

Large-Print Labels

Home of the Future, 1925–1985: Designing Domestic Utopias

Artworks are organized by section.

Home of the Future, 1925–1985: Designing Domestic Utopias

Between 1925 and 1985, visions of future living transformed the American home. During this period, people were promised an astonishing array of tomorrows: kitchens that cleaned themselves, living rooms organized around radios and television sets, plastic houses assembled in a day, and computers small enough to sit on a desk. These innovations reshaped how families worked, communicated, and entertained themselves.

This exhibition explores such domestic utopias by asking who imagined them, how they were promoted, and for whom they were intended. The single-family house became a testing ground where scientific

innovation, corporate ambition, government policy, and experimental design converged. Some proposals were practical, others wildly speculative. Most, however, were presented as imminent. World's fairs, museum exhibitions, model homes, department stores, advertisements, films, and television brought these futures directly to the public. New technologies, materials, and ways of living were made to seem not just desirable but inevitable.

Organized in four overlapping sections, the exhibition traces the evolution of the American home from rational machine to consumer paradise, from Cold War command center to site of countercultural experiment. Together, these shifting visions of tomorrow reveal the ambitions, anxieties,

and contradictions of the society that produced them.

The Kitchen and Its Discontents, a standalone exhibition embedded within *Home of the Future* explores the role of the kitchen in modern life through works in LACMA's collection.

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The exhibition catalogue is available for purchase at the LACMA Store and online at thelacmastore.org.



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lacma-free-wifi

1925–1945: Health, Efficiency, and Mechanization

The American home of the 1920s and 1930s was reimagined as a machine: rational, hygienic, and perfectly calibrated to modern life. New materials rendered surfaces as polished and germ-free as laboratory benches. Novel appliances measured, timed, and automated household labor. Manufacturers addressed the housewife as a technician managing her domain with scientific precision, and promoted their products as instruments of domestic liberation. Radios and telephones further transformed the home into a connected technological environment, linking private life to expanding networks of information, entertainment, and advertising.

The slogan of Chicago's 1933–34 Century of Progress International Exposition—"Science Finds, Industry Applies, Man Conforms"—captured the era's faith in scientific and industrial advances. At the height of the Great Depression, the fair presented technology as a pathway to a more prosperous and hopeful future. The domestic tomorrows being sold, however, came with unacknowledged costs. New appliances reduced physical drudgery but also raised expectations for what an acceptable household required: more washing, more cleaning, and more elaborately prepared meals. The ideology of efficiency was also, always, a strategy to increase consumption.

Top:

Dorothy Raley

United States, 1902–1938, editor

***A Century of Progress: Homes and
Furnishings, as Exhibited at the World's
Fair, Chicago, 1934, 1934***

The Wolfsonian–Florida International
University, Miami Beach, Florida, the
Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection

Herbert Bayer

Austria, 1900–1985, active Germany and
United States

General Electric Company, client
New York, 1892–2024

Leo Lionni, art director

The Netherlands, 1910–1999, active Italy
and United States

***Electronics—A New Science for a New
World***, 1942

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council Acquisitions Fund and the Robert
Gore Rifkind Foundation
M.2021.172

Ruth Vassos, author

United States, 1890s–1965

John Vassos, illustrator

Romania, 1898–1985, active United States

***Contempo: This American Tempo*, 1929**
Collection of Christopher Long

Bottom:

Paul T. Frankl

Austria, 1886–1958, active United States

***Form and Re-Form: A Practical
Handbook of Modern Interiors*, 1930**

Collection of Christopher Long

Alexey Brodovitch

Russia, 1898–1971, active France and
United States

New Jersey Zinc Company, client
New York, 1852–2016

**“The House of the Future” foldout
advertisement, from *Advertising Arts*,
July 1933**

Collection of Christopher Long

Ruth Vassos, author
United States, 1890s–1965

John Vassos, illustrator
Romania, 1898–1985, active United States

***Ultimo: An Imaginative Narration of Life
under the Earth***, 1930

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

Norman Bel Geddes

United States, 1893–1958

**House Number 3 floor plans, in
Horizons, 1932**

Collection of Christopher Long

R. Buckminster Fuller

United States, 1895–1983

**A Minimum Dymaxion Home Project
(elevation, axonometric, and plan), 1927**
(unrealized)

Graphite on paper

**A Dymaxion Home Project (elevation,
axonometric, and plan), c. 1930**
(unrealized)

Graphite and watercolor on diazotype

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gifts
of the Howard Gilman Foundation, 2000

A period model of R. Buckminster Fuller's
later Dymaxion Dwelling Machine is on view
nearby.

“Homes of Tomorrow” at the Chicago World’s Fair

At Chicago’s Century of Progress International Exposition in 1933 and 1934, “the home of the future” became a powerful sales strategy. For the first time at a world’s fair, corporations sponsored full-scale model homes, showcasing their newest products to millions of Depression-era visitors hungry for hope. The exposition crystallized a conviction of the era: that technology was not merely useful but redemptive.

The displays ranged from the practical to the visionary. George Fred Keck’s twelve-sided House of Tomorrow offered central air-conditioning, radiant floor heating, and a hangar for a personal airplane. Kohler debuted its Integra—

“unquestionably the toilet of the future”—in a bold black finish. Health-o-Meter scales appeared in demonstration bathrooms as tools of scientific self-management.

Together, these objects and systems transformed the model home into a showroom for modern living, persuading Americans that a better future could be purchased, one product at a time.

George Fred Keck with Leland T. Atwood, *House of Tomorrow*, 1933. Watercolor on paper.

© The Estate of George Fred Keck, photo courtesy of the Chazen Museum of Art
George Fred Keck with Leland T. Atwood, *House of Tomorrow* structural system, 1933.

Wisconsin Historical Society, WHI-(66408)

R. Buckminster Fuller

United States, 1895–1983

Dymaxion Dwelling Machine (Wichita House), Wichita, Kansas, built 1945–48; model made 1944–46

House now on permanent display at Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation, Dearborn, Michigan

Aluminum and plastic

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of the architect, 1947

Completed in 1946 and donated by R. Buckminster Fuller to the Museum of Modern Art soon after, this model of the Dymaxion home helped promote Fuller's vision for a low-cost, prefabricated, self-sufficient “dwelling machine” of the future.

The gleaming aluminum house incorporated modular furnishings, water-recycling systems, and labor-saving technologies within a lightweight circular structure. Fuller promoted the Dymaxion as a revolutionary solution to the nation's postwar housing shortage—a mass-produced home lightweight enough to be delivered by airplane and assembled almost anywhere—but only two full-scale prototypes were built.

Drawings of R. Buckminster Fuller's earlier Dymaxion Home are on view nearby.

Nathan George Horwitt

Russia (now Belarus), 1898–1990, active
United States

Morris Katcher, collaborator

Russia, 1886–1979, active United States

Howell Company, manufacturer

Geneva, Illinois, 1867–1954

***Beta chair model*, 1929–30**

Steel and corduroy upholstery

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design

Museum, Smithsonian Institution, gift of

Hank Horwitt

Nathan George Horwitt

Russia (now Belarus), 1898–1990, active
United States

Morris Katcher, collaborator

Russia, 1886–1979, active United States

Howell Company, manufacturer

Geneva, Illinois, 1867–1954

***Beta chair prototype, club body*, 1930**

Form exhibited in *Machine Art*, Museum of
Modern Art, New York, 1934

Tubular steel, wood, and upholstery
(replaced)

Brooklyn Museum, gift of the artist

Leland T. Atwood, associate architect and
furniture designer

United States, 1900–1956

George Fred Keck, architect

United States, 1895–1980

Keck and Keck, architectural firm

Chicago, 1931–80

Howell Company, manufacturer

Geneva, Illinois, 1867–1954

Child's chair from House of Tomorrow,
1933

Exhibited at Century of Progress

International Exposition, Chicago, 1933–34

Chrome-plated tubular steel and canvas

LACMA, gift of Chazen Museum of Art,
University of Wisconsin-Madison, bequest
of Lucile L. Keck (Mrs. George Fred Keck)
M.2025.8

This small cantilever chair was designed for the children's room of George Fred Keck's House of Tomorrow—a futuristic twelve-sided glass-and-steel structure installed at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. Scaled to a child's body, the chair used the same tubular steel popularized by European modernists like Marcel Breuer. By bringing the forms of the avant-garde into the nursery, the chair reflected a radical new conviction: that childhood was a distinct stage of life deserving its own carefully designed environment.

George Fred Keck with Leland T. Atwood,
House of Tomorrow (children's room),
1933.

Photo by Kaufmann & Fabry Co. © 1933 B.
R. Graham, digital image file courtesy of
Chicago History Museum

George Sakier

United States, 1897–1988

American Radiator and Standard Sanitary
Corporation

New York, 1929–2007

Sink with stand, c. 1930

Form exhibited at Century of Progress
International Exposition, Chicago, 1933–34

Porcelain and chromium-plated steel
Collection of Frank Novak

Kem Weber

Germany, 1889–1963, active United States

Bathroom-dressing room (rendering), 1928

Designed for *An International Exposition of Art in Industry*, Macy's, New York, 1928

Watercolor on cardboard

Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UC Santa Barbara, Architecture and Design Collection, Karl Emmanuel Martin (Kem) Weber Papers

Frank G. Brotz

United States, 1882–1949

Gordon P. Gavin

United States, 1892–1963

Kohler Co.

Kohler, Wisconsin, 1873–present

Integra toilet, introduced 1933, this
example 1936

Form exhibited at Century of Progress
International Exposition, Chicago, 1933–34

Vitreous china

Kohler Archives

**Waters-Genter Company, a subsidiary of
McGraw Electric Company**
Minneapolis, 1900–38 (now
Toastermaster, Inc.)

***Toastermaster* toaster, model 1B5,**
manufactured 1934–36

Chrome and Bakelite
LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council Acquisition Fund
M.2025.130

Jane Callaghan, content
United States, dates unknown

Betty Jane Johnston, content
United States, dates unknown

Harold E. Smalley, director
United States, 1921–1994

Lillian Moller Gilbreth, consultant
United States, 1878–1972

University of Connecticut, Motion and Time
Study Laboratory
Storrs, c. 1950s

***Principles of Motion Economy in the
Home (clip)***, 1952

Courtesy of Purdue University Archives and
Special Collections, Purdue University
Libraries

Lillian Moller Gilbreth held a PhD in psychology and with her husband, Frank, ran a pioneering consulting firm that applied scientific management to factory production with the goal of reducing workers' fatigue and improving their wellbeing. Despite her credentials, Gilbreth struggled to find steady employment in her field after Frank's death in 1924. She turned instead to home economics, which proved to be a remarkable second act: Gilbreth designed kitchens, taught at universities, and conducted time and motion studies to streamline household tasks. This film, made with Gilbreth as a consultant, documents that hard-won expertise in action.

Lillian Moller Gilbreth, Chronocyclegraph (motion study), Anne Shaw putting away dishes, c. 1940s. Courtesy of Purdue University Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries

Belle Kogan Associates, design firm
New York, 1931–70

Belle Kogan, designer
Russia, 1902–2000, active United States

William B. Connolly, patent holder
United States, 1884–1979

Abe O. Samuels, patent holder
United States, 1899–1966

Samson United Corporation
Rochester, New York, 1929–53

***Tri-Matic* toaster, no. 194**, 1935

Chrome, painted steel, Bakelite, and cloth
(cord)
LACMA, gift of Stephen Little

M.2025.207

General Electric Company

Boston, 1892–2024

Monitor Top refrigerator, manufactured c.
1927–37

Form exhibited at Century of Progress
International Exposition, Chicago, 1933–34

Steel

Collection of Frank Novak

Raymond Hood and Jacques André
Fouilhoux, Rex Cole showroom, Brooklyn,
featuring a large, ornamental *Monitor Top*
refrigerator on roof (detail), 1931. Photo ©
Samuel H. (Samuel Herman) Gottscho
(1875–1971)/Museum of the City of New
York

The *Monitor Top* takes its name from the gun turrets of the Civil War warship the USS *Monitor*—an unlikely source of inspiration for a kitchen appliance that became one of the defining domestic objects of the 1930s. Its hermetically sealed compressor was a first, and made this home refrigerator far more reliable than competing models. Consumers noticed: by 1932, General Electric could claim that “one out of every three homes with modern refrigeration has a . . . Monitor Top.” At the 1933–34 Chicago World’s Fair, four of the twelve display kitchens were outfitted with one.

Bruce Goff, designer
United States, 1904–1982

Charles Turzak, illustrator
United States, 1899–1986

Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company, client
Toledo, Ohio, 1930–86

Vitrolite kitchen, Turzak residence,
Chicago, 1937, house built 1938–39
Illustration commissioned for Libbey-
Owens-Ford's promotional booklet
Bathrooms & Kitchens of Vitrolite, 1937

Gouache, graphite, and watercolor on
paper

The Wolfsonian–Florida International
University, Miami Beach, Florida, the
Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection

Frank G. Brotz

United States, 1882–1949

Kohler Co.

Kohler, Wisconsin, 1873–present

Electric Sink, introduced 1926, this
example 1928

Form exhibited in Masonite House at
Century of Progress International
Exposition, Chicago, 1933–34

Enameled cast iron

Kohler Archives

Above:

Roy Huse Collins, artist
United States, 1883–1949

Kohler Co., client
Kohler, Wisconsin, 1873–present

Electric Sink, c. 1927

Oil on canvas
Kohler Archives

Kohler Co.
Kohler, Wisconsin, 1873–present

Electric Sink* advertisement, from *Good Housekeeping, 1927

Kohler Archives

With its “Electric Sink for the Electric Twenties!,” Kohler integrated a dishwasher into the traditional basin and promised liberation from the “thrice-daily drudgery” of washing dishes by hand. These three objects document the full arc of that campaign. To market this new appliance, Kohler commissioned an artist to depict an elegant couple marveling at its motor-powered technology. Text was then added to the image for a 1927 advertisement. The sink itself—showcased at the 1933–34 Chicago World’s Fair—completed the strategy, transforming a domestic appliance into a symbol of the electric future.

