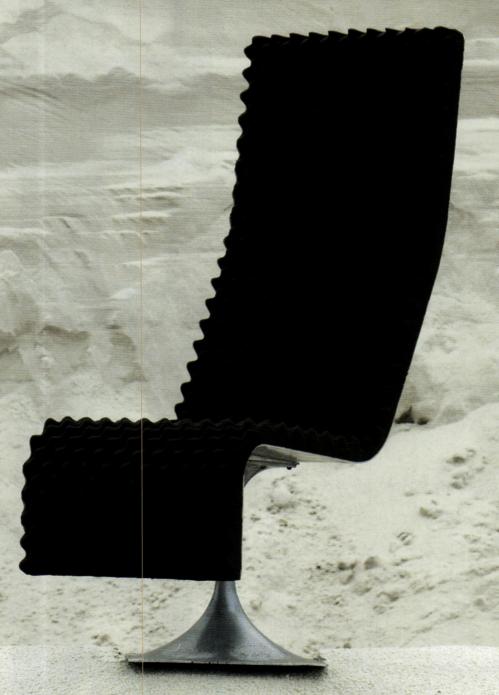


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Rue Chateaubriand, Paris,
circa 1922



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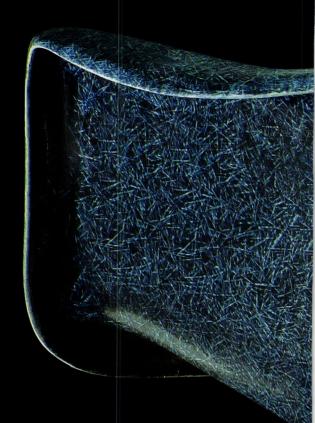


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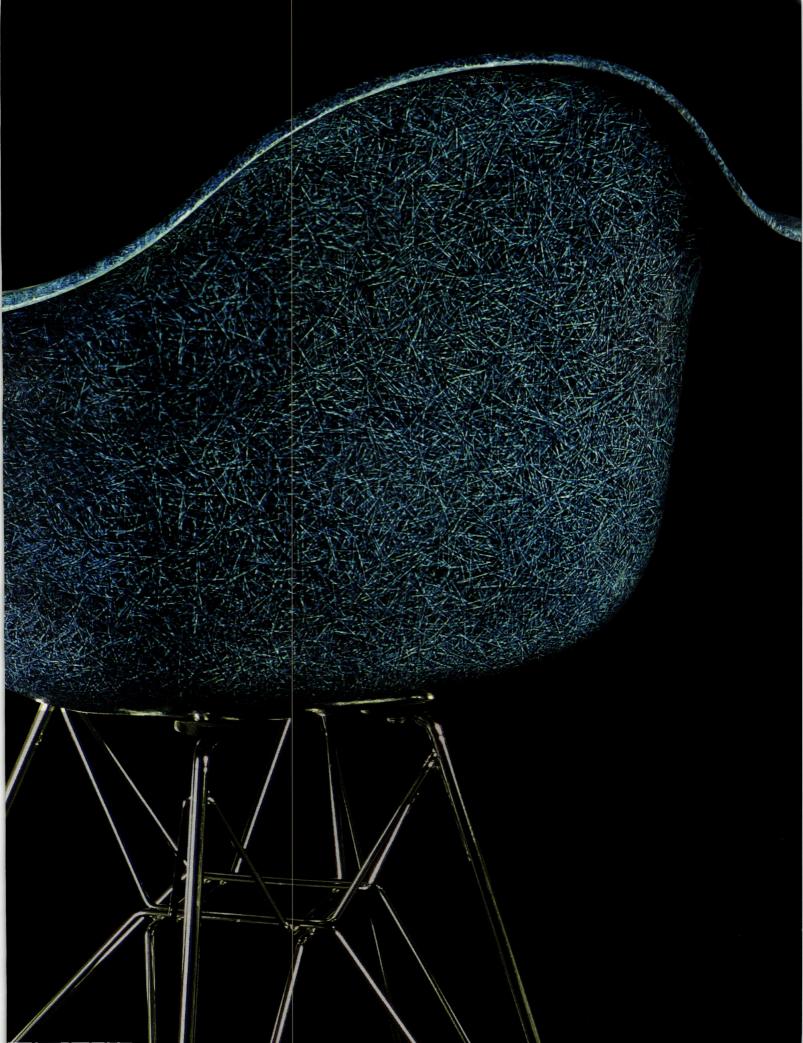


