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Celebrating 175: Florence Knoll Bassett, Letters (1960s), 1961-1968

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collaborators, for example Harry Bertola, even if these efforts were not directly connected with the actual production program. It is in this spirit that Knoll International GmbH in Stuttgart and all other branches arrange exhibitions of general cultural interest. German and international artists and architects are invited to show their work and to lecture, and thus, a forum for the exchange of

Page 11

ideas and experiences is created which in turn stimulates the work of Knoll International in all its branches. It was of the greatest interest for the new generation of architects to have the privilege of meeting two of the most dynamic Italian architects of international repute, Pier Luigi Nervi and Gio Ponti. The exhibition of works of Gio Ponti in Stuttgart showed clearly in its harmonic concert between actual models of rooms and the pictorial display of the architectural work of Ponti, that the "international style" contrary to what its enemies say, on the one hand, is the logical result of more rational thought and expression and, on the other hand, although starting from the same premise, takes on individual form. The element of the unpredictable inherent in all creative effort overrides the limits of rational sobriety.

Page 12

Harry Bertola, whose graceful wire basket chairs seem to be a reduction of his free metal compositions to a system of applied wire geometry, is one of the most successful artists of the Italian school of "irrational-rational" design. Its roots can be found in the sketch books of Leonardo da Vinci. Bertola finds stimulation for his free, creative work in the discipline of applied design.

Page 13

Applied design in turn finds ever new inspiration in its devotion to free art. Something of the poetry of metal reverberates in Bertola's seemingly disembodied chair design, which, surprisingly and at the same time symbolically, has become one of the most convincing forms of expression of contemporary design. Here is particularly obvious proof that "less can be more."

Page 14

The elegant designs and color line of Knoll International are found all over the world: in reception areas, in office and conference rooms of great industrial enterprises as well as in public and government buildings, giving a pleasantly clean and at the same time stimulating effect. The deep royal blue and the bright orange red, the dull black and the neat gray of the wool covers in combination with the warm gold tone of the light leathery upholstery, this together with chrome, white or black metal or wire constructions, give the chairs and armchairs of the Knoll collection their very special note.

Page 15

Added to this are the esthetic charms of the precious materials of the table tops, marble or polished glass, the beautiful wood of the cabinets and desks. Wherever a good, contemporary building furnishes a sympathetic frame for these pleasant things, room and furnishings become one salutary organic whole. The harmonic interplay becomes most delightful where, in addition, a work of art accentuates the beauty of the functional and stresses its complete validity. A fascinating example of this is provided by the great hall of the Landtags building of the State of Baden-Wuerttemberg in Stuttgart.

Page 11

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