

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

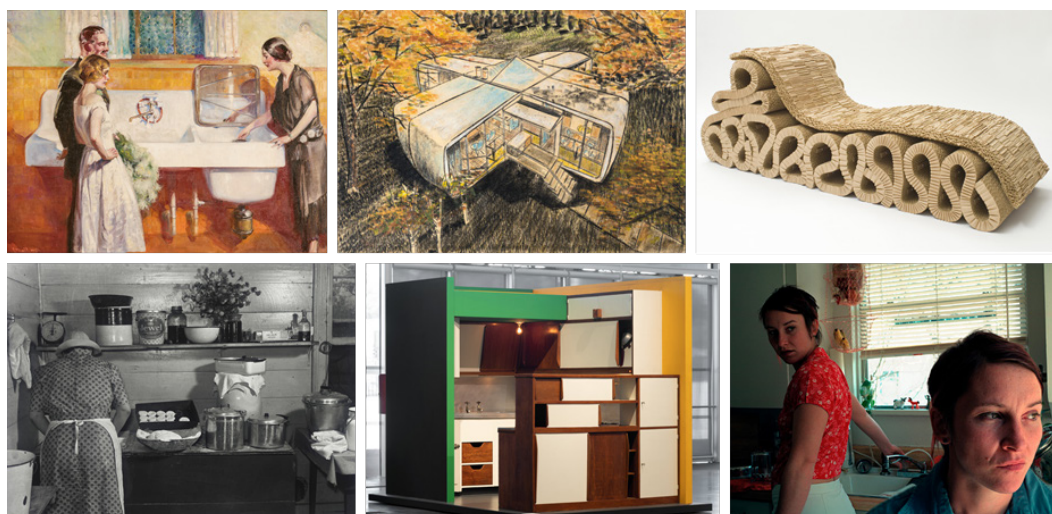
Dates: September 27, 2026–March 14, 2027

Location: Resnick Pavilion

Exhibition: *The Kitchen and Its Discontents*

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(Top row: *Home of the Future*, bottom row: *The Kitchen and Its Discontents*, all image captions on page 5)

(Los Angeles, CA—September 1, 2026) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents two exhibitions exploring design as an agent of social, political, and economic transformation in modern domestic life: *Home of the Future, 1925–1985: Designing Domestic Utopias* and *The Kitchen and Its Discontents*.

Over the course of the 20th century, Americans were offered an astonishing array of domestic tomorrows: self-cleaning kitchens, plastic houses assembled in a day, push-button appliances, and desktop computers all shaping aspirations about how to live. With more than 260 architectural models, drawings, photographs, films, paintings, furniture, and objects ranging from sinks to televisions, *Home of the Future* explores the American home of tomorrow. The exhibition asks not only what futures were imagined, but also who imagined them, how they circulated, and for whom they were intended.

*The Kitchen and Its Discontents* is a standalone exhibition embedded within *Home of the Future*. This presentation puts Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky's Frankfurt Kitchen (c. 1926–30) and Charlotte Perriand's kitchen for Le Corbusier's l'Unité d'habitation (c. 1946–52) in conversation with other works from LACMA's collection, highlighting the complex cultural and psychological significance of the kitchen space.

"*Home of the Future* and *The Kitchen and Its Discontents* explore experiments in architecture, design, and ways of inhabiting the world," said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. "We hope that audiences will find here a provocation: a reminder that the homes we inhabit today were once someone's radical idea, an act of imagination, and a leap of faith."

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

Between 1925 and 1985, single-family dwellings in the U.S. became a testing ground where scientific innovation, corporate ambition, government policy, and experimental design converged. Companies not only manufactured new products but also helped shape how the future was conceived and sold. World's fairs, museum exhibitions, model homes, department stores, and mass media made new technologies, materials, and ways of living seem both compelling and inevitable. *Home of the Future* investigates the social meanings embedded in these visions while expanding representation of the contributions and counter-narratives of women designers, designers of color, and historically marginalized communities.