American Stove Company

St. Louis, 1901–86

Magic Chef stove, series 1400, introduced 1935

Enameled steel, chromium-plated tubular steel, cast iron, stainless steel, and plastic
Collection of Frank Novak

Among the first stoves to incorporate a clock, the *Magic Chef* promoted a new conception of cooking: less domestic routine, more scientific precision. The housewife would become a technician, engineering the perfect meal by measuring time as carefully as temperature. A 1937 advertisement called her “Mrs. Modern,” asserting that the *Magic Chef* “is planned to serve me instead of enslave me” and has

“made possible my liberation from kitchen drudgery.” The ad celebrated the stove’s chrome finish, tubular steel frame, and gas fuel as emblems of modernity, transforming the kitchen into a domestic laboratory.

Paul Nelson

United States, 1895–1979, active France

Louis Dalbet, model maker

France, 1879–1950

Suspended House, designed 1936–38

(unrealized); model made 1939

Exhibited in *Art in Our Time*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1939

Acrylic, metal, paint, stone, textile, and wood

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of the Advisory Committee, 1939

Paul Nelson envisioned a house suspended within a steel armature, with private sleeping quarters floating above open communal living spaces. He enlisted his

friends Alexander Calder, Joan Miró, and Fernand Léger to contribute miniature artworks to the model. Nelson declared his goal was “to establish a new point of departure for the development of the future dwelling of man.” Though never built, the project attracted considerable attention. Two models were created and exhibited simultaneously in 1939: this example in a Museum of Modern Art exhibition organized in conjunction with the New York World’s Fair, and another at the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco.

Gilbert Rohde

United States, 1894–1944

Röhm & Haas Company, Inc.

Philadelphia, 1909–2009

Chair, c. 1938

Exhibited in Hall of Industrial Science, New
York World's Fair, 1939–40

Tubular steel and Plexiglas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift
of Mark McDonald, Jeffrey P. Klein

Purchase Fund and John C. Waddell

Purchase Fund, 2000

Henry H. Turchin, designer
United States, 1891–1967

Theodore M. Turchin, designer
United States, 1917–1983

Attributed to **Lewis G. Diera**,
original design
Hungary, 1912–2002, active United States

H. H. Turchin Company, manufacturer
New York, c. 1930s–50s

Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, glass
manufacturer
Pittsburgh, 1883–present

Chair, designed 1939, updated and
manufactured c. 1947

Original form exhibited at New York World's Fair, 1939–40

Slumped plate glass, metal, and woven textile (replaced)

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, museum purchase through gift of George R. Kravis II and from General Acquisitions Endowment Fund

Seen by millions at the 1939–40 New York World's Fair, this dramatically curved chair provided a vision of domestic life shaped by new materials. Formed from a single sheet of plate glass, it seemed to float in space, challenging conventional ideas about what furniture could look like—or be made from. Large plate glass had mainly been the province of storefronts and skyscrapers; the

world's fair brought it into the home.
Displayed in the Pittsburgh Plate Glass
model home and the Glass Center pavilion,
the chair embodied what the brochure
called "The Miracle of Glass."

The brochure showing this chair at the New
York World's Fair is on view nearby.

Frederick Kiesler

Austro-Hungarian Empire (now Ukraine),
1890–1965, active United States

Space House, photo 1933, printed 2026

Fay Sturtevant Lincoln, photographer
United States, 1894–1975

Built for display in Modernage Furniture
Company showroom, New York, 1933 (later
demolished)

Inkjet print

The Austrian Friedrich and Lillian Kiesler
Private Foundation, Vienna

Nesting coffee tables, 1935–38

Cast aluminum

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of Carlo M. Grossman and Josie G. Lindau in memory of their parents Isobel and Isidore Grossman, 1996

Viennese émigré architect Frederick Kiesler imagined the home of the future not as a machine, but as a living organism. His experimental Space House rejected the rigid geometry of mainstream modernism in favor of flowing, continuous forms inspired by nature and the body; Kiesler believed such spaces would better support contemporary life both physically and emotionally. His cast-aluminum nesting tables translate these ideas into furniture: they are flexible, mobile forms designed to adapt to changing needs. Together, these projects reveal a vision of design that was

centered less on efficiency than on human experience.

A. Lawrence Kocher, architect
United States, 1885–1969

Albert Frey, architect
Switzerland, 1903–1998, active
United States

Logan U. Reavis, illustrator
United States, 1887–1958

**“The Home of the Future,” cutaway
illustration of Aluminaire House, in
Popular Mechanics, August 1931**

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

A. Lawrence Kocher, architect
United States, 1885–1969

Albert Frey, architect
Switzerland, 1903–1998, active
United States

David J. Webb, model maker
United States, b. 1952

Aluminaire House, New York, built 1931;
model made 2013
House now on permanent display at Palm
Springs Art Museum

Cardboard, plastic, and mixed media
Collection of David Webb

The first all-metal house built in the United States was constructed in just ten days as a showpiece for New York's Architectural and Allied Arts Exposition, and it drew more than 100,000 visitors in its first week.

Designed by A. Lawrence Kocher and Albert Frey as a prototype for affordable mass-produced housing, the Aluminaire House enabled flexibility and convenience through folding partitions, a retractable dining table, and adjustable neon lighting. In 1931, *Popular Mechanics* celebrated it as “The Home of the Future,” describing the Aluminaire as “a sort of museum of domestic innovation.”

Richard Neutra

Austria, 1892–1970, active United States

Julius Shulman, photographer

United States, 1910–2009

Lovell Health House, Los Angeles,
designed and built 1927–29; photos c.
1950–67, printed 2026

Inkjet prints

© J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research
Institute, Los Angeles
(2004.R.10)

Herman A. Sperlich

United States, 1883–1962

Ironrite Ironer Company

Detroit, 1911–59

Health Chair, designed 1938

Form displayed in Gregory Ain's *Exhibition House* for the Museum of Modern Art garden, New York, 1950

Steel and lacquered plywood

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of the manufacturer, 1940

Ironrite Ironer Company, “Now, the Sensational New Ironrite” advertisement, in *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1948

Brooks Stevens Design Associates,
design firm
Milwaukee, 1934–present

Brooks Stevens, form designer
United States, 1911–1995

Edward P. Schreyer, mechanical designer
Hungary, 1896–1981, active United States

Edmilton Corporation
Milwaukee, c. 1941–44

***Petipoint* iron, model W410,**
designed 1941

Chromium-plated steel, steel, Bakelite, and
fiber-wrapped cord
LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council Acquisition Fund

M.2022.57.1

Lester Beall

United States, 1903–1969

Rural Electrification Administration
Washington, D.C., 1935–present

Wash Day, 1937

Screenprint

Light, 1937

Screenprint

When I Think Back, 1939

Offset lithograph and screenprint

A Better Home, 1941

Offset lithograph and screenprint The Resnick Collection

President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Rural Electrification Administration to bring electric power to American farms and small communities. From 1937 to 1941, graphic designer Lester Beall created three poster campaigns to promote the initiative to audiences wary of government intervention and the cost of electricity. In his earliest designs, Beall used bold pictograms and flat fields of color inspired by European modernism, but officials worried that such avant-garde imagery would fail to connect with viewers. In later posters, he incorporated photographs and more naturalistic imagery to show electrification improving everyday life. By

1941, half of American farms had electricity, up from only 10 percent in the mid-1930s.

Frank Furedy

United States, 1892–1964

Sun-Kraft, Inc.

Chicago, c. 1940s

***Sun-Kraft Jr.* portable ultraviolet ray lamp**, introduced 1947

Aluminum and glass

Collection of Frank Novak

Jackson D. Comstock

United States, 1891–1973

Donald E. Grove

United States, 1907–1973

Hollywood Liquefier Corporation

Glendale, California, c. 1938–75

***Hollywood Liquefier* blender,**
introduced 1939

Plastic, glass, and metal

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Acquisition Fund

M.2024.66a–c

Mathias J. Weber

Hungary, 1889–1985, active United States

Russell E. Vanderhoff

United States, 1897–1982

Continental Scale Works

Chicago, 1919–98

Health-o-Meter scale, designed 1933

Form exhibited at Century of Progress

International Exposition, Chicago, 1933–34

Iron, metal, chrome, and paint

The Wolfsonian–Florida International

University, Miami Beach, Florida, the

Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection

The *Health-o-Meter* scale was sold with the complimentary book *Scientific Weight*

Control, which promoted daily weighing as essential to good health. In the nineteenth century, Americans were weighed in doctors' offices or on coin-operated "penny scales" in public places. In the early twentieth century, bathroom scales brought this culture of measurement into the home, allowing users to monitor their bodies, track children's growth, and compare themselves against increasingly standardized ideals of health, efficiency, and beauty.

Above:

Hy Farber

Poland, 1921–2012, active United States

Interstate Engineering Corporation

El Segundo, California, 1937–67

***There's Tremendous Sales Power in the
All-New Compact!***, 1956

LACMA, gift of Don Farber

M.2017.163.12

Lurelle Guild Associates, design firm
New York, 1920s–c. 1970

Lurelle Van Arsdale Guild, designer
United States, 1898–1985

Electrolux Corporation USA
Old Greenwich, Connecticut, 1924–present
(now Aerus LLC)

Vacuum cleaner, model XXX (30),
designed c. 1937

Chrome-plated, polished, and enameled
steel; cast aluminum

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council Acquisition Fund
M.2026.103.1

Walter von Nessen

Germany, 1889–1943, active United States

Nessen Studio, Inc.

New York, 1927–present

Standing floor lamp, c. 1928

Brushed chromium over brass and iron
LACMA, gift of the 2022 Decorative Arts
and Design

Acquisitions Committee (DA²) with
additional support from Debbie and Mark
Attanasio

M.2022.127a–c

Gilbert Rohde, desk designer
United States, 1894–1944

Walter von Nessen, lamp designer
Germany, 1889–1943, active United States

Herman Miller Furniture Company
Zeeland, Michigan, 1923–present

Side table with lamp, *Laurel* group, no. 3549A, c. 1933

Laurel and nickel-plated brass
LACMA, Decorative Arts Deaccession Fund
M.2006.7

Walter Dorwin Teague Associates,
design firm
New York, 1926–present

Walter Dorwin Teague, designer
United States, 1883–1960

Frank Del Giudice, designer
United States, 1917–1993

Polaroid Corporation
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1937–2001

Desk lamp, *Executive* model no. 114,
designed 1939, manufactured 1939–41

Bakelite and aluminum
LACMA, purchased with funds provided by
Mr. and Mrs. Harold and Jetta Goudal
Grieve

M.2001.141.3a–b

Ruth Gerth

United States, 1896–1952

Chase Brass & Copper Co., Inc.

Waterbury, Connecticut, 1876–2002

***Glow Lamp*, 1931**

Chrome-plated metal and Bakelite

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design

Museum, Smithsonian Institution, gift of

Mel Byars

During the Great Depression, Chase Brass & Copper Co. hired industrial designers to transform utilitarian metal components into fashionable household goods. Designer Ruth Gerth created the *Glow Lamp* by repurposing a toilet float as the spherical base of a lamp. Chase embraced such

strategies to expand its product lines without investing in costly new molds or machinery, demonstrating how industrial design could reimagine ordinary plumbing hardware as stylish furnishings for the modern home.

Gilbert Rohde

United States, 1894–1944

Herman Miller Clock Company

Zeeland, Michigan, 1927–present (now
Howard Miller Company)

Clock, model 4083A, designed 1933

Form exhibited at Century of Progress
International Exposition, Chicago, 1933–34,
and in *Machine Art*, Museum of Modern Art,
New York, 1934

Glass, chrome-plated metal, and enameled
metal

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Acquisition Fund

M.2024.238.1

Z Clock, model 4090, c. 1933

Form exhibited at Century of Progress
International Exposition, Chicago, 1933–34

Chrome-plated and enameled brass and
glass

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift
of the George R. Kravis II Collection, 2018

As the first design director for Herman Miller, Gilbert Rohde helped redefine contemporary furnishings for middle-class American homes. These clocks, exhibited in one of the “Homes of Tomorrow” at the 1933–34 Chicago World’s Fair, transformed the familiar clock face into avant-garde abstraction. Rejecting conventional numerals, Rohde reduced timekeeping to floating spheres, bars, and geometric hands arranged in dynamic motion across

mirrored and transparent surfaces. The clocks' stripped-down forms reflected the belief that industrial objects should be simplified and refined for the new Machine Age.

George Adomatis

United States, 1907–1982

Paul Fehér

Hungary, 1898–1990, active United States

Lawson Time

Pasadena, 1932–c. 1980

***Zephyr* clock, model P40, style 304,**
introduced c. 1937, this example c. 1950

LACMA, purchased with funds provided by
Maura and Mark Resnick

M.2010.125

Isamu Noguchi

United States, 1904–1988

Zenith Radio Corporation

Chicago, 1918–present

***Radio Nurse* receiver and *Guardian Ear* transmitter with original box, 1937**

Forms exhibited in *Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture, Drawings and Prints*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1939

Bakelite, enameled steel, and paper

LACMA, gift of the 2012 Decorative Arts and Design Acquisitions Committee (DA²)

M.2012.37.1–.2

Raymond Loewy Associates, design firm
New York, 1929–77

Raymond Loewy, designer
France, 1893–1986, active United States,
England, and Switzerland

Colonial Radio Corporation
Long Island City, 1924–44

***New World* radio**, 1933

Catalin, metal, and fabric
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, gift
from the George R. Kravis II Collection

Harold Van Doren, designer
United States, 1895–1957

John Gordon Rideout, designer
United States, 1898–1951

Air King Products Company, Inc.
New York, 1928–51

Air King radio, model 66, 1933

Plaskon, metal, glass, and woven textile
Collection of Frank Novak

Clarence Karstadt

United States, 1902–1968

Sears, Roebuck and Co.

Chicago, 1892–present

***Silvertone Rocket* radio, model 6112,**
1938

Bakelite

Collection of Frank Novak

Norman Bel Geddes & Co., design firm
New York, 1927–1950s

Norman Bel Geddes, designer
United States, 1893–1958

Emerson Radio and Phonograph
Corporation
New York, 1915–64

***Patriot* radio, model 400**, c. 1940

Catalin
LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council Acquisition Fund
M.2024.238.2

Norman Bel Geddes encased this radio in
Catalin—an early plastic prized for its jewel-
like colors and lustrous finish—and dressed

it in red, white, and blue, fusing minimalist design with wartime patriotism. At a moment when radio was transforming American domestic life, bringing entertainment and world events into the living room, the *Patriot* made that connection visible: the future of communication, packaged as a consumer object small enough to sit on a shelf. The color of the Catalin has shifted over time, as exposure to UV light gradually deepens and darkens the original hue.

