

DISTINCTIVE CANADIAN DESIGNS

How Canadian Manufacturers May Profit by Introducing Native Designs Into Their Products

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FASHION constantly demands new designs of our manufacturers, but the war prevents them from getting these designs in the usual way. The manufacturers are anxious for help, and this cutting off of the supply of designs from foreign sources may lead to the development of distinctive Canadian designs, with far-reaching results in the development of Canadian trade.

In the United States five hundred million dollars is spent yearly on silk, and over four hundred and fifty million dollars worth of this silk is woven in the United States. Thirty years ago over ninety per cent. was imported. Yet, though the silk is manufactured in the United States, the designs have been almost wholly foreign. The great war cut off supplies of new designs from Europe needed to keep pace with the fashion, but through the efforts of the American Museum of National History, New York, United States designers are now producing equally pleasing patterns in their own country. They are now using Peruvian, Mexican, South-Western United States, Plains, Korean, Chinese and Siberian native designs, taken from specimens in the museum. In the United States they do not seem to be trying to develop a United States art. They are merely trying to get new designs, and only for textiles. Canada should not only get new designs, but should also be concerned with developing an art that will characterize not merely Canadian textiles, but all Canadian manufactures, and help us to hold our own with other countries after the war. In Canada the archaeologists of the Geological Survey, Department of Mines, Ottawa, are taking up this work, and although the office has no facilities for making designs, nearly four hundred examples of motives for decorative and symbolic designs and trade marks have been selected for Canadian manufacturers and their commercial artists from prehistoric Canadian art and handiwork. This forms practically a complete series of prehistoric Canadian motives.

Mr. Joseph Keele, of the Ceramic Laboratory of the Department, has used some of these shapes and motives in the modeling of vases made to test Canadian clays. Many of these pottery products, after serving their purpose, were given to the Women's Canadian Club, who sold them for the benefit of the Red Cross. At the sale there was a greater call for the vases made after these Canadian motives than for any of the others.

Thirty Canadian manufacturers, representing at least nine different industries, a museum and an art school have already applied for copies of these motives. This is over twenty per

cent. of those informed of the opportunity. It suggests a still larger demand, since seven of the nine requests are from seven different trades. The trades represented include even more than this if all related work is counted. They are the clay, cotton printing, cotton fabric, rug, silverware, jewelry, stencil, paper, bookbinding, designing, printing and lithographing industries. One firm desired material for a trade mark, and another manufacturer, by asking if it will be necessary to send a designer to Ottawa, signifies a considerable desire to secure these motives. Several firms have already sent representatives to look into the matter. One sent two representatives from Toronto to Ottawa.

They all express themselves as surprised at the quantity and usefulness of the material, and two have already selected motives for their designers to use. One Canadian manufacturer writes that owing to the war, designing in Paris, France, is practically at a standstill, and will be until things right themselves. He is using practically the same designs that he had on hand for the last two years.

All this seems to prove that there is a demand for motives or inspiration for new and characteristic Canadian designs and trade marks. This demand we may expect to grow at the close of the war, when Canada makes special efforts to stand on an even footing with other countries in producing manufactures recognized all over the world as individually and characteristically her own.

Woman's Wear, a New York daily textile publication, took up this work vigorously in the United States, and has held two contests for designers, offering \$500 in prizes, and these prizes were supplemented by hundreds of dollars offered by textile firms in crying need of designs.

The American Museum had calls from representatives of Johnson, Cowdin and Company; Mr. MacLaren, business manager, wished to see if the collections contained art motives; Mr. Jacobs, mill expert, came to see if the designs were such as could be developed on the loom; Mr. Emil Speck, the designer, came to convert the motives he saw in the museum specimens into modern designs. He is now a constant visitor to the collections. Many other manufacturers are now doing likewise. These include Cheney Brothers, Belding Brothers, John Wanamaker, Joseph Berlinger, the Central Textile Company and H. R. Mallinson and Co. The products of the work of the silk companies alone now enable United States women to utilize in the fabrics they wear the great arts of the New World; and similar results are being obtained in other textile industries, especially in the manufacture of



PREHISTORIC CANADIAN POT

One of the many specimens dug up about forty miles south of Ottawa in a prehistoric Iroquoian village site by Dominion archaeologists. It has given inspiration for the designing of modern Canadian pottery.



