



The Shakers: History, Culture and Craft (Shire Library USA)

Lesley Herzberg

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Shaker handicrafts' dignified simplicity is perhaps our greatest example of form following function. An offshoot of Quakerism, the Shakers sought to create a heaven on earth through both worship and diligent work. Practical yet attractive, the furniture, textiles, tools and machinery of the Shakers are utterly distinctive and became famous the world over during the twentieth century, with certain Modernist architects and designers finding unexpected common ground with this decidedly non-modern sect. 'Shaker Handicraft' – the first Shaker exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1935 – was only the first of many exhibits, and today the spirit of the Shakers – and the clean lines, solid construction and honest functionality of their crafts – make it one of the most popular and timeless design categories in the US and beyond.

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