



Order Reigns Supreme

Sally Walsh of the S. I. Morris Associates-Planning Unit designs a showroom for a CFC furniture dealer

IN CREATING showrooms for the furniture division of Wilson Stationery and Printing Company, Sally Walsh of the S. I. Morris Associates-Planning Unit, Houston, based the design solution on general sales theories held by both herself and the client. The overall 13,800 square feet of showroom space (300 square feet on the first floor, 13,500 on the second floor) are entirely open, and are described by Ms. Walsh as "a single white box with a black concrete floor." All space dividers are free-standing, allowing for future changes.

Of paramount importance in the design scheme is the fact that furniture is grouped according to period and manufacturer (60 per cent is contemporary, 40 per cent traditional). This is based on Ms. Walsh's firmly held belief that most customers know basically what they want before visiting a showroom. Thus, someone seeking contemporary furniture does not appreciate having his time wasted by walking through eclectic or scattered settings of traditional furnishings, she explains. Practically all furniture is displayed in settings. "People have to be able to imagine themselves in a roomful of furniture similar in size and scope to their offices."

There are, however, four instances where furniture is not shown in this manner. One is in the area reserved to

highlight a constant influx of new designs. It consists of an 8-foot wide by 120-foot long space, running along the front windows, whose white vinyl surface differentiates it from the remainder of the black concrete floor space. Here, newest designs or even systems are dramatically presented. Clear plastic boxes, varying in height, function as display stands. As for period, only contemporary products and antiques are shown; reproductions are not displayed.

Office systems, such as Herman Miller's *Action Office*, are not part of room or office settings. They are displayed in entirety, whereas when used in an actual office, all the components of a system would not be generally used.

With steel office furniture, according to the designer, "the emphasis must be on demonstrable efficiency, easy interchangeability, the superb quality created from nuts and bolts." Thus, Wilson's collection of products by General Office Equipment is displayed not in vignettes, per se, but is grouped around an octagonal box that houses a conference room.

ABOVE

View looking into stairwell. Small Plexiglas lamps, designed by Ron Nuetzel, have logos of represented firms silkscreened on top. These lamps are the only light source in an otherwise dark area. *Photographer: Hossein Oskouie and Ralph Steivison*