

MEDIA CONTACT

Emma Jacobson-Sive, Director of Public Relations
Tel (626) 568-3665 x12, emma.jacobson@pmcaonline.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 23, 2012

Greta Magnusson Grossman: A Car and Some Shorts **October 28, 2012 - February 24, 2013**



Rare three panel folding screen in walnut and metal. Designed by Greta Magnusson Grossman for Glenn of California, Los Angeles, 1952.

PASADENA, CA – The Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA) proudly presents *Greta Magnusson Grossman: A Car and Some Shorts*, the first-ever retrospective of work by pioneering Swedish-American architect and designer Greta Magnusson Grossman (1906-1999). Beginning with her education and early career as one of a handful of female designers defining Swedish Modernism in the 1930s, the exhibition chronicles her meteoric rise upon settling in Los Angeles, where she received prestigious commissions from such firms as Barker Bros. and Ralph O. Smith, and began her career as an architect exemplifying the California modernist style. Since Grossman's death, her role in the Southern California design movement has been largely under-recognized; this exhibition rediscovers her influential and rare accomplishments as both an industrial designer and architect.

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To Grossman, modern design was “not a superimposed style, but an answer to present conditions... developed out of our preferences for living in a modern way.” In a career that spanned four decades, Greta Magnusson Grossman became the first woman to graduate from the Stockholm School of Industrial Design. Influenced by European Modernism and architects such as Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, her surprisingly functional designs were simultaneously delicate and powerful.

When Grossman arrived in San Francisco in the 1940s, she was greeted by a journalist from the *San Francisco Examiner* who reported that she “arrived...with the number one objective of ‘buying a car and some shorts’ as the first step toward self-Americanization.” This sense of humor and playfulness was reflected in her work which was set apart by its odd proportions and asymmetrical lines, by her use of color and for employing materials which were not commonly used at the time, such as laminated table tops.

In the 1940s and 1950s, Grossman designed two of her most iconic products, the Grasshopper floor lamp and the Cobra floor and table lamps. Her Grasshopper lamp, which had a tripod stand and an aluminum bullet shaped hood mounted on a flexible arm, was widely imitated. The Cobra lamp also received critical acclaim and won the *Good Design* award in 1950 and was exhibited at the *Good Design Show* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

In addition to her furniture, Grossman became renowned for her architectural designs, completing sixteen homes, fifteen of which are in California. Frequently built on the sides of a hill or canyon with the aid of stilts, she employed curtain walls of glass and free-flowing floor plans to take advantage of their hilltop locations. Her homes’ modest footprints and understated lines made the most what were primarily characterized at the time as “problem lots.” Her houses were often the first to bring modernism to their neighborhoods. Although Grossman abruptly withdrew from the design world in the 1960s, her most iconic designs still today reflect the unique and fertile period of midcentury Los Angeles

Organized by the Swedish Museum of Architecture and R 20th Century Gallery, New York City, the exhibition is curated by Evan Snyderman of R 20th Century Gallery and Karin Åberg Waern, curator, Arkitekturmuseet. *Greta Magnusson Grossman: A Car and Some Shorts* exhibition opened at the Swedish Museum of Architecture on February 9, 2010. It was on display at Price

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Tower Arts Center in Bartlesville, Oklahoma from January 20 through May 6, 2012. The exhibition is accompanied by a 160 page, full-color catalogue.



LEFT to RIGHT: *Cobra* lamp in aluminum and steel with original gray paint. Designed by Greta Magnusson Grossman for Ralph O. Smith, Burbank, California, 1948-49; Desk in walnut and wrought iron with pencil box. Designed by Greta Magnusson Grossman for Glenn of California, Los Angeles, 1952.

PROGRAMS

OPENING RECEPTION

Saturday, October 27, 2012

7:00 – 9:00 pm

\$5 admission

Free for PMCA Members

Mission:

The mission of the Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA) is to present the evolution of California art and design through exhibitions that explore the cultural dynamics and influences that are unique to California.

Hours:

Wednesday – Sunday, 12:00 - 5:00 pm.

The Museum is closed July 4th, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas and New Year's Day.

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Admission:

\$7 for Adults, \$5 for Seniors (65+) and Students with valid ID; free to PMCA Members and children under 12. Access for people with disabilities is provided.

Location/Parking:

The Museum is located at 490 East Union Street. From the 210 Freeway, take the Lake Avenue exit. Go south and take a right on Union Street. From the 110 Freeway/Downtown Los Angeles, follow the freeway until its end, then take Arroyo Parkway and turn right at Colorado, then left at Oakland to get to Union Street. Parking is available at the Museum.

PMCA Tours:

At this time, the museum does not offer regularly scheduled docent tours of our special exhibitions. However, docent tours are available to private groups for a fee of \$75. A non-refundable deposit of \$40 is due two weeks prior to the scheduled date in order to guarantee a tour. We regret that we are unable to accommodate tours for groups smaller than 10 or larger than 50 people. Before requesting a tour, please check the exhibition calendar to see which exhibitions will be available during your visit.

A discounted group rate of \$4 per person is available for groups of 20 or more, and free admission is offered to school groups of K-12 public school students. Please call to notify us at least one week in advance for these special admission rates.

For any questions or to make reservations for a tour or group rate, please call Christine Goo at 626-568-3665 x18.

PMCA Information:

For information, the please call 626-568-3665 or visit the website: www.pmcaonline.org

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