

STUDY A LA MOMA



You might call it storage to study by or even a glorified basement.

But then again things at the Museum of Modern Art are usually much more important than they seem at first glance.

Like the Lillie P. Bliss International Study Center which is being dedicated today.

At first you might think that the center's department of architecture and design under the direction of Arthur Drexler (left) and Lanier Graham is just where they keep all that china (and there is an awful lot of china) and those design objects for which there isn't enough exhibition space.

But the excitement about the study center is that instead of being the inaccessible repository for objects in dead storage, it is a quasi-exhibition. Not only is everything accessible, but all is also visible.

Whether one is looking for Tiffany glass, a ball bearing from Philip Johnson's Machine Art Show of 1934 or an inflatable chair, you can be sure to find it. Everything is neatly stored behind glass doors.

Anyone from a Ph.D. to a housewife can use the Study Center by making an appointment. (Even though William Paley

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is dedicating the center today it won't really be operating until after the summer. In the former Whitney Museum building which has been remodeled by Philip Johnson Associates, the center will have a 16-man Advisory Board to assist in developing research programs.)

According to assistant curator Lanier Graham, who will be stationed in the study center, it's as easy to use as the little private rooms banks give to view the contents of a safety deposit box.

If one chooses to use the separate study rooms, not only the object, but the photographic archives and reference file can be seen in relative privacy.

Important to Graham is that the center not be used as a shoppers' guide, but rather to raise design standards.

"We hope people will try to emulate the quality of the excellent examples we show, not try to make a literal translation."

This supplement to the Philip L. Goodwin Galleries for Architecture and Design will let the public see 90 per cent of the museum's design possessions that have been stored due to lack of space.

Whether one chooses to see the Louis Kahn architectural drawings or read some biographical information supplied by a designer whose work is included, the study center will be an invaluable source.