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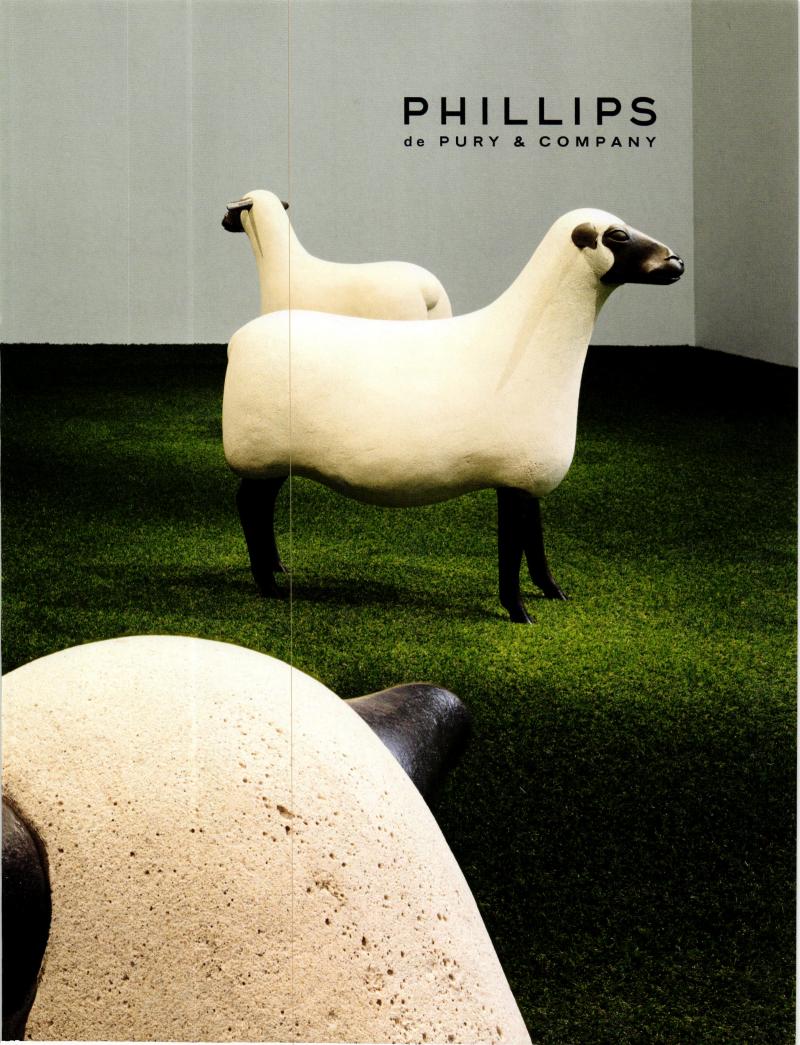


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Hidden in plain view

JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO I had the privilege of touring Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's 1930 masterpiece, the Villa Tugendhat in the mesmerizing city of Brno in the Czech Republic. The house had languished for years—decades really—after its owners Fritz and Grete Tugendhat, both heirs to textile manufacturing fortunes, fled in 1938 in advance of the Nazis. The Gestapo moved into the house in 1939, and the German Nazi government appropriated it in 1942. To summarize a long and sad story, the house became the property of the USSR in 1945 and over the years served as a dance school and a rehabilitation center for children, among other uses.

Our guides through the three-story house, which stands on a prominent hillside site with a sweeping garden and a broad view of Brno below, were brothers Miroslav and Vladimir Ambroz. Miroslav, an art historian, and Vladimir, an architect and designer, were involved in the laborious details of the restoration of the house, poring over hundreds of original plans found at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, seeking out the last remaining examples of the original furniture and fittings, and, most particularly, researching the three important chairs (the Brno, Barcelona, and Tugendhat) that figured prominently in the spare but dramatic decor. They sought out the originals, photographed and measured them, and even X-rayed them to understand how the joints worked. (It was also intriguing to see the chairs covered in the original bright green and red leather—colors that in later productions were changed to black or white or neutral.)

Perhaps the most moving of all the stories the Ambroz brothers told revolved around the rediscovery of the large-scale Macassar ebony panels that formed the wall of the dining room. Presumed lost—victims of Nazi vandalism—they were actually hidden in plain

view. Somewhere in the course of the German occupation, these extraordinary pieces of wood had been moved to a nearby officers' commissary that ultimately became a university canteen and were seen daily by hundreds of students and others. Almost all the panels (there were eleven altogether) were intact—another striking story that connects this house to the larger sweep of world history. I was struck by how ever-present World War II seemed in Brno, how much the past is part of the present there.

In this issue, you will find three other houses that one might consider to be hidden in plain view. The architect Hermes Mallea spent years traveling to his Cuban homeland to find and document Havana's rich legacy of residential architecture, which resulted in his recent book *Great Houses of Havana*. One of his discoveries (and a surprise to us all) was a number of modernist houses completed just before the 1959 Revolution and still intact (if in some cases rundown), as if the clock had stopped. Mallea reprises and elaborates on one such house, the Pérez Farfante house, in these pages.

John Hall, whose photography has appeared in previous issues of MODERN, was visiting a former assistant in Morocco and was taken to see (and fortunately for us, to shoot) a family home that is an art deco jewel, its rich history carefully recounted here by Judith Nasatir. Completed in 1930, the same year as the Villa Tugendhat, the house was occupied by bats and scorpions when the family bought it in 1989 and lovingly restored and furnished it.

The architect and writer Sharon McHugh tells the story of a little-known house built in Hatboro, Pennsylvania, for the Fisher family in the 1960s by the great American architect Louis I. Kahn. In studying the house, McHugh grew to understand it as one of Kahn's unsung masterworks. She provides a look at it as it goes onto the real estate market for the first time. The Fishers deeded it to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the new owner must under the stipulations of that gift make the house available to the public and scholars on occasion.

Not every modern house, even those by the most important architects of the last century or so, is a masterpiece, of course, but the lessons of this issue are several: that we must be vigilant to try to save, restore, and preserve those twentieth-century buildings that are significant in the annals of architecture or the span of history, and that sometimes, those buildings are less obvious to us—but they are there, hidden in plain view.



BETH DUNLOP EDITOR

Correction: In the section "In Perspective" in the Spring issue, the seating furniture in the photograph at lower left on p. 55 was misidentified. Shown are a Togo chair and sofa by Ligne Roset, not sections of the Cameleonda sofa by Mario Bellini. We apologize for the confusion.

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Han Moss



An alabaster vase with ormolu stand by T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings, late 1950s

From the residence of Dorothy and Thomas B. Davis, Kimbrough Towers, Memphis, TN



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