John Vassos

Romania, 1898–1985, active United States

Alfred Weiland, engineer

United States, 1887–1975

Selden T. Williams, engineer

United States, 1892–1983

Radio Corporation of America, RCA Victor
Division

New York, 1929–87

Portable phonograph, RCA Victor Special, model M, c. 1937

Aluminum, chromium-plated steel, velvet,
and plastic

LACMA, gift of Margaret and Joel Chen
through the 2022

Decorative Arts and Design Acquisitions
Committee (DA²)
M.2022.190

As the lead consultant designer for RCA between 1932 and 1975, John Vassos helped shape the forms of electronic technology in the modern American home. This 1937 phonograph made recorded music mobile: designed to resemble a streamlined suitcase, the hand-cranked machine could be carried from room to room or taken outdoors, liberating music from the parlor. Its aluminum casing reinforced its futuristic appearance, while its portability reflected changing ideas about leisure, mobility, and modern living.

Above:

John Vassos

Romania, 1898–1985, active United States

**“Musicorner” in America at Home
pavilion, 1940**

Designed for New York World’s Fair, 1940

Gouache, graphite, and ink on board

Smithsonian Institution, Archives of

American Art, John Vassos Papers,

1915–1989

R. M. (Rudolph Michael) Schindler

Austria, 1887–1953, active United States

Radio end table from Shep Commission,

Los Angeles, 1936–38

Gumwood, glass, and metal

LACMA, gift of Ruth Shep Polen

AC1995.81.22.1–.3

George R. Lum

United States, 1882–1982

Western Electric Company, a subsidiary of
AT&T

New York, 1869–1983

Telephone, model 302, desk set (black),
patented 1932, manufactured c. 1939

Form exhibited at New York World's Fair,
1939–40 and the Golden Gate International
Exposition, San Francisco, 1939–40

Die-cast metal, Bakelite, and enamel

Telephone, model 302, desk set (clear),
1938

Form exhibited at New York World's Fair,
1939–40, and Golden Gate International
Exposition, San Francisco, 1939–40

Acrylic

Courtesy of AT&T Archives and
History Center

One of only twenty made for public demonstration, this transparent telephone transformed a new communications medium into spectacle. Displayed beside the solid black model 302, it revealed the wires and mechanisms normally concealed inside, reassuring visitors that this unfamiliar technology was understandable—not mysterious. Made from recently developed clear plastic, the phone was a celebration of scientific advances shaping modern life. While earlier radios and telephones were often enclosed in wood cabinets to blend into traditional interiors, objects like this embraced a new aesthetic of modernity, inviting consumers

to marvel at the machine's inner workings
and then welcome telephones into their
homes.

Glass Incorporated

New York, est. c. 1939

Corning Glass Works

Corning, New York, 1851–present

Owens-Illinois Glass Company

Toledo, Ohio, 1929–present

Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company

Pittsburgh, 1883–present

Dining room and kitchen in *The Miracle of Glass: Its Glorious Past, Its Thrilling Present, Its Miraculous Future, as Presented at Glass Center, New York World's Fair*, 1939

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

A slightly later version of the chair in the brochure is on view nearby.

A. Lawrence Kocher

United States, 1885–1969

Douglas Fir Plywood Association

Tacoma, Washington, 1933–present (now
APA—The Engineered Wood Association)

***Town of Tomorrow, Demonstration
Home No. 2, New York World's Fair 1939,
the House of Plywood, 1939***

Collection of Christopher Long

John Vassos

Romania, 1898–1985, active United States

Radio Corporation of America, RCA Victor
Division

New York, 1929–87

Television receiver, model TRK-12, 1939

Form exhibited at New York World's Fair,
1939–40

Walnut, beech and ebonized veneer,

Bakelite, glass, and metal

LACMA, purchased with funds provided by
the David Bohnett Foundation

John Vassos for Radio Corporation of
America, Television receiver, model TRK-
12 Phantom, on display at New York
World's Fair, 1939.

Courtesy of the Hagley Museum and Library

Introduced in 1939 at the New York World's Fair—where President Franklin D. Roosevelt's opening address launched regularly scheduled television broadcasting—the TRK-12 was among the first television sets marketed to consumers. Inside the RCA pavilion, thirteen sets displayed live programming. Designer John Vassos housed the large cathode-ray tube within an elegant cabinet of wood veneers; images were projected upward into a mirror concealed inside the lid. A transparent Lucite "Phantom" version (see photograph) famously proved to skeptics that the technology was real. Due to the TRK-12's high price and the paucity of television programs, widespread adoption of the

medium was delayed until after World War II.

Attributed to **Walter Dorwin Teague**
United States, 1883–1960

Eastman Kodak Company
Rochester, New York, 1892–present

Library Kodascope and cabinet,
introduced 1929

Walnut, ebony, and metal
Collection of Frank Novak

1945–1965: Plastics, Push Buttons, and Prefabrication

After World War II, the home of the future arrived as a material fact. Innovations in plastics and molded plywood developed through military research were applied to architecture, furniture, and textiles.

Prefabricated construction made the modern house newly accessible. Push-button technology, once the province of science fiction, became first an aspiration and then a reality. Corporations promoted these breakthroughs as the foundation of a domestic paradise defined by convenience, abundance, and leisure.

Synthetic materials promised a world that was lighter, brighter, easier to clean, and built for tomorrow. Model homes,

exhibitions, films, and advertisements encouraged Americans to imagine themselves living amid molded plywood chairs, nylon fabrics, electric kitchens, and plastic houses. Many of these innovations were no longer distant fantasies—they had become integrated into everyday life.

Yet this postwar future was shaped by contradictions. Labor-saving appliances were sold as liberatory while reinforcing expectations that women would remain responsible for domestic work. And even more fundamentally, the promise of homeownership was systematically denied to Black Americans through redlining, racially restrictive covenants, and discriminatory lending practices.

Front:

Emil Mathias, inventor
United States, 1895–1972

Push-Button Manor, in *Popular
Mechanics*, December 1950
Project c. 1948–50s in Jackson, Michigan

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch
Art Research Library

Back:

Henry Dreyfuss & Associates, design firm
New York, 1929–2012

Henry Dreyfuss, designer
United States, 1904–1972
Carl Kronmiller, engineer
United States, 1889–1968

Minneapolis-Honeywell Regulator Company
Minneapolis, 1906–present

***Round* thermostat, model T-86**,
introduced 1953, this example c. 1958–65

Metal and molded plastic
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design
Museum, Smithsonian Institution, gift of
Honeywell Inc.

Henry Dreyfuss believed that objects should be designed to fit people, and the *Round* thermostat is among the purest expressions of that conviction. Dreyfuss transformed an ordinary household control into an elegant, intuitive object. Borrowing the familiar turning gesture of a radio dial, he enclosed the mechanism within a perfect circle and added a removable outer ring that homeowners could paint to match their decor. Advertised as “the first really new idea in thermostats in years,” the *Round* became one of the most recognizable and enduring objects in the American home.

Henry Dreyfuss & Associates, design firm
New York, 1929–2012

Niels Diffrient, designer
United States, 1928–2013

Western Electric Company, a subsidiary of
AT&T
New York, 1869–1983

***Princess* telephone, touch-tone model
1702B**, 1963

Plastic and metal wiring
Courtesy of AT&T Archives and
History Center

Front:

Eugene Polley, inventor
United States, 1915–2012

Zenith Radio Corporation
Chicago, 1918–present

***Flash-Matic* remote control**, 1955

Plastic and metal
LACMA, purchased with funds provided by
the David Bohnett Foundation

Robert Adler, inventor

Austria, 1913–2007, active United States

Zenith Radio Corporation

Chicago, 1918–present

Space Commander 600 remote control,
introduced 1965, manufactured c. 1965–72

Plastic, metal, and wire

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Acquisitions Fund

M.2024.262

Back:

Emil I. Harman, designer
Croatia-Slavonia (now Croatia), 1897–
1982, active United States

Ernest H. Traub, engineer
Singapore, b. 1912, active England and
United States

Philco
Philadelphia, 1892–present

***Safari* portable transistor television,
model H-2010, 1959**

Leather, plastic, metal, and paint
Collection of David C. Bohnett

Attributed to **Richard Arbib**

United States, 1917–1995

General Electric Company

Boston, 1892–2024

Clock radio, model 914-D, 1957

Glass, plastic, metal, and rubber

From the collections of the Henry Ford,
Dearborn, Michigan

Painter, Teague, and Petertil, design firm
Chicago, 1950–60

Richard Koch, chief engineer
United States, 1922–2010

Regency Division, I.D.E.A. (Industrial
Development Engineering Associates), Inc.,
manufacturer
Indianapolis, 1945–present

Texas Instruments, transistor manufacturer
Dallas, 1951–present

Transistor radio, model TR-1, 1954

Styrene
Collection of David C. Bohnett

Dieter Rams

Germany, b. 1932

Braun

Kronberg im Taunus, Germany,
1921–present

Transistor radio, model T3, designed
1958

Plastic

**Phonograph and transistor radio, model
TP1**, designed 1959

Plastic, aluminum, and leather

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Fund

M.2018.26, M.2018.75a–c

When the Regency TR-1 appeared in 1954 as the first commercially available transistor radio, it fit in a pocket—a simple fact with profound consequences. Radio had been a shared family experience, with members gathered around a living room set; the TR-1 made it private, personal, and portable. Within a few years, Dieter Rams had refined the same idea for Braun, producing transistor radios and a combined phonograph whose spare, functional forms proved remarkably prescient. Rams's T3 is frequently compared to the original Apple iPod—a reminder that the design language of personal electronics was essentially established in the 1950s.

Arthur Radebaugh

United States, 1906–1974

***Closer Than We Think! Automatic
Kitchens*, 1958**

***Closer Than We Think! Robot
Housemaid*, 1959**

Ink and paper on illustration board

The Ohio State University Billy Ireland
Cartoon Library & Museum, International
Museum of Cartoon Art Collection and
Records

Frances Gabe

United States, 1915–2016

Self-Cleaning House, Newburg, Oregon,
built 1970s–80s; model made c. 1978

Wood, plastic, ceramic, and rocks

Hagley Museum and Library, Fred M. B.

Amram & Sandra A. Brick Woman Inventor
Collection

Frances Gabe spent decades trying to eliminate one of the most persistent forms of domestic labor: housework. Her Self-Cleaning House incorporated sixty-eight inventions, including ceiling-mounted sprinklers that washed and rinsed each room, plastic-coated books and furniture, and a closet that laundered clothes while they hung inside. This working model,

created to test and promote her designs, represents one of the most radical domestic visions in the exhibition: a house that did not merely promise liberation from drudgery but was engineered to achieve it.

Henry P. Glass

Austria, 1911–2003, active United States

Fleetwood Furniture Co.

Grand Haven, Michigan, 1955–present

***Swing Line* cabinet, c. 1951**

Masonite, lacquer enamel, and wood

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Fund

M.2010.9a–b

Can furniture help shape how a child thinks? Mid-century designer Henry P. Glass believed it could. Influenced by new ideas about childhood development, Glass designed this cabinet specifically for small hands and growing independence. Its drawers pivot open rather than slide,

allowing children to organize their belongings more easily by themselves. Rounded corners and brightly colored compartments transformed storage into an experience that was both playful and practical.

Gloria Caranica

United States, 1931–2026

Creative Playthings, Inc.

New York, 1945–66

Rocking Beauty hobby horse, designed
1964–66

Plywood, wood, and paint

Brooklyn Museum, bequest of Laura L.

Barnes and gift of Mrs. James F. Bechtold,
by exchange

Charles Harrison

United States, 1931–2018

Sawyer's, Inc.

Portland, Oregon, 1914–66

***View-Master*, model G with picture reels**,
designed 1958, this example 1962; reels
c. 1965

Injection-molded thermoplastic, cardboard,
and Kodachrome color transparency film
The Museum of Modern Art, New York,
anonymous gift, 2016

Originally introduced at the 1939 New York
World's Fair, the *View-Master* invited users
to experience distant places through three-
dimensional stereoscopic images—
armchair travel as a domestic future. When

Charles Harrison revamped it in 1958, he transformed a bulky object into a lightweight, affordable toy that was easier to hold and operate. Harrison, the first Black industrial designer hired by Sears, Roebuck and Co., would create hundreds of household products guided by a similar belief: that good design should be accessible to everyone.

Eames Office, design firm
Los Angeles, 1941–88

Charles Eames, designer
United States, 1907–1978

Ray Eames, designer
United States, 1912–1988

Tigrett Enterprises, Playhouse Division
Jackson, Tennessee, 1930s–60s

The Little Toy, 1952

Cardboard, Tekwood, metal, and wire
connectors

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council Fund

M.2013.31.3

Mattel, Inc.

Hawthorne, California, 1945–present

***Barbie's Dream House*, c. 1962**

Offset lithograph on cardboard

Private collection

When *Barbie's Dream House* appeared in 1962, its most radical feature was what it lacked: a kitchen. The omission was a statement—that this home, designed for a doll introduced three years earlier as a fashion model, was centered on leisure, independence, and personal freedom rather than domestic labor. Yet at the time, millions of American women could not obtain a mortgage without a male co-signer, and unmarried women were routinely denied credit altogether. *Barbie* inhabited a

future of female autonomy that American law would not begin to recognize until the passage of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act in 1974.

Arthur A. Carrara

United States, 1914–1995

Reno J. Carrara, collaborator

United States, 1907–1982

Carradan Associates

Chicago, c. 1948–50s

Walker Museum of Art, sponsor and retailer

Minneapolis, 1879–present

Magnet Master Playtool, set no. 8, 1947

Steel, enameled steel, printed paper, and
cardboard

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Acquisition Fund

M.2024.90

When Marcel Breuer furnished the children's room of his 1949 *House in the Museum Garden* at the Museum of Modern Art, he included the *Magnet Master* Playtool—a sign of how quickly this toy had entered progressive design circles. One of the first construction toys to use magnets, it invited children to assemble abstract structures from steel plates and rods. Developed by architect Arthur Carrara in 1947 and distributed exclusively by the Walker Art Center, the playset reflected postwar beliefs that open-ended play fostered creativity, experimentation, and modern ways of thinking.

