



Heal's Posters

Advertising Modernism

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ISBN 9780993587894

Publisher Artmonsky Arts

Binding Paperback / softback

Territory World excluding US & Canada

Size 175 mm x 215 mm

Pages 124 Pages

Illustrations 100 color, 48 b&w

Price £10.00

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A survey by Nicklaus Pevsner in the 1930s estimated that some 80-90% of manufactured goods in England were shoddy and poorly designed. When it came to furniture only a handful of manufacturers would have escaped such condemnation. Prime among these was Heals of Tottenham Court Road – manufacturer, retailer, and, with its top floor Mansard Gallery, the Mecca for Home Counties cognoscenti of 'modernism'. Most furniture manufacturers advertised their wares in the press but Heal's was a rare exception in the industry in its use of posters.

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Furniture Posters

Two events, in the years between the wars, were to have a major influence on furniture design – the foundation of the Bauhaus in 1919 and the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes held in Paris in 1925. The first was a school of design and the second a major exhibition of modern design. Both were from the Bauhaus as 'self-governing manufacturers'; while Peter Behrens, the architect, was the driving force behind the exhibition.

For while the advocates of modernism, through the very clearest of their propaganda, seemed to have claimed the world of art and design for themselves, the exhibition was a triumph for a British, a 'World Fit for Heroes'. As we see in the recently-corrected version of the exhibition's title, the emphasis was on the declaration of new virtues, more personal and generous than those of the Bauhaus, and more democratic than those of the Paris.

Although the Bauhaus only existed four years, its influence

