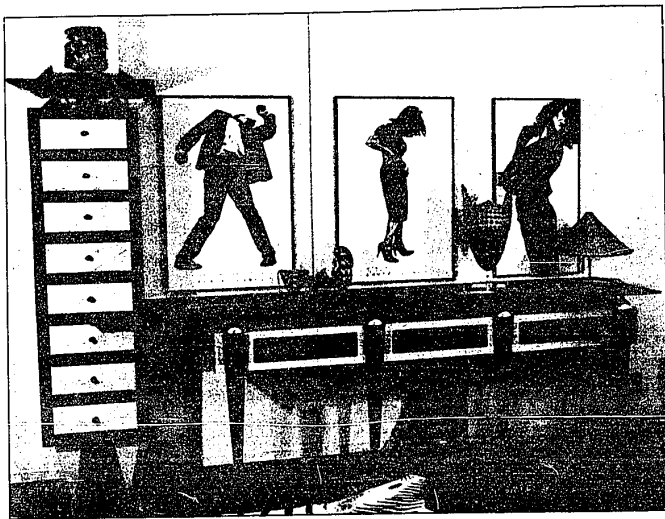


## COVER STORY



Thoroughly modern: Linda Golden featured sleek modernism furnishings in a show-room (above). Gustav Stickley, whose bookcase is at right, was one of the modernism designers.



Stickley speaking: This piece by Gustav Stickley shows the simple, handsome style of modernism.

BY MARY KLEMIC  
AT HOME KRM/C

Some "modern times" and you may conjure up thoughts of the Charlie Chaplin movie of that name, in which Chaplin's beleaguered character struggles with the Machine Age.

But if you're speaking of "modern times" as in the modernism style, the reaction in real life is different from that in Chaplin's reel life. People are comfortable with modernism and its wide variety, from the lava lamp to art deco pieces to sleek furniture designs.

"I'm sure everybody has something (of modernism) in the house," said interior designer Tom Verwest.

Modernism style is free of ornamentation. It runs the whole gamut of furnishings, including furniture, wallpaper, glass, ceramic and silver; and is considered more affordable and accessible than other styles. Famous names are among its designers — such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Salvador Dali and Gustav Stickley, founder of the American arts and crafts movement.

Examples of modernism pieces are bleached wood coffee tables, black and chrome tables and lamps, trumpet lamps and tubular aluminum furniture.

Modernism has the ability for people to live with it easily, said interior designer David Weiss.

"It's nice and clean and sleek looking," he said. "It's a classic."

"It's really really very timeless," said interior designer Linda Golden.

"People relate to it."

# MODERNISM OFFERS STYLE FOR ALL TIME

Verwest's living room is an attractive arrangement of modernism elements. It features people Art-Jacobson egg chairs and gliders with a vibrant Alexander Girard design. It can be mixed with any style in any room, Verwest said.

"Good design is good design."

One of Golden's showrooms with modernism style included a table in mahogany, maple, ebony, platinum and gold, and a Leucois banded lamp.

Southeastern Michigan is rich in the modernism heritage. Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen were two young architects with the Cranbrook Academy of Art when they won top honors in the Organic Design in Home Furnishings competition in the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1940. Their designs set the tone for style in the 1950s and 1960s.

English reformists William Morris and John Ruskin were among those at the end of the 19th century who founded workshops and guilds to elevate the status of the worker and the work. They had been appalled at the dehumanization of the worker by the machine.

Their reaction led to the decorative arts movement. Stickley introduced these ideas in the United States. The movement was called art nouveau in France and was more fanciful. Tiffany brought art nouveau style to America.

After World War I, the Society of Artists Decorators in France promoted the supremacy of decorators through regular shows. "Les Expositions des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels" in 1925 was so effective a showcase for French

designers that "les arts deco" became the popular abbreviation for the style.

Economic necessities of the Great Depression resulted in the Moderne design movement, which featured tubular steel and glass. Advances in transportation led to the Streamline movement, with clocks, radios and other objects designed to resemble trains, planes and autos.

"It takes its roots from a lot of different places," Weiss said of modernism. "Sleeker furniture — very clean and very neat. Charles Rennie Mackintosh (from the) 1910s and 1920s. The people from the Bauhaus movement in Germany."

"It is really 20th century design, anything from 1900 on to the present ... The arts and crafts period, right up through the deco period, '30s and into the '50s and '70s, right up into the '80s," Verwest said.

The Detroit Area Art Deco Society, a private, not-for-profit corporation, is going strong in its 10th year. The DAADS was founded in 1986 by a group of collectors and enthusiasts interested in the decorative objects, architecture and style of the art deco period. DAADS members are active in a variety of projects, such as preservation projects and a yearly preview party for the Michigan Modernism Exposition. The third annual exposition took place in Southfield last weekend.

"Twentieth century decoration is something we have a recollection of," said Ann Duke of the Duke Gallery in Royal Oak, a member of the DAADS. "Different (modernism) objects that we see that are popular now we remember from our childhood."

## On the cover:

Interior designer Tom Verwest's living room is decorated with modernism elements. Photo by Beth Singer.



## EXAMPLES OF MODERNISM

PIECES ARE  
BLEACHED  
WOOD COFFEE  
TABLES.  
BLACK AND  
CHROME  
TABLES AND  
LAMPS.  
TRUMPET  
LAMPS AND  
TUBULAR  
ALUMINUM  
FURNITURE.