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Preliminary Note

L. B. first recalls the old dream of an "integration of all the arts", which, from town-planning to objects of use, could initiate us into a harmonious civilization; then, in a preface, he shows that, contrary to the situation reflected in current discussions in Germany, for example, certain Swiss department stores are attempting to educate the public with their products (and their lay-outs). What will the result be: better sense of design in the future, or, more prosaically, an increase in sales? However that may be, this issue, leaving aside mass-selling articles, concentrates solely on creations of "industrial design" that seek to be nothing more than experimental studies.

Out of the Mainstream

by Lucius Burckhardt

In Van de Velde's Memoirs there is an echo of the important discussion on the question as to whether the objects proceeding from the principles applied by the «Werkbund» were to be unique works of art, or, on the contrary, "types" to be put into mass production. At the time of the debate the majority was for the first thesis, but developments since that time have returned a verdict in favour of the second. Nevertheless, contrary to the hopes that it had been possible to nourish, the truth had to be faced that industrial production is far from determining clearly new forms and that, even more than handicrafts, it is exposed to the influence of fashion. The extreme variability of the formal aspect only presents us in a still more urgent manner with the problem of providing training in industrial design. The present issue presents two methods which are as distinct as they are equally legitimate. One, worked out by Paul Schatz (Dornach) is based on a mathematical-functional analysis of the most simple regular bodies, for example, the "reversible cube" described here, the theoretical study of which has suddenly issued in practical applications in the field of mixing machines. In his activity as professor at the School of Applied Arts in Zurich, Karl Schmid, on the other hand, has his pupils execute works whose form proceeds from an insight into the nature of the material employed. In both methods there is no question of imitating the designs of the pioneers but rather of preparing creations of which it will be possible to say perhaps that they tended to a "design" which is beyond the formalism of yesterday and the modernism of today.

Experiments with Regular Bodies—Works by Paul Schatz, Dornach

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If the preceding article explains, among other things, why Paul Schatz's researches are important, two citations (lack of space prevents their inclusion here) reveal their theoretical interest; one is borrowed from Plato's *Timaeus*, the other from the treatise "De divina proportione" (1509) by Fra Luca Pacioli.

Experiments in the Teaching of Industrial Design by Karl Schmid

by Rudolf Brennenstuhl

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Originally a carpenter, then a maker of surgical and biological drawings, K. S., designer, engraver, painter, sculptor, creator of tapestries, teaches at the School of Applied Arts in Zurich. As in his art (both in his representational and in his non-representational work), he always proceeds as if hearkening to his material; he seeks in his teaching to get his pupils to practise concentrating at great length and intensively on the material to be transformed, looking at it from the standpoint both of craftsmanship and of aesthetics. The examples published in this issue ("salad cover", relief in black slate, two collages, pointilliste image, shape in gilt bronze) are student projects realized for the most part in rare woods and not intended for use; their aim is to familiarize the pupil with the material as such, the design being, as it were, discovered *within* the actual wood in the course of the work.

Workshop Projects of the Decorators' Class of the School of Arts and Crafts in Basle; Professor: Ernst Nielsen, Basle

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The problem was to find a joint between two planks to be assembled longitudinally (the result obtained—an extensible bookcase—was set only to concretize the task, but it has no importance per se). The solutions required (longitudinal joints, capable of being disassembled, of vertical planks, and if need be horizontal ones) had to be realized with maximum economy, without any adventitious formal concern, the design being limited throughout to being the result of a purely constructive logic. As can be seen in the issue itself, we are publishing 12 projects by 12 pupils, which can as it happens be grouped in 4 sets of 3.

417 Statics and Aesthetics; Projects by Werner Blaser, Basle 439

Except as regards the first example (a plexiglass cross, where, however, the joints are essential in the design), the problem again in the work of W. Bl., shown here, is that of wooden joints. In fact, the joint can be considered as the primary element, and, one may venture to add, the mainspring or the germ of Blaser's creations. In nearly all our examples, we have handcrafted pieces taking the joint as a decorative motif (but without definite decorative intention in the negative sense of prettification) ending in a restrained constructivism evoking—albeit discreetly—certain modernistic tendencies of the Twenties, but always justified by the essential rightness of the craftsmanship.

418 Henri Laurens

by Helmi Gasser

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Born in a working-class family in Paris in 1885, H. L. died there in 1954. After attending various schools and art studios, in 1911, which was rather late, he came in contact with cubism and joined forces with Apollinaire and Max Jacob. His first exhibition was in 1913 at the Salon des Indépendants. In 1915, he won the friendship of Picasso and created sculptures on polychrome sheet metal. The year 1925 marked the end of his cubist period. In 1935 he was awarded the Hélène Rubinstein Prize. A large exhibition was devoted to him at the Museum of Modern Art of Paris in 1951. In 1953, sculpture award at the Biennale of São Paulo.—What is dominant in his work is the primary sense of volume, at first cubist, then cubic, finally assuming the shape of what could be called a free parabola of the human body. The last period, in which bronze is substituted for stone, unfolds in a spirit of dynamism, in a joyous feeling of equilibrium and awareness of elementary forces, embodied in a profusion of beings, snatched, one might say, from the depths and possessing the allurements of sirens.

On Bresdin

by Heinz Keller

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Born in 1822 on the border of Anjou and Brittany, Rodolphe Bresdin, who died at Sèvres in 1885, represents one of the cases, so rare today, of a secret glory, for if he is unknown to many, absent from most print-rooms, a few enthusiasts and a number of collectors are his fervent admirers, without prejudice to the exhibitions that have been devoted to him the last few years by the Rijksmuseum of Amsterdam and the Museum of Modern Art of New York. Nevertheless, painters and, what is even more significant, writers above all and poets, Baudelaire, Gautier and Hugo, have been interested in him (not to mention the tale of Champfleury where he plays the role of the hero, "Chien-Caillou", whose surname he kept). The Symbolists, with "A rebours" by Huysmans and with Montesquiou celebrated him as well, and at the same time we owe to Odilon Redon, who was his pupil, the best pages ever devoted to him. However, official criticism had only disdain for him, which we can understand when we realize how alien to his time was the art of Bresdin in its obsessional quality and its timelessness, qualities that awake in us moderns so many associations (e.g. surrealism and the work of Saul Steinberg). This does not mean to say that he is one of us: he was a visionary and a "naïf", a solitary artist to be rediscovered by other solitaires, or at any rate by small numbers of admirers.