

1949

## Breuer: Modern Designer

MARCEL BREUER: ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER. By Peter Blake. 128 pp. New York: Museum of Modern Art. \$2.50, paper. \$4, cloth.

By ALINE LOUCHHEIM

IN the Museum of Modern Art's garden, against a dramatic backdrop of the Renaissance-palace-like University Club and the brownstone houses of West Fifty-fourth Street, stands the small modern exhibition house designed by Marcel Breuer. It is a mere sample of work by this distinguished architect, work which exists not only in Europe but all over America.

Marcel Breuer, Hungarian-born and trained in the famous Bauhaus School in Germany, is summed up in this new monograph as "part technician, part artist: the man who can creatively select the best elements that industrialism has to offer, and who can relate them in patterns that only an artist could conceive."

He is further important as a link between the turbulent, pioneer days of the Twenties, when much of the credo of modern

architecture was evolved, and today, when the style is steadily gaining acceptance. And both as teacher at Harvard and as a successfully practicing architect, he has had telling influence on many of our young designers.

The author of this book, curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art, underlines Breuer's special talents: his ability to organize a plan with clarity and flexibility in terms of family living; his discriminating use of bright color and varied textures; his adherence to "purist" concepts of clean detail; the separation of man-made objects from nature without denial of site or atmosphere; his adept handling of space in terms of interlocking volumes and masses; and his assimilation of modern technical methods.

To this reader, the otherwise excellent little volume must be questioned on two counts. One, it fails to evaluate Breuer against such other great contemporary architects as Mies van der Rohe and Frank Lloyd Wright. Two, by avoiding discussion of those buildings which would involve adverse criticism, the book lacks the depth it might have had.

*Mrs. Louchheim is an art critic of this newspaper.*

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