

## **Nationalism and Modernism: Rethinking Scandinavian Design in Canada, 1950–1970**

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Article abstract

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Cet article considère le rôle du design scandinave dans la recherche d'une identité visuelle canadienne au cours des décennies suivant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Nous examinons le discours provenant d'instances gouvernementales et institutionnelles, ainsi que des revues professionnelles d'art et d'architecture : le « moderne scandinave » s'est ainsi vu recontextualisé et approprié par des institutions qui cherchaient à améliorer tant le goût du public que les industries du design au Canada, et est devenu un modèle pour un design canadien potentiellement « authentique ». Nous examinons le mobilier conçu par Sigirin Bülow-Hübe, née en Suède et installée au Canada, et le comparons à l'appropriation de styles scandinaves par des concepteurs nés au Canada, afin d'explorer les effets de ces emprunts sur le design canadien.

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1. Kjetil Fallan, ed., "Introduction," *Scandinavian Design: Alternative Histories* (New York, 2012).

2. *Ibid.*, 4–6.

3. *Ibid.*, 3–6.

4. Alan C. Elder, "Introduction," *Made in Canada: Craft and Design in the Sixties*, ed. Alan C. Elder (Montreal, 2005), 4.

5. The National Industrial Design Council set out principles for judging "good design" in Canadian products for the NIDC Design Awards established in 1953.

6. For the impact of Expo 67 on Canadian design in terms of its national and international significance see Harris Mitchell, "What's

In his 2012 book *Scandinavian Design: Alternative Histories*, design historian Kjetil Fallan argues for an understanding of "Scandinavian Design" as a constructed category developed in 1950s Britain and North America for the showcasing of contemporary design from Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Sweden.<sup>1</sup> The term served as a promotional tool for a narrow range of design objects conforming to modernist notions of aesthetic quality. The simplistic characterizations of these objects in trade and professional journals, popular magazines, and design histories since the 1950s have perpetuated the idea that furniture and furnishings that were "humane," "democratic," "organic," and "blond" could be aestheticized and mythologized as essentially "Scandinavian."<sup>2</sup> As Fallan demonstrates, this notion of "Scandinavian Design" as a unifying cultural designation must be distinguished from "Scandinavian design" as an analytic category, a tool for exploring the codes that coexist within complex and contested regional and national contexts.<sup>3</sup>

This paper explains how Scandinavian Design as a cultural category operated in Canadian design discourse during the 1950s and 1960s as a site of appropriation, emulation, and contestation. According to craft and design curator Alan Elder, a search for a national visual identity in Canada had begun in the immediate postwar period and was espoused by public institutions and manufacturers. This search involved a particular conceptualization of modern life that relied on the notion of "good design" in manufactured objects.<sup>4</sup> Within the nascent Canadian industrial design movement, good design was largely understood through the filter of the British and especially the Scandinavian industrial design movements, whose objects and aesthetic values were seen to be based on modern ideas of "simplicity, fine proportion and functional utility."<sup>5</sup> Scandinavian modern design was thus recruited in these years as part of Canadian designers' struggle to find a national visual identity. By the late 1960s, and most explicitly in Expo 67, there had arisen a new conception of Canada as an "international" country, one that had entered the world stage and whose visual design had taken on an "international meaning."<sup>6</sup> In this context, Michael Prokopow has argued, the appropriation of Scandinavian modernism as the signature style of the 1960s in Canada—in thousands of consumer products—may be understood as the domestic manifestation of the modernizing mission.<sup>7</sup> For Prokopow, Canadian designers' embrace of Scandinavian design "represented a critically important moment in the nation's post-war ideological, social, and cultural history."<sup>8</sup>

In this article, I examine the role of Scandinavian design in the search for a Canadian visual identity during the postwar decades, during which a network of official and public actors, as well as designers themselves, paradoxically deployed the Scandinavian model as a means to forming an authentically “indigenous” Canadian design.<sup>9</sup> In keeping with the ideology of postwar industrial design, these actors together promoted new roles for designers within manufacturing industries, focusing on high quality and aesthetic value in objects for everyday use; they also thereby sought to elevate public taste and to stimulate production of homegrown designs to promote Canada on the international market. Scandinavian Modern was re-contextualized and appropriated on the one hand by consumers, lifestyle magazines, and department stores, and on the other by institutions that sought to improve public taste and Canadian design industries nationally and internationally. In the postwar decades, modern Scandinavian designs were valorized or ignored according to their correspondence with those values promoted by government, professional bodies, and professional art and architecture journals that sought a way forward for Canadian design in local and international markets. At the heart of this tendency was thus a complex appropriation of foreign cultural forms that took up Scandinavian design principles to create a new Canadian design identity, and to show industry how to sell Canada—and an indigenous Canadian modernism—on the international market.<sup>10</sup>

New in Furniture? Canadian Design That's What!" *Canadian Homes* (September 1967), 3.

7. Michael Prokopow, "Deign to Be Modern: Canada's Taste for Scandinavian Design in the Sixties," *Made in Canada*, ed. Elder, 95.

8. *Ibid.*, 95–96. According to Prokopow, furniture styles such as “provincial” or “colonial” that were available to Canadians were attractive to many, as they carried associations with a European past. See also Virginia Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada 1920 to 1970* (Toronto, 1997), 10, for her discussion of the history of Canadian furniture manufacturers’ reliance on French and English “period” furniture and North American “colonial” styles.

9. The term “indigenous” as used in this article does not refer to First Nations cultures, but rather to a sought-after design style that would be authentically Canadian, in contrast to the foreign borrowings and eclectic historicism of the postwar furniture market. On the issue of indigenous design for Canadian manufacturers, see Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 36–42.

10. For ideas concerning the processes of appropriation see Gertrud Øllgaard, “A Super-Elliptical Moment in the Cultural Form of the Table: A Case Study of a Danish Table,” *Journal of Design History* 12, 2 (1999): 143–57.

11. George Englesmith, “Canadian Commentary,” *Design* 4 (April 1949), 10. Allan Collier, “On the Map: Modern Design in Canada, 1940–80,” *The Modern Eye: Craft and Design in Canada 1940–1980* (Victoria, 2011), 8.

