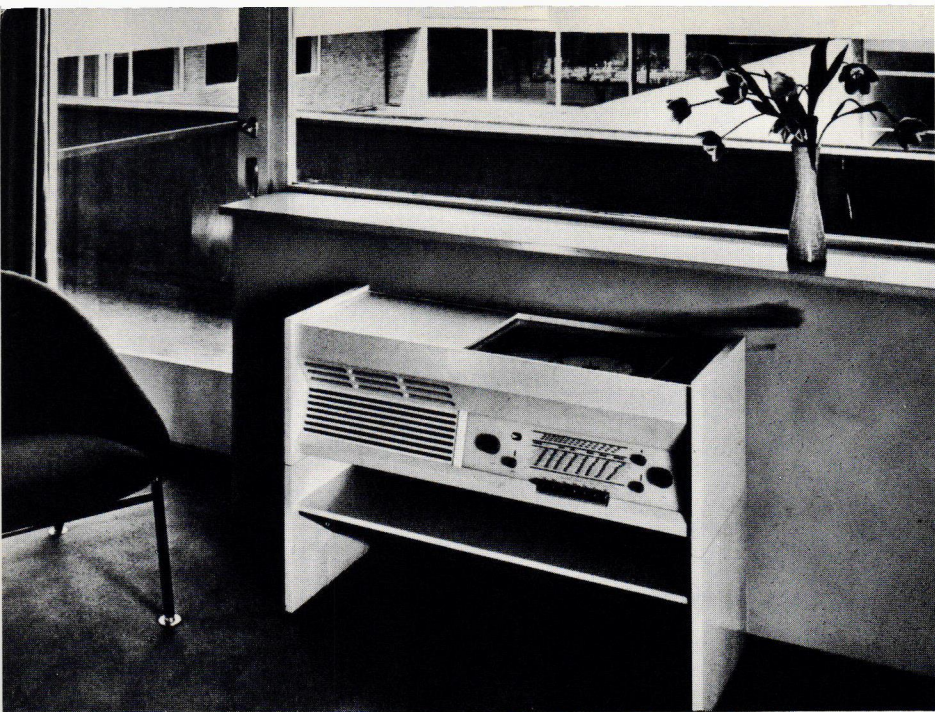


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in furnishing their customers with sets of instructions for the proper use of their houses.

How do the people who live behind the white facades of the new apartment blocks feel about modern home furnishings? A poll taken in 1954 to determine the consumer attitudes of German women of all classes and all age groups over 18 turned up some highly suggestive answers. Of all the women questioned, 2% still love the Edwardian grandeur of carved oak and potted palm; nearly 60% are content with the flowered chintz, simulated wood-grains and heavy overstuffings of current department store best-sellers; while 30% prefer the style which might be called "subdued modern" or "Swedish middle-brow," with its blond woods, chaste shapes and unadorned surfaces. More advanced designs were favored by a far smaller group, though of the younger women (under 30 years of age) fully 10% voted for the style which, for lack of a proper name, could be called "Knoll-International." A further break-down of these groups reveals that the modern idiom ("Swedish" or "International") is preferred by 44% of women between 18 and 29 years, 28% of working-class wives, 44% of self-employed women, and no fewer than 54% of female wage-earners. It is most popular in towns of middle size, curiously enough, less so in the metropolitan or rural areas. Whatever the accuracy of these figures, they do reflect a massive and rapid trend which has already had its effect on the production policies of major firms.

Numerous private and state-supported agencies are doing their best to speed this trend. Most universities and technical schools have begun to offer courses in industrial design. At Ulm, the Hochschule für Gestaltung carries on the traditions of the old Bauhaus. Several industry-sponsored bodies, the Deutsche Werkbund, the Institut für neue technische Form (Darmstadt), and Industrieform (Essen), strive to establish standards of quality and to familiarize manufacturers and dealers, as well as the public at large, with the economic and aesthetic advantages of rational design. Their main instruments for exerting

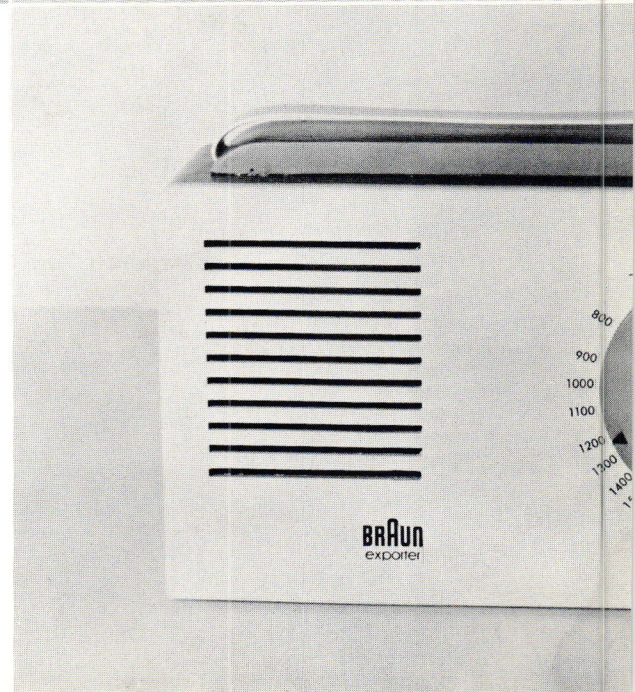


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influence are well-publicized competitive exhibitions of German industrial products. The Federal and provincial governments of Germany actively participate in this work. Following a British precedent, the Ministry of Economics has set up an official Council for Industrial Design (Rat für Formgebung); a few of the provincial governments maintain permanent collections of well-designed industrial products. The Neue Sammlung in Munich, a tax-supported gallery of modern design, exhibits the work of German and foreign designers and originates traveling exhibitions for use in high schools. It may seem surprising that government-controlled agencies should act as arbiters of taste in industrial design and assume a frankly partisan or even doctrinaire attitude in promoting modern design. This is possible in Germany (where the State has often played an active role in such matters) because since 1945 the weight of official approval has come to rest on the side of modern art, modern architecture, and modern design. To support these has become — like support of the UN, atomic disarmament and anti-colonialism — part of the new orthodoxy. Even the President of the Federal Republic, a mellow conservative and ex-professor, has on several occasions solemnly, and with evident sincerity, endorsed modern art. Nowhere has its embattled cause achieved a more solidly official respectability than in Western Germany (conditions beyond the Oder-Neisse line are, of course quite different).

