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*Archives of American Art*

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

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Florence Knoll's earliest successes resulted mainly from the fact that she was given the opportunity to furnish a number of important American enterprises. These office furnishings showed themselves functional in two ways. They were designed for efficiency and were at the same time esthetically satisfactory. Their practicability and stimulating color scheme had a beneficial influence upon the atmosphere of the entire plant. Notwithstanding their emphasis on functional design, they satisfied the demands of representative appearance which is just as important in the modern glass and steel administrative building as it was in the thickly walled-in, plush and leather upholstered palace of industry of yore.

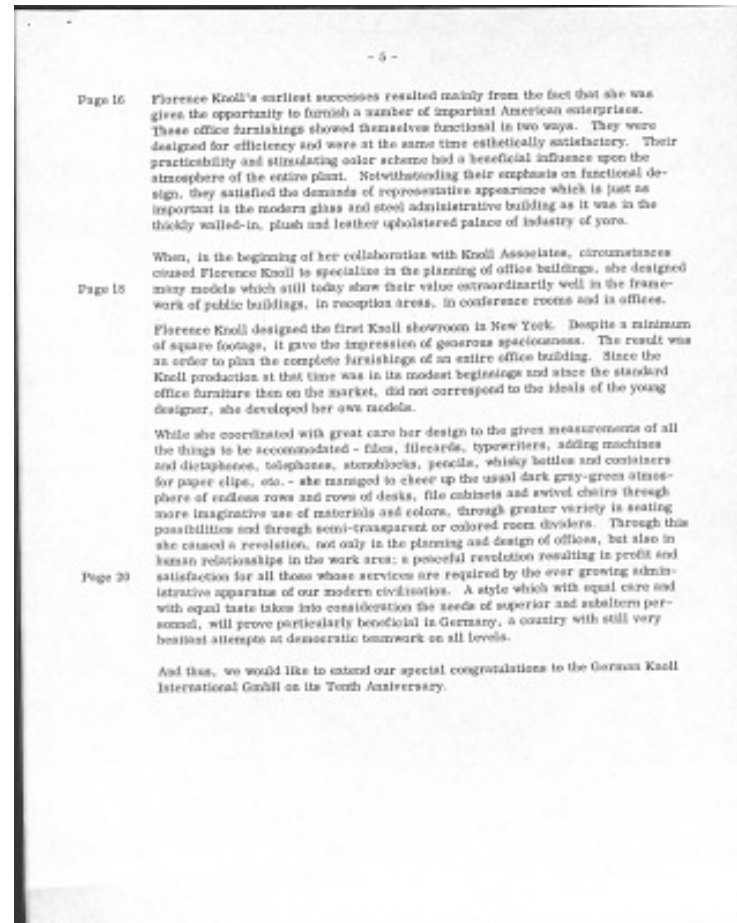
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When, in the beginning of her collaboration with Knoll Associates, circumstances caused Florence Knoll to specialize in the planning of office buildings, she designed many models which still today show their value extraordinarily well in the framework of public buildings, in reception areas, in conference rooms and in offices.

Florence Knoll designed the first Knoll showroom in New York. Despite a minimum of square footage, it gave the impression of generous spaciousness. The result was an order to plan the complete furnishings of an entire office building. Since the Knoll production at that time was in its modest beginnings and since the standard office furniture then on the market, did not correspond to the ideas of the young designer, she developed her own models.

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While she coordinated with great care her design to the given measurements of all the things to be accommodated - files, filecards, typewriters, adding machines and dictaphones, telephones, stenoblocks, pencils, whisky bottles and containers for paper clips, etc. - she managed to cheer up the usual dark gray-green atmosphere of endless rows and rows of desks, file cabinets and swivel chairs



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