Leonard Nadel, author and photographer
United States, 1916–1990

“Aliso Village, U.S.A.,” c. 1949

Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Aliso Village, a garden-style residential complex completed in Los Angeles’s Boyle Heights neighborhood in 1942, was one of the first racially integrated public housing projects in the United States—a community where white, Hispanic, Black, and Asian families lived side by side. Commissioned by the city’s Housing Authority and designed by a collective led by Ralph Flewelling and Lloyd Wright, the bright residences and landscaped grounds offered low-income Angelenos amenities usually reserved for the middle class. In this

unpublished manuscript, Leonard Nadel documents four families of different backgrounds to show how Aliso Village could serve as a model for the future by directly challenging Jim Crow—era segregationist policies and norms.

Left:

George Nelson

United States, 1908–1986

Henry Wright

United States, 1910–1986

***Tomorrow's House*, 1945**

Paul R. Williams

United States, 1894–1980

***The Small Home of Tomorrow*, 1945**

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

These two books, published in the same year, argued that the home of the future was not a fantasy—it was already within reach. In *Tomorrow's House*, George Nelson and Henry Wright proposed compact modern dwellings with open floor plans and labor-saving devices, arguing that such homes, already possible in 1945, “would look like something out of the day after tomorrow.” Paul R. Williams, the most prominent Black architect in the United States, made a similar case for affordable modern housing in *The Small Home of Tomorrow*—at a moment when discriminatory lending practices denied most Black Americans the right to own one.

The exhibition *Paul R. Williams: Architect for Living* will be on view in the adjoining

gallery from November 15, 2026 to May 31, 2027.

Right:

Henry Dreyfuss

United States, 1904–1972

***The Measure of Man: Human Factors in Design*, 1960**

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

The *Joe* and *Josephine* posters from this portfolio are framed at right.

Henry Dreyfuss, creator
United States, 1904–1972

Alvin R. Tilley, draftsman
United States, 1914–1993

Joe, 1960

Josephine, 1960

From *The Measure of Man: Human Factors in Design*

Offset lithographs

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

These life-size charts of “Joe” and
“Josephine”—the standardized male and
female figures at the heart of Henry
Dreyfuss’s landmark 1960 portfolio (in the

case at left)—provided designers with human templates intended to make everyday objects more comfortable and intuitive. Yet these figures embodied assumptions about whose body defined the norm: Joe was based on data drawn from fit, white military recruits, while Josephine reflected the narrow sizing standards of mid-century fashion companies. Dreyfuss later expanded his research to include a broader range of ages, body types, and physical abilities.

Liddle and Jones, architectural firm
Tacoma, Washington, 1957–68

Douglas Fir Plywood Association
Tacoma, Washington, 1933–present (now
APA—The Engineered Wood Association)

***Century 21 Plywood Home of Living
Light***, 1962
Designed for Century 21 Exposition,
Seattle, 1962

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

A. Quincy Jones

United States, 1913–1979

Frederick E. Emmons

United States, 1907–1999

Jones and Emmons, architectural firm

Los Angeles, 1951–69

Eichler Homes, developer

Palo Alto, 1949–67

Ernest Braun, photographer

United States, 1921–2010

X-100, San Mateo, California, built 1956;
photo 1957, printed 2026

Inkjet print

Courtesy of Ernest Braun archive

Lee Madden, director
United States, 1927–2009

Paul McCobb, set designer
United States, 1917–1969

Philco-Ford Corporation, a subsidiary of
Ford Motor Company
Philadelphia, 1961–74

1999 A.D. (clips), 1967
Library of Congress

Westinghouse Electric Corporation
Pittsburgh, 1886–1997

The Total Electric Home (clip), c. 1959

James Jackson

active United States, 1960s

Joyce Chopra

United States, b. 1936

**“At Home, 2001,” from *The 21st Century*,
hosted by Walter Cronkite (clip), 1967**

Footage supplied by CBS News

Universal Pictures

Universal City, California, 1912–present

***Universal Newsreel* featuring the Eichler
X-100 (clip), October 1956**

Frank Lloyd Wright

United States, 1867–1959

Herbert and Katherine Jacobs First House (exterior perspectives), Madison, Wisconsin, 1936, built 1937

Graphite, colored pencil, and oil pastel on paper

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation
Archives (The Museum of Modern Art |
Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library,
Columbia University, New York)

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

Germany, 1886–1969, active United States

Edward Duckett, delineator

United States, 1920–2008

Farnsworth House (elevation), Plano, Illinois, 1945, designed 1945–47, built 1949–51

Watercolor and graphite on tracing paper
The Museum of Modern Art, New York,
Mies van der Rohe Archive, gift of the architect, 1966

When Ludwig Mies van der Rohe completed the Farnsworth House in 1951, its glass walls, open floor plan, and minimalist steel frame made it unlike anything previously built. Mies eliminated

traditional boundaries between inside and out, creating a seamless unity between the spare modern interior and its bucolic setting along a river. He called the result “universal space”: a home so open and undivided that it could accommodate any way of living. Some praised its radical simplicity; others found it sterile and impractical. Few houses have inspired so much admiration—and argument—about how architecture should shape human experience.

John Lautner

United States, 1911–1994

Lamp for Sturges House (Frank Lloyd Wright, architect), Los Angeles, early 1940s

Cast iron, brass, wood, and paint
LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council Acquisition Fund
M.2016.151.1

Olga Lee

United States, 1924–2014

Ralph O. Smith Manufacturing Company
Burbank, c. 1949–54

Lamp, designed c. 1952, manufactured c.
1952–54

Form exhibited in *Good Design*, Museum of
Modern Art, New York, 1952, and *California
Design*, Pasadena Art Museum, 1954

Aluminum and iron

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Fund

M.2007.186

Greta von Nessen

Sweden, 1898–1974, active United States

Nessen Studio, Inc.

New York, 1927–present

***Anywhere Lamp*, 1951**

Form exhibited in *Good Design*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1952

Aluminum and enameled steel

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Acquisition Fund

M.2022.79

Zahara Schatz

Jerusalem, 1916–1999, active United States and Israel

Heifetz Manufacturing Company,
competition co-sponsor and manufacturer
New York, 1937–80

Table lamp, designed 1950, manufactured
1951

Designed for lamp competition at Museum
of Modern Art, New York, 1950; form
exhibited in *New Lamps*, Museum of
Modern Art, 1951

Aluminum and enameled brass

LACMA, gift of the 2018 Decorative Arts
and Design Acquisition Committee (DA²)
M.2018.83.2

For its 1950 lamp competition, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) invited designers to imagine new forms for one of the most essential objects in the modern home.

Zahara Schatz was among the winners. Her elegant table lamp—with a cone-shaped light source and adjustable reflective shade to provide either focused reading light or a soft ambient glow—was one of ten designs selected for production by competition co-sponsor Heifetz Manufacturing Company and included in a 1951 MoMA exhibition. The lamp exemplifies the museum's strategy of using competitions, exhibitions, and partnerships with manufacturers to bring experimental design to market and shape the future American home.

Eames Office, design firm
Los Angeles, 1941–88

Charles Eames, designer
United States, 1907–1978

Ray Eames, designer
United States, 1912–1988

Herman Miller Furniture Company
Zeeland, Michigan, 1923–present

***ESU* (Eames storage unit), 400 series**,
designed c. 1949, manufactured 1950–55

Zinc-plated steel, birch-faced and plastic-coated plywood, lacquered particle board, and rubber

LACMA, gift of Mr. Sid Avery and Mr. James Corcoran

M.86.105

Charles Eames, architect
United States, 1907–1978

Ray Eames, architect and model
supervisor
United States, 1912–1988

D. Michael Hamner, model maker
United States, b. 1958

Kestutis Paul Zygas, model supervisor
Lithuania, b. 1942, active United States

Museum of Modern Art, New York,
commissioner
1929–present

Eames House (Case Study House #8),
Los Angeles, built 1949; model made 1984

Plastic and wood

The Museum of Modern Art, New York,
Emilio Ambasz Fund, 1984

This scale model, commissioned by the Museum of Modern Art in 1984, documents one of the most celebrated houses of the twentieth century. Charles and Ray Eames designed Case Study House #8 as part of *Arts & Architecture* magazine's postwar program to demonstrate the possibilities of building with new materials and methods. Constructed in 1949 from off-the-shelf industrial components, this Case Study showed how prefabricated, affordable housing could be both rigorously geometric and warmly inhabitable. The Eameses lived there until their deaths—proof that the future they imagined was one they wanted to call home.

Gregory Ain

United States, 1908–1988

Joseph Johnson, collaborator

United States, 1911–1987

Alfred Day, collaborator

United States, 1909–1992

Theodore Conrad, model maker

United States, 1910–1994

Museum of Modern Art, co-sponsor

New York, 1929–present

Woman's Home Companion, co-sponsor

Springfield, Ohio, 1873–1957

***Exhibition House* for the Museum of Modern Art garden, New York, house built 1950; model made c. 1950**

Paper, wood, plastic, acrylic, metal, aluminum, and paint

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of Alice M. Tisch, Andrea Woodner, and Dietrich Neumann, 2014

In May 1950, the Museum of Modern Art opened a full-scale house in its sculpture garden. Designed by Los Angeles architect Gregory Ain, the structure was a prototype for affordable, mass-produced housing. Features like sliding walls and an open floor plan demonstrated that modern design did not have to be a luxury. In an unprecedented step for a museum, the exhibition catalogue included a price list for

every commercial item on display. It was living proof, as one writer noted, that “tomorrow’s house had arrived.”

Richard Neutra

Austria, 1892–1970, active United States

Chair from Channel Heights Housing Project, San Pedro, California, 1941–42

Plywood (white pine), steel, plastic, and fabric cushion

LACMA, gift of Thomas S. Hines

M.91.142

Ray Komai

United States, 1918–2010

J. G. Furniture Company

New York, c. 1920s–73

Side chair, model 939, 1949

Form exhibited in *Good Design*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1950–51

Molded plywood and chrome-plated steel
LACMA, gift of Mark A. McDonald, Hudson,
NY

M.2007.188

R. M. (Rudolph Michael) Schindler

Austria, 1887–1953, active United States

Dining chair from Skolnik House, Los Angeles, c. 1950–52

Plywood and original upholstery

LACMA, gift of David and Patricia Gebhard

AC1998.178.1.1

Vienna-born architect R. M. Schindler considered furniture micro-architecture: scaled-down design that should speak the same language as the building around it. The angular back of this chair, designed for the Skolnik House, echoes the dining room's sloped ceiling and irregular geometry. To minimize waste and cost, Schindler designed its flat surfaces to be easily cut from a single sheet of industrial

plywood. Light, unobtrusive, and easy to move, the chair also reflects Schindler's belief that furniture should adapt to its users rather than dictate to them—a domestic future defined by flexibility rather than fixed arrangement.

Kem Weber

Germany, 1889–1963, active United States

Air Line Furniture Company

Los Angeles, c. 1930s

Air Line chair, designed 1934,
manufactured c. 1939

Birch, ash, and PVC faux leather

LACMA, purchased with funds provided by
the J. Paul Getty Museum

M.2004.13

Kem Weber, *Air Line* chair (packaging and
assembly), c. 1935.

Image courtesy of the Karl Emanuel Martin
(Kem) Weber Papers, Art, Design &
Architecture Museum, UC Santa Barbara

Eames Office, design firm
Los Angeles, 1941–88

Charles Eames, designer
United States, 1907–1978

Ray Eames, designer
United States, 1912–1988

Evans Products Company, Molded Plywood
Division
Los Angeles, 1943–47

Armchair, 1944–45

Ash plywood and maple plywood
LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council Fund in honor of Annie Kelly and
Tim Street-Porter receiving the 2013
Design Leadership Award, Susan and Eric

Smidt, Debbie and Mark Attanasio, Chuck
Chewning, Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Resnick,
Michael S. Smith, Andrea and Steve
Stanford, and Margaret Weitzman
M.2013.180

Herbert von Thaden

United States, 1898–1969

Thaden Jordan Furniture Corporation
Roanoke, Virginia, 1946–51

Chair, 1946

Bent plywood, wood, and metal
LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council Fund
M.2011.186

Marcel Breuer

Hungary, 1902–1981, active Germany,
England, and United States

U.S. Forest Products Laboratory, research
support

Madison, Wisconsin, 1910–present

United States Rubber Research Laboratory,
collaborator

Naugatuck, Connecticut, 1892–present
(now Uniroyal, Inc.)

***Resilient Chair*, 1948**

Exhibited in *Prize Designs for Modern
Furniture*, Museum of Modern Art, New
York, 1950

Plywood, rubber mounts, and caning
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift
of the designer, 2008

Eva Zeisel

Hungary, 1906–2011, active Germany,
Soviet Union, and United States

Hudson Fixtures, Inc., manufacturer
New York

Richards-Morgenthau, retailer
New York, 1941–80

Resilient Chair, designed 1948–49

Chrome-plated tubular steel and cotton
(replaced by the artist in 1995)

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift
of the designer, 1995

Eva Zeisel named this chair *Resilient* for
good reason. One of the most influential
designers of the postwar era—and the first

woman to receive a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art—Zeisel created the chair from a continuous steel frame and a taut cotton seat. It rocks gently backward and forward as the sitter moves, then folds flat for easy storage. Its combination of flexibility, efficiency, and graceful engineering prompted one contemporary critic to call it “the day-after-tomorrow version of the old rocking chair.”

Brooks Stevens Design Associates

Milwaukee, 1934–present

John Hughes, designer

United States, 1912–1991

Raymond Loewy Associates, *Sunrise*
colorways

New York, 1929–77

Formica Company

Cincinnati, 1913–present

Left:

**Primrose *Skylark* pattern sample for
Formica, *Sunrise* color line, 1956**

Paper

Middle:

**Aqua *Skylark* pattern sample for
Formica, *Sunrise* color line, 1956**

**Gray *Skylark* pattern sample for
Formica, 1951**

Paper

Right:

**Pink *Skylark* pattern sample for Formica,
Sunrise color line, 1956**

Formica

Historic Formica ® Laminate Collection held
at the National Building Museum

These pattern and laminate samples trace the evolution of Formica's *Skylark* design, with its distinctive boomerang-like forms. Originally developed in 1951 for passenger train interiors, the pattern was later recolored by Raymond Loewy Associates for the company's *Sunrise* line, which helped bring a streamlined, atomic-age aesthetic into American kitchens. Formica, made by sealing decorative paper within durable melamine resin, offered an affordable alternative to tile and other traditional surface materials. Backed by a *Good Housekeeping* guarantee, the material helped make the postwar home more colorful, customizable, and easy to maintain.