So much for the peculiar circumstances which surround the re-birth of modern design in Germany; what of the work actually being done?

To begin with a broad generalization: there is probably less individual brilliance, less conscious artistry to be met with, in German than, for instance, in Italian design. The best German work is characterized by simplicity and technical soundness; destined for a mass rather than a luxury market, it aims at economy and broad social utility. As a result, it makes fewer concessions to fashion, sometimes lacks elegance and wit, but is also less prone to the strained mannerisms, the snobbery and silliness that go with fashion-centered design. What makes it





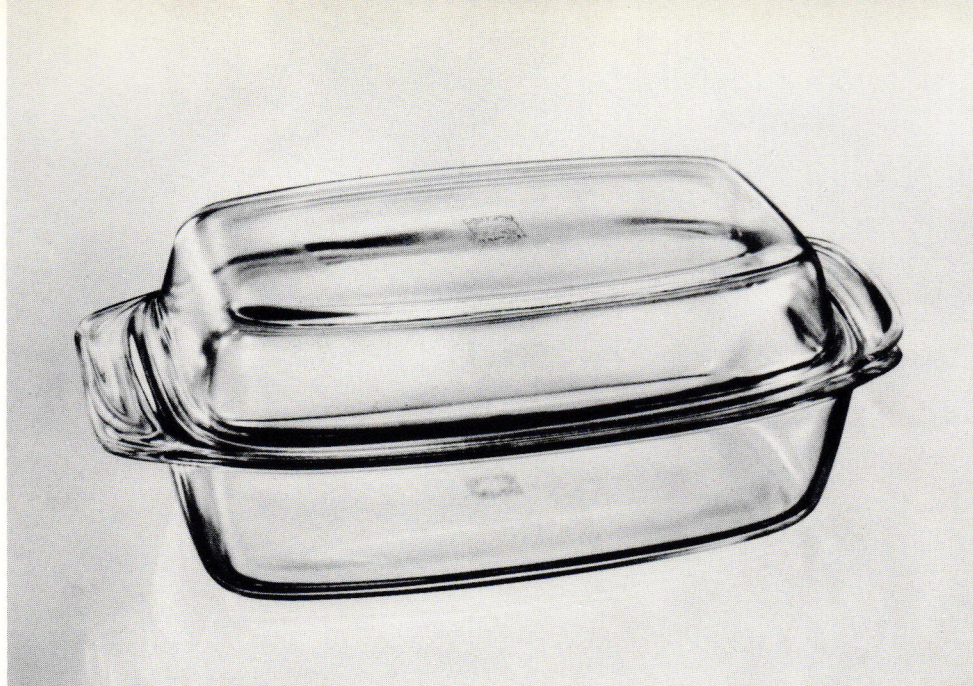
remarkable is its high general level and its wide application, rather than a few spectacular peak performances. Among its special virtues is a concern for the less privileged articles of daily use, for such modest items as faucets, door handles, hooks and hinges. German basic electrical fixtures in particular have benefited from rigorous standardization, rational construction, and the observance of safety regulations; the visual contrast which they offer to the dismal ricketiness of comparable American products (especially to our ugly and dangerous plugs and sockets) is highly instructive; it proves that objects which owe their form to the most banal technical requirements can still achieve aesthetic decency, even beauty, provided no attempt is made to prettify them. On a less elementary level, Germany offers a wealth of utility products of exemplary design — oven-ware of Jena glass, steel cutlery, table glass and china — most of them priced within the average consumer's means. In a somewhat more problematical class are such semi-decorative objects as lamp-shades, vases, bowls, trays, and boxes which invite modish treatment. Here, too, some pleasant designs are to be found, though it is evident that German designers show less assurance in projects where the nature of the job gives their aesthetic fantasy





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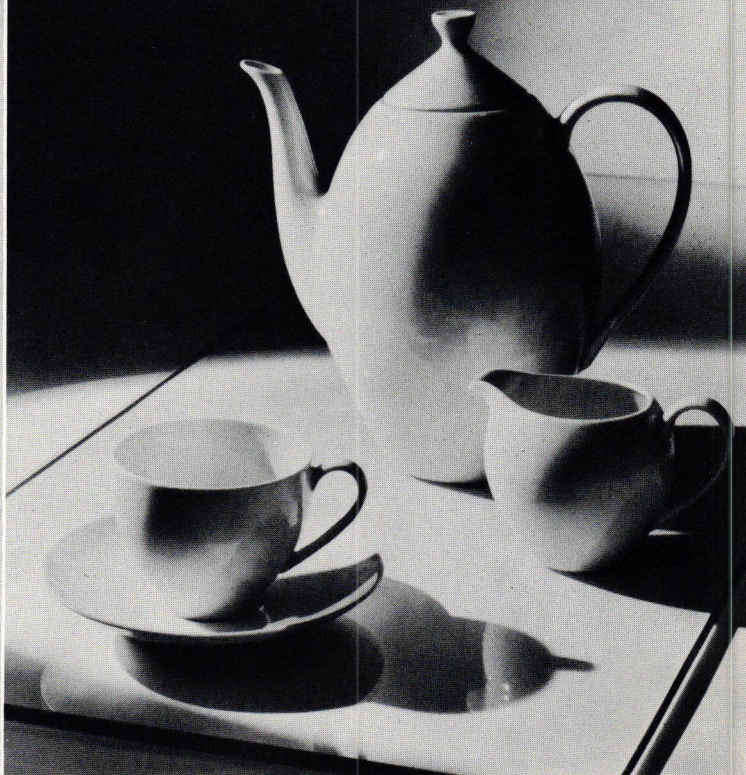
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free play. They are at their best when most narrowly hemmed in by technical limitations; their machines, pots and pans turn out better than their furniture, printed textiles, and wall-papers. But this is a condition which is not confined to Germany.

