

Functional goals keynote Design exhibits

Appeal made to sight and touch

By Henry Holmes

Functionalism isn't just a theme at the Institute of Design; it's an obsession.

For four years functionalism is hammered into students, then they're thoroughly fitted to produce such phenomenally functional items as a piece of wood shaped to please the hand . . . or a chair built of paper.

Making and understanding the problems concerned is a key part of the study process. All the engineering problems of the chair built of paper are conquered, but the fashion problem remains.

It develops that current styles—particularly in women's clothes—will lead to extreme discomfort for persons sitting in these chairs. The Institute is now working on clothes that can be worn while sitting in the paper chair. However, there have been no blatant suggestions that the birthday suit may yet be the most appropriate.

Some people claim that the Institute of Design is up in the air about things. Certainly members of the Institute can't deny that—and it's all because of functionalism. Nothing that can be hung from the ceilings is placed on the floor. The Institute is noted for a conspicuous lack of trash and useless furniture.

Ethereal items strongly reminiscent of tinker toys, erector sets, torn hair nets, and toothpicks dangle from the ceiling and massage the students' scalps in classrooms. According to the devious thinking of the inhabitants, these ornaments are not only logical, they're functional.

After four years of intensive study inhabitants emerge with a quality they feel is extremely rare in other men—an appreciation of form.

Their chief target is developing an understanding of all of one's senses, particularly those of touch and sight. Graduates should be capable of pin-pointing an outstanding design at distances which would discourage any normal mortal. Once the form is sighted, the sense of touch plays a key part.

"When this understanding is accomplished," observed one member of the Institute, "it must be linked with the knowledge of the material with which a person is working. This gives him a basis of approach for his designs and he arrives at the form."

In this respect embryo designers are given an opportunity to create from two dimensional line work an object that is not only pleasing to the sight but also to the touch. Beginners usually concern themselves with a small piece of wood and the finished product is so worked and polished that the inherent beauty of the wood is not only brought out but also fits the form for which it was intended. Thus a handle for a drill press would not only be pleasing to the eye but would also fit the palm of the hand.

This same handle also functions under a psychological aspect. If, for instance, it was involved with a dangerous operation on the machine the design would be so as to more-or-less warn the operator of the hazardous features.

This approach is used in the design of operating throttles and levers in aircraft. Thus a lever which lets the landing wheels down would move downward for this operation and would be shaped like a landing wheel.

In their exhibit the Institute demonstrates some very elementary household mechanisms. An eggbeater with a handle shaped to fit the palm of the hand, is actually less tiresome to use than the more standard forms. A screw driver with what resembles a pota-



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to masher top operates more easily and with less force than the straight-handled type. This attitude applies to a hacksaw, and, of course, to the paper-pressed chair.

In the problem of design concerning the chair, there are also certain economy features. The chair is cheaper than traditional forms, it is easier to clean because it has no unobtrusive corners, and it can be mass-produced with very few industrial operations.

The more blasé personality views the aims of the Institute with an upraised eyebrow claiming its inhabitants are too arty for the everyday approach to living. Some even go so far as to claim that it was here the polka dot shirt was invented. Nevertheless, the Institute continues to turn out accomplished product designers whose innovations in the field are being more and more widely accepted.

Such prominent architects as Frank Lloyd Wright and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe are active members with the aims of the Institute. For those who are not familiar, we got may be remembered as the designer of the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, the only structure that remained intact during a disastrous earthquake in Japan. Mies van der Rohe's architectural genius is readily apparent on the IIT campus.

In keeping with the concepts of Wright and Mies van der Rohe, the Institute flaunts tradition in almost every elementary aspect. In certain cases the approach is paradoxical. Thus, in developing the proverbial mousetrap, the question may be of an historical nature and the designer may find himself asking the reason for killing mice in this manner. Rather than improvement there is a complete breaking down and the end result may be a contraption which catches mice by the tail.

Above all the average student at the Institute is in love with his work and undergraduates may be found in the many design laboratories working long into the night.

EVENTS

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be awarded to the winners of each tournament.

