



**R & Company to Open Exhibition of Rare and Important Works
By Brazilian Design Master Joaquim Tenreiro in September,
Including Never-Before-Seen Archival Materials**

Presentation Captures Depth of R & Company's Vintage Brazilian Design Holdings

On View September 9 – October 28, 2022

New York—August 8, 2022—On September 9, R & Company will open a major exhibition of furniture by leading mid-century modernist designer Joaquim Tenreiro (1906-1992). Responsible for shaping a new visual vocabulary that has come to define Brazilian modern aesthetics, Tenreiro effortlessly created hundreds of architectonic designs during the 1950s



and 60s. This exhibition presents never-before-seen masterworks acquired over the last decade, reflecting R & Company's twenty-year mission to rediscover and champion Tenreiro's work. Featuring more than forty original pieces—including an array of one-of-a-kind objects commissioned by Brazilian patrons—the presentation is also supported by archival material from the gallery's extensive holdings, showing the development of Tenreiro's career, as well as photographs of his custom pieces in their original, intended settings. With the exhibition, R & Company captures the visionary quality and incredible craftsmanship of Tenreiro's work, illuminating his distinct place in the history of design well beyond his home country. *Joaquim Tenreiro* will remain on view through October 28 at 64 White Street and builds on the gallery's multi-decade history of collecting and presenting Brazilian design.

Trained as a furniture maker in Rio de Janeiro and Melo, Tenreiro's work is remarkable for its boundary-breaking aesthetics—transforming otherwise traditional geometric forms and heavy woods into refined sculptural designs. His knowledge of woodworking allowed him to push materials to the limits of their performance, resulting in exquisitely crafted pieces strongly bound to the Brazilian cultural milieu. Tenreiro established his own atelier that catered to individual patrons interested in one-of-a-kind furniture, helping to define their tastes. Often contracted to design a whole interior, as well as office spaces and vacation homes, Tenreiro ensured that his work merged with the surrounding architecture to create a consistent and cohesive environment. At a time when modernism was growing in stature in

Brazil, in tandem with the rise of Brasilia, the country's new Oscar Niemeyer-designed capital, Tenreiro found a market for his work that supported experimentation and bespoke design.

“This exhibition is an opportunity for us to feature one of the most important designers of the 20th century, while also demonstrating our commitment to understanding the history of design and sharing that with our audiences. We began collecting works by Tenreiro and other Brazilian masters in the late 1990s, when there was little global access to this work. Through dedicated efforts, we were able to introduce the importance of Brazilian design to an international audience and establish an unparalleled collection of Brazilian works and archival materials,” said Zesty Meyers, Principal at R & Company. “This exhibition brings more of these exceptional, original objects on view, and provides access to our photographs, furniture design schematics, installation plans, and correspondence, adding a new dimension to our understanding of the singularity of Tenreiro’s vision and craftsmanship.”

The exhibition will occupy the entirety of R & Company’s lower-level gallery with objects installed to present living environments in alignment with Tenreiro’s original visions. A major focal point of the exhibition is a monumental bar made in 1961 as a private commission to furnish a modern home in Rio de Janeiro that exemplifies Tenreiro’s approach to objects and interior design. The wood-framed bar features hand-painted ceramic tiles by Regina Bolonha and a glass top that is painted yellow on the underside. The bar’s most prominent feature is its ceramic front, taking inspiration from *azulejos* (Portuguese blue and white ceramic tilework), and which were a feature of both Brazilian colonial and modernist architecture. The top of the bar—an 86.5" stretch of wood surface with no intermediate support—demonstrates his mastery of materials, while the overall size makes it architectonic in scale, serving as a room divider as well as a centerpiece of design. The bar is accompanied by three stools, commissioned by the same patron. To balance the weight of the bar, the stools’ slim metal legs make the seats seemingly float in space—and ensure the visibility of the bar’s ceramic front. The wooden seats have been expertly carved for optimal ergonomics, with subtle curves that counterbalance the rectilinear lines of the bar.