German design is for the middle class. This fact underlies its aesthetic and its utilitarian bent, its sense of social responsibility, and its economic accessibility. The notion persists that well-designed products should be more economical and durable than ordinary, unimproved ones. Certain firms, having economized through rational design, have passed on their savings to their customers. A notable example of such economy is provided by the radios and phonographs produced by Max Braun (Frankfurt am Main), the handsomest and at the same time least expensive of their class, a result achieved partly through standardization, partly through the elimination of the decorative trimmings with which other radio makers still encumber their sets.

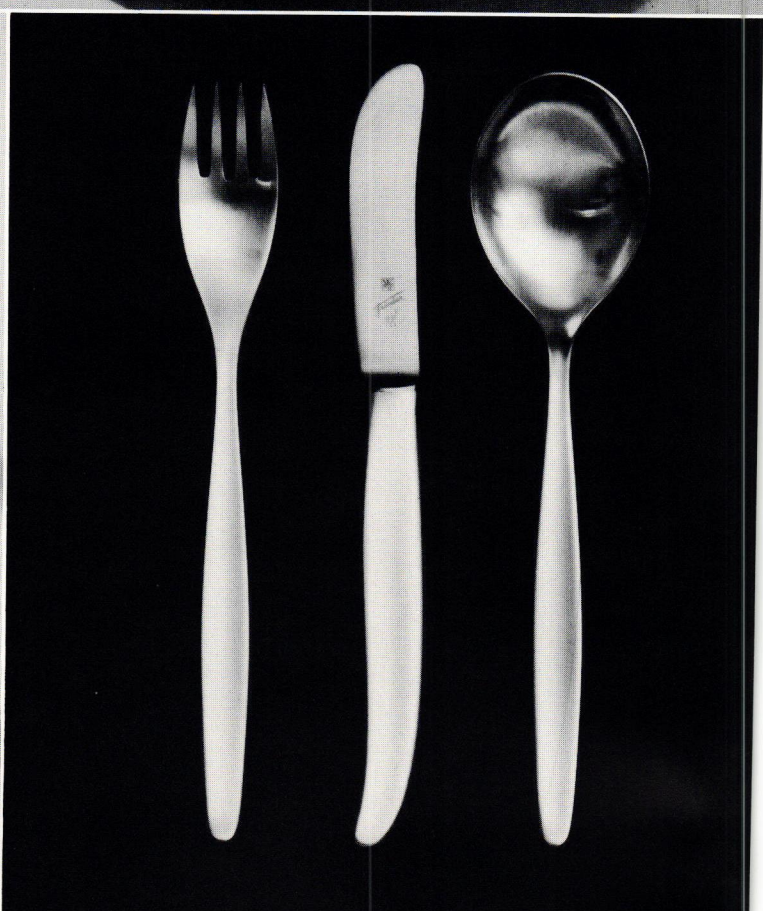
The War and the poverty which it created have, no doubt, been responsible for the current emphasis on rationality and economy. The problem until now has been to satisfy urgent needs, rather than to dispose of surpluses or stimulate a demand for luxuries. It is still too early for German manufacturers to speed the cycle of consumption through such devices as artificial obsolescence. But if prosperity