SOME DISTINCTIVE CANADIAN POTTERY

These vessels were made by Miss Young of the Ceramic Laboratory, Mines Branch, Department of Mines, Ottawa, to test Canadian clays. The designs were inspired by prehistoric Canadian specimens.

cotton goods and garments. The American Museum has appointed a research associate in textiles, and the Museum's efforts to call attention to the usefulness of the prehistoric motives in the Museum are resulting in designs which are now being developed and manufactured so fast that it is impossible even to keep track of them.

Progress in the United States.

The Museum has also compiled a list of artists and designers and an increasing number of young artists are receiving recognition and employment, both pleasant and profitable, as a result of this movement. Many manufacturers who buy the designs from the artists do not realize that the motives were found in Museum material. It has grown to be the habit of out-of-town retailers to include a visit to the Museum as part of their New York activities.

The aboriginal designs in the New World have already had an immense effect on designing, especially the designing of silks. The aboriginal American types of costume have also had some influence on the great costume industry in the United States; many houses in New York have been converted to the use of such sources. Some of the silks manufactured, however, are of raw metallic coloring, far inferior to the coloring of the prehistoric Indian fabrics. This is encouraging, for it shows that the prehistoric motives are good enough for the needs of the manufacturers even without the original color. The prehistoric Canadian motives at present available include no color.

The Canadian Archaeological Office is also getting in touch with art and technical schools, in order to get students, designers and anyone else to develop these motives into designs for Canadian manufacturers. A good design is often worth thousands of dollars to an industry. There is every reason to believe that Canadian designers, by untiring effort, can

surpass the record of service of the United States designers by developing designs and trade marks solely from Canadian motives, and supply designs not merely for textiles, but for all Canadian industries using design, and from motives that will brand the products as distinctively Canadian and help to win trade after the war.

Artists Needed.

Practical artists will understand what is wanted, and the industries have come to realize that it is to the artists of Canada that they must look for their distinctively Canadian designs. Artists who have never before been recognized by the industries may be very successful, as they were in the United States. The road to success is true ability.

The industries can absorb an indefinite number of good artists. Ideas must be continuously refreshed, and the rewards of success are open to clever persons who will give this matter their thought.

The Canadian archaeological material has been selected because it supplies not only the oldest human decorative material from Canada, but material unsurpassed in distinctiveness. The fossils, animals, flowers, leaves, fruits, etc., and especially the historic objects from Indians, found only in Canada, would no doubt supply other motives capable of use, as the lotus blossom has supplied innumerable designs used throughout much of the world. These motives are so undoubtedly and intimately Canadian that they may well serve as inspiration to our designers for our distinctive decorative art. The prehistoric Canadians made little that was only artistic and not useful, such as mere bric-a-brac; yet they decorated many of their useful objects.

These motives may be used as they are, or may be conventionalized, or dissected, or multiplied, or developed in several of these ways. Designers may use them as inspiration for designs which may be applied to fronts of buildings, gargoyles, fountains, terra cotta, pottery, china, ornamental work, cast-iron railings, stoves, carpets, rugs, linoleum, wall paper, stencils, dress fabrics, lace, embroidery, neckwear, umbrella handles, belt buckles, hat pins, book covers, tall pieces, toys, souvenirs, trade marks, and many other lines of work.

Drawings to be Published.

