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2/7 - 4/9/10 press release

Jens Risom furniture



I set out to design contemporary furniture that was comfortable and practical to use.

I developed an American version of Scandinavian modern furniture. Jens Risom (b1916), *Classic Modern*

In recent years Risom has had several approaches to reissue his furniture in Europe. These he's turned down, but since Rocket held an exhibition of his work in 2007, he has confidence that we're doing things in the way that he would like.

His furniture from the 1950s and 1960s is very down to earth and functional, but still has enormous elegance. It is a fusion of the craft tradition he learned in Denmark with American modernism and the hi-tech of American production methods. It is significant that he always wants to be known as a Danish-born American designer, not a Danish designer. His designs are more pared down than those of the likes of Hans Wegner or Finn Juhl.

Jonathan Stephenson, quoted in July 2010 *Wallpaper**

Jens Risom has collaborated with **Rocket** and **Benchmark**, who have jointly secured the European rights to reissue his 1950s and 1960s furniture designs. This first collection of nine pieces has been creatively directed by Jonathan Stephenson of Rocket and made by Sean Sutcliffe and Terence Conran's Benchmark Furniture company in their Dorset and Berkshire workshops – with the close involvement of Risom himself.

The group of furniture released by Rocket includes an easy chair, a side chair, a desk, various coffee tables, two magazine tables and Risom's famous upholstered bench. These will be exhibited in a mixture of oak and walnut versions and upholstered in a variety of Kvadrat fabrics and Elmo leathers.

Jens Risom was born in Copenhagen in 1916. From 1935 to 1938 he attended the School for Arts and Crafts in Copenhagen where he trained under the furniture-maker Kaare Klint and his fellow students included Hans Wegner. In 1939, Risom emigrated from Denmark to the USA, where in 1941 he designed the first range of furniture manufactured by Hans Knoll. In 1946 he established Jens Risom Design Inc which grew to become the third largest furniture company in America.

A catalogue of the new furniture collection will be available and the pieces may be viewed on the dedicated website jensrisom.com

Simultaneously, as a back-drop to the furniture, Rocket will present **Black & white minimalism** with works by Lars Wolter, Michelle Grabner, Stefan Eberstadt and Keld Helmer-Petersen.

Interviews with Jens Risom can be organised on request

For images please contact Anna Taylor on 020 7729 7594 or at.rocket@btinternet.com

Rocket gallery is open Tues to Fri 10-6 & Sat 12-6 – exhibition preview on Thursday 1 July from 6-9