

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

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PRESS RELEASE for

Speech for the opening of the
Pola Stout Exhibition
at Bennington College
Bennington, Vermont

by

Alexander Dorner

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Why is the exhibition we are opening here so important? Because it shows the work of an artist named Pola Stout who is one of the most important--if not the most important--of the pioneers in the field of applied arts.

All around us these arts have reached a new low. Never before have artistic imagination and scientific function been split so disastrously. One has only to look at our automobiles, where the so-called free imagination is more than obviously superimposed upon the functioning body. These cars pretend to be airplanes, disturbed layer-cakes, or otherwise chaotic combinations of truly wild colors and God knows what. And look at the ties of our males, where nudes rest under palms, or sea-gulls are crossing over sailboats, and, last but not least, at the dresses of our women. A chaotic change for change's sake has been burying the personality of the woman under a heap of ever new senselessly "free" inventions.

Here Pola Stout comes in. She studied at the Kunst Gewerbe Schule and at the Wiener Werkstaetten. Soon she freed herself from the still too academic line of the Werkstaetten to become a follower of the Bauhaus movement. And in this atmosphere she tied her color schemes to the scientific discipline of Ostwald's famous color theory, combining it with her own similar discipline. The results are her wonderful creations of sequences of colors and fabrics. They enable every woman to choose her own line to become her specific self again. Out goes the more than obvious business of ever novel designs that turn women more and more into caricatures.

Even if the Museum of Modern Art had not made the exhibition, "Textiles USA" of August-November, 1956, we would know by now that this dance of clownery and insanity is near its end.

Now there is rising a new type of American woman who is disciplined in her dresses, no longer uniformized in a chaotic way but open to a deeper, ever growing evolution of her specific personality. She will dress herself throughout the years, so to speak, in a coherent sequence of suits, skirts, coats, etc., which all fit and tie in with one another and her personality.

Pola Stout's aim is to create in her field an integrated society of individuals who are dressed both in their own style and at the same time on a common scientific basis.

Thus the genius of Pola Stout visualizes a completely new integration of artistic and scientific creativeness and of individuality and social unity. In this way she is freeing us, in an hour of dire need, from the paralyzing split between sciences and arts as well as from the equally paralyzing chaos of change for change's sake.

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