It is hoped to publish drawings of the specimens bearing these motives as soon as the drawings can be made. In the arrangement of the material each selected specimen is labelled as to what it is, where it was found, where it is now, its size, material, and, to a certain extent, with the region in which the type of motive is found. The last may be of use so that a British Columbian manufacturer, for instance, may adopt a local motive if he so desires. Some of these areas extend into the United States, as does the area of the maple leaf and the beaver; others are exclusively Canadian. Reference is made to photographs, lantern slides, and published illustrations wherever such exist. The specimens are scattered in this museum, the Provincial Museum at Toronto; Provincial Museum at Victoria; the Museum of the Natural History

Society, St. John, New Brunswick; the Provincial Museum at Halifax; the American Museum of Natural History, New York; the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania; the British Museum; and Museums in San Francisco; Florence, Italy; Berlin, Germany; and elsewhere.

Design is often evolved from or based on crude or at least primitive beginnings, and artists are always searching for a basic motive. The Japanese, for example, have succeeded in making beautiful stencils from such crude motives as bamboo, turtles and fish. The lotus blossom was variously conventionalized and widely used by the ancient Egyptians. The designs were borrowed by the Greeks, and are applied to innumerable things throughout the civilized world of to-day. This exemplifies how a single shape or design, possibly crude or primitive, may offer a source of endless usefulness in many industries throughout a wide geographical area.

It is not intended that the specimens themselves or the proposed illustrations will be used by the designers as they are, but that they will only serve as inspiration, motives, or a starting point for the artist.

Rules to be Observed.

In using these motives attention must be given to several matters: First, the artistic value of the original specimen; second, the suitability of the motive to the material and medium to be used—pottery, leather, fabric, metal, wood, cement, etc.; third, the suitability of the motive to the size, shape and use of the article to be decorated; fourth, the preservation of the original spirit of the motive; and fifth, the addition of the designer's personality as by distorting the motive conventionalizing it, just as the lotus has been conventionalized into innumerable designs, duplicating it, dissecting it, combining dissections, and various combinations of these.

It is well understood that a distinctive Canadian art cannot be selected, forced, or created except through the slow growth of the spirit of the country as developed by the individuality of its artists. But there is no harm in the Canadian manufacturer supplying his designers with motives from the first

handiwork, the plant and animal life of the home soil. The simplicity and freedom of expression of the prehistoric Canadian art is what modern craftsmen most need to counteract the tendency to over-decoration, mechanical technique, mathematical monotony and lack of individuality.

Value of the Work.

In regard to the value of prehistoric New World art, hitherto considered crude, a textile expert, referring particularly to pre-Columbian South American fabrics, states that the color combinations in these fabrics is exquisite beyond description, implying a knowledge of color values as fine as the world has ever seen, and that all the decorative arts of to-day requiring the use of strong color could profit inestimably by a study of these perfect specimens. He further states that the fabrics of Peru are, beyond all question, the most interesting technical and artistic record of textile history. They are said to surpass those of Egypt and Turkestan. In Peru every process of decoration of which we know is found, every trick of the weaver's art, every skilful blending of colors. Indeed, in some of their technique and color they far surpass modern work. An artist said of one piece that if anyone could analyze the rules which governed the combinations of colors in a single design on this one prehistoric Peruvian fabric he would know more about colors and their values than does any living man. An Oriental rug expert admitted that the work of one of the Peruvian fabrics is superior to that of his samples of the best Oriental rugs. In Canada, on the Pacific coast, there is an Indian blanket generally known as the Chilcat blanket, woven from mountain goat wool and cedar bark. The weaving of this, though coarse, is perhaps the most complex and wonderful textile in the world. Certainly it surpasses anything woven on the looms of commerce.