In the first part of this paper, I examine the state of industrial design in Canada in the early postwar period, comparing it with that of Britain. Here I establish the argument for the search for an indigenous design aesthetic based on the ideology of good design, in line with the British industrial design movement. In the second part, I examine the state of Canadian design against the international discourse concerning Scandinavian design in the postwar period, and within Canadian practices of consumption. I particularly consider how the aestheticized and mythologized values of Scandinavian Design—its “timelessness” and its “democratic” and “humanizing” qualities—played important roles in Canadian postwar design discourse. In the third and final section, I consider how Canadian designers appropriated Scandinavian-influenced furniture forms toward the construction of a Canadian design identity during this period. In particular, I focus on the furniture design of Swedish-born Sigrun Bülow-Hübe, who, as I argue, occupied the position of the traditional Scandinavian functionalist whose work appeared to support the myths of timelessness and superior taste in Scandinavian design. I contrast her work with that of other Canadian designers who appropriated Scandinavian design in the construction of a national visual identity for Canada.

### Part I

In the immediate postwar period, Canada was one of the world’s largest producers of manufactured goods.<sup>11</sup> This period of prosperity resulted from a great demand for housing and consumer goods, an abundance of raw materials, and the development of new technologies. However, the country lacked a distinctive design culture. A major goal of the industrial design movement from the perspective of the government was the creation of a national image for Canadian products that would make them more competitive in international

markets.<sup>12</sup> In a 1949 article in the British journal *Design*, architect and University of Toronto professor George Englesmith articulated the challenge: to develop an underlying philosophy of design within the industrial design profession in Canada, and simultaneously to generate interest and confidence in its products, designers, and institutions.<sup>13</sup> The Texas-born Englesmith had trained in Liverpool under Sir Charles Reilly, a member of the British Council of Industrial Design, where he focused on the relationship between architecture and industrial design. As a member of the academic elite in postwar Canada, Englesmith would take a strong leadership role in developing an appropriate design philosophy. Part of his vision arose from his connection with the Society of Industrial Designers in the United States, but he was especially influenced by the Council of Industrial Design in Great Britain, which had been established in 1944 by the British Board of Trade with a strong emphasis on good design ideology.<sup>14</sup> Membership in this Council was composed of a cultural elite who held the view that aesthetic judgement involved talent, training, and taste; indeed, a clear sense of aesthetic discrimination was an essential component of the makeup of the members selected for the Council. The Utility Design Scheme of the postwar period revealed continuity with this aesthetic hegemony.<sup>15</sup>

The British model was also a significant force in the shaping of a receptive context in Canada for Scandinavian design through the association of design quality with Danish-designed furniture. As Great Britain was restricted after World War II from directly importing goods as part of the national reconstruction effort, only “utilitarian” chairs could be imported—a task largely accomplished through Finmar, an importer of Danish furniture, whose Windsor-type chair was machine-produced to meet the utility and price restrictions then in force in England. This chair was further made acceptable to the British public by its reference to the classic British Windsor chair type, which had served as a touchstone for the Danish Kaare Klint School, in line with their idea that historic chairs could be models for timeless modern designs. Denmark, which unlike Great Britain, had not undergone a serious manufacturing interruption during the war, was able to continue the production of furnishings, and thus became a major exporter of furniture to Britain, where it made an impact as a model of modern functionalism.<sup>16</sup> Back in Canada, Englesmith, following the British model, was responsible for the refocusing of industrial design as a corollary of architecture in Canadian universities, including Toronto, McGill, Manitoba, and British Columbia. In his advisory role, Englesmith was instrumental in the creation of the Association of Canadian Industrial Designers, the National Industrial Design Committee (changed in 1953 to the National Industrial Design Council) and the Design Index, all based on the British industrial design model. However, he was also aware of the powerful US manufacturing model; as he noted in his 1949 *Design* article, the Canadian position in industrial design was poised between British restraint and American “know-how.”<sup>17</sup> The task ahead was, following Bauhaus functionalism, to “assimilate all things but emulate none.”<sup>18</sup> Englesmith stated, “The aim is simply *fine design, meeting the needs of Canadian life, culture and economy*. Plagiarism has been a cardinal Canadian sin and must be cured. Design solutions arise from marketing research and the logical potential of

12. Englesmith, “Canadian Commentary,” 9.

13. *Ibid.*, 8.

14. Jonathan M. Woodham, “Managing British Design Reform I: Fresh Perspectives on the Early Years of the Council of Industrial Design,” *Journal of Design History* 9, 1 (1996), 55–56.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Kevin Davies, “Markets, Marketing and Design: the Danish furniture industry c. 1947–65,” *Scandinavian Journal of Design History* 9 (1999): 56–73.

17. Englesmith, “Canadian Commentary,” 8–9.

18. *Ibid.*, 10.

available materials and manufacturing processes.”<sup>19</sup> The implication was that for innovation in design and the creation of an original national design, there must be a complete break from eclectic historicism.<sup>20</sup>

Englesmith’s view of “the Canadian” was a stereotypical one. He argued that the nature of the Canadian people is one of frank rational thinking, eminent common sense, and an impressive natural heritage. He believed in the possibility of an indigenous Canadian design. As he wrote, “whatever form and character will appear in our design, we wish it to be Canadian.”<sup>21</sup> Since the confidence of manufacturers and the public in homegrown Canadian design was required for the success of the movement he envisioned, his rhetoric was underlain by a desire to improve the public’s taste. As part of the educated elite, he wished to create a Canadian consumer class in the British image of aesthetic refinement. But these ideas had little impact on Canadian furniture manufacturers, who largely held to their belief that Canadians wanted traditional furniture styles and remained reluctant to alter their practices to follow the directions suggested by him and other design reformers.

Issues of design quality in industry had become increasingly prominent in Canada after 1945, when the art historian Donald Buchanan launched a campaign against what he perceived as mediocrity in the Canadian manufacturing industry. During the 1940s and 1950s, while Buchanan was co-editor of *Canadian Art* and director of the Association of Canadian Industrial Designers, he wrote articles that both encouraged and criticized manufacturers and that decried the public’s taste. In his review of the 1945 *Design in Industry* exhibition held at Toronto’s Royal Ontario Museum, Buchanan compared the state of Canadian design with that of Sweden, Great Britain, and the United States. In his view, furniture in Canada revealed a weakness in design principles and too great a reliance on tradition:

As for our old established industry of furniture making, even in its modern efforts, it is weak in design. While some of the tables and desks shown were simple and straightforward in construction, many were heavy handed and lacking in both lightness and grace. Do our cabinet makers really believe that stolidity is a virtue? <sup>22</sup>

Buchanan employed the international discourse of Scandinavian design, using the terms “lightness” and “grace” and implying that Swedish design was a potential model for the creation of modern manufactured furniture in Canada.

