

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE COMPETITION TO BE AIDED BY SIX DESIGN-RESEARCH TEAMS

The Museum of Modern Art and the Museum Design Project, Inc. announce the names of the six design-research teams, composed of some of the country's best designers and laboratories, who are participating in the International Low-Cost Furniture Competition, as follows:

- Marcel Breuer U. S. Forest Products Laboratory
- Charles Eames University of California, Los Angeles
- Carl Koch Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Robert E. Lewis and Armour Research Foundation, Illinois
James Prestini Institute of Technology
- Donald A. Wallance Midwest Research Institute and
 Yale University School of Forestry
- Harry Weese Armour Research Foundation, Illinois
 Institute of Technology

In the process of developing their designs each design-research team will conduct technological research on methods and materials for low-cost furniture; and each will publish an account of its work, its methods; its findings which should be of extraordinary future value to designers and to the entire industry. The best account will be awarded a \$2,500 prize.

In addition, a special reference service is simultaneously established to supply information on technical questions to any of the competitors, who should address their questions to the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street.

Manufacturers, retailers, designers, research laboratories, all are now co-operating to obtain well-designed, low-cost furniture for the average man's income. The competition does not close until October 31, and yet today with over four months still to go, nearly 1,200 entrants have registered: 463 from 31 foreign countries, 692 from the United States.

The need for such mass-produced, low-cost furniture is apparent when it is realized that business estimates predict an expenditure of some 40 billion dollars on the building of homes in the next ten years. Since building costs per cubic foot have nearly tripled in the past few years, homes will doubtless have to be built smaller; and the furniture

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to go into these homes accordingly should be designed for flexibility and multiple use. With mass production designs based on the best available technological research in new materials and new manufacturing processes, such furniture can be produced at a low-cost level.

The sponsors are concerned that this will not be just a theoretical project on paper, that these designs will actually go into production and sale. Participating manufacturers will have a chance to open negotiations for winning designs to put into mass production, and they also have a guaranteed market in more than 200 cities where participating retailers have agreed to sell the mass-produced items. The Museum will exhibit the final selections in New York and in various other parts of the country; but such exhibitions will not take place until the furniture has actually been produced and is for sale in the local stores.

The need for new directions in the field is frankly admitted by the furniture manufacturers themselves, who recognize that furniture design has not kept pace with design development in other fields. From a business point of view, they realize that this puts them at a disadvantage in competing for the consumer's dollar and, as they pointed out at a recent manufacturers' meeting at the Museum of Modern Art, that "if we don't keep up with the changing world, we are going to wind up behind the 8-ball."

Brief biographies of the designers associated with laboratories to make up the design-research teams are as follows:

Marcel Breuer: Studied and taught at the Bauhaus in Germany where he was director of the department for furniture design. Professor in the Department of Architecture, Harvard University. Created the first tubular steel furniture in 1925; the first springing aluminum furniture in 1933, with which he won two first prizes in the International Aluminum Competition in Paris; the first plastic plywood furniture in 1935, and the first resilient cut-out plywood furniture in 1945.

Charles Eames: Studied architecture at Washington University on scholarship. In 1938, architectural fellowship at Cranbrook Academy of Art. Worked for Eliel and Eero Saarinen during 1939-40. Two first prizes with Eero Saarinen in the Organic Design Competition conducted by the Museum of Modern Art, 1940-41. During war, designed splints for the armed forces in association with the Molded Plywood Division of the Evans Products Company. Exhibition, "New Furniture Designed by Charles Eames," at the Museum of Modern Art in 1946. At present with Evans Products Company.

Carl Koch: Studied Harvard Architectural School. Received Harvard Scholarship and Harvard Bacon Traveling Fellowship. Built houses in Cambridge, Belmont, Lincoln, Fitchburg, Sandwich and elsewhere. Low-cost FHA housing development in Fitchburg, Mass. (with Huson Jackson). Defense housing project in Stamford for NHA (with T. R. Yardley). During war, Senior Housing Research Technician for NHA; U.S. Navy. At present, visiting critic at Yale School of Architecture; Assistant Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Tech-

Carl Koch:

nology, School of Planning and Architecture; working on Childrens' Library, Fitchburg, Mass.; Nursery School, Brookline, Mass.; development and manufacture of pre-fabricated houses; Boston Waterways, Inc.; Cambridge-Belmont-Arlington Shopping Center. Exhibitions at Museum of Modern Art and for O.W.I. First prize with E. D. Stone in Glass Industry Competition and in House and Garden competition.

Robert E. Lewis:

Studied at the University of Chicago. Taught mathematics and science at the Institute of Design in 1940. During war, worked with motion pictures and optical engineering. Officer of Society of Motion Picture Engineers, co-founder of Documentary Film Group of the University of Chicago, member of board of Hyde Park Co-operative Society, President of Evergreen Co-operative Society (housing group), co-founder with James Prestini of Design Seminar of Armour Research Foundation. Works with visual and optical design problems in Physics Research Department of Armour Research Foundation.

James Prestini:

Studied at Sheffield Scientific School and School of Education, Yale University; University of Stockholm (furniture design), and the Institute of Design, Chicago. Taught at Lake Forest Academy, Institute of Design, Mills College, North Texas State Teachers College and Black Mountain College. Designs exhibited widely here and abroad (Baltimore Museum of Art, Cleveland Museum of Art, Walker Art Center, Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Modern Art, Smithsonian Institute and the University of Stockholm among others). Designs in permanent collections of Cleveland Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Northwestern University and other institutions. At present with the Armour Research Foundation.

Donald A. Wallance:

Studied design and technology at Design Laboratory, Pratt Institute and University of Minnesota. In 1940, appointed technical director responsible for design and standards of products manufactured in the industrial workshops of the National Youth Administration for Louisiana. In 1942, joined the Research and Development Branch, Office of the Quartermaster General, developing new designs suited for use under varying climatic conditions and suitable for production in large quantities. At present designing new lines of office furniture and luggage and serving as consultant to the Office of the Quartermaster General.

Harry Weese:

Graduated 1938 Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Received fellowship in city planning under Saarinen at Cranbrook Academy of Art. First prize with Benjamin Baldwin for outdoor furniture in the Organic Design Competition conducted by the Museum of Modern Art, 1940. First prize in Productive Homes Competition, Midwest Region. Associated with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1946-7. At present independently practicing architecture in Chicago.