



Livable Modernism: Interior Decorating and Design During the Great Depression (Yale University Art Gallery S)

Kristina Wilson

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During the years of the Great Depression in America, modernist designers developed products and lifestyle concepts intended for middle-class—not elite—consumers. In this remarkable book, Kristina Wilson coins the term “livable modernism” to describe this school of design.

Livable modernism combined International Style functional efficiency and sophistication with a respect for consumers’ desires for physical and psychological comfort. Wilson offers a new view of many popular designs for living rooms, dining rooms, and bedrooms of the 1930s and investigates the remarkable marketing savvy of the furniture and decorative arts companies of the day. As the first study of the advertising and retailing of modern design during the Depression years, *Livable Modernism* also features an extensive array of vintage advertisements from such popular magazines as *House Beautiful* and *Ladies’ Home Journal*.

Engagingly written and handsomely designed, *Livable Modernism* is an essential book for anyone interested in modern furniture and decorative arts. The author demonstrates that the work of these designers—including Russel Wright, Donald Deskey, and Gilbert Rohde—paved the way for Charles and Ray Eames and other post-World War II designers, and that the importance of their philosophies, innovations, and influence has until now been underappreciated.

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