Maria Kipp

Germany, 1900–1988, active United States

Textile length for drapery, c. 1950

Cotton, rayon-bouclé, metallic-plastic, and linen plain weave with supplementary warp and weft float patterning and looped fringe

LACMA, Costume Council Fund

AC1999.19.4

Jack Lenor Larsen

United States, 1927–2020

United States Rubber, Textile Division
Naugatuck, Connecticut, 1892–1990
(now Uniroyal, Inc.)

Trilok samples, no. 5003 and 5007, 1957

Two-ply viscose rayon, linen, and clear
polyethylene warp and two-ply viscose
rayon weft

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design
Museum, Smithsonian
Institution, gift of the United States
Rubber Company

Jack Lenor Larsen Inc.

New York, 1952–97

***Bojangles* sample, *The Butterflies*
collection, 1967**

Hand-printed Caprolan textured stretch
nylon bonded to polyester foam

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design
Museum, Smithsonian Institution, gift of
Jack Lenor Larsen

Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa)
Pittsburgh, 1888–2016

Edgar De Evia, photographer
Mexico, 1910–2003, active United States

**Alcoa *Forecast* advertisement featuring
portable aluminum oven designed by
Greta Magnusson Grossman, c. 1957**

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

Marianne Strengell
Finland, 1909–1998, active United States

Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa)
Pittsburgh, 1888–2016

Alcoa *Forecast* rug sample prototype, 1956

Linen warp; wool, linen, jute, cotton,
rayon/viscose wefts; and aluminum thread
Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift
of the designer, 1985

“There’s a world of aluminum in the wonderful world of tomorrow” was the slogan of Alcoa’s *Forecast* program, launched in 1956 to demonstrate the domestic potential of the lightweight metal. The company enlisted prominent designers to make the case. Marianne Strengell wove aluminum threads (a new development) together with natural fibers to transform an industrial product into something warm and tactile. Greta Magnusson Grossman, meanwhile, designed a portable aluminum

oven sleek enough to anchor an aspirational lifestyle advertisement. Together, these objects suggest how the future of the American home would be fashioned from the materials of modern industry.

Aluminum Company of America, *Forecast: The Miracle of Metallic Yarns Made of Alcoa Aluminum* pamphlet featuring Marianne Strengell's *Forecast* rug, c. 1956.
© Alcoa Corporation, courtesy of Cranbrook Archives, Cranbrook Center for Collections and Research

Dorothy Liebes

United States, 1897–1972

Du Pont

Wilmington, Delaware, 1802–present

Theater curtain prototype for Du Pont pavilion, New York World's Fair, 1964–65, completed 1964

Orlon and Fairtex metallic yarn,
power loomed

Museum of Arts and Design, New York, gift
of Dorothy Liebes

Design, through the American Craft
Council, 1973

George Nelson and Co., design firm
New York, 1947–80s

Charles Pollock, designer
United States, 1930–2013

Herman Miller Furniture Company
Zeeland, Michigan, 1923–present

***Swaged Leg* chair, model MAA**, c. 1958

Tubular steel, molded plastic shell, and
rubber

Collection of Cranbrook Art Museum, gift of
Herman Miller, Inc., the Herman Miller
Collection

Eames Office, design firm
Los Angeles, 1941–88

Charles Eames, designer
United States, 1907–1978

Ray Eames, designer
United States, 1912–1988

University of California, Los Angeles,
College of Engineering, collaborator
1945–present

Herman Miller Furniture Company
Zeeland, Michigan, 1923–present

Armchair, model LAR (low lounge chair),
designed 1948, this example c. 1950

Form exhibited in *Prize Designs for Modern Furniture*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1950

Fiberglass, low wire, and rubber shock mounts

LACMA, gift of the employees of Herman Miller, Inc.

M.89.104.5

In response to the Museum of Modern Art's 1948 call for affordable furniture suitable for mass production, Charles and Ray Eames submitted this molded-fiberglass armchair—developed with UCLA's College of Engineering—and won second prize. The jury of the International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture Design called it “virtually indestructible.” Whereas other designers concealed fiberglass beneath

upholstery, the Eameses celebrated the substance, using it to create translucent, sculptural furniture. A material developed for wartime aircraft became a defining feature of the postwar American home.

Maria Kipp

Germany, 1900–1988, active United States

Textile length for drapery, c. 1940

Mohair, metallic yarn, and chenille yarn
plain weave

LACMA, Costume Council Fund

AC1999.19.6

Verner Panton

Denmark, 1926–1998

Vitra, manufacturer

Birsfelden, Switzerland, 1950–present

Herman Miller, Inc., retailer

Zeeland, Michigan, 1923–present

Panton Chair, model PA100, introduced
1967, this example 1974

Polystyrene

LACMA, gift of the employees of Herman
Miller, Inc.

M.89.104.13

Ken Chapman

active United States, 1960s

Walt Disney Productions

Burbank, 1923–present

***Carousel of Progress*, 1967**

Screenprint

The Walt Disney Imagineering Collection

This poster distills the *Carousel of Progress* into a single image: on the left, a woman irons in a Victorian parlor; on the right, a man at leisure is seated in Eero Saarinen's *Pedestal* chair. "From the Good Old Days ... to the Possible Present" was the slogan of the rotating theater Walt Disney designed for General Electric's pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair. Audiences moved

through four scenes—from the 1880s to the 1960s—watching audio-animatronic figures demonstrate how electricity and consumer technology had transformed American domestic life. The attraction reopened at Disneyland's Tomorrowland in 1967.

Monsanto Chemical Company, Plastics Division

St. Louis, Missouri, 1901–2018

Walt Disney Productions

Burbank, 1923–present

Bay State Film Productions, Inc.

Springfield, Massachusetts, 1944–present
(now Penfield Productions, Ltd.)

The Monsanto House of the Future
(clips), c. 1957

Courtesy of Eastman Chemical Company

Hamilton & Goody Architects

Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1955–60s

Marvin E. Goody, architect

United States, 1929–1980

Richard W. Hamilton, architect

United States, 1924–1959

Monsanto Chemical Company

St. Louis, 1901–2018

Clockwise from top left:

Heliport Study #2, Monsanto House of Tomorrow (exterior perspective),
Anaheim, 1956, house designed 1953–56,
built 1957

Kyu Lee (Yi Ku), renderer

Japan, 1931–2005, active United States
and Korea

Colored pencil on paper

**Kitchen Study, Monsanto House of
Tomorrow (interior perspective),**
Anaheim, 1956, house designed 1953–56,
built 1957

Kyu Lee (Yi Ku), renderer

Japan, 1931–2005, active United States
and Korea

Graphite, colored pencil, and chalk on craft
paper

Monsanto House of the Future (presentation rendering), 1956

Colored pencil on paper and board

Courtesy of MIT Museum, Monsanto House
of the Future Collection, gift of Goody
Clancy

When the Monsanto House of the Future opened at Disneyland in 1957, it was unlike anything visitors had ever seen: a gleaming, cross-shaped structure cantilevered above the ground and fabricated almost entirely from plastic.

Designed by MIT architects and sponsored by Monsanto Chemical Company, which hoped to expand peacetime markets for synthetic materials developed during World War II, the house attracted some twenty million visitors before its demolition in 1967.

These drawings reveal the project's futuristic ambitions: a rooftop heliport, a kitchen of molded surfaces and push-button appliances, and a vision of domestic life shaped by the fantasies of the space age.

Erwine Laverne

Romania, 1909–2003, active United States

Estelle Laverne

United States, 1915–1997

Laverne Inc.

New York, 1938–70s

Lily chair, Invisible Group line,

introduced 1959

Molded acrylic

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Acquisition Fund

M.2025.265a

One of four flower-inspired chairs in Erwine and Estelle Laverne's *Invisible Group* of see-through furniture, the *Lily* was described by the *New York Times* as “the

first full-fledged modern design in acrylic.” Applying molding processes developed during World War II for fabricating plastic airplane cockpits, the husband-and-wife designers created a completely transparent, unified chair. In doing so, they succeeding in their aim of going further than Eero Saarinen, who asserted that his *Pedestal* line eliminated the “slum of legs.” As one ad for the *Lily* described, “In crowded rooms it seems to take no space, delighting all who see it.”

Laverne Inc., “The Next Sound You Hear Will Not Be a Mother Screaming” advertisement for *Lily* chair, 1960

Neal Small

United States, 1937–2020

Neal Small Designs Inc.

New York, c. 1965–73

Cocktail table prototype, model 5031,
c. 1968

Acrylic

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Acquisition Fund

M.2022.57.2

Zahara Schatz

Jerusalem, 1916–1999, active United States and Israel

Screen, c. 1950

Plexiglas, copper, brass, and enameled steel

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design Council Fund

M.2011.79

George Nelson and Co., design firm
New York, 1947–80s

Irving Harper, designer
United States, 1916–2015

Herman Miller, Inc.
Zeeland, Michigan, 1923–present

Marshmallow Love Seat, model 5670,
designed 1956, this example c. 1960s

Wool, steel, and foam
LACMA, gift of Michael and Susan Rich
M.2012.183

Kitchens of Tomorrow

Throughout the twentieth century, manufacturers promised that technology would liberate women from kitchen drudgery. Exhibition kitchens, advertisements, and promotional films imagined the kitchen of tomorrow as a scientist's laboratory equipped with an electric dishwasher, self-cleaning oven, push-button range, and automated serving cart. Housewives were assured they would spend less time cooking and cleaning and more time enjoying modern life.

Yet this future repeatedly failed to arrive. New appliances raised standards rather than eliminating labor: more washing, more cleaning, more elaborate meals, and ever-greater expectations of hygiene and

efficiency. Even the most futuristic kitchens were based on the assumption that women would remain responsible for domestic work. Technology transformed the kitchen's appearance, but rarely the social structure surrounding it.

The exhibition in the adjoining gallery, *The Kitchen and Its Discontents*, explores these themes in an international context, highlighting two influential modern kitchens from LACMA's collection.

Top:

H. Creston Doner, kitchen designer
United States, 1903–1991

Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company,
kitchen manufacturer
Toledo, Ohio, 1930–86

Nina Leen, photographer
Russian Empire (now Ukraine), 1906–1995,
active United States

**“Kitchens of Tomorrow May Look Like
This,”** in *Life*, August 1943

Arthur Dea Elrod, kitchen designer
United States, 1926–1974

William C. Raiser, kitchen designer
United States, 1916–1974

Arthur Elrod Associates, Inc.
Palm Springs, est. 1954

Johnson Publishing Company, client and
publisher
Chicago, 1942–2019

General Electric Company, appliance
manufacturer
New York, 1892–2024

Alexandre Georges, photographer
United States, b. 1916

***Ebony* Test Kitchen, in *Ebony*,**
September 1972

Bottom:

Frigidaire Division, General Motors Corporation

Dayton, 1919–79

Presenting . . . the 1955 Frigidaire Kitchen of Tomorrow, c. 1955

H. Creston Doner, kitchen designer
United States, 1903–1991

Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company
Toledo, Ohio, 1930–86

“Kitchen of Tomorrow,” 1943; kitchen designed 1942

Frigidaire Division, General Motors Corporation

Dayton, 1919–79

Here It Is: The Kitchen Idea of the Year,
c. 1955

Sundberg-Ferar, kitchen design firm
Detroit, 1934–present

Whirlpool-Seeger Corporation
Benton Harbor, Michigan, 1911–present
(now Whirlpool Corporation)

Bob Lerner, photographer
United States, 1926–2019

RCA Whirlpool Miracle Kitchen, in Look,
July 1959

All LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art Research Library

Sundberg-Ferar, kitchen design firm
Detroit, 1934–present

Whirlpool-Seeger Corporation
Benton Harbor, Michigan, 1911–present
(now Whirlpool Corporation)

**Anne Anderson in the *RCA Whirlpool*
Miracle Kitchen**, kitchen designed 1956;
photo 1959, printed 2026

Bob Lerner, photographer
United States, 1926–2019

Look magazine, photography client
Des Moines, Iowa, 1937–71

Exhibited at American National Exhibition,
Moscow, 1959

Inkjet print

Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs
Division, LOOK Magazine Photograph
Collection

The RCA Whirlpool Miracle Kitchen,
1957

From the collections of the Henry Ford,
Dearborn, Michigan

Whirlpool-Seeger Corporation

Benton Harbor, Michigan, 1911–present
(now Whirlpool Corporation)

***RCA Whirlpool* Electronic (microwave) oven, 1957**

Metal, plastic, paper, and rubber

From the collections of the Henry Ford,
Dearborn, Michigan, donated in memory of
father, William B. Hull, Sr.

This microwave (originally called an “electronic oven”) was marketed alongside the *RCA Whirlpool* Miracle Kitchen, a vision of push-button luxury that Whirlpool toured across the United States starting in 1957. Microwave technology had been introduced for household use just two years earlier, by a stove company. Advertisements referred

to the electronic oven as the future available “here today,” promising it could bake a cake in three minutes and cook vegetables in seconds. Microwaves wouldn’t become commonplace until Amana introduced a smaller, far less expensive model in 1967. Today they are in most American kitchens—but rarely used for cake.

Front:

Arne Jacobsen

Denmark, 1902–1971

A. Michelsen

Copenhagen, 1841–1985

AJ Cutlery, introduced 1957

Stainless steel

LACMA, gift of Dung Ngo

M.2018.239.2a–f

Russel Wright

United States, 1904–1976

Northern Industrial Chemical Company

Boston, 1908–60s

Sugar bowl and creamer, *Flair* line, *Ming Lace* pattern, introduced 1959

Melamine

LACMA, gift of Dennis Teepe and
Jan Howard

M.2026.101.15a–b, .16

Plastics arrived on the postwar table in many forms; the two most prominent are represented here. Earl S. Tupper's flexible polyethylene bowls and cups, sold through the innovation of home *Tupperware* parties, promised airtight freshness and enabled a new approach to food storage. Melamine offered something different: "unbreakable" dishes with the smooth finish of porcelain at a fraction of the cost. Prominent designers gave melamine status: Belle Kogan's colorful *Boontonware* earned a *Consumer*

Reports top rating in 1951, while Russel Wright's *Ming Lace* pattern from the *Flair* line brought organic warmth to synthetic material. For many Americans, objects like these were a first, approachable encounter with plastics in the home.