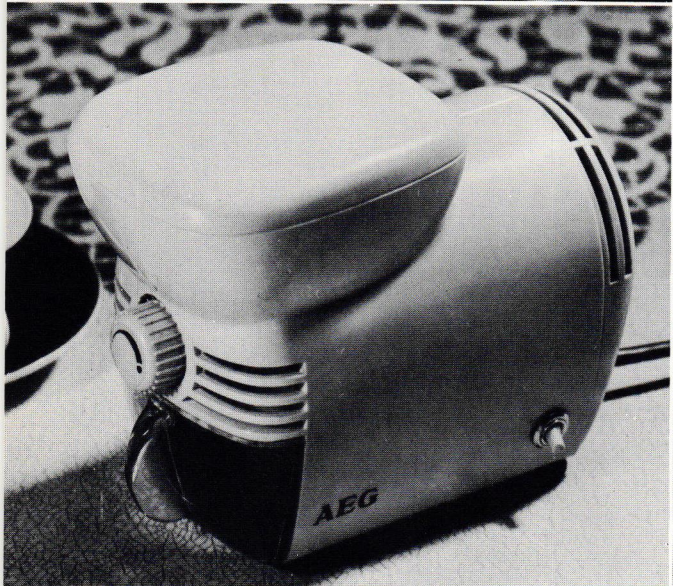
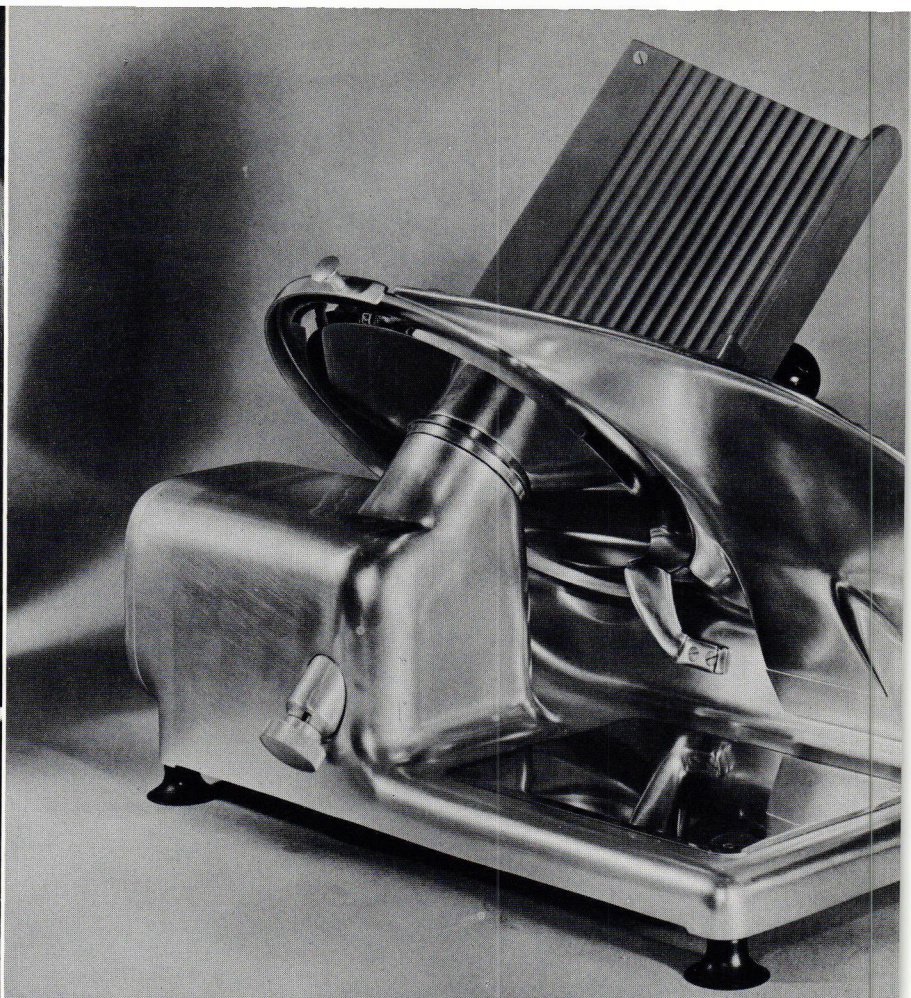
continues, modishness — the manufacturer's way of cutting the life-span of his product — is bound to become a more prominent feature of German design. Meanwhile this trend, probably inevitable in the long run, is being slowed by another circumstance: the last dim survival of craft traditions. Despite a high level of industrialization, an awareness of craftsmanship lingers among German consumers, even among people who are not sensitive to aesthetic quality as such. Industrial products continue to be measured against hand-wrought things. Handicrafts and mass-production methods continue to exist side by side in certain industries. It is not an accident that some of the best designs have come from industries, such as glass-blowing, which have their roots in craft processes. Whether this is a retarding or fertilizing influence on industrial design is difficult to decide. But its effect on the appearance of German products is unmistakable; it accounts for the conspicuous sturdiness and durability, the occasional dullness and excessive solidity which some of them show.

Is there anything peculiarly "German" in post-War German design? Well-made objects the world over are apt to resemble one another; the fact that modern design is a thoroughly international blend is nowhere more apparent than in Germany. Yet it is also true that definite though hard to define traits of style identify industrial products as being of German (or of Swedish, or Italian, or Swiss) origin. These national



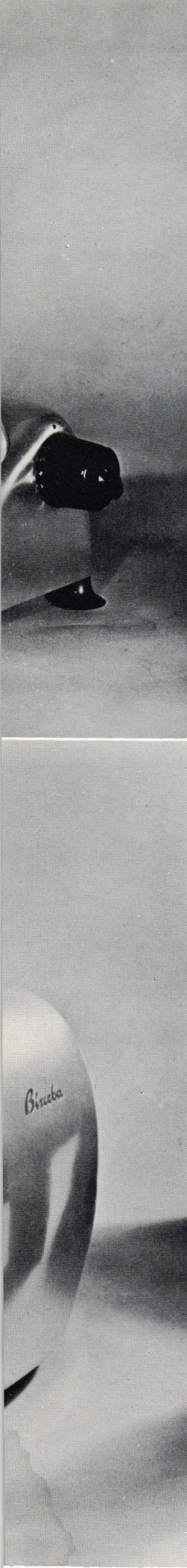
traits are most obvious among the "modernistic" clap-trap produced everywhere to satisfy a demand for fashionable novelties. On this level, every country produces its own caricature of modern design, and these vulgarizations are instructive because they illustrate basic national tendencies of taste. Ennobled and subtilized, these same tendencies appear in the better productions of the various countries and constitute a recognizable national style. Thus what is rank garishness in Italian third-rate work appears as vitality and wit in the first-rate, and the melancholy purity of fine French interiors amounts to an idealization of the cold dismalness of average French homes.

There has been no conscious attempt at asserting national traditions in German design. Unlike Scandinavian designers who seek inspiration in peasant work, German designers shy away from folkloristic suggestions. That source of forms has been poisoned for them by the lunatics of the Third Reich. The memory of the pseudo-styles fostered by the Nazis is still fresh enough to cast some disrepute on the whole idea of consciously applied style. In discussions concerning art and design, it has become customary to avoid the very word and to replace it with more modest or more technical terms. The escape into the neutrality of technics and functionalism is a definite reaction to the recent troubles. Nevertheless, German conditions and German forms of thought inevitably continue to influence German design and to give it something of a national character. Several of the material factors and their effects have already been mentioned. Within the realm of aesthetics and art, German design can draw upon two native traditions: there is, on the one hand, the strain of subjective emotionality and romantic fantasy on which expressionism has thrived; on the other hand there is the opposite, but no less German, strain of disciplined, impersonal objectivity, of reliance on an abstract order, on technics and mathematics, which has inspired the ideas of functionalism and *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Of the two, the expressive-romantic trend is the more deeply rooted in German tradition, though it also happens to be



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the one less in harmony with the present social and economic situation, or with the requirements of industry. Far more subdued than in the Twenties, the innate tendency to give an expressive, quasi-human face to inanimate objects still occasionally appears in German design; one meets with lingering traces of expressionism in posters and stage designs, in the friendly embonpoint of coffee pots and in the glowering masks of automobiles. But this is not the dominant feature in present-day German design. It is overshadowed by the prevailing note of impersonal sobriety which amounts to a deliberate denial of expressionism. Instead of relying on subjective feeling, designers seek guidance in the laws of physics and mathematics which offer certainty and permanence, and respite from human stress. A new classicism appears to be on the ascendant, based on the dogma that perfect technical solutions are necessarily beautiful. The designer-scientist is seeking to replace the designer artist.