In an attempt to stimulate interest in hiring more designers in the Canadian furniture industry, the National Industrial Design Committee (NIDC), which Buchanan had founded in 1948, published a brochure entitled *How the Industrial Designer Can Help You in Your Business*.<sup>23</sup> It included an introduction on the rise of the industrial design movement, which started in Sweden and spread to Britain, the United States, and finally Canada.<sup>24</sup> The brochure was written for manufacturers, engineers, and technicians to encourage improved design in Canadian manufactured goods so that they could stand up to competition from other countries.<sup>25</sup> The Swedish industrial design movement, in particular, was recognized for the use of designers in industry.

International expositions played a significant role in the promotion of Scandinavian design, and in fact Buchanan’s admiration of Swedish design had arisen in part from his viewing the Swedish Pavilion at the 1935 Brussels International Exhibition.<sup>26</sup> Penny Sparke indicates that the term “Swedish

19. *Ibid.*, 8–9. Italics in the original.

20. For the history of eclectic historicism in Canada see Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*.

21. Englesmith, “Canadian Commentary,” 10.

22. Donald W. Buchanan, “Design in Industry—A Misnomer,” *Canadian Art* 2, 5 (Summer 1945), 195.

23. Regarding this brochure, see “Introducing Manufacturers to Design,” *Canadian Art* 7, 2 (1949), 54–57. Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 115, discusses Buchanan’s founding of the National Industrial Design Committee.

24. “Introducing Manufacturers to Design.”

25. *Ibid.*, 55. See also Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 129.

26. Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 120.

Modern” was coined in 1939 at the World’s Fair in New York; set off against the design languages of the Bauhaus, French Art Deco, and American Stream-form, she writes, “the Swedish objects at the 1939 fair appeared reticent, moderate, undominating, aesthetically simple, and extremely graceful. In addition to their pleasing appearance they also clearly functioned as visual symbols of a culture that valued a democratic and humanistic interpretation of human life.”<sup>27</sup> For Buchanan, the Swedish objects at the exhibition—a “choice but small grouping of furniture, kitchenware, glassware and pottery”<sup>28</sup>—led to an aesthetic awakening that prompted his conversion to the modern movement in design.<sup>29</sup> Buchanan’s definition of “good design,” as seen in his pamphlet *Design for Use in Canadian Products*, reflects the discourse typical of Swedish design:

Good design in manufactured objects, as we understand it today means a combination of simplicity, fine proportion and functional utility. It is not a question of ornamentation, but of the design of ordinary objects for everyday living. Grace of line and clarity of form are allied to fitness and purpose.<sup>30</sup>

These criteria were to form the basis for the inclusion or exclusion of products from the Design Index, a photographic collection of Canadian-made industrial objects established in 1948 as part of the National Gallery of Canada’s Industrial Design Information Service, the administrative arm of the NIDC. The Index rated products according to standards of taste, and its authority derived from the National Gallery’s postwar mandate.<sup>31</sup> For Buchanan, the purpose of the Design Index was to ensure that Canadian industry could compete by emulating the highest international standards. By 1953, however, the Design Index committee had selected only 150 industrial objects for inclusion, compared with the 2,000 objects in the British Design Index at the same time.<sup>32</sup> The extremely limited number of objects meeting Buchanan’s criteria for good design—clarity of form, distinction of colour and finish, and absence of meaningless ornament—could be interpreted either as a reflection of the strictness of the criteria for admission or as Buchanan’s comment on the sad state of the Canadian design industry. Indeed, as Virginia Wright has suggested, Buchanan used the Design Index and other venues to launch moralistic attacks on this industry.<sup>33</sup>

### Part II

In 1950s Canada, design elites and government and educational institutions sought to educate the public in issues of good taste as a means to further the modernization of the nation—a desire perpetually countered by that of manufacturers and the general public. The Canadian situation may be especially paralleled with that of Finland during this same period, where the industrial design movement began later than in other Scandinavian countries due to late industrialization.<sup>34</sup> As Minna Sarantola-Weiss notes, as late as the 1950s in Finland, the discourse on architecture and design “was dominated by nationalism and an ethos of popular education following the ideal of creating a modern and rational society,” while in the other Scandinavian countries, this nationalistic discourse had developed much earlier.<sup>35</sup> Like Canadian opinion makers, Finnish arbiters of design taste, committed to protecting the consumer from inferior products such as false antiques and inauthentic design,

27. Penny Sparke, “Swedish Modern: Myth and Reality,” *Svensk Form: A Conference about Swedish Design* (London, 1981), 15.

28. Buchanan, quoted by Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 120.

29. Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 120.

30. Buchanan, *Design for Use in Canadian Products* (Ottawa, 1947), quoted in Collier, “On the Map,” 9.

31. John Bruce Collins, “Design for Use, Design for the Millions: Proposals and Options of the National Industrial Design Council, 1948–1960,” MA thesis, Carleton University, 1986, 39, 51–52. The Design Merit Awards were established by the NIDC in 1953 and were given to products that qualified for the Design Index, 77.

32. *Ibid.*, 55–56.

33. Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 120–21.

34. Factory objects that were intentionally designed for serial production did not occur in Finland until the 1920s. Minna Sarantola-Weiss, “Creature Comforts: Soft Sofas and the Demise of Modernist Morality in 1970s Finland,” *Scandinavian Design*, ed. Fallan, 148–50. Also see Fallan et al., “A Historiography of Scandinavian Design,” *Scandinavian Design*, ed. Fallan, 21.

35. Sarantola-Weiss, “Creature Comforts,” 140.

36. *Ibid.*, 148–50.

37. Kjetil Fallan, "How an Excavator Got Aesthetic Pretensions—Negotiating Design in 1960's Norway," *Journal of Design History* 20, 1 (Spring 2007), 43–59.

38. Fallan et al., "A Historiography," 21.

39. According to the sculptor Elizabeth Wyn Wood, the notion of a "craft tradition" functioned differently in Canada, where it contributed to the idea of a nation of unique regions occupied by a variety of immigrant groups who brought their craft traditions with them, retaining traditional handcraft skills while adapting craft objects to modern Canadian ways of living. Thus, not only did Canadian craft not function as a unifying cultural category, the tendency of its supporters to elevate craft to the level of fine art denied it any real place in the genealogy of manufactured design for everyday life. Elizabeth Wyn Wood, "Canadian Handicrafts," *Canadian Art* 2, 5 (Summer 1945), 186–93.

40. Buchanan, "Design in Industry," 95.

41. See Virginia Wright's chapter on the art/craft debate in Canada in the postwar period in *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 87–107. Also see Wright Wood, "Canadian Handicrafts."