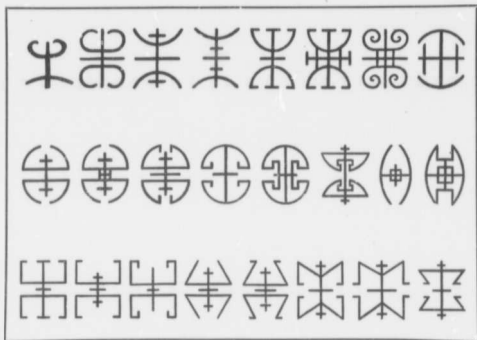
The John Wanamaker store has had an exhibit of fabrics designed from pre-Columbian Mexican designs found in the American Museum. These fabrics have also been exhibited in several other places, even as far west as Oregon.

If botanists, zoologists, students of modern Indians and others will also contribute an album of distinctive



AN OBJECT LESSON IN THE VALUE OF DISTINCTIVE DESIGN

Any one would recognize which is the Dutch tile and the Asiatic vase; pottery experts would also know the two Moorecraft vases from England. When will Canada turn out manufacturers recognized all over the world as Made in Canada and just as distinctive as the Made in China and Made in Germany products?



MANY DESIGNS FROM ONE MOTIVE

A prehistoric motive from a painting on a rock in Ontario, with over twenty designs which W. J. Winstenberg developed from it. The first motive is the most difficult for the artist to secure. Then one design suggests another. Many more could be made from this single motive.

Canadian motives to the commercial artists and designers, altogether a contribution will have been made to Canadian art that may become as well known and as characteristic as Dutch art, German art, or Chinese art, and Canada may be able not only to contribute her part to the world's products of skill, but also to rise above the mere selling of unworked raw materials—hewers of wood and haulers of water—and may rather be like the modistes of Paris, who not only add to the world's beauty and joy, but also help to pay French expenses in the war by selling hats and gowns at the greatest advantage and highest price because of the exquisite French skill in design and decorative art.

Anyone can recognize a Dutch tile, an Oriental rug, or a Japanese vase. Experts can recognize English Moorecraft pottery. Paris does not need to copyright its fashions, for no one can equal them. If Canada can only copy the designs of other countries she cannot hold her own with them. Whatever we can design better than all the rest of the world will be recognized all over the world as made in Canada, and will not only develop Canadian trade, as things made in Japan and made in Germany have developed the trade of those

countries, but will also contribute Canada's share to world progress and world welfare. Besides, nothing more than music, language and decorative art unites the people of a country in mutual understanding and sympathy. Art does not reach us for good so much through the few great masterpieces in art museums as in the decorations of the objects that surround us in everyday life.

The world's decorative art will be permanently increased by the inspirational wealth of prehistoric Canadian motives. With experience our designers will make more and more of it, and we will also grow in appreciation of the results.

Art, like science and ethics, knows no limits, and it is not desirable to cater to those who desire either to limit it to political boundaries or to build up local art independently of the heritage from all peoples of all times and all places. Nevertheless, this series of motives for commercial designers must have a geographical limit, and arbitrarily it has been confined within the limits of Canada. Moreover, it is desirable that Canada, as well as Egypt, Greece, Japan and other political entities should contribute its mite to the world's art; and for Canadian emblems, trade marks and other symbolic purposes

distinctive Canadian motives are desirable. Ornamental and symbolic designs are used by over one hundred and seventy-five Canadian industries, nearly all of which are listed in the Export Directory of Canada, with the addresses of the firms engaged in each. The total of these is over eleven hundred. However, this number must be slightly reduced, since some firms engage in more than one industry.

As it may be some months before all the drawings can be made and the album of prehistoric Canadian motives can be published, the archaeologists will make every effort to give, free of all expense, any practical aid that they can in the use of these motives. All this data, specimens as well as pictures, and manuscript text, is at the service of any Canadian manufacturer who desires to call at the office. Possibly photographs can be made of a few of the motives for such manufacturers as specify just what designs they would like to have. A type-written list of the books containing pictures of some of the specimens will be supplied on request.

The archaeologists will do all in their power to hasten this work, and will be obliged to manufacturers if they will call or write to offer suggestions and express their needs.