

## A young showroom on the move

Until its next great expansion, Atelier International is established in a duplex high above 57th Street

The two-and-one-half-year-old firm, Atelier International, directed by four neophytes in the furniture business—two young business school graduates Edward N. Epstein and Eric D. Rosenfeld, and two Cornell architectural graduates Stephen H. Kiviat and James E. Rappoport (president)—has come a short but resoundingly successful way. Their first introduction within a small rented space on 53rd Street was a shocker. Quietly the team had gathered together under one roof all the manufactured furniture de-



Above: Reception level and stairwell to lower showroom floor.

At right: View across stairwell toward memo sample (fabric) storage walls of fiberboard tubes. The lid of each tube is upholstered with type and color fabric found inside. In the center of the area is "UP" an expandable sofa designed in Italy by Gaetano Pesce.



signs of Le Corbusier. An arrangement of exclusivity was made with Heidi Weber, doyenne of all Corbu's design patents. This coup was followed in close order by skimming off the cream of Italy's august designers, Afra and Tobia Scarpa, Francesco Binfare, Frattini, the Castiglioni, Magistretti, and Gio Ponti—as produced by the manufacturing firm, Figli di Amadeo Cassina. AI then added Floss lighting, with designs by Bellini, and the extruded plastic furniture from C & B of Meda.

The latest stroke of genius was to snap up designer Gaetano Pesce's "UP" compressed polyurethane furniture which was, hands down, the hit of last month's Milan Fair. This intriguing, and technically revolutionary expandable furniture (several chair sizes and shapes and a two-seat sofa) is shipped compressed into a small flat lightweight round vinyl container—sealed—which rips open to release the seat. Air is absorbed into each cell of the urethane form. When it reaches full size (the process

takes about an hour), a seat is capable of supporting heavy weights. It cannot be compressed again. The skin-tight covers are in solid colors or gay stripes.

Presently involved with the American manufacturing process, AI will shortly launch its own school and library furniture (to be previewed early next year).

With all this activity a move to larger quarters was inevitable. And the new space, a duplex, is located at 139 East 57th Street, New York. Kiviat and Rappoport acting

as architects have divided the two floors into a series of small intimate areas separated by waist-high partitions each topped with polished marble slabs; some areas were raised on platforms several feet high in an effort to segregate and isolate into small groupings the large scaled, even massive furniture.

Future plans are to continue to gather classics of modern design and pieces emanating from advances in technology.—J.W.



Above: View of showroom directly behind reception area.



At left: Two-level showroom area is but part of the space on lower level. Far end of the space is a display of individual contract chairs. Each chair is separated from the other by strips of dark fabric.