42. During the 1950s, the company's production primarily involved hand-loomed material for drapery and upholstery fabrics that were used by furniture producers, including Sigrun Bülow-Hübe. See Rachel Gotlieb and Cora Golden, *Design in Canada since 1945: Fifty Years from Teakettles to Task Chairs* (Toronto, 2001), 230–31. Bulow believed that craft was viewed as a hobby in Canada and that there should be more support from the government, universities, and the public. However this had little impact on the professional status of the craft disciplines in the postwar period as an anti-craft propaganda in the industrial design movement prevailed. See Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 104–07.

43. Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 106.

44. The ideal model drew upon the visual language of the works of Karin and Carl Larsson and Ellen Key, as well as the Arthur Hazelius open air museum at Skansen of 1891.

45. Christina Zetterlund, "Just Decoration? Ideology and Design in Early-Twentieth-Century Sweden," *Scandinavian Design*, ed. Fallan, 105–08.

46. *Ibid.*, 109.

47. Jean Stewart, "Selling Design in Sweden: Stockholm Department Store's Experiment

largely ignored the many consumers for whom traditional furniture represented family roots and memories and a legitimate way of representing the middle-class interior.<sup>36</sup>

Interestingly, while Finnish consumers frequently sought to retain a language of traditional forms in their domestic environments, by the 1950s Finland was understood internationally as falling under the unifying cultural category of Scandinavian Design.<sup>37</sup> This is less contradictory than might initially seem, however, since Finnish modernist design discourse took the domestic craft tradition—attached to agrarian modes of life and an intimate relationship with nature—as a starting point for simple utilitarian objects.<sup>38</sup> While Finnish design discourse could partly reconcile modernist design with vernacular craft tradition, good design ideology among Canadian elites rejected any connection with an early Canadian craft history, revealing a lingering art/craft dichotomy.<sup>39</sup> As early as 1945, Donald Buchanan had discarded the idea that Canadian craftspeople could play a role as designers in industry when he objected to the handmade work at the *Design in Industry* exhibition.<sup>40</sup> Despite an ongoing debate on this issue beginning in the 1940s,<sup>41</sup> craft did not play a significant role within Canadian industrial design discourse, whether to construct a genealogy of utilitarian objects or to guarantee a history of high aesthetic value in everyday objects. The main exception to this rule was in the field of weaving, where the Danish-born Karen Bulow was a leading proponent of craft in Canadian interiors, introducing Scandinavian design fabrics for interior design and the furniture industry through her company, Canada Homespun.<sup>42</sup> Bulow argued for an adoption of the Swedish model whereby craft was used as the basis for design in the manufacturing industries.<sup>43</sup>

If Bulow could point to a cultural identity unified through the successful marriage of craft and industry in Swedish design, there was another cultural myth, that of the democratic qualities of the Scandinavian-designed object, that would be influential in the development of Canadian modernist design. Christine Zetterlund has traced the quintessential Swedish style's origins in the efforts of Sweden's National Association of Social Work (CSA) to solve the country's housing problem in the early 1900s. Modernism was allied to the improvement of the moral health of the poor when the Stockholm *Home Exhibition* of 1917 presented ideal model flats in a rural aesthetic that featured ample light, white curtains, wooden furniture, rag rugs, open shelves, and fold-down sofa beds. The implication was of a democratization of beauty through affordable yet tasteful harmonious displays, representing a renewal of artistic taste that was coupled at this stage with the definition and promotion of a national character in design.<sup>44</sup> As Zetterlund points out, this discourse contained a negative element as well, that of controlling and disciplining the people through an aesthetic education that would transform the subversive worker into a solid citizen.<sup>45</sup> However, the objects based on democratic design shown at the *Home Exhibition* would be available only at Nordiska Kompaniet (NK), the upscale department store for a wealthier clientele. In other words, the inclusion of the working class was on a discursive or ideological level only.<sup>46</sup> The more modestly priced NK-bo did sell *Triva* furniture—inexpensive knockdown products designed by NK's director, the architect Elias Svedburg—for shipment to other countries, including Canada.<sup>47</sup>



**Figure 1.** Sigrun Bülow-Hübe, Interior Design for a Montreal client with Sofa (NIDC Award 1959), Armchair and Stool (NIDC Award 1959), and other furniture. Photo: Sigrun Bülow-Hübe Archive, CAC McGill University.

**Figure 2.** Sigrun Bülow-Hübe, AKA Furniture Co. "12 Habitat Suites," *Canadian Interiors* 4, 9 (September 1967). Photo: McGill University.



**Figure 3.** Sigrun Bülow-Hübe, Furniture, Council Chamber, Ottawa City Hall, 1959. *Canadian Architect* 4, 11 (November 1959). Photo: McGill University.





By the late 1940s, Swedish design and the general success of the NK department store as a site for the promotion of good design were addressed in the pages of the British journal *Design* in a report written from Sweden by Paul Reilly. The discourse of Swedish modernism is evident in his description of NK-bo's light, simple, wooden furniture, appropriately scaled for smaller rooms; fabrics for upholstery hand-woven by Fru Sampe-Hultberg; lamps and fittings; light-coloured wallpaper in delicate patterns; glassware; and hand-crafted ornaments, all of which Reilly saw as evidence of a living tradition of Swedish contemporary design.<sup>48</sup>

In the in-store room settings of the NK-bo showroom, consumers would be given object-lessons in good design; in addition, the store also offered decorating services in which customers could view coloured slides and photographs of completed rooms and samples of wallpaper, textiles, and carpet. Homemakers' courses were offered in which the participants could design their own rooms—the emphasis again being on education in good design principles.<sup>49</sup> The idea of model rooms educating popular taste would likewise enter Canadian design practice, both through the inclusion of such rooms in department stores<sup>50</sup> and in the establishment of quasi-showrooms at the Design Centre, established in 1953 by the National Gallery of Canada, and set up in the Laurentian Building, Ottawa.<sup>51</sup> The purpose of the Design Centre was to display lifelike groupings of Canadian designs for everyday use along with didactic panels for educational purposes.<sup>52</sup> In his 1954 report on the first year of the Design Centre, the architect and urban planner Humphrey Carver questioned whether the Canadian industrial design object could ever take its place beside the arts of painting, architecture, and sculpture.<sup>53</sup> For Carver, the problem remained one of product quality, marketing, and the resulting consumer choices of the public. So long as manufacturers filled department stores with “articles of deplorable character,” the “general level of public taste” would remain low. Torn between furnishings based on traditional forms or the newest fashion, Carver wrote, the public often compromised by buying “streamlined” or “modernistic” versions of old-fashioned designs.<sup>54</sup> Thus the true value of the Design Centre was as a place for window-shopping, more welcoming in its location and setup than the typical art gallery/museum with its rarefied atmosphere. Carver argued that the Design Centre “[invited] those who are least interested in the mysteries of art,” adding that although the displays revealed Canadian products with a desirable “purity of form” that was educational for the public taste, the products did not ensure an international reputation of excellence in design for Canada.<sup>55</sup> According to the professional presses of the day, few Canadian designs for furniture and furnishings could claim to belong to the category of “art.”

