



Irving Harper Works In Paper

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Irving Harper is quietly responsible for some of the most iconic modernist design of the 20th century. While director of design at George Nelson Associates (1947–1963), he created the Marshmallow Sofa, countless Howard Miller clocks and the original fifties-era Herman Miller logo. Yet he remains obscure, overshadowed by a system that cast a spotlight on the studio namesake rather than the designers at work.

A forthcoming Rizzoli publication, *Irving Harper Works In Paper* surveys Harper's unparalleled creativity in the form of nearly 300 paper sculptures produced as a pastime over a forty-year period. Rarely seen, these works have been carefully restored, documented, and assembled by Maharam for the first time. This hardcover volume includes a contextual essay by Julie Lasky, as well as personal commentaries by its editor, Michael Maharam, and principal designer, Uschi Weissmüller.

Maharam's relationship with Irving Harper (b. 1916, New York City) began in 2001 when Maharam sought out Harper, then eighty-four, to validate the modern interpretation of textiles he'd created for Nelson nearly fifty years earlier. Visits to Harper's home in Rye, New York revealed an amazing paper menagerie that filled every corner of his three-story home; in fact, Harper's hobby only came to an end in 2000 when he ran out of room. His ingenious craftsmanship elevated humble materials like construction paper and toothpicks, while trips to galleries and museums provided much of his inspiration. Upon realizing that tribal masks like those he so admired in the African wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art were beyond his financial reach, Harper simply made his own. Cubism, particularly Picasso's work, and Surrealism were also major influences, as was nature, in the forms of birds, animals, and the great American beech tree in his front yard. Like much of Harper's commercial work, these private meditations in paper reveal an aesthetic infused with joy.

Designed by A4 Studio, the graphic design arm of Maharam, *Irving Harper Works In Paper* will be published by Rizzoli in February 2013. Maharam offers a comprehensive collection of textiles for commercial and residential interiors.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Maharam is the CEO of Maharam and a recipient of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Award for Design Patron. A widely published design writer, Julie Lasky was recently appointed to the position of deputy editor of *The New York Times'* Home section and was formerly the editor-in-chief of *I.D.* and *Interiors*, as well as a contributing writer to *The New York Times*, *Metropolis*, *Dwell*, and NPR. Uschi Weissmüller is a Swiss-born, New York-based graphic designer and founding director of A4 Studio.

IRVING HARPER WORKS IN PAPER

Edited by Michael Maharam; 192 pages; 8" x 10"; 150 color and black-and-white photographs; hardcover; \$45.00 / C\$50.00; Skira Rizzoli; ISBN: 978-0-8478-4001-4; publication date: February 2013.

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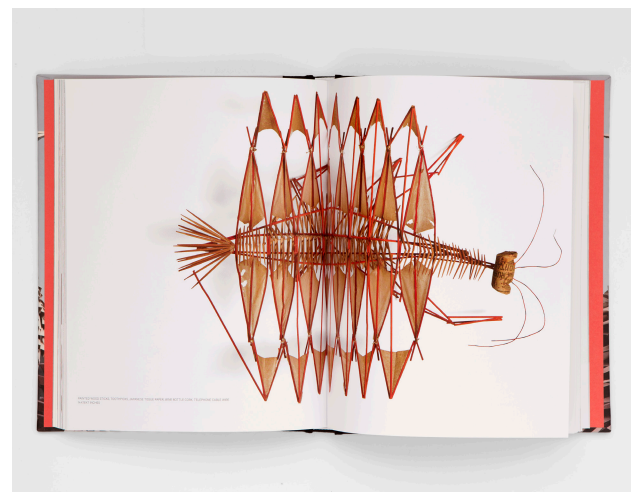
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