

HOSTLER BURROWS

Paul T. Frankl (1886-1958) was a Viennese-born artist, designer and architect active in the United States in the mid-twentieth century. His distinctive Skyscraper furniture line, inspired by the New York cityscape, represented both European modernism and American innovation, and set the aesthetic precedent for Art Deco design in the 1920s.

Frankl studied at the prestigious Vienna Polytechnic University before settling in Manhattan in 1914. He established his own gallery in midtown, Skyscraper Furniture, where he developed and popularized his designs that were evocative of the stepped office towers that dominated the New York City skyline, as well as a series of streamlined "Speed" chairs and sofas throughout the 1920s. Frankl also imported modern textiles and wallpapers for sale from Europe.

In 1934 Frankl relocated to Los Angeles where his style evolved once again in direct relation to the city he inhabited. He experimented with more relaxed and simpler Chinese and Japanese forms, and in the 1940s became one of the first designers to explore the possibilities of the biomorphic form. He also made use of many novel materials such as cork, denim and nubby wool.

Frankl designed for many of Hollywood's elite, including Fred Astaire, Katherine Hepburn and Alfred Hitchcock. He also created production pieces for Brown Saltman of California and Johnson Furniture Company of Grand Rapids.

MUSEUMS

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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The Brooklyn Museum of Art

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The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

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