

Good Taste Said Enjoying Boom With Housewives In Canada

By OLIVE DICKASON

Good design in the home doesn't only apply to architecture and furniture and painting, but to spoons and percolators as well.

Henry Abramson, who is a Montreal painter and ceramist, had a word of praise in an interview yesterday for the good taste of Canadian women. "Women determine the taste in the home," he said, "and in North America generally, middle income groups are keenly aware of things of good taste and design. This applies not only to recognized objects of art, but to more ordinary household articles as well."

Unique Here

This interest of middle income groups in things of good taste is unique to North America, the young artist continued. "It's partly due to the high standard of living here, and partly to the great amount of education being done by museums, handicraft projects, magazines, and so on. The whole movement received a big impetus after the war."

Mr. Abramson has been in a position to observe this development. He was one of the first group of 20 Canadians to be selected from the armed forces to receive scholarships in Europe, and he chose to study art in France. He worked with the world-known artist, Fernand Leger, as his assistant, and then in 1950 came back to Montreal. Now he plans to open an art gallery here, probably around the middle of the month.

Developed Taste

"Canadians have a well-developed artistic taste," he said. "But there aren't the facilities here to give it full scope. We're too much in the habit of going to New York, Paris or London when we want to get the best in art. Canadians are quite capable of producing as good art as anybody."

Mr. Abramson has a hope that Montreal will become the artistic centre for Canada. "Right now Canadians aren't even keeping up with their own demands," he said. When they want accessories for better living, they look elsewhere. Our own artists could and should play a fuller role in our country's life."

This would mean not only the encouragement of Canadian painters, but also of designers and craftsmen in a wide field, ranging from textiles to ash trays.

"Artistically, we're just beginning to catch up to the industrial revolution," Mr. Abramson said. "Because a thing is mass produced doesn't have to mean that it is ugly. Good design can be applied to factory methods, and the result is a much more pleasant way of life."

He and his wife Anita work together to design and produce pottery and ceramics. The Montrealer's interest in modern art led him to arrange for an exhibition of contemporary French painting here two years ago; it was shown at the Museum of Fine Arts here, and then travelled to Quebec, Toronto and Winnipeg.

"It's all part of the growing artistic life of our country," Mr. Abramson said. "The field is wide open, and we're all keen to see it developed."