Oh, that icing!

The opportunity which all our culinary minded engineers have eagerly awaited is about to arrive. A new feature of Junior Week this year will be a cake baking contest open to all male students and faculty members.

Those students who do not have adequate facilities of their own will be able to use the Home Economics department's mixing utensils and ovens in the Home Ec kitchens, 18 South Michigan, from 8 until 10 p.m. on Friday. Students will be requested to bring their own ingredients plus a baking tin.

Judging will be held in the NU cafeteria on Saturday, at 2:30 p.m.

Sailing, sailing

IIT's ocean-going Techawks, more commonly called the Sea-hawks, will have a fully-rigged sailing dinghy, together with pictures of its members' sailing activities, in the Psychology building.

Charts of the Great Lakes will be posted and information will be available concerning the championship regatta to be held the weekend of Junior Week at the Columbia Yacht club. The other schools participating will be Northwestern, University of Chicago, Notre Dame, Washington, University of Washington and the University of Minnesota.

Midget choo-choos

Model "Wheels A'Rollin'" is the title chosen by the IIT Model Railroaders for the exhibit this year in 600M.

Visitors will see long freight "drags," sleek passenger trains, and stubby switchers shunting in the yards. Those who are electrically inclined will find interest in the method by which signals from towers are automatically reproduced on the mainline cabs.

EXHIBITS

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ment's exhibit will be a brain-teasing peep show that promises to arouse the interest of all. A display of machinery used for drawing and reproduction will enable visitors to see the latest in drafting's mechanization. Drafting machines that will be shown include the "ellipsograph," the "pictograph," a sensational tracing table and a "variograph" machine that will letter any type style.

Electron microscope

Ever-popular demonstrations of colorful polarized light compete with high voltage phenomena for the attention of viewers of the physics exhibit. These thrills are followed by chills in the display of low temperature effects induced by liquid air.

A little looks like a lot when viewed through the department's electron microscope, a part of the exhibit for the first time this year.

Heat gets Beat

The Fire Protection Engineering Department will have as one of its many exhibits a colossal display from the Cardox Company. A small railway car, filled with alcohol will be set afire and towed into a miniature room protected with a low pressure CO₂ system. Heat actuating devices will set off this efficient system and smother the fire. A short demonstration of fire extinguishers includes the use of a self quizzing machine. A third phase of this exhibition will show the use of "wet" water in fire extinguishment.

Got tax problems?

A swift and breezy course which carries the visitor through the various phases of the business world, and one which is guaranteed to make the exasperating problem of income tax crystal clear will be featured by the business and economics department. In addition, the BE majors have rigged up a brain teasing electrical

apparatus which entertains and educates the casual observer with a series of questions and answers on pertinent economic topics.

Vote by machine

An actual voting machine is shown to visitors of the Political Science department along with a program illustrating the tactics of persuasion. This program includes a recorded dramatization and analysis of propaganda methods.

Are you breathing?

A main feature of the Biology department show will be the demonstration of a true-life ant colony showing the worker ants, nurse ants (honest), and all the other varied professions of ants contributing their share to the ant life.

A pneumograph (part of a lie detector) will be on hand to help you find out where your best girl actually was the night she said she was sitting up with a sick aunt.

Also included in the display will be plants flown in from Guatemala to illustrate hormonal activity of plant life; germination of seeds on nutrient agar (???); butyl alcohol fermented from corn, with samples for the strong-stomached Techawk; and the latest competitor of the electric light—luminous bacteria.

How to set a table

Those of the Open House visitors who are in the "If I knew you were coming I'd have baked a cake" category find this year's Home Economics display an oasis of relief from the mass of technical engineering exhibits seen almost everywhere else on the campus.

One of the main points of interest is the demonstration of accepted table setting techniques, intended, among other reasons, for those who sometimes have difficulty in remembering whether the salad is placed on the right, left, or dead center. Housewives who consider their families under or over-nourished find comfort in the schedule of well-balanced meals carefully prepared by Te'h's increasingly important home economics school.