The exhibition is curated by Wendy Kaplan, department head and curator of Decorative Arts and Design at LACMA.

"The American home of the future was always elsewhere, just over the horizon," said Kaplan. "That restless forward motion, powered by the conviction that tomorrow's design would solve today's problems, is itself quintessentially American. The objects, images, and houses brought together in *Home of the Future* remind us that every utopia is a mirror, reflecting our dreams as well as our blind spots, our values, and our willingness to imagine and to exclude in equal measure."

The exhibition is organized into four overlapping chronological sections. The first, **1925–1945: Health, Efficiency, and Mechanization**, demonstrates how the home was reimagined as a machine: rational, hygienic, and perfectly calibrated to modern life. Reducing domestic labor was paramount: Kohler's *Electric Sink* promised liberation from the "thrice-daily drudgery" of washing dishes by hand while American Stove's "Mrs. Modern" declared the company's *Magic Chef* was "planned to serve me instead of enslave me." Radios and telephones further transformed the home: these connected technologies linked private life to expanding networks of information, entertainment, and advertising.

**1945–1965: Plastics, Push Buttons, and Prefabrication** elucidates how, after World War II, military innovations in plastics, plywood, and metals were applied to furniture, textiles, and architecture. Made almost entirely of plastic and replete with push-button appliances, Disneyland's **Monsanto House of the Future** shared with 20 million visitors a world that was lighter, brighter, and easier to clean. Charles and Ray Eames's **Case Study House #8**, while constructed from mass-produced industrial materials, was also beautiful, flexible, and deeply personal. This section also continues to examine access to postwar futures restricted by racial and gender discrimination.

The exhibition's third section, **1950–1970: The Cold War Command Center**, explores a period of nuclear threat and social upheaval, when domesticity and geopolitics became inextricably linked. This was a "New Frontier" of fantasies about alternative living: underground, underwater, or in outer space. The enclosure of Eero Aarnio's ***Ball Chair*** offered another kind of retreat: a cocoon of safety wrapped in the aesthetic of the space age. In contrast, Olivier Mourgue's ***Djinn chair and ottoman*** embodied the period's ideal of furniture liberated from traditional structure—fluid and seemingly weightless. And the role of the home continued its evolution from shelter to information hub, with emerging audiovisual technologies (especially television) bringing global systems into domestic spaces.

By the late 1960s, the optimism of postwar prosperity had eroded. Yet, even as countercultural thinkers rejected the technocratic values that had shaped the postwar home, their tools for personal autonomy laid the groundwork for a new kind of domestic future, one defined by the personal computer. This last section, **1965–1985: The Counterculture and The Computer** considers the transition from the "back-to-the-land" ethos to the birth of the computerized home. Examples include the rejection of conventional materials: Frank Gehry's ***Bubbles lounge chair*** elevated humble corrugated cardboard into sculptural furniture. And the creation of alternative models for community—such as Floyd McKissick's proposed multiracial **Soul City**—demonstrated efforts to realize a more equitable future.

### **Publication**

Co-published by LACMA and DelMonico Books, the exhibition's accompanying publication illuminates how artists, designers, companies, and government agencies imagined, disseminated, sold, and repurposed the home of the future, paving the way for today's "smart homes." The richly illustrated catalogue features a foreword by Michael Govan and an introductory essay by Wendy Kaplan. Other essays are by Glenn Adamson, Andrew Blauvelt, Grace Converse, Sam Dodd, Margaret Hanson, Christopher Long, Amy Ogata, Emily Orr, Monica Penick, Mark Resnick, Abraham Thomas, Gary Van Zante, Kristina Wilson, and Alexa Griffith Winton.