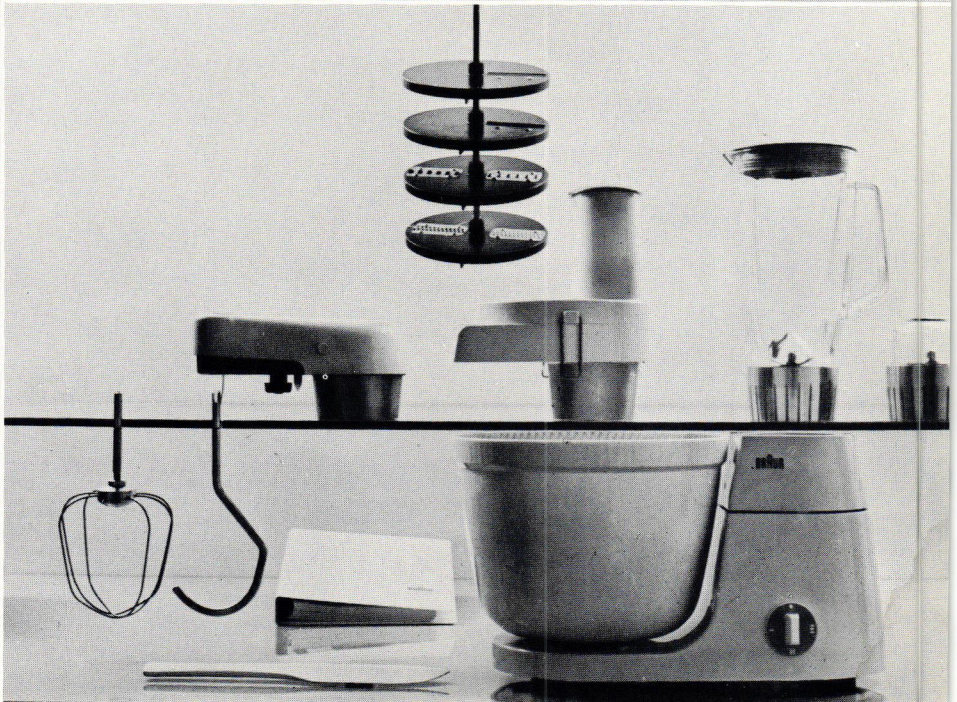
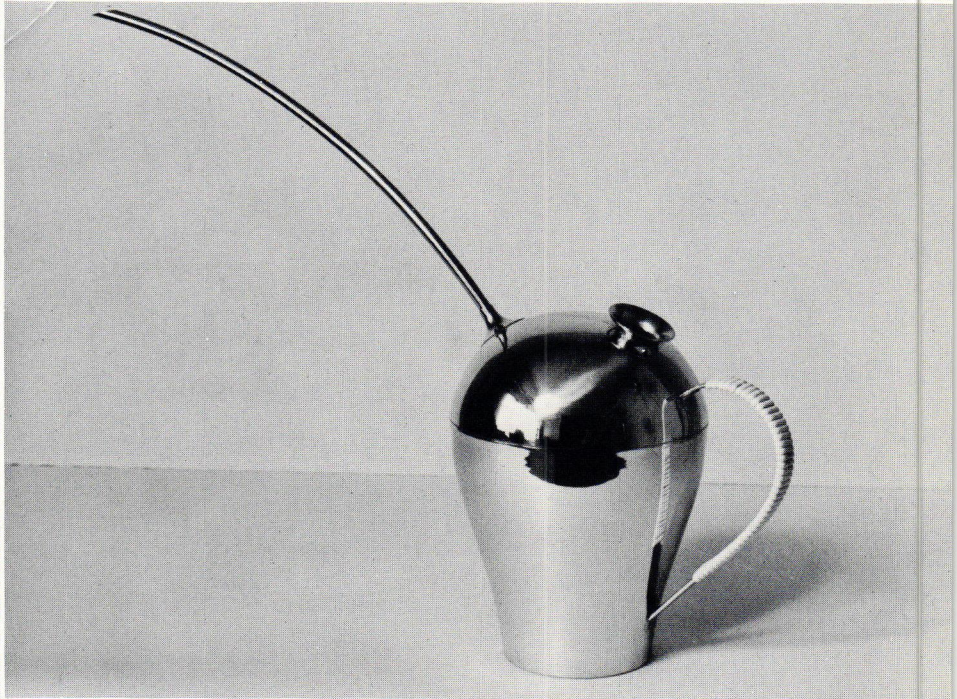
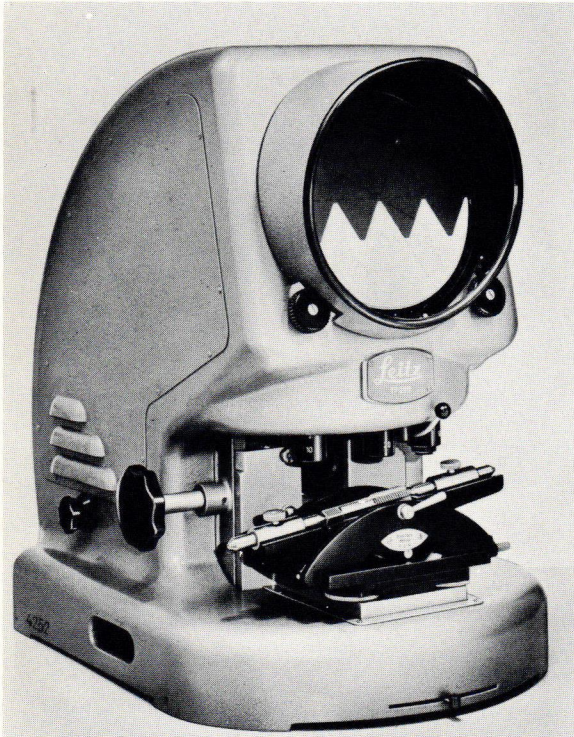
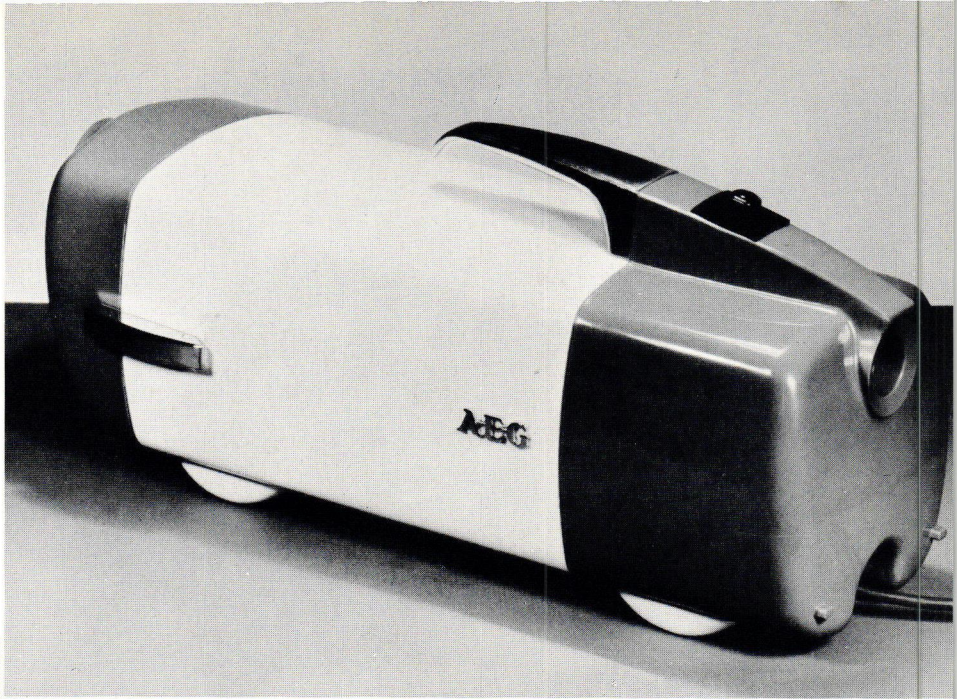
Germany's productive capacity and growing export trade assure German design an influence that will reach beyond her borders. What happens in German design will ultimately matter not only to the Germans. It is still too early to forecast its further development from the present slow and cautious beginnings. The special difficulties and opportunities which confront German designers, the immensity of the reconstruction task and the indefiniteness of the ideological situation make the future unpredictable. The boldness of spirit which characterized the work of the Twenties is lacking; there are no salient personalities that could be measured against the men of the Bauhaus. Yet this very anonymity and gradualism may be symptomatic of a deep-going transformation. The current decade is probably not one of the Golden Ages in German art, as the years between the First World War and Hitler may well have been, but the changes which are occurring now reach deeper and affect more people than did the transient brilliance of those years.

