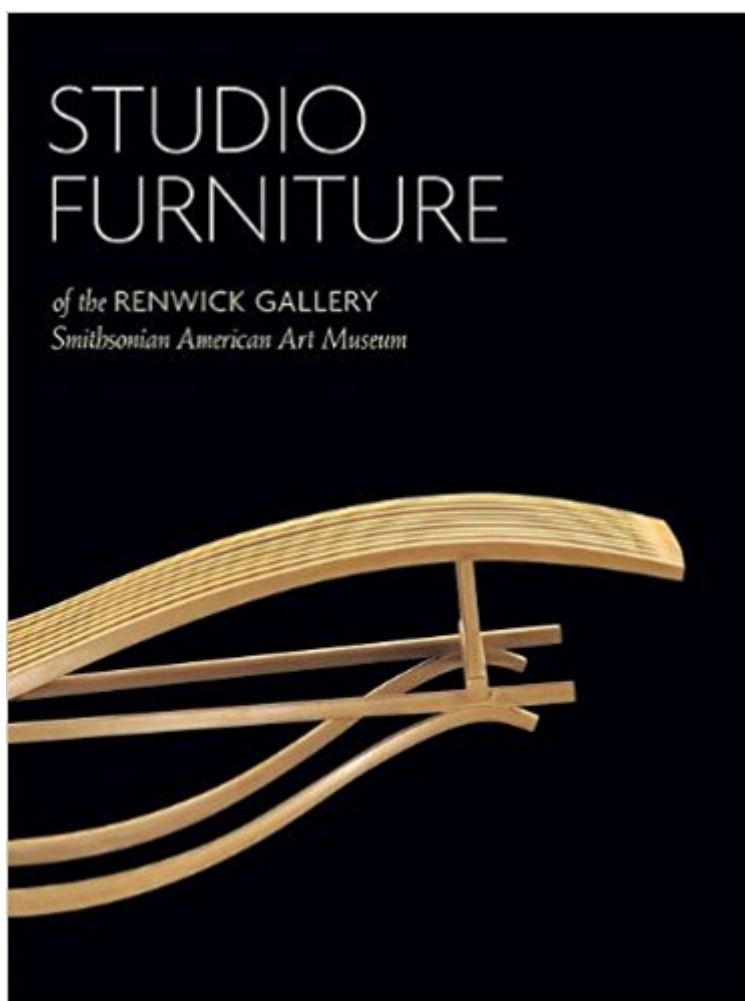


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# Studio Furniture Of The Renwick Gallery - HC Edition: Smithsonian American Art Museum



## Synopsis

Take a tour of the Renwick Gallery, the craft division of the Smithsonian, and enjoy an in-depth look at the artists and the work of this unparalleled collection of handmade contemporary furniture. This absorbing volume features profiles and interviews of 52 artists and reveals their artistic influences and interpretations along with 112 stunning photos of iconic work.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Fitzgerald offers a long-overdue portfolio showcasing the Renwick Gallery's entire 84-piece collection of crafted American furniture. This critical resource will serve as a foundation for the study and historic preservation of 20th-century American furniture makers' work. Highly recommended. "Choice" can't miss text for any collector of American studio furniture. "American Style" magazine --American Style Magazine Fitzgerald's statistical analysis of the collection, formulated from detailed interviews with the surviving artists, casts new light on workshop practices, marketing concerns and other aspects of the contemporary studio furniture movement. A foreword by noted scholar and curator Paul Greenhalgh gives readers a brilliant overview of the studio furniture field and the intimate role furniture plays in daily life. "The Crafts Report