However, this perception changed gradually during the course of the 1950s, in part because the concept of Swedish taste began to play a role in the thinking of the popular arbiters of taste, and in part because advertising in popular magazines saw retailers, including Simpson's and Eaton's department stores, become primary promoters of Scandinavian design. In postwar Canada, the drive toward a universal middle-class standard of living was rooted in the creation of a consumer society with the ideal of obtaining widely advertised luxury goods, rather than the Scandinavian conception of democratic living for

Reviewed,” *Design* 2 (February 1949), 11–12.

48. Paul Reilly, “Report from Sweden,” *Design* 23 (Nov 1950), 32.

49. Stewart, “Selling Design in Sweden,” 12.

50. According to Wright, showrooms displaying “modern furniture” were initiated in Eaton's and Simpson's department stores by the 1920s as an attempt to sell modern styles to those reluctant to replace older furniture with new styles. By the postwar period, the department stores were major venues for Scandinavian furniture display. See Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 22, 158–61. In 1950, Sigrun Bülow-Hübe was hired by Eaton's to design tasteful room settings exemplifying the Scandinavian sensibility. Bülow-Hübe later designed her own showroom based on NK-bo. See also Prokopow, “Deign to Be Modern,” 99, on the importance of Margit Bennett as a tastemaker employing the Scandinavian aesthetic.

51. Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 152.

52. Merit Design Award winning furniture from the Design Index was displayed. Other Design Centres were opened later in Toronto and Montreal. See Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 151–53.

53. Humphrey Carver, “The Design Centre—The First Year,” *Canadian Art* 11, 3 (1954), 105–08.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*, 107.



Figure 4 (left). Upholstered chair compared to that of Sigrun Bülow-Hübe. *Canadian Art* 12, 3 (Spring 1955). Photo: author.

Figure 5 (right). “... goodness and newness must go together...” Chair by Sigrun Bülow-Hübe in 1955 for AKA Works, Montreal, given a NIDC Design Award in 1957. *Canadian Art*, 12, 3 (Spring 1955). Photo: author.

all classes. Over the course of the 1950s, Swedish and Danish Modern—nominally democratic in essence—would become an interior decorating ideal for an educated elite in Canada. Within this new regime of value, appropriation of the modern Scandinavian designed object assured a legitimacy of taste for the Canadian homemaker.

When North American markets began to open up for Scandinavian products in the postwar period, museum exhibitions enhanced the appreciation of these designed objects as art, with star designers seen as carriers of a national brand. Scandinavian design infiltrated the popular Canadian imagination via *Design in Scandinavia*, an exhibition of products from Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Norway that was shown in twenty-two North American museums between 1953 and 1957, including Toronto’s Royal Ontario Museum and the National Gallery and Design Centre in Ottawa.<sup>56</sup> The exhibition included glass, ceramics, wood, metals, textiles, and furniture in contemporary designs, drawing from each of the four countries’ traditions and native folk designs, and simultaneously emphasizing star actors in the field of design. It received favourable coverage in the *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, in a review by artist and writer George Swinton, who argued that Scandinavian Design, “deep-rooted in heritage and folklore,” was responsible for the demise of Bauhaus functionalism, which he saw as having eliminated the idea of aesthetic value from the concept of good design through its rejection of historic forms. The Scandinavian designer, by contrast, combined age-old craft knowledge, the use of indigenous historical forms, and the individual creative mind to create human warmth and delight in objects of daily use that derive their life from historic forms.<sup>57</sup>

Swinton’s statement reveals the influence in the exhibition of the Danish Kaare Klint<sup>58</sup> school’s “third way,” which advertised high-quality furniture with an exceptional sense of craft and function while remaining affordable to everyone through mass production.<sup>59</sup> The centrality of the Kaare Klint school, an alliance of architects and cabinetmakers, to the narrative of Danish modernism, reflects the selling of this design as an alternative that emphasized a care for human needs in retaining historic materials but also promoted a modern way of living and thinking.<sup>60</sup>

56. Peter Anker, “Mid-Century: Years of International Triumph,” *Scandinavian Modern Design: 1880–1980*, ed. David Ravere McFadden (New York, 1982), 134–35.

57. George Swinton, “Design in Scandinavia—An Exhibition,” *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* 31, 9 (September 1954), 336–38.

58. Architect and furniture designer, Kaare Klint (1888–1954) taught at the Royal Danish Academy in Copenhagen and was instrumental in the creation of the Modern Danish furniture tradition.

59. Davies, “Markets, Marketing and Design,” 64–65. According to Davies, the primary purpose of setting the exhibitions in museums was to sell Danish products that were too costly to compete in the North American market.

60. *Ibid.*

### Part III

The influence of the Kaare Klint school was primary for one of the key figures in the promotion of Scandinavian design in Canada, the Swedish-born architect and furniture designer Sigrun Bülow-Hübe.<sup>61</sup> During her career at AKA Furniture (Montreal), Bülow-Hübe gained recognition in the Canadian design scene, winning twelve NIDC Awards between their inception in 1953 and the closing of the awards program in 1959. Images of her work were constantly used in the Canadian cultural press as examples of good design.<sup>62</sup> Trained at the Royal Danish Academy of Art, Copenhagen, as an architect and furniture designer, Bülow-Hübe was hired by the T. Eaton Company in 1950 through one of their European offices as an interior consultant for their Montreal store. When Bülow-Hübe arrived in Canada, she was already a qualified architect with considerable experience in both interior design and furniture design, having been made chief designer of interiors and furniture for the Malmo City Theatre in 1942, and having done housing research for the Swedish government from 1943 to 1947. In 1947 she had established her own consulting office for interior architecture and furniture design in Stockholm.<sup>63</sup>

61. Research conducted at the Canadian Architecture Collection (CAC), McGill University. See also Margaret Hodges, "Sigrun Bülow-Hübe: Scandinavian Modernism in Canada," MA thesis, Concordia University, 1996.