Lorenz Eitner

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1. *Hanging lamp designed by Wilhelm Wagenfeld for Peill & Putzler, Düren*
2. *Hanging lamp designed by Wilhelm Wagenfeld for Peill & Putzler, Düren*
3. *Hanging lamps designed by A. F. Gangkofner for Peill & Putzler, Düren*
4. *Hanging lamps designed by A. F. Gangkofner for Peill & Putzler, Düren*
5. *Hanging lamps designed by A. F. Gangkofner for Peill & Putzler, Düren*
6. *Wall lamp for Kontakt-Werkstätten, Bad Godesberg*
7. *Storage unit for Holzäpfel KG, Ebhausen/ Württemberg*
8. *Drapery "Bergamo" designed by Margaret Hildebrand for Gardinenfabrik GmbH, Herrenberg/ Württemberg*
9. *Drapery "Toledo" for Stuttgarter Gardinenfabrik GmbH, Herrenberg/ Württemberg*
10. *Printed plastics "Tupfenbaum" for Kunstleder Werke GmbH, Göppingen/ Württemberg*
11. *Desk designed by Herbert Hirche for Holzäpfel KG, Ebhausen/ Württemberg*
12. *Storage unit designed by Herbert Hirche for Holzäpfel KG, Ebhausen/ Württemberg*
13. *Secretary's desk and storage unit for Holzäpfel KG, Ebhausen/ Württemberg*
14. *Typewriter table designed by Herbert Hirche for Holzäpfel KG, Ebhausen/ Württemberg*
15. *Radio-phonograph designed by Herbert Hirche for Max Braun, Frankfurt/ Main*
16. *Desk and storage unit designed by Herbert Hirche for Holzäpfel KG, Ebhausen/ Württemberg*
17. *Radio-phonograph designed by Hans Gugelot for Max Braun, Frankfurt/ Main*
18. *Radio designed by Artur Braun and Dr. Fritz Eichler for Max Braun, Frankfurt/ Main*
19. *Radio-phonograph designed by Hans Gugelot and Pieter Rams for Max Braun, Frankfurt/ Main*
20. *Transistor for Max Braun, Frankfurt/ Main*
21. *Portable radio for Max Braun, Frankfurt/ Main*
22. *Glasses designed by A. F. Gangkofner for Peill and Putzler, Düren*
23. *Set of glasses designed by Heinz Löffelhardt for Vereinigte Farbenglaswerke, Zwiesel/ Niederbayern*
24. *Goblets designed by Richard Süßmuth for Richard Süßmuth Glashütte, Immenhausen*

