

Locating Exhibition Design as a means of marketing architectural modernism in inter-war Britain

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Throughout the interwar period many dialects of modernist visual languages were developed and all of them are important to our understanding of how people approached and negotiated modernity, often mediated by the technologies of photography, film, and design. Of particular relevance to this account is the discourse that emphasised seeing, or, in other words, the visual. The negotiation of modernity through the visual, and people's own senses of being 'modern', was to become one of the key features characterising the exhibition designs of the architect Oliver Hill (1887-1968).

Taking Hill's designs for the *Exhibition of British Industrial Art in Relation to the Home* at the Dorland Hall in 1933 as a starting point this paper seeks to investigate Hill's commitment to the education of the consumer. Exhibition designs such as at the Dorland Hall proved a perfect vehicle for Hill's educational imperatives in educating the consumer in good design. The success of this exhibition not only shows that consumers felt connected with what was on display but it also highlights the exhibition's usefulness in the fight against apathy in matters of good design. Indeed, designs for the exhibition, as this paper will highlight, showed how various ideas on design reform were in play and how exhibition design formed a navigational tool for both the visitor and for the exhibitor.

Through a close reading of this exhibition design this paper seeks to highlight how Hill fully embraced fashionability, both in terms of market consumerism and in the power that fashion had in improving taste and standards in design during that time.