62. At the same time, in the Canadian press of the day, there was a tendency to focus on Bülow-Hübe as a taste maker, with an emphasis—typical of the gendered understanding of design practice in these years—on her role as a decorator rather than on her education, technical expertise in design, and innovative design details. Sigrun Bülow-Hübe Archive, CAC.

63. "Curriculum Vitae, Sigrun Bülow-Hübe, ACID, RCA, Industrial Designer," ca. 1978, from the collection of Gloria Lesser.

64. Bluma Appel, "Gold Medalist from Sweden Liked Canada, and Stayed Here," *The Monitor*, 14 February 1957.

65. Koller was active in furniture design from the 1950s to the 1970s.

66. Drawings and elevations from the 1930s from the Sigrun Bülow-Hübe Archive, CAC, reveal Bülow-Hübe's participation in Kaare Klint's development of types such as Chippendale, Windsor, and Safaristol. See, for example, her cane chair with curved backrest, a variation of the folk-type chair using a single curving backrest, reminiscent of the work of Kaare Klint designers such as Borge Mogensen.

67. Mary Jo Weale, "The Influence of Furniture Designers on Contemporary Furniture Design," unpublished chapter, 1967, Sigrun Bülow-Hübe Archive (CAC).

68. Sigrun Bülow-Hübe, "Design in the Home," Lecture for the Montreal ywca, 1961, Sigrun Bülow-Hübe Archive, CAC.

69. See Hodges, "Sigrun Bülow-Hübe," 56.

On her arrival in Canada in 1950, Bülow-Hübe recognized that the profession of furniture design was in a nascent stage and that any modern furniture that existed was being imported. In her view, it was through this importation of Scandinavian furniture, at first from the United States and then directly from the Scandinavian countries, that Canadians had developed taste in furnishings.<sup>64</sup> In 1953, Bülow-Hübe formed a partnership with furniture designer Reinhold Koller<sup>65</sup> as part of the AKA Furniture Company, with the goal of creating original designs for mass-produced furniture.

Although of Swedish origin, Bülow-Hübe occupied a position within the Danish Kaare Klint school of thought, and her experimentation with traditional "types" reflected the 1950s Danish trend toward innovation of design coupled with respect for traditional styles and materials.<sup>66</sup> For Bülow-Hübe, as for these Danish designers, the highest expression of taste involved the concept of timelessness, a quality that she argued could be discerned in Scandinavian design and in the work of the most significant contemporary designers, who used a bare minimum of decoration and followed techniques that were true to their materials.<sup>67</sup> In addition to seeking this same timelessness in her own designs, Bülow-Hübe was committed to educating the public in the principles of good taste.<sup>68</sup> Following the Swedish example of the NK-bo studio in Stockholm, she set up AKA showrooms in Montreal in various displays including dining rooms and living rooms that featured her furniture designs and wall units, as well as imported glassware, fixtures, and paintings.<sup>69</sup>

Bülow-Hübe's first NIDC Award was in 1957 for an armchair she designed in 1955 with a concern for comfort, reflecting her training in anatomical studies. The backrest, in the shape of an irregular hexagon, was movable and adjusted to the frame of the sitter. The chair became a staple design of the line of office furnishings produced by AKA during the 1960s. Her 1959 award-winning sofa with an unusual hexagonal-shaped back, her award-winning armchair and a stool from 1957, and several other pieces were combined to furnish the living room of an AKA client in order to create an ensemble that exemplified the Scandinavian design aesthetic that had reached a peak in popularity in Canada

Figure 6. "The jury examining a Canadian chair during the judging for the NIDC Design Awards 1955," *Canadian Art* 12, 3 (Spring 1955). Photo: author.



Figure 7. Bedroom suite by Jan Kuypers. *Canadian Art* 12, 3 (Spring 1955). Photo: author.



Figure 8. "Occasional arm-chair Designed by Jan Kuypers, ACID Manufactured by Imperial Furniture Mfg Co. Ltd, Toronto," *Canadian Art* 16, 1 (February 1959). Photo: McGill University.



Figure 9. Designed by Robin Bush. Caption: "This dining-room group in natural walnut was produced in 1953," *Canadian Art* 16, 2 (May 1959). Photo: McGill University.

by the late 1950s. | fig. 1 | Despite tensions that existed within the local design climate,<sup>70</sup> Bülow-Hübe's work represented the best of Canadian design at the 1957 Triennale di Milano, the 1958 Brussels World Fair, and the World Exhibition of Expo 67. Bülow-Hübe would be one of twelve Canadian designers who were asked to design furniture for Moshe Safdie's Habitat 67. | fig. 2 | Her designs were also chosen to furnish the new Ottawa City Hall in 1959, | fig. 3 | suggesting that Scandinavian design was seen as highly appropriate to represent the nation in its capital, where it was to add a humanistic element.<sup>71</sup>

In 1950s Canadian writings on design, there was at times a contradiction between the discourse of good design propagated by the National Design Council and issues of indigeneity and national identity in the actual objects depicted.<sup>72</sup> There seems to have been an anxiety at the heart of the design discourse in these years that the search for an indigenous Canadian design was perhaps futile. It could be argued that this was due to the perception that the NIDC Award Program and its Design Merit Awards, along with the Design Index, demonstrated an acceptance of the superiority of foreign-born furniture designers (such as Bülow-Hübe).<sup>73</sup>

Examples of this ambiguity between text and image occurred in the reporting on an NIDC Furniture Conference in Toronto during the fall of 1954, where approximately one hundred manufacturers, retailers, and designers had gathered to discuss whether modern furniture was a passing fad or a development based on the needs of contemporary living. In the *Canadian Art* article covering the event, Bülow-Hübe's NIDC Award-winning armchair was juxtaposed with an illustration of an overstuffed armchair in heavy brocaded upholstery in order to highlight the former's qualities of "goodness and newness."<sup>74</sup> | figs. 4, 5 | Against this view, which was also that of the NIDC, the article included a comment from furniture designer George Soulis, of Snyder's Limited of Waterloo, who felt that Bülow-Hübe's design was in a foreign style and was inappropriate as a model for Canada: "We have a different set of conditions; we have a different temperament in the people. We have a different geographical problem. We have to work these problems out for ourselves."<sup>75</sup> This was a striking conclusion, given that Snyder's of Waterloo was one of the few Canadian manufacturers that would have been considered entirely modern in design philosophy, working in glass and steel as early as the 1930s, and having developed a fully modern line of furniture by the 1950s.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, a 1950 article by company president Clayton H. Snyder espoused a design discourse that sounds remarkably similar to that of Scandinavian designers, stating that

[Modern furniture] must be graceful of design, finely finished, functional, economic and properly treated with colour.... [It] is a logical result of a modern way of living. Its clean lines and easy-to-care-for finish suit the needs of the modern home maker: space-saving, time-saving and money-saving.<sup>77</sup>

The fact that Bülow-Hübe's designs illustrated good design for the NIDC may have been problematic for furniture manufacturers such as Snyder's that were competing within the domestic home market. Scandinavian forms of furniture were beginning to fill the market from a variety of sources, including direct imports available in stores such as Shelagh's of Canada in Toronto, and inexpensive lines that were being brought into Canada through the large department stores. In addition, many Canadian designers were mimicking the

70. Among these tensions was the perception that Bülow-Hübe was a foreign designer and not contributing to indigenous design and that her furniture was fine craft rather than industrial design for mass production.