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25. *Decanter and glasses designed by Horst Michel for Fischerhütte, Ilmenau/Thur*
26. *Vases designed by Heinz Löffelhardt for Vereinigte Farbenglaswerke, Zwiesel/Niederbayern*
27. *Pitcher and glasses designed by Richard Süßmuth for Richard Süßmuth Glashütte, Immenhausen*
28. *Glasses designed by Richard Süßmuth for Richard Süßmuth Glashütte, Immenhausen*
29. *Casserole for Jenaer Glasswerk, Mainz*
30. *Coffee and tea service designed by Heinrich Löffelhardt for Schönwald, Schönwald/Oberfranken*
31. *Dinnerware designed by Heinrich Löffelhardt for Porzellanfabrik Schönwald, Schönwald/Oberfranken*
32. *Dinnerware designed by Heinrich Löffelhardt for Porzellanfabrik Arzberg, Arzberg/Oberfranken*
33. *Coffee service designed by Heinrich Löffelhardt for Porzellanfabrik Arzberg, Arzberg/Oberfranken*
34. *Serving bowls for Fürst Adolf-Werksträtte Kunstkeramik, Bückeberg*
35. *Snack set for Fürst Adolf-Werksträtte Kunstkeramik, Bückeberg*
36. *Snack set for Fürst Adolf-Werksträtte Kunstkeramik, Bückeberg*
37. *Stainless steel flatware designed by Kurt Mayer for Württembergische Metalwarenfabrik, Geislingen/Steige*
38. *Coffee grinder for Siemens-Schuckertwerke AG, Berlin*
39. *Meat slicer for Bizerba-Waagen-Verkaufsgesellschaft, Württemberg*
40. *Electrical coffee grinder for Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft, Frankfurt/Main*
41. *Meat grinder for Bizerba-Waagen-Verkaufsgesellschaft, Württemberg*
42. *Vacuum cleaner for Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft, Frankfurt/Main*
43. *Contour measuring projector for Ernst Leitz GmbH, Optische Werke, Wetzlar*
44. *Watering can for Schwäbische Metalwarenfabrik GmbH, Unterleuninggen/Teck*
45. *Portable electric heater for Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft, Frankfurt/Main*
46. *Kitchen machine for Max Braun, Frankfurt/Main*
47. *Electric calculating machine for Brunswiga, Brunswig*
48. *Telephone for Siemens, München*
49. *Telephones for Siemens and Halske AG, Berlin*
50. *Loudspeaker telephone for Siemens and Halske AG, Berlin*

BOOK REVIEWS

SOURCES OF ART NOUVEAU, by *Stephan Tschudi Madsen, George Wittenborn, Inc., New York, 1957. 488 pages, 264 figures. \$18.50.*

As it appears today in historical perspective, Art Nouveau was only one of several new trends of the second half of the nineteenth century trying to liberate art from revivalism and academism and to create a "New Art," "Free" or "Modern." Impressionism with its post-Impressionism branches was the most significant step among the new trends. Architecture—like the minor arts—did not achieve comparable success until almost the end of the century and the beginning of the twentieth. In its more rational aspects it led to the European and American structural metal skeleton, the geometrized classicism of Wagner and Behrens, and the simplified medievalism of the late Richardson, Mackintosh, and Berlage. In its more emotional and dynamic aspects it appeared in Belgium as "Libre Esthetique" (as in the work of Horta), in Germany as "Jugendstil" (Van de Velde, Endell), in Spain as the "Gaudi or Catalan Style," in the U. S. A. as the "Sullivan Compromise," and in France as "Art Nouveau" (Guimard).

Although Belgium gave the style its earliest significant synthesis, it was in France that it received the fullest and most refined realization of its principles, its dominant characteristics and the name by which the style is best known. It shared with its "revolutionary" competitors a strong opposition to the evils of revivalism, but did not break completely with the past and try to create new style. Instead, it made an eclectic synthesis of the elements suited to the volatile enthusiasm of its creators, who hoped to achieve something spectacularly "new."

The ingredients of the Art Nouveau were found in the undulating masses and surfaces of Baroque architecture, in the picturesque plasticity of Baroque and Rococo decorative sculpture, in the subtlety of Rococo, late Gothic and Islamic arches, and in the free sweeping lines of the painting, graphic, and textile arts of Japan and Java. To these historical, endemic, and exotic elements was often incorporated the organic and dynamic lines of vegetable nature. But these were abstracted and stylized, so as to remove them from their purely descriptive function or botanical identity, and translated into graceful forms, in which one may find independent esthetic enjoyment. This "natural" component of the Art Nouveau is also surprisingly suggestive of the Bergsonian theory of the pervasive life-force (*Élan Vital*) which overcomes the inertia of static matter in an effort to express and perpetuate itself. The nearest equivalent in painting is to be found in some landscapes of Van Gogh where the undulating heavenly and earthly forms suggest an artistic vision of a universe writhing in birth pains.

The major results of the Art Nouveau therefore can be said to be a form of eclectic expressionism. Its eclectic syn-

thesis is evident to anyone familiar with the major historical styles. Its expressionist character is felt not only in the choice of dynamic elements from historical and natural forms but in the manner that the media are made to express their tensility, maleability, fluidity, etc.

Despite the efforts of Mackintosh, Wagner, and Sullivan to harmonize the conflict between the rational and emotional currents in the new art, by building in some rationalized historical style and decorating in the Art Nouveau manner, no permanent symbiosis seemed possible. Art Nouveau in its Franco-Belgian form found fulfillment of its objectives—however short its success—in a little more than a decade of phenomenal virtuosity. It then gave way before the all-levelling resurgence of rationalized classicism, early in the twentieth century, because the latter was better suited to the new demands of technological processes and economics. But vestiges of the spirit of Art Nouveau survived in the mycological forms of the early projects of Eric Mendelsohn and the elastic configurations of Dali's fantasmagoric universe.

Despite the brief and limited success of the Art Nouveau, the mystery and complexity of its origins and its fascinating and imaginative synthesis of architecture and the allied arts, it has attracted considerable art historical interest in Europe and America during the past two decades.