About the Authors Dr. Oscar Fitzgerald earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in history from Georgetown University and served as director of the Navy Museum in Washington, D.C., until he decided to

pursue full time his passion as a furniture historian and decorative arts consultant. He is currently on the faculty of the Smithsonian Institution/Corcoran School Master's Program in the Decorative Arts where he developed and teaches a core course on the studio furniture movement. His book, *Four Centuries of American Furniture*, which includes coverage of the studio furniture movement, is the standard reference work in the field. In 2004 he was awarded a prestigious James Renwick Research Fellowship, which funded research for an essay published in the 2005 issue of *Furniture Studio*. Paul Greenhalgh is a world-renowned scholar of the decorative arts and a leading figure in the international museum and academic world. He is currently director and president of the Corcoran Gallery of Art and the Corcoran College of Art and design, in Washington, D.C. His previous posts have included the presidency of NSCAL University, one of the leading Canadian institutions of art and design (2001-2006); head of research at the Victoria & Albert Museum (1992-94); deputy keeper of ceramics and glass at the V&A (1990-1992). Over the past two decades he has also written and edited a number of defining texts in the field of the crafts, decorative arts, and cultural history, including *Ephemeral Vistas* (1988), *Modernism in Design* (1990), *Art Nouveau, 1890-1914* (2000) *The Persistence of Craft* (200), and *The Modern Ideal* (2005). He also curated the seminal exhibition *Art Nouveau, 1890-1914* at the V&A in 2000.

Great photos. The Renwick is generally recognized as the country's best craft museum. (No. 2: The Museum of Arts & Design in NYC; No. 3: The Racine Art Museum in Racine, Wisconsin.) Take a look at the photos, discard your preconceptions of "craft" and reconsider whether there's a real distinction between fine craft and fine art. The Renwick's collection is amazing.

I have been to the Renwick several times and consider the best of the Smithsonian museums. I bought the book mostly for the furniture photographs, but all arts are excellently represented. The photography and the printing are exceptional. It is well worth the money and I would,t hesitate to buy it.

This has a good historic and current sampling of top studio furniture artists. The story of each artist is fascinating - each has a long and varied path for how they arrived at the best of their craft.

I gave this as a gift to an artist who works with wood. He was facinated with the book's contents and peruses it constantly.

Interesting collection of work. For the money, I find that 500 Chairs and 500 Tables are far more inspirational and beautifully presented than Studio Furniture.

All 84 furniture pieces of the Gallery a part of the Smithsonian are pictured in full-page color photographs on righthand pages with comments on them and their makers on facing lefthand pages. One sees immediately on looking through the many pieces what Greenhalgh means when he writes in the Foreword, "Furniture is perhaps more allied to architecture than any of the other individual craft-based arts." This is especially true of this studio furniture made between the early years of the 1900s to the early years of the twenty-first century. While the furniture is self-evidently modern, made basically of wood, never losing sight of its utilitarian purpose, and its inner details (rather than flourishes, for example), it for the most part it is for the most part within the mainstream of furniture, particularly Victorian furniture and more recently art nouveau and the arts-and-crafts furniture toward the end of the Victorian era. Where the Renwick Gallery pieces depart somewhat from the mainstream it is not in shape simply for the sake of shape nor in riotous colors or assemblage calling into question the meaning of "furniture". Where this furniture departs, it is mostly in whimsical touches. Looking over the collection, one also sees what Greenhalgh means when he comments this furniture comes from a "furniture world [that] was, on the whole, less cohesive and dramatic than these other genres [e. g., jewelry] and unfolded in a more subtle and complex way." No movement, school, or "intellectual thrust" in American furniture making during this period of roughly a century meant that there was "rather, a number of seams of activity." While basically falling within the mainstream, each piece is nonetheless distinctive in appearance. The many chairs--the collection's largest category of furniture--are each distinctive for length of back, size of seat, shape of arms, and details in these. The chairs are distinctive mainly for their sense of proportion among these variables. Except for a few, they're not meant to be ostentatious, nor call attention to their maker. The impression they give off is that of being well-made; and if they give of any kind of statement, it is that of the nearness of the world of nature and the subtle and to some extent mutable connections between it and the human world.

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