National Capital Radio & Television Museum

Artifact Showcase:

RCA Model 103 Speaker



RCA introduced the Model 103 loudspeaker in 1928. Often advertised in conjunction with RCA's then-new Radiola 60 receiver, it represented a departure in speaker design by employing an attractive tapestry grille cloth rather than a more conventional pattern. The switch from horn speakers to better-sounding cone speakers took place in the mid-1920s, and by 1928 designers were competing to fashion this new technology into works of art to grace the living room.

The Museum has several cone speakers featuring hand-painted art. RCA's octagonal tapestry design represented a new and different approach. It sold for $37.50 (about $620 in today's dollars) and sales were brisk.

These speakers often turn up at antique radio meets, although it is rare to find one with the grille cloth in mint condition. For a time, a made-in-China reproduction grille cloth was available, so purists look carefully before purchasing this beautiful piece to see if the cloth is original.

We appreciate your support of the museum so that historical artifacts like this one, and the stories that go with them, can be preserved for future generations. THANKS!