Back:

Earl S. Tupper

United States, 1907–1983

Tupper Corporation

Farnumsville, Massachusetts, 1938–2024

***Tupperware cups and saucers,
Millionaire line, c. 1947***

***Tupperware Wonderlier bowl, Millionaire
line, c. 1954***

Polyethylene

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

Belle Kogan Associates, design firm
New York, 1931–70

Belle Kogan, designer
Russia, 1902–2000, active United States

Boonton Molding Company
Boonton, New Jersey, 1920–81

Boontonware DeLuxe vegetable serving
dish, no. 605, 1951

Melamine
LACMA, gift of Dennis Teepe and Jan
Howard
M.2026.101.1a–b

C. A. Swanson & Sons

Omaha, c. 1899–1955

Swanson TV Dinner tray, introduced 1954

Aluminum

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Acquisition Fund

M.2024.263

Catherine Winkler, designer
Austria, 1906–1989, active United States

Richard Whipple, designer
United States, 1916–1964

Severin Jonassen, designer
United States, 1913–1998

Philco
Philadelphia, 1892–present

***Predicta* pedestal television, model 4654**,
designed 1958

Tenite, brass, and wood
LACMA, purchased with funds provided by
the David Bohnett Foundation

Philco introduced the *Predicta* with the slogan “TV today from the world of tomorrow,” marketing the device as a passport to the future. The innovation of a swivel-mounted, “separate” screen and pedestal base gave the set an almost weightless presence and enabled it to be positioned with unusual flexibility in the home. More than a stylistic novelty, this adaptability helped normalize television as a central domestic fixture, accelerating its transformation into an indispensable medium that reshaped everyday life.

Honeywell Inc., Computer Control Division

Framingham, Massachusetts, 1966–70

Neiman Marcus, retailer
Dallas, 1907–present

***H316 Kitchen Computer*, 1969**

Plastic and metal

Computer History Museum, gift of
Boudreau Computer Services, Ltd.

Neiman Marcus, “If She Can Only Cook as Well as Honeywell Can Compute” advertisement for *H316 Kitchen Computer* (detail), 1969. Courtesy of the Computer History Museum

William Beaudine, director
United States, 1892–1970

General Motors Corporation
Detroit, 1908–present

Victor D. Solow, producer
Russia, 1917–1977, active United States

MPO Productions, Inc., production
company
New York, 1947–c. 2012

Design for Dreaming (clips), 1956

Library of Congress, © 2026 General
Motors LLC

Frigidaire Division, General Motors Corporation

Dayton, 1919–79

***Out of This World (clip)*, 1964**

Prelinger Archives

William Hanna, creator
United States, 1910–2001

Joseph Barbera, creator
United States, 1911–2006

Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc.
Los Angeles, 1957–2001

***The Jetsons*, episode two, “A Date with Jet Screamer” (clips), 1962**

Licensed by Warner Bros.

Bewitched still featuring the Frigidaire *Flair* stove, designed by Larry Feer during M. Jayne Van Alstyne's tenure as Frigidaire's head of Advanced Products, 1964. There is a plume of smoke in the background, which occurred when protagonist Samantha's mother, Endora, was about to appear. "Bewitched" courtesy of Sony Pictures Television.

M. Jayne Van Alstyne

United States, 1923–2015

Frigidaire Division, General Motors Corporation

Dayton, 1919–79

"Clean Up Center—Making the Sink into an Appliance" (design sketch), c. 1955–65

“Food Prep Using Component in Today’s Market” (design sketch), c. 1955–65

Kitchen unit featuring hydrator, disposer, and china closet dishwasher (design sketch), c. 1955–65

Ink on tracing paper

Cranbrook Center for Collections and Research, Cranbrook Archives, Jayne Van Alstyne Papers, gifts of Jayne Van Alstyne

Alex Tremulis, lead designer

United States, 1914–1991

McKinley Thompson Jr., collaborator

United States, 1922–2006

Ford Motor Company, Advanced Styling Team

Dearborn, Michigan, 1903–present

Ford *Gyron* (model), c. 1960

Painted fiberglass

Collection of the Petersen Automotive Museum, gift of Margie and Robert E. Petersen

Introduced at the 1961 International Auto Show, the Ford *Gyron* was a futuristic two-wheeled concept car stabilized by an internal gyroscope. Designed by Alex Tremulis with contributions from McKinley Thompson Jr.—who, in 1956, became the first Black designer hired by Ford—the *Gyron* embodied Detroit’s fascination with space-age technology and experimental mobility. Although the “purely experimental machine” never entered production, its

radical form reached American households through toys like the *Ford Gyron Remote Control Car of the Future*, which translated automotive fantasy into everyday play.

Front:

Ichida Co., Ltd

Tokyo, 1918–present

Ford Gyron Remote Control Car of the Future, 1961

Metal and plastic

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council

Acquisitions Fund

M.2026.59

Back:

Harley J. Earl, lead designer
United States, 1893–1969

General Motors Corporation
Detroit, 1908–present

Pontiac *Firebird II* (model), 1956

Painted plaster, wood, acrylic, and metal
(restored)

Collection of the Petersen Automotive
Museum, gift of Margie and Robert E.
Petersen

This car is included in the General Motors
advertising film *Design for Dreaming*. See
the monitor at left.

Alexis V. Lapteff

Russia, 1905–1991, active United States

***Family Departing Visit with
Grandparents in Their Commuter
Helicopter, 1947***

Gouache on artist's board

Collection of the Petersen Automotive
Museum, gift of Margie and Robert E.
Petersen

General Motors Corporation

Detroit, 1908–present

Let's Go to the Fair and Futurama, 1964

Collection of Monica Penick

This booklet invites visitors to Futurama II, the star attraction of the General Motors pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair. The company's first Futurama, designed by Norman Bel Geddes for the 1939 fair, envisioned American highways and suburbs twenty years in the future; the second iteration, designed in-house, looked to "the enthralling world of tomorrow" on Earth and beyond. Moving chairs carried visitors through "imaginative yet realistic" dioramas set in the year 2024. These included an Antarctic research station and

the ocean floor, where guests lodged at Hotel Atlantis and explored with “aquacopters” and undersea jetpacks.

Left: General Motors Corporation, Futurama II ride, New York World’s Fair (Antarctica scene and ocean-floor scene featuring Hotel Atlantis), 1964.

© 2026 General Motors LLC

1950–1970: The Cold War Command Center

During the Cold War, the home of the future took on a new psychological charge. It was shelter, but also fortress—a place from which the threats of the nuclear age might be held at bay through the right combination of technology and design. Fantasies of living underground, underwater, or suspended in air were responses to Americans' deepest anxieties, while the Space Race recast the cosmos itself as the ultimate domestic frontier. At the same time, television and new communications technologies were transforming the living room into an information hub that broadcast both the wonders and dangers of the outside world directly into the home.

Television series and films such as *The Jetsons*, *Star Trek*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey* did more than predict the future; they furnished the imagination, giving visual form to hopes and fears about automation, mobility, and living off-planet. And earthbound objects were designed to mirror a space-age aesthetic while also eliciting feelings of security. From high-style underground fallout shelters to the enclosed Ball Chair—described in a 1966 magazine as “a little house within a house . . . an island of peace”—designers created cocoons of safety in an uncertain world.

Raymond Loewy/William Snaith, Inc.,
design firm
New York, 1929–77

Raymond Loewy, designer
France, 1893–1986, active United States,
England, and Switzerland

NASA, client
Washington, D.C., 1958–present

Skylab study, cutout of living space,
c. 1967

Ink and paper on diazotype

**Skylab study, 6-Men Shuttle Orbiter
Recoverable, 1972**

Ink on paper

Hagley Museum and Library, Raymond Loewy archive

Above:

Sun Ra

United States, 1914–1993

John Coney, director

United States, 1935–2015

Jim Newman, producer

United States, b. 1933

North American Star System, production
company

El Saturn Records, record label

Chicago, est. 1957

Space Is the Place (clips), 1974

SPACE IS THE PLACE © 1974 North
American Star System, courtesy of Janus
Films

Rick Guidice

United States, b. 1943

NASA, client

Washington, D.C., 1958–present

Bernal Sphere, 1976

Cutaway of Torus Wheel Habitat, 1975

Acrylic on board

NASA Ames Research Center

In these paintings, Rick Guidice transports viewers to two orbiting space colonies: the Bernal Sphere, a self-contained world two miles across, and the Torus Wheel, whose interior curves overhead as it spins to simulate gravity. NASA commissioned Guidice to visualize proposals that emerged from a 1975 study led by Princeton

physicist Gerard K. O'Neill, who argued that amid environmental crises, colonizing space was not merely possible but necessary. Designed to house thousands, the recommended settlements included homes, farms, schools, and workplaces. Reproduced in O'Neill's 1976 book *The High Frontier*, Guidice's images transformed speculative engineering into a compelling vision of humanity's future in space.

Mattel, Inc.

Hawthorne, California, 1945–present

Jack Ryan, designer

United States, 1926–1991

Ralph Dunn, designer

active United States, 1960s–1980s

***Jeff Long* action figure**, 1969

Plastisol, wire, and paint

LACMA, gift of Martin McGee

M.2026.44a–b

***Major Matt Mason* action figure**, 1967

Plastisol, wire, and paint

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council Acquisitions Fund
M.2026.61a–b

Mattel, Inc.

Hawthorne, California, 1945–present

***Major Matt Mason Space Station*, 1967**

Plastic

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Acquisitions Fund

M.2026.60a–e

Mattel introduced *Major Matt Mason* at the height of the Space Race, bringing lunar exploration to the playroom. Unlike combat-ready *G.I. Joe*, *Mason* and his crew were scientists, and their equipment was modeled on NASA concepts featured in popular magazines. Their mission: collect moon rocks, not fight wars. In 1969, Mattel added *Jeff Long*, a Black astronaut, to the team, though NASA's astronaut corps

would remain entirely white for another fifteen years. *Long* represented a vision of who might participate in the future of space exploration—one that NASA itself had yet to embrace.

Sid Noble, designer
United States, b. c. 1922

Ideal Toy Company
New York, 1907–97

Robert the Robot, 1954

Plastic, metal, and wires
LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council
Acquisition Fund
M.2024.261

Ideal Toy Company, “Robert the Robot
Walks, Talks,” in *Popular Science*,
December 1954 © Copyright
Mattel, Inc. All rights reserved

Eero Aarnio

Finland, b. 1932

Asko Oy, manufacturer

Lahti, Finland, 1918–2000

Stendig, retailer

New York, 1956–76

Ball Chair, designed 1963

Fiberglass, foam, woven upholstery, and
steel base

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Acquisition Fund

M.2024.239

James Pratt Winston

United States, 1933–2024

Weltron Corporation

Durham, 1967–present

Weltron 2005 stereo, The New Shape of Sound line, introduced 1973

Plastic and metal

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Acquisition Fund

M.2024.78.3a–b

Sun Ra

United States, 1914–1993

John Coney, director

United States, 1935–2015

Curtis Schreier, poster artist

United States, b. 1944

El Saturn Records, record label

Chicago, est. 1957

Space Is the Place, 1974

Lithograph

From the collections of the Henry Ford,
Dearborn, Michigan

Robert Springett

active United States, 1970s

Columbia Records, record label
New York, 1889–present

Herbie Hancock, *Thrust*, 1974

LACMA, gift of Alma Belia Villegas and
Gustavo Garcia Vaca
M.2026.48.36

Gribbit!, design studio
Los Angeles, est. 1972

David Alexander, photographer
United States, b. 1943

Casablanca, record label
New York, 1973–80

**Parliament, *Mothership Connection*,
1975**

LACMA, gift of Alma Belia Villegas and
Gustavo Garcia Vaca
M.2026.48.35

Sun Ra's *Space Is the Place* and the covers for Herbie Hancock's *Thrust* and Parliament's *Mothership Connection* share a bold visual language: Black musicians casting themselves and their communities as inhabitants of the cosmos. Sun Ra imagined Black Americans leaving an oppressive Earth for a liberated planet of their own. Parliament and Hancock expressed similar ideas through funk and jazz. Their work drew on science fiction, technology, spirituality, and Black cultural traditions. What critics later would call

“Afrofuturism”—a term coined in 1994—these artists were already envisioning through music, film, and design.

Henry Dreyfuss & Associates, design firm
New York, 1929–2012

Henry Dreyfuss, designer
United States, 1904–1972

Hoover Company
North Canton, Ohio, 1908–present

Hoover Constellation vacuum cleaner,
model 444, c. 1956–59

Metal and plastic
LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design
Council Acquisition Fund
M.2024.78.1a–d

Douglas Trumbull, director
United States, 1942–2022

George Akimoto, poster artist
United States, 1922–2010

Michael Gruskoff, producer
United States, b. 1935

Universal Pictures, production company
Universal City, 1912–present

Silent Running, 1972

Offset lithograph
Academy of Motion Picture Arts and
Sciences, Margaret Herrick Library, Poster
collection

Olivier Mourgue

France, b. 1939

Airborne International

Montreuil, France, 1951–75

Djinn chair and ottoman, designed 1963

Tubular steel frame, foam padding, wool,
and nylon jersey (replaced)

LACMA, purchased with funds provided by
Per Sandell

M.2025.176a–b

Stanley Kubrick, *2001: A Space Odyssey*
still featuring *Djinn* chairs, 1968.

Licensed by Warner Bros.

Western Electric Company, a subsidiary of AT&T

New York, 1869–1983

***Picturephone*, model I, 1964**

Form exhibited at New York World's Fair, 1964–65

Plastic

Courtesy of AT&T Archives and History Center

At the 1964 New York World's Fair, AT&T invited visitors into *Picturephone* booths to see, not just hear, the person on the other end of the line—sometimes from as far away as Disneyland. A similar phone had appeared in the cartoon series *The Jetsons*, and a prop version of the booth would be designed for the film *2001: A*

Space Odyssey. While the *Picturephone* included a privacy switch for voice-only calls, flipping it was seen as rude or evasive, so callers stayed visible, camera-ready or not. But the device proved too expensive and too exposing, and never found a market.