### ***The Kitchen and Its Discontents***

Historically a site of women's labor, the kitchen has also been researched and critiqued by women. Two groundbreaking 20th-century designers, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky and Charlotte Perriand, applied modern principles of efficiency and modularity to the home, with the aim of improving users' lives. *The Kitchen and Its Discontents* debuts LACMA's recently acquired examples of Schütte-Lihotzky's **1926–30 kitchen for the New Frankfurt social housing program** in Germany, and Perriand and Le Corbusier's **1948–50 kitchen for l'Unité d'habitation** in France, in dialogue with photographs, prints, and advertisements that illustrate more complicated realities of daily life.

The exhibition is curated by Britt Salvesen, curator and head of the Wallis Annenberg Photography Department and the Prints & Drawings Department, and Staci Steinberger, curator of Decorative Arts and Design at LACMA.

"*The Kitchen and Its Discontents* provides a rare opportunity to see two of the 20th century's most influential kitchen designs—both by trailblazing women designers—alongside new photography acquisitions, including works by Jona Frank, Mary Frey, and Joanne Leonard," said Salvesen and Steinberger. "We're excited to continue the process of rethinking LACMA's permanent collection, forging new connections across cultures, periods, and disciplines."

Presented as complete structures, Schütte-Lihotzky's and Perriand's landmark designs anchor the exhibition's exploration of domestic labor, efficiency, gender, class, and modernity. Surrounding the kitchens, 32 photographs, posters, prints, drawings, advertisements, and video are organized into thematic groupings that engage broader stories of representation and social change from the 19th century to today.

Documentary photographs such as Marion Post Wolcott's ***One of the Wilkins Family Making Biscuits, Near Tallyho, Granville County, North Carolina*** (1939) capture the pragmatic and sometimes improvisational realities of ordinary kitchens, while advertising and architectural images by commercial photographer Ralph Bartholomew, Jr., promote idealized visions of comfort, convenience, and domestic fulfillment. The exhibition also highlights works by artists and activists addressing the kitchen's longstanding association with women's identity and labor, including Martha Rosler's ***Semiotics of the Kitchen*** (1975), Laurie Simmons's ***New Kitchen/Aerial View*** (1979), and Kelli Connell's ***Kitchen Tension*** (2002).

**Credits:** *Home of the Future, 1925–1985: Designing Domestic Utopias* was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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**About LACMA:** Located on the Pacific Rim, LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of 155,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of artistic expression across the globe. Committed to showcasing a multitude of art histories, LACMA exhibits and interprets works of art from new and unexpected points of view that are informed by the region's rich cultural heritage and diverse population. LACMA's spirit of experimentation is reflected in its work with artists, technologists, and thought leaders as well as in its regional, national, and global partnerships to share collections and programs, create pioneering initiatives, and engage new audiences.

**Location:** 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. [lacma.org](http://lacma.org)

**Image captions:** [Top left] Roy Huse Collins for Kohler Co., *Electric Sink*, c. 1927, Kohler Co., courtesy KOHLER Archives; [top center] Hamilton & Goody Architects, Monsanto House of the Future, 1956, MIT Museum, gift of Goody Clancy, photo courtesy MIT Museum; [top right] Frank O. Gehry, *Bubbles* lounge chair, from the series *Experimental Edges*, 1987, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Robert H. Halff, © Frank O. Gehry, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA; [bottom left] Marion Post Wolcott, *One of the Wilkins Family Making Biscuits, Near Tallyho, Granville County, North Carolina*, 1939, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, anonymous gift, Los Angeles, in honor of Robert Sobieszek, digital image courtesy Museum Associates/LACMA; [bottom center] Charlotte Perriand (designer) and Le Corbusier (architect), Kitchen for an apartment in

l'Unité d'habitation, Marseille, France, designed 1948–50, this example c. 1952, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of the 2019 Collectors Committee, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA; [bottom right] Kelli Connell, *Kitchen Tension*, 2002, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by the Ralph M. Parsons Fund, © Kelli Connell, digital image courtesy Museum Associates/LACMA

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