71. As architect David Crinion noted: "[The] use of the cold-looking finishes [for the building] has to be seen in contrast to the use of warm materials in the council chamber." Quoted in Alan H. Armstrong, "What Kind of Civic Centre-Piece?" *Canadian Art* 16, 2 (May 1959), 108–15.

72. This ambiguity between the text and the accompanying image is evident in some articles illustrated with furniture designed by Bülow-Hübe as well as designers born in other countries, such as Jan Kuypers (Holland) and Robin Bush (Canada).

73. Collins, "Design for Use," 78.

74. George Soulis, "Do Canadians Want Modern Furniture?" *Canadian Art* 12, 3 (Spring 1955), 125.

75. *Ibid.*

76. Virginia Wright, *Seduced and Abandoned: Modern Furniture Designers in Canada—The First Fifty Years* (Toronto, 1985), 4.

77. "These Men Share Your Living Room," *Canadian Homes and Gardens* 27, 4 (April 1950), 26.

look of the Scandinavian Style throughout the 1950s in order to fill popular market demands and large public contracts. The cover image of Soulis's article shows the jury members judging a chair that was in the Scandinavian style, all looking very pleased with the product. | fig. 6 | Soulis's negative comment suggests that Scandinavian-style furniture produced by the local furniture industry was becoming competitive on the mass-produced furniture market, which was a problem for smaller-scale outfits such as Snyder's; it was also a problem for AKA whose furniture, while consistently represented in the Design Index, was not mass produced.

In a 1958 article in *Canadian Art*, Donald Buchanan criticized Canadian manufacturers for failing to create a link between economy and design: "[Some] of the more refined examples of furniture, particularly upholstered chairs, are too expensive. Only occasionally in this country do our products manage to combine common utility value and fine design in such articles."<sup>78</sup> The article used Bülow-Hübe's 1957 award-winning chair as a successful example. Buchanan's criticism points to the problem of AKA manufacturing, but also to a breakdown in the mythological equation of Scandinavian design with democratic social values. As Kjetil Fallen points out, such ideals were mere rhetoric, as both the brokers of the discourse and the objects constructed were often elitist in both the economic and cultural sense.<sup>79</sup> Even Bülow-Hübe, who was committed to the education of the general public in matters of good taste, served as a consultant for the interior design of wealthy clients and produced designs that were well beyond the reach of the average furniture buyer in Canada.

Other instances of Canadian design in this period negotiate an appropriation of Scandinavian Design (and associated values) with representations of Canadian nationhood without drawing criticism. An example of this effect can be seen in the case of Jan Kuypers, a Dutch designer hired by Imperial Furniture of Stratford, Ontario, in 1951. Educated in architecture and industrial design at The Hague Academy of Arts and Architecture, Kuypers worked in England and Scotland before being hired by Imperial's president Donald Strudley as an in-house designer to create contemporary furniture for the firm.<sup>80</sup> In their history of Canadian design since 1945, Rachel Gotlieb and Cora Golden explain that Kuypers's legacy to Canadian furniture design was the "introduction of modular construction and the use of standard components," which led to superior mass-production capacities and were adopted by other Canadian furniture companies.<sup>81</sup> As the authors note, furniture firms such as AKA retained the artisan approach to the production of high quality furniture, but could not match the production runs of "their more pedestrian counterparts."<sup>82</sup> The influence of Scandinavian design in Kuypers's work was evident not only in the forms of his furniture designs for Imperial but also in the marketing names given to the various lines: Helsinki (storage units, desks, and bookshelves), Oslo (bedroom), and Stockholm (dining room).<sup>83</sup>

One of Kuypers's bedroom suites was used to illustrate the 1955 *Canadian Art* article "Do Canadians Want Modern Furniture?" | fig. 7 | With a caption informing readers that "The bedroom ... has few if any inherited items," the image implied that Canadians, typically uneducated in matters of taste, were able to overcome their preferences for nostalgic heritage bedroom furniture and purchase contemporary lines such as Kuypers's.<sup>84</sup> In 1958, he furnished

78. Donald W. Buchanan, "Publicity for Good Design," *Canadian Art* 15, 2 (April 1958), 107.

79. Fallen, "How an Excavator," 44.

80. Peter Day and Linda Lewis, "Jan Kuypers," in *Art in Everyday Life: Observations on Contemporary Canadian Design* (Toronto, 1988), 50.

81. Gotlieb and Golden, *Design in Canada since 1945*, 60–63.

82. *Ibid.*, 64.

83. *Ibid.*, 83.

84. Soulis, "Do Canadians Want Modern Furniture?," 126.

a display room for Simpson's of London, Ontario, with furniture that he designed on Scandinavian lines.<sup>85</sup> His furniture designs for his own home were also featured in a cover article for *Canadian Homes and Gardens* in 1958. Although Imperial Furniture promoted these Scandinavian-modern designs, the article reported that they had also asked him to design a line called *Canadian Colonial* for similar consumer markets:<sup>86</sup> Kuypers's Nipigon armchair of 1956 (winner of an NIDC Award in 1957) seemed to signal a change in the national design image, even if it remained indebted to Scandinavian motifs. | fig. 8 | The chair was featured in the Canadian pavilion at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair along with other Scandinavian-influenced pieces.<sup>87</sup> Kuypers's designs for Imperial brought the company great success in the retail and contract market, and he became a star within the larger Canadian sphere, winning twenty-five NIDC awards between 1953 and 1955.<sup>88</sup> Gotlieb and Golden suggest that eventually Imperial Furniture "trumpeted his national and international success in advertisements—a rare occurrence of designer 'branding' in the mid-fifties."<sup>89</sup>

