

# The New York Times

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WEEKEND FINE ARTS/ LEISURE

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## ART IN REVIEW

### 'The 1940's'

### 'Modern American Art and Design'

Michael Rosenfeld Gallery

24 West 57th Street, Manhattan

Through Nov. 1

Neatly packed into Rosenfeld's smaller rear gallery, "The 1940's: Modern American Art and Design" is set up like the living room of a sharp-eyed collector of Modernist antiques. Among more than 40 objects are small paintings by Adolph Gottlieb, Dorothea Tanning, Burgoyne Diller and others; sculpture by Alexander Calder and José de Rivera; furniture by Charles and Ray Eames, Frank Lloyd Wright and Marcel Breuer; ceramics by Russel Wright and Eva Zeisel; and an American Philco radio and a Zenith Mayflower television. (Mark McDonald, a decorative arts dealer in Hudson, N.Y., helped organize the show.)

The intersection of so many different aesthetic and intellectual projects is exciting to ponder. All those -isms: Cubism, Constructivism, Symbolism, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Futurism, primitivism, utopianism and more. How are they all related? Is there some familial connectedness underlying the diversity and contradiction? If so, it might be that all share a drive to get at the essence of something, to uncover archetypal fundamentals of form, feeling and imagination. This is, admittedly, an old story about Modernism, but it's refreshing to see it recast in such quasi-domestic terms.

In the larger exhibition space is a show of gouache paintings by Charmion von Weigand (1898-1983), whose loopy, primary-colored improvisations — all made in 1945 — look like collaborations between Mondrian and Miró. They are as lightweight as the paper they're made on, but they do have an infectious, playful energy.

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