From the bar, the exhibition extends into a full living environment, with a five-seat sofa, lounge chairs, credenza, and two glass-topped coffee tables on rosewood legs. The coffee tables serve as another important highlight of the presentation. Made in 1955, Tenreiro’s approach was to strip the idea of a coffee table down to its essential elements: a simple surface simply supported. Here, the table legs evidence a biomorphic sensibility, as if they were the thin legs of an animal or recalling the outlines of the mountains in Rio. By using glass for the surfaces, Tenreiro then emphasized the delicate nature of the legs, while imbuing the whole piece with the elegance of a sculpture. The living space gives way to a dining area, featuring a large-scale dining table with a beautifully reflective black under-painted glass top.

To further capture Tenreiro’s incredible skill as a craftsman and the depth of his conceptual innovations, the exhibition will feature a platformed runway with seven of his approaches to chair design. Each chair will be accompanied with text about the intricacies of its design, as well as original archival photographs. Among the chairs featured in the exhibition is Tenreiro’s 1947 masterwork *Cadeira de Três Pés* or three-legged chair, made from five Brazilian hardwoods. The shape of this chair references an art deco slipper chair, while the vertical lines of the curving wood grain evoke a sense of movement. Additional archival materials will be framed throughout the lower and mezzanine space of the gallery, providing visitors with further insight into Tenreiro’s vision, skill, and approach.

About Joaquim Tenreiro

Joaquim Albuquerque Tenreiro (1906-1992) was born and raised in Melo, in the north of Portugal, where his father taught him the principles of traditional woodworking. In 1928, Tenreiro moved to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to study, first attending the Portuguese Literary Lyceum and later the Lyceum of Arts and Crafts. To earn a living, Tenreiro worked as an assistant draftsman for the furniture manufacturing firm Laubisch & Hirth from 1933 to 1936. After several years working in the woodshop of Leandro Martins, he returned to his previous employer in 1941 as a full designer.

That year, writer Francisco Inácio Peixoto went to Laubisch & Hirth looking for furniture to fill the modernist house he had commissioned from architect Oscar Niemeyer. Tenreiro, who had expressed an interest in creating modern furniture, took on the expansive commission. Following this work, Tenreiro launched the firm of Langenbach & Tenreiro in 1943, a partnership with a former salesman of Laubisch & Hirth. By 1947, with the opening of the first store, the business was focused exclusively on modern pieces. In the following years, his two shops in Rio and one in São Paulo would showcase these objects and Tenreiro received countless commissions for bespoke designs. Despite his success, Tenreiro decided to leave the furniture studio to his son and son-in-law in 1968 and devote himself exclusively to fine arts.

About R & Company

For over 20 years, R & Company has championed collectible design, advancing the contemporary marketplace and actively growing a global collector base and clientele. Its founders, Zesty Meyers and Evan Snyderman, are widely recognized for identifying rising talent, deepening scholarship about collectible design, and developing new avenues for growth in the industry. R & Company maintains two dynamic spaces in New York: its expansive, inaugural space at 82 Franklin Street features a rotating display of interior environments highlighting gallery designers, while 64 White Street offers an active roster of solo and group exhibitions and includes a Library and Archive of more than 4,000 books, journals, and other materials. The gallery is committed to nurturing and sustaining the markets and careers of both emerging and established designers, as well as to maintaining and expanding commercial and academic interest in historic design. Its roster of international designers includes Wendell Castle, Sebastian Errazuriz, Rogan Gregory, the Estate of Greta Grossman, Serban Ionescu, Hun-Chung Lee, Joyce Lin, Jolie Ngo, Katie Stout, Johnny Swing, Studio Job, Joaquim Tenreiro, and Jeff Zimmerman, among many others. With its vision, passion, and expertise, R & Company serves as a critical platform for experiencing 20th and 21st-century objects and discovering innovative, rare, and significant design.

Image: Works by Joaquim Tenreiro. Photo: Joe Kramm. Courtesy R & Company

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