A third prominent designer in this era who enjoyed success with furniture based on Scandinavian lines was the Canadian-born Robin Bush, who had studied art and design at the Vancouver School of Art. In the early 1950s, in partnership with Earle Morrison, Bush designed low-lying sofas and lounge chairs reminiscent of Scandinavian models, which were sold locally by Standard Furniture and retailed through Eaton's across Canada. He founded Robin Bush Associates Limited in Vancouver in 1953, where he manufactured his own designs as well as Herman Miller products under licence,<sup>90</sup> and later added a store in Toronto. A dining room group designed by Bush in 1953 reveals the Scandinavian influence of his designs of the period.<sup>91</sup> | fig. 9 |

In a 1959 article in *Canadian Art*, the then-current director of the Design Centre, Norman Hays, described Bush's early work as "clean, sharp and geometric relying for its beauty on natural wood and textured fabrics, in interesting, and at the time, unusual colours."<sup>92</sup> Rather than interpret the work through the lens of Scandinavian style, Hays emphasized Bush's intelligence and genius, mentioning that the Aluminium Company of Canada had selected Bush's furnishings to increase the comfort levels for workers at the Kitimat mine, and thus aid in retaining workers for longer periods at the difficult site. The Kitimat experiment also became the theme for the representation of Canadian furniture design at the 1957 Milan Triennial. Bush's work straddled a divide between Scandinavian influence and what would be considered a Canadian visual design identity. In an interview with *Canadian Homes and Gardens* in September 1958, in an issue in which his Scandinavian-style designs are featured on the cover, Bush rejects the use of teak, a wood traditionally used in Scandinavian furniture, insisting on Canadian woods for his mass-produced furniture. The implication is that the choice of Canadian woods turned Scandinavian design into "genuine" contemporary Canadian design.<sup>93</sup>

As early as 1955, Bush attempted to resituate the problem of the production of an indigenous Canadian design as one of inadequate advertising of good design and indifference on the part of the architectural community toward modern forms of furniture.

There is practically no good advertising produced in Canada for contemporary design.... I do not think good design in itself is necessarily indigenous. It is actually fairly

85. Margit Bennett, "Seven Canadian Designs for Living," *Canadian Homes and Gardens* 35, 9 (September 1958), 17. Kuypers later became a partner at Dudas, Kuypers, and Rowan Associates.

86. "The Kuypers Made Every Inch of Space Work Hard," *Canadian Homes and Gardens* 35, 2 (February 1958), 18.

87. Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 173.

88. *Ibid.*, 152.

89. Gotlieb and Golden, *Design in Canada since 1945*, 241.

90. *Ibid.*, 136–42.

91. See Norman Hay, "Robin Bush," *Canadian Art* 16, 2 (May 1959), 116.

92. *Ibid.*, 118.

93. Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, 74. According to Wright, there was a tendency in Canada to represent foreign-influenced furniture in terms of typical Canadian woods, thus emphasizing the association with nationality and originality.

international, and it is affected by the economic, the architectural, and the political and other changes going on around us.<sup>94</sup>

Bush was already cognizant of the futility of waiting for an indigenous design to develop in Canada, and was turning—like so many others in this period—to other sources, especially Scandinavian ones, to construct a progressive vision for Canadian design and a national visual identity.

In a review of the decade of the Association of the Canadian Industrial Designers, affiliate member Henry Finkle asserted flatly that the great demand for Scandinavian furniture and other modern types had resulted in weakening the creative potential of Canadian designers.<sup>95</sup> For journalist Robert Fulford, writing for *Canadian Homes and Gardens*, Canada had not progressed in developing an indigenous design, which led to his call for an end of the NIDC Awards.<sup>96</sup> By this time, ironically, the Canadian furniture industry, and especially its Scandinavian-influenced designs, had become more prominent nationally through advertising in interior decoration magazines. As Prokopow reveals in his examination of advertisements by manufacturers and retailers in decorating magazines such as *Canadian Homes and Gardens*, *Western Homes and Living*, and *Canadian Interiors*, by the early 1960s “Scandinavian Modern had infiltrated the nation’s decorating psyche.”<sup>97</sup>

However, as Fallan suggests, the construction of Scandinavian Design as an “elite design buzzword, a high-end marketing tool, and a unifying cultural category” lost currency during the course of the 1960s due to dramatic transformations within the international design community itself, with the effect of undermining the holistic ideals upon which Scandinavian design was based.<sup>98</sup> Manufacturers were facing increased competition in the world market as industry in Europe, Japan, and the United States fully recovered from the Second World War. There was also a shift away from the primacy of the NIDC’s focus on good design ideology when in 1963 the federal government created the Federal Department of Industry to assume responsibility for the National Office of Design and Design Council. As Peter Day and Linda Lewis argue, this shift away from direct association with the National Gallery meant that design was no longer considered primarily in aesthetic terms, but rather as an integral component of industrial production. There was thus a transfer of political responsibility for design from culture to commerce, which signalled an important shift in the promotion of design in Canada.<sup>99</sup> While the good design ideology of the NIDC had been directed toward education of the populace and the development of a national visual identity, in the 1960s and 1970s the focus of design reform would shift to addressing manufacturers to hire designers as a guarantee for corporate growth, with a corresponding shift in the marketing message from “buy good design” to “good design pays.”<sup>100</sup> This shift also signals the extent to which by this point “Scandinavian Design”—whether exemplified by the “authentic” designs of Bülow-Hübe or the appropriation of the Scandinavian style by Kuypers, Bush, and others—had been thoroughly assimilated in the creation of a Canadian canon of modern designers.<sup>101</sup> ¶

94. Robin Bush, “Do Canadians Want Modern Furniture?” *Canadian Art* 12, 3 (Spring 1955), 129.

95. Henry Finkle, “ACID, Association of Canadian Industrial Designers,” *Canadian Art* 16, 1 (February 1959), 39.

96. Robert Fulford, “What Is a Designer Anyway? And Why Is He Fighting in Your Living Room?” *Canadian Homes and Gardens* 35, 9 (September 1958), 90.

97. Prokopow, “Deign to Be Modern,” 96.

98. Fallan, “How an Excavator,” 44.

99. For a detailed history of these changes see Day and Lewis, *Art in Everyday Life*.

100. *Ibid.*, 136–37.

101. The Canadian canon includes, in addition to Sigrun Bülow-Hübe, her partner Reinhold Koller and others whose work was based on Scandinavian influences, A.J. Donahue, Bob Calvert, Russell Spanner, Lawrie McIntosh, Earl Morrison, Robin Bush, Jan Kuypers, and Snyder’s of Waterloo in-house designers Walter Nugent and Chris Sorensen, among others. See Wright, *Modern Furniture in Canada*, for information on these designers throughout the book.