The book reviewed here is the first important effort at bringing together the most significant trends towards a "new art"—especially the Art Nouveau in the narrower sense—the personalities which theoretically or practically shaped the movements, and the major bibliographical sources. After a brief prefatory statement, the first major division of the book presents summaries of the condition of the "new art" at its height in each of the several European countries. Part II deals with the origin of the name and the conception of the style, progressive trends such as the Arts and Crafts movement in England and "Japanese and Oriental Influence." Part III is given to the development of the style in the different countries and ends with a summary of the origin and development of the Art Nouveau per se. Part IV, entitled "Sources," consists of lists of recent exhibitions related to the style, catalogues, and different classes of bibliography. A comprehensive index, including the names and dates of the artists, completes the book.

This work will undoubtedly become the major source for further study of the style. The gathering of the many facts, the lending of collective and individual substance to the participating personalities, and even the broad stylistic characterizations are generally good. But the effort to achieve comprehensiveness—though limited to western Europe—at so early a stage in our knowledge of this difficult subject, which should have been preceded by numerous and more limited studies, has weakened the book in several ways. It represents an adequate compilation of historical events and facts rather than integration and mature interpretation of

ideas, styles, and sources in perspective. The organization of the book is confusingly fragmented. The prefatory statement is rather inadequate as an introduction to so complex a problem. The chapter devoted to the sampling of the "new art" at its height in various participating countries is brief and consequently incomplete and invites confusing repetition later under Part III. It would have been preferable to have had a longer introduction with an extended definition of the problem as a whole, and then to have devoted a chapter to each country's contribution. Each chapter would have included any precocious intellectual and artistic tendencies, more precisely defined and illustrated stylistic sources from European and exotic areas and periods, stylistic differentiations between the original sources and their creative adaptation in the new art, etc. The order of treatment would follow some logical and chronological order of priority in which England might be treated first and France last. At this stage of our knowledge even a superior "picture book" with many excellent illustrations preceded by an extended and broad definitional introduction and followed by comprehensive biographical, monumental, and bibliographical indexes might have served scholarship just as well without leading the author to factual errors concerning stylistic sources and premature or indefinite conclusions.

As the book stands the reader will find it difficult to rely on its contents in unfamiliar areas if in the familiar ones he finds ambiguous or unsupported generalizations or erroneous stylistic attributions. Consider a few examples: "The neo-Impressionists and Synthetists to some extent strove to achieve the same esthetic effect ["flat patterns and fixed contours with clear lines"] and also went back to Oriental art." The statement implies that the esthetic objectives of both the neo-Impressionists and the Synthetists were similar or identical, which is not true; and since the Japanese influence is kept apart from the "Oriental" we are left at a loss to know which of the many branches of Orientalism—if any—were used by the different Synthetists and neo-Impressionists.

Elsewhere, discussing the nature of Gaudi's cathedral in Barcelona, the author says that "this building represents a free and imaginative remodelling of the Gothic. Here the inner similarity of form which exists between late Gothic and Baroque rings out unmistakably in neo-Gothic and neo-Baroque. Gaudi is in reality the only artist who has completely fused these very different [sic] style-elements and succeeded in producing a consistent unity." Thus the second sentence contradicts the first and the third contradicts the second. If the author also implies that this is the first instance in which a fusion of the essentials of the Gothic and Baroque has been made he is ignoring at least Vierzenheiligen and eighteenth-century Germany.

Another instance, involving the work of Berlage, is even more disturbing. The author says that in the 1890's the "period aspect" of Dutch architecture was gradually discarded "as the artists turn more and more to pure, undeco-

rated and simple architectural solutions and go back to the old architecture of Egypt and the Near East for inspiration," and that this trend is reflected in the work of Berlage as shown in the evolution of the Amsterdam Exchange illustrated in three projected designs together with the realized building (fig. 228a-d). One may grant that the earliest project might be "neo-Norman" in inspiration. But when he says that the building as built "reminds us in appearance of an Assyrian temple," and then goes on to tell us that through this building Berlage "liberated himself from imitation and created Holland's first piece of modern architecture," he is compounding error with confusion. The building as finished has merely evolved from the first imitative Romanesque-Gothic project to a simplified, "rationalized" form which retains the Romanesque mass and fenestration in the tower and in the semicircular arches at the entrance but has appropriated from the English Perpendicular or Tudor Gothic the large multiple-mullioned window which illuminates the main chamber of the building. As for its resemblance to an "Assyrian Temple," I must confess complete ignorance. All the illustrations of Assyrian Temples which I have seen as restored before 1900 are in the form of Ziggurats. It is possible that the author was thinking of the towers at the entrances of Assyrian palaces but even these would not explain Berlage's building.

A third instance under "Japanese and [sic] Oriental Influence" highlights another kind of inaccuracy. In discussing fig. 105—an illustration by Grasset—the author states that it was done "under marked Japanese influence," without specifying the features which might have been contributed by Japanese art. Since the motifs in the illustration are almost all from Carolingian and post-Carolingian illuminations with some modern touches, one wonders what the author knows of Japanese or medieval art. Even the two-dimensionality of the decorative motifs and the neutral background can be found in early medieval art and nullify the assertion, made elsewhere in the book, that such features in the works of Grasset were a reflection of Japanese influence.

Finally, the book has been poorly edited and its many smaller errors underline the necessity for using it with great caution. Some special circumstances related to the preparation of the book, and possibly in part extenuating, might be mentioned here. It was written in Norwegian, translated by another Norwegian whose mother tongue was not English, and was printed in Norway. The errors range from misuse of words to misprints and misspellings of words and proper names (in three languages!), erroneous punctuations, un-English syllabifications, etc.

For all the foregoing criticism the book is a worthwhile contribution to an important and difficult segment of the modern movement and will serve art historians for many years. They will also be grateful to Mr. Wittenborn for adding another volume to the documentation of modern art.

Dimitri Tselos



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