Pierre Paulin

France, 1927–2009

Artifort

Maastricht, Netherlands, 1890–1998

Ribbon chair, model 582, designed 1965,
this example 1970

Tubular steel frame, latex foam, stretch
fabric, paint, and wood base

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift
of Dominique Paulin and the Suzanne
Slesin Purchase Fund, 2008

Gene Roddenberry, *Star Trek* still featuring
Spock seated in *Ribbon* chair, 1969. Star
Trek Archive, Paramount

Pierre Paulin revolutionized furniture-making by stretching jersey fabric over molded foam on a steel frame, eliminating visible seams and traditional upholstery altogether. The result was the *Ribbon* chair: a single, continuous, biomorphic curve that turned seating into sculpture. Its sleek, organic form made it an icon of space-age style—exactly the kind of silhouette that films and television series relied on to signal the world of tomorrow. Here, in a *Star Trek* still, Spock sits in a *Ribbon* chair, demonstrating how set decorators borrowed the era’s most cutting-edge design to imagine the future.

Bill Curry

United States, 1927–1971

Design Line, Inc.

El Segundo, 1962–77

***Columnlite*, model G**, designed 1962

Enameled cast iron and polystyrene

LACMA, gift of Julie Silliman

M.2025.285.13

Gene Roddenberry, *Star Trek* still featuring
Columnlite (at far right), 1969. TM & C 2026
CBS Studios Inc.

Star Trek Archive, Paramount

Eero Saarinen

Finland, 1910–1961, active United States

Knoll Associates, Inc.

New York, 1938–present

***Pedestal* (“Tulip”) armchair, model 150,**

designed c. 1955, this example c. 1965

Cast aluminum with plastic coating,
fiberglass, foam rubber, and upholstery
(partially replaced)

LACMA, gift of Ted and Mary Kapenekas

M.2005.33.2

Knoll Associates, Inc., *Pedestal* chair
advertisement, c. 1967–68.

Courtesy of MillerKnoll Archives

Donald Deskey Associates, design firm
New York, c. 1943–70

Russell Heston, designer
United States, 1929–2009

***Undersea Lounge, Scheme 3, Main Level
(section)***, c. 1960s

***Undersea Lounge, Scheme 3 (interior
perspective)***, c. 1960s

Pastel crayon, colored pencil, wove paper,
and presentation board

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design
Museum, Smithsonian Institution, gifts of
Donald Deskey

Leon Deller, artist

Australia, b. c. 1930, active United States

Motorola, Inc.

Schaumburg, Illinois, 1928–2011

Leo Burnett Worldwide, Inc.,

advertising agency

Chicago, 1935–2002

**“Fresh from Motorola . . . New Leader in
the Lively Art of Electronics”**

advertisement, in *Life*, c. 1961

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

Paul László

Hungary, 1900–1993, active Germany and United States

Atomville, U.S.A., design 1950

Published in Paul László, c. 1958

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art Research Library

What if a nuclear shelter could also be a California dream house? That was what Paul László envisioned with *Atomville, U.S.A.*—a 1950 design for an underground community that combined bunker-like protection with open planning, modern materials, and the latest amenities. Like many postwar “homes of the future,” *Atomville* attempted to reconcile Cold War anxiety with the optimism of California

modernism. László wanted residents to feel safe from atomic attack without sacrificing the comforts and pleasures of forward-looking domestic life.

George Bertels, artist
United States, 1931–1982

Motorola, Inc.
Schaumburg, Illinois, 1928–2011

Leo Burnett Worldwide, Inc.,
advertising agency
Chicago, 1935–2002

**“Fresh from Motorola . . . New Leader in
the Lively Art of Electronics”
advertisement, 1962**

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

Syd Mead

United States, 1933–2019

United States Steel Corporation

New York, 1901–present

“Tomorrow . . . Leisure Rules the Home,” in *Concepts* (promotional catalogue), 1961

Extrol, LLC

In this vision of the future, Syd Mead imagined a world where steel could make everyone’s home more comfortable and efficient. The image appeared in *Concepts*, the first of five promotional catalogues Mead created for U.S. Steel in the 1960s. Facing growing competition from plastics and aluminum, the company hired the

young designer to recast this centuries-old metal as the material of modernity. Mead responded with luminous interiors, advanced technologies, and abundant leisure, presenting modern design and industrial innovation as the path to a better life.

John Lautner

United States, 1911–1994

Julius Shulman, photographer

United States, 1910–2009

Reiner-Burchill Residence (Silvertop),

Los Angeles, built 1957–63; photo 1980,
printed 2026

Malin Residence (Chemosphere), Los
Angeles, built 1960–61; photo 1961, printed
2026

Inkjet prints

© J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research
Institute, Los Angeles (2004.R.10)

1965–1985: The Counterculture and the Computer

By the late 1960s, the optimism generated by postwar prosperity had eroded.

Environmental alarm, resource depletion, and mounting synthetic waste made the gleaming future of plastics and state-of-the-art appliances increasingly suspect. For some activists, the solution was radical self-sufficiency: handmade shelters, communal living, salvaged materials, and “environmental” houses that promised lighter ways of living on the land.

Other experiments challenged the very idea of the house as a permanent container for possessions. Radical designers proposed interiors with portable furniture and fewer permanent fixtures—nomadic

environments that would loosen the ties between identity, ownership, and place. Simultaneously, visionary Black artists and leaders excluded from the postwar suburban idyll imagined alternative futures: in *Space Is the Place*, for example, Sun Ra offered a cinematic vision of true liberation beyond Earth itself.

Yet the tools of countercultural autonomy ultimately paved the way for a new kind of technology. The *Whole Earth Catalog* linked self-sufficiency to the decentralization of information, an approach that soon intersected with personal computing. In the early 1980s, experimental “smart” dwellings like Ahwatukee and Xanadu translated the eco-futurist idea of distributed networks into computerized automation. The home of the future had

become digital; as *Time* magazine proclaimed on a 1983 cover, “The Computer Moves In.”

Middle case, top row:

Martin Pawley

England, 1938–2008, active United States

Architectural Press, Ltd., publisher
London, est. 1900

***Garbage Housing*, 1975**

Art Boericke, author

United States, 1927–2006

Barry Shapiro, photographer

United States, 1941–2009

***Handmade Houses: A Guide to the
Woodbutcher's Art*, 1973**

Middle case, bottom row:

James Hennessey

United States, 1945–2020

Victor Papanek

Austria, 1923–1998, active United States

Nomadic Furniture, 1973

Robert Haney

United States, 1926–2004

David Ballantine

United States, 1926–2005

Jonathan Elliott, photographer

United States, b. 1953

***Woodstock Handmade Houses*, 1974**

Jeanne Tetrault, editor
United States, 1944–2004

Carol Newhouse, photographer
United States, b. 1943

Billie Miracle, illustrator
United States, b. 1944

***The Woman's Carpentry Book: Building
Your Home from the Ground Up*, 1980**

All LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

Left case:

Stewart Brand, editor
United States, b. 1938

Portola Institute, publisher
Menlo Park, 1966–70s

Whole Earth Catalog, Fall 1970

Lloyd Kahn
United States, b. 1935

Bob Easton, designer and co-editor
United States, b. 1940

Shelter, 1973, this edition 1990

Both LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch
Art Research Library

Stewart Brand, editor
United States, b. 1938

Portola Institute, publisher
Menlo Park, 1966–70s

***Whole Earth Catalog*, “Shelter and Land Use” section**, Fall 1969

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

Steve Jobs called it “Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came along.” First published in 1968, the *Whole Earth Catalog* offered readers “access to tools” for self-sufficient, sustainable living—reviews of geodesic domes, yurts, solar panels, and hand tools alongside books on ecology, craft, and communal living.

Creator Stewart Brand had campaigned for NASA to release the first satellite photograph of Earth from space, and the resulting “blue marble” image on the cover conveyed a powerful message: the planet is finite, humanity shares a single home, and how we choose to live on it matters.

Floyd McKissick, founder
United States, 1922–1991

Soul City Company
Soul City, North Carolina, 1974–79

Soul City, c. 1976

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
Development
Washington, D.C., 1965–present

Collection of the Smithsonian National
Museum of African American History and
Culture, gift from the Trumpauer-Mulholland
Collection

Soul City: The Bold Alternative,
c. 1974–79

U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington, D.C., 1903–present
Collection of the Smithsonian National
Museum of African American History and
Culture

In the 1970s, civil rights leader Floyd McKissick proposed a multiracial “new town” in rural North Carolina—a planned community where Black and white residents would share equal economic opportunities, built from the ground up as a direct challenge to segregation and suburban exclusion. Soul City received support from the Nixon administration and partial construction began. But racially charged accusations of financial mismanagement led to federal investigations and funding delays. Although McKissick was cleared of wrongdoing, the project ultimately collapsed

under political opposition and the pressures of the mid-1970s recession. Soul City was a bold vision of domestic futurity that America was not yet prepared to build.

Alvin E. Miller, architect
United States, 1923–1989

R. Buckminster Fuller, geodesic dome
concept
United States, 1895–1983

Pease Woodwork Company
Hamilton, Ohio, 1893–2022

The New Way to Build for Less, c. 1965

Cranbrook Center for Collections and
Research, Cranbrook Archives, Kenneth
Dale Isaacs Papers, gift of Joan and David
Trushin and Joshua Isaacs

Steve Baer
United States, 1938–2024

Dome Cookbook, 1967, this edition 1970

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

Peter Rabbit (Peter Douthit)
United States, 1936–2012

Drop City, 1971

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

See the monitor at right to hear Peter
Rabbit reading an excerpt from *Drop City*.

Matti Suuronen, architect
Finland, 1933–2013

Oy Polykem AB, manufacturer
Helsinki, 1954–92

John Zimmerman, photographer
United States, 1927–2002

“A Lunar Capsule for Earthbound Fun”
featuring a Futuro, in *American Home*,
September 1969; house designed 1968

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

See the monitor at right for footage of a
Futuro interior.

Bernard Judge, architect
United States, 1931–2021

Jeffrey Lindsay, architect
Canada, 1924–1984, active United States

R. Buckminster Fuller, geodesic dome
concept
United States, 1895–1983

Julius Shulman, photographer
United States, 1910–2009

**“A Bubble of Plastic High in the
Hollywood Hills,” featuring Triponent
House, cover of *Los Angeles Times
Home*, July 1962**

UC Santa Barbara, Art, Design &
Architecture Museum, Bernard Judge
papers

Triponent House, Los Angeles (kitchen),
completed 1960s; photo 1962, printed 2026

Inkjet print

© J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research
Institute, Los Angeles (2004.R.10)

Steve Baer, architect
United States, 1938–2024

The Complex, Drop City, El Moro,
Colorado, dome built c. 1967 (later
demolished); photo c. 1967, printed 2011

Richard Kallweit, photographer
United States, b. 1943

Car Top Dome, Drop City, El Moro,
Colorado, dome built c. 1966 (later
demolished); photo c. 1966, printed 2011

Inkjet prints
University of Colorado Art Museum, gift of
Clark W. Richert Estate

These photographs document Drop City, founded in 1965 in Colorado scrubland as a “community from scratch.” Its young artist-residents, called Droppers, constructed their homes from salvaged materials—the curved steel tops of junked cars turned out to be ideal panels for assembling dome structures. The result was a cluster of colorful, multifaceted buildings that cost almost nothing to make and presented a radically different vision of domestic life: anti-consumerist, collectively built, and ecologically resourceful. R. Buckminster Fuller recognized these efforts, awarding Drop City his 1966 Dymaxion Prize for “poetically economic structural accomplishments.”

Joan Grossman, director and producer
United States, b. 1959

Tom McCourt, producer
United States, b. 1958

Seventh Art Releasing, distributor
Los Angeles, 1994–present

Drop City (clip), 2012

From the documentary film *Drop City*
(2012), courtesy of Joan Grossman

Australian Broadcasting Commission
Sydney, Australia, 1932–present

Report on Futuro (House of the Future)
(clip), 1969

Australian Broadcasting Corporation Library Sales

Mika Taanila, director
Finland, b. 1965

Lasse Saarinen, producer
Finland, b. 1960

Kinotar, production company
Helsinki, Finland, 1994–2010s

Futuro: A New Stance for Tomorrow
(clip), 1998

Director Mika Taanila, © Kinotar Oy

Steve Baer

United States, 1938–2024

Stanley Marsh 3

United States, 1938–2014

Clark Richert, model maker

United States, 1941–2021

Zomeworks Corporation

Longmont, Colorado, 1969–present

Original *Zometoy* set with assembled model, 1969; model 2011

Wood and plastic

LACMA, gift of Clark W. Richert Estate

M.2024.216.1–.2

Herbert V. Kohler Jr., designer
United States, 1939–2022

Don Doman, designer
United States, 1922–1991

Kohler Co.
Kohler, Wisconsin, 1873–present

Environment, 1977

Fiberglass, teak, cypress, and acrylic
Kohler Archives

When it was introduced in 1977, Kohler's *Environment* was unlike anything previously designed for a home bathroom: a luxurious “environmental enclosure” that promised total sensory immersion. Owners could choose from “Baja Sun” heat lamps, “Tropic

Rain” warm showers, “Jungle Steam,” and “Spring Shower”—all within a fiberglass chamber lined with teak and cypress and equipped with a terrarium, lightbox, and built-in sound system. The accompanying drawings document the development of one of the most extravagant domestic objects of its era: a vision of the home not as a machine for living but as a sanctuary for the senses.

Don Doman

United States, 1922–1991

Kohler Co.

Kohler, Wisconsin, 1873–present

***Environment design sketches*, c. 1976**

Ink and paper on tracing paper mounted on
tagboard

Kohler Archives

Marc Harrison

United States, 1936–1998

Cuisinarts, Inc.

Greenwich, Connecticut, 1971–89

***Cuisinart* food processor, model DLC-7E**, introduced 1980

Plastic and metal

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Acquisition Fund

M.2026.102.1–.8

Marc Harrison

United States, 1936–1998

International Lead Zinc Research
Organization

(ILZRO), sponsor

Durham, 1958–2010s

Rhode Island School of Design, partner
Providence, 1877–present

**Service Modules, C61, Industrialized
Housing Project, c. 1975**

Ink on paper

Hagley Museum and Library, Manuscripts
and Archives Department, Marc Harrison
papers

Most homes are intended for able-bodied adults—Marc Harrison set out to change that. In 1972, ILZRO partnered with Harrison and the Rhode Island School of Design to design a house usable by everyone, regardless of age or physical ability. Easy-to-grip door handles, wider doorways, and roll-under sinks were among the features created with wheelchair users and seniors in mind. As a colleague observed, Harrison “believed if he solved the issues for a disabled person, he would have solved the issues for everyone.” This drawing documents an unusually humane vision of the home of the future.

A model showing the ILZRO house in use, c. 1975.

Courtesy of the Hagley Museum and Library

Motorola, Inc.

Schaumburg, Illinois, 1928–2011

***The Motorola Home Management
System for the House of the Future at
Ahwatukee, 1980***

Organic Architecture + Design Archives

Charles Schiffner

United States, 1948–2023

Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

Scottsdale, 1940–present

Presley Development Company, client

Newport Beach, 1956–84

**PRISM: Model Home for Randall Presley
(exterior perspective, looking north),
Ahwatukee, Arizona, 1977, completed 1980**

Colored pencil, graphite, ink, and gold leaf
on tracing paper

Taliesin Associated Architects architectural
drawings and records, 1959–1991, part of
the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation
Archives (The Museum of Modern Art |
Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library,
Columbia University, New York)

“Instead of predicting the future, I called it a
showcase of ideas,” declared architect
Charles Schiffner, whose pyramidal,
copper-clad house rises from the Arizona
desert in this drawing. The Ahwatukee
House of the Future is often described as
the first microcomputer-controlled home. It

promoted a proprietary network of Motorola technologies that adjusted blinds, controlled temperature, and even stored family recipes. Motorola's brochure reassured nervous visitors that humans would remain "in complete control." More than 250,000 people toured the house over four years—a remarkably early vision of what we now call the "smart home."

Farallones Institute

Berkeley, est. 1972

Bill Wells, cover design

United States, b. 1945

Gordon Ashby, cover design

United States, b. 1934

***The Integral Urban House: Self-Reliant Living in the City*, 1979**

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

Eleanor Raymond, architect

United States, 1887–1989

Mária Telkes, heating system designer

Hungary, 1900–1995, active United States

Ray Pioch, cover artist

United States, 1917–2005

**“Sun Furnace in Your Attic,” featuring
Dover Sun House, cover of *Popular
Science*, March 1949**

House completed 1948 in Dover,
Massachusetts (demolished c. 2010)

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library, gift of Wendy Kaplan

Telkes and Raymond outside Dover Sun
House, Dover, Massachusetts, 1948.

Image courtesy of the Eleanor Raymond
Collection, 1927–1975, Peabody

Sun-Heated House, 1948. Box 1, Folder 42,
Frances Loeb Library, Harvard

University Graduate School of Design

A. Lawrence Kocher, architect
United States, 1885–1969

Maron J. Simon, editor
United States, 1906–1995

Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company,
publisher
Toledo, Ohio, 1930–86

“Virginia,” in ***Your Solar House***, 1947

Collection of Monica Penick

Wendell Castle

United States, 1932–2018

***Environment for Contemplation*, 1970**

Stack-laminated oak, flock-covered fiberglass, flock-covered wood, fabric, and lightbulb

Courtesy of Friedman Benda, New York

The *Environment for Contemplation* transformed furniture into architecture. Wendell Castle used his signature stack-lamination technique—shaping, gluing, and carving boards into a single continuous form—to make a biomorphic shell that opens to reveal a black, shag-lined interior, lit only when occupied: do not disturb, enlightenment in progress. He debuted this womb-like sculptural object work in

Contemplation Environments, a 1970 exhibition of sixteen meditation chambers at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York. As the exhibition catalogue noted, its atmosphere created “a quieting, peaceful influence on the mind.”

Computers Enter the Home

By the late 1970s, the home of the future was no longer defined by plastics or push-button appliances, but by digital networks. Projects such as Xanadu and Ahwatukee imagined houses controlled by microcomputers that could regulate lighting, climate, security, and entertainment through integrated automated systems. Their creators promoted the idea of the home itself as a computer—a responsive environment with a central “House Brain” and an “electronic hearth” where families would gather around interactive media. These systems promised freedom not only from physical labor but also from the mental burden of managing domestic life.

But the digital future arrived in another way. Neither Xanadu nor Ahwatukee convinced Americans to computerize their homes. What did was the personal computer: a self-contained, increasingly accessible machine that gradually became essential to everyday domestic life. Breaking its longstanding “Man of the Year” tradition, *Time* named the personal computer its “Machine of the Year” for 1982.

Bob Masters and Stuart “Boot” Gordon, Xanadu, a Foam House of Tomorrow, Wisconsin Dells, built 1979 (demolished 1990s). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, John Margolies Roadside America photograph archive (1972–2008). Photo by John Margolies, 1988

Sidney A. Boguss, designer
United States, 1924–2005

Joseph Enterprises
San Francisco, 1981–present

Peter Liljequist, inventor
Canada, dates unknown

Kou I. Chen, inventor
Taiwan, dates unknown, active Canada

Carlisle Stevens, engineer
United States, 1931–2023

Dale Reamer, engineer
United States, 1942–2025

The Clapper, c. 1989

Plastic, paper, and metal
LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

Al Alcorn

United States, b. 1948

Atari, Inc.

Sunnyvale, California, 1972–84

Sears, Roebuck and Co., retailer

Chicago, 1892–present

***Pong* home video game, c. 1975**

Plastic and metal

From the collections of the Henry Ford,
Dearborn, Michigan

Clockwise from top left:

Richardson/Smith Design, computer
design firm
Columbus, Ohio, 1960–89

George Segal, sculptor
United States, 1924–2000

Roberto Brosan, photographer
Italy, b. 1946, active United States

**“Machine of the Year: The Computer
Moves In,” cover of *Time***, January 3,
1983

Joan Kron
United States, b. 1928

Suzanne Slesin

United States, b. 1944

Walter Bernard, designer

United States, b. 1937

Raeanne Giovanni, cover photographer

United States, b. 1947

***High-Tech: The Industrial Style & Source
Book for the Home*, 1979**

Neil Ardley

England, 1937–2004

***Tomorrow's Home*, 1981**

All LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

Roy Mason

United States, 1938–1996

***Xanadu: The Computerized Home of Tomorrow and How It Can Be Yours TODAY!* (chapter seven title spread), 1983**

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art Research Library

This book promoted three speculative houses built along tourist routes in Wisconsin, Florida, and Tennessee. Equal parts roadside attraction and product showcase, each Xanadu invited visitors to marvel at an all-foam, fully computerized future. Creators Bob Masters and Roy Mason originally focused on sprayable foam as the next material for quick,

affordable home construction. But as microcomputers overtook synthetics as the new technological frontier, Masters and Mason's vision expanded to include "home brain" networks. They featured such innovations as video game consoles, the *Music Chamber*, the Heathkit *HERO Jr.* robot, *The Clapper*, and Kohler's *Environment*—all on view nearby.

Syd Mead

United States, 1933–2019

Ridley Scott, director

England, b. 1937, active United States

Filmways, production company

Los Angeles, 1952–82

Warner Bros., production company

Burbank, 1923–2026

***Deckard's Kitchen*, design concept for
Blade Runner, 1981**

Gouache on panel

Syd Mead Incorporated

Craig Hodgetts

United States, b. 1937

Robert Mangurian

United States, 1941–2023

Keith Godard

England, 1938–2020, active United States

Design Research

Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953–79

***Punchout* lounge chair kit (unassembled), 1972**

Painted cardboard and plastic

LACMA, gift of Craig Hodgetts

In 1972, Craig Hodgetts, Robert Mangurian, and Keith Godard designed a lounge chair

you could punch out of a flat sheet of cardboard and assemble yourself—no tools, no wood, no petroleum-based materials. The oil crisis and the burgeoning environmental movement had made designers newly attentive to the costs of conventional furniture production, and cardboard offered an inexpensive and surprisingly durable alternative.

Commissioned by Design Research, the celebrated Cambridge lifestyle store, the *Punchout* chair offered a future where furniture could be lightweight, portable, and radically rethought from the ground up.

See opposite platform for an assembled *Punchout* chair.

Ken Isaacs, author and designer
United States, 1927–2016

Bob Witanowski, cover photographer
United States, b. 1945

***How to Build Your Own Living
Structures***, 1974

Ant Farm
San Francisco, 1968–78

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston,
sponsor
1948–present

***Ant Farm 2020 Vision* calendar (artist's
book)**, 1973

Ant Farm

San Francisco, 1968–78

Inflatocookbook, 1971, this edition 1973

All LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Art
Research Library

Italy: The New Domestic Landscape

When *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* opened at the Museum of Modern Art in 1972, it presented Italian design not simply as a collection of beautiful objects but as a provocation. Curated by architect Emilio Ambasz, the exhibition challenged the modernist faith that good design would automatically produce a better world—and the objects on view made that challenge tangible. The show featured inflatable chairs, beanbag seating, modular “microenvironments,” and speculative interiors that encouraged flexibility, participation, and improvisation. The home of tomorrow was treated less as a perfected ideal than as an open question. Ettore Sottsass even declared that nothing he created for the exhibition would ever be for

sale. *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* had an immediate and lasting impact on American designers, legitimizing experimental approaches that blurred distinctions between design, art, architecture, and everyday life.

Ettore Sottsass

Austria, 1917–2007, active Italy

Preliminary Project for Microenvironment, Element for Landscape Home, c. 1971

Gouache and ink on print with acrylic paint

Preliminary Project for Microenvironment, c. 1971

Designed for *Italy: The New Domestic
Landscape*, Museum of Modern Art, New
York, 1972

Collage with ink, gouache, acrylic paint, and
tape

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gifts
of the designer, 2013

Piero Gatti

Italy, 1940–2017

Cesare Paolini

Italy, 1937–1983

Franco Teodoro

Italy, 1939–2005

Zanotta S.p.A.

Nova Milanese, Italy, 1954–present

Sacco chair, 1968

Form exhibited in *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1972

Leather and polystyrene beads

LACMA, gift of the Museum of Modern Art, New York

Jonathan De Pas

Italy, 1932–1991

Donato D'Urbino

Italy, b. 1935

Paolo Lomazzi

Italy, b. 1936

Carla Scolari, collaborator

Italy, 1937–2020

Zanotta S.p.A.

Nova Milanese, Italy, 1954–present

***Blow inflatable chair*, 1967**

Form exhibited in *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1972

PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic
LACMA, gift of Andrew Blauvelt
M.2025.138

Craig Hodgetts

United States, b. 1937

Robert Mangurian

United States, 1941–2023

Keith Godard

England, 1938–2020, active United States

Design Research

Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953–79

Punchout lounge chair, 1972

Painted cardboard and plastic

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Fund

M.2025.96

See opposite wall for an unassembled
Punchout chair kit.

Frank O. Gehry

Canada, 1929–2025, active United States

Frank Gehry and Associates

Los Angeles, 1962–present

New City Editions

Venice, California, est. 1982

***Bubbles lounge chair, Experimental
Edges series, 1987***

Corrugated cardboard, birch, and metal
interior supports

LACMA, gift of Robert H. Halff

M.87.302

Barry Simpson

United States, 1941–2017

Charles D. Hosford

United States, b. 1938

Dirt Road Company

Waitsfield, Vermont, est. 1972

Rooster folding stool, designed 1975–76,
manufactured 1976–84

Plywood and canvas

LACMA, Decorative Arts and Design

Council Fund

M.2025.47

The patented *Rooster* stool serves as a sturdy seat, stepstool, or side table, then collapses flat to hang on a wall hook.

Yale-trained architects Barry Simpson and Charles Hosford designed and manufactured the *Rooster* in Vermont's Mad River Valley, a center of the 1960s–70s design/build movement. Simpson practiced its countercultural values directly, converting an eight-by-ten-foot mobile unit into his home and filling it with durable, compact, multipurpose furniture. The stool embodied an alternative vision of domestic life: smaller, more resourceful, and less dependent on the accumulation of things.

Paul Rudolph

United States, 1918–1997

Modulightor

New York, 1976–present

Armchair, designed 1968

Chrome-plated steel and Lucite

Brooklyn Museum, Designated Purchase
Fund

Anthony J. Carsello

United States, b. 1926

Edmund M. DiGiulio

United States, 1927–2004

Listening Environment Engineers (LEE)

Chair Corporation

Burbank

Music Chamber, introduced 1969, this
example 1970

Polyurethane foam, fiberglass, and
polyester upholstery

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M.2024.78.2

Dennis Foley, lead designer
United States, 1959–2015

James M. Lytle, lead engineer
United States , c. 1939–2021

Heath Company, a subsidiary of Zenith
Electronics Corporation
Benton Harbor, Michigan, 1979–89

Heathkit *HERO Jr.* robot, model RT-1,
introduced 1984

Plastic
Computer History Museum, gift of
Steven Reich

Apple, Inc.

Cupertino, 1976–present

Steve Jobs

United States, 1955–2011

Jerry Manock

United States, b. 1944

***Macintosh* personal computer, 1984**

ABS plastic and other materials

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M.2019.352.1–.5

Niels Diffrient

United States, 1928–2013

Sunar-Hauserman, Inc.

Cleveland, 1978–89

***Jefferson Collection*, pre-production chair, ottoman, and cantilever table with video tray**, designed c. 1982, manufactured 1985–89

Aluminum, steel, molded plastic, and leather

Collection of Cranbrook Art Museum, gift of Sunar-Hauserman, Inc.

Designer Niels Diffrient demonstrating comfortable personal computer use in his *Jefferson* chair. 1984. John Dominis/The LIFE Picture Collection/Shutterstock

Named for President Thomas Jefferson—who famously worked from a bedroom chair with his feet propped up and a writing table beside him—the *Jefferson Collection* anticipated a future in which Americans would spend most waking hours seated in front of a screen. As personal computers began to enter the home, designer Niels Diffrient drew on his decades of ergonomics research to create a seat that supports the body in a semi-reclined posture, with the monitor at eye level and the keyboard over the lap. Retailing for \$2,500 (nearly \$8,500 today), the *Jefferson* reduced physical strain and increased focus, transforming the comfortable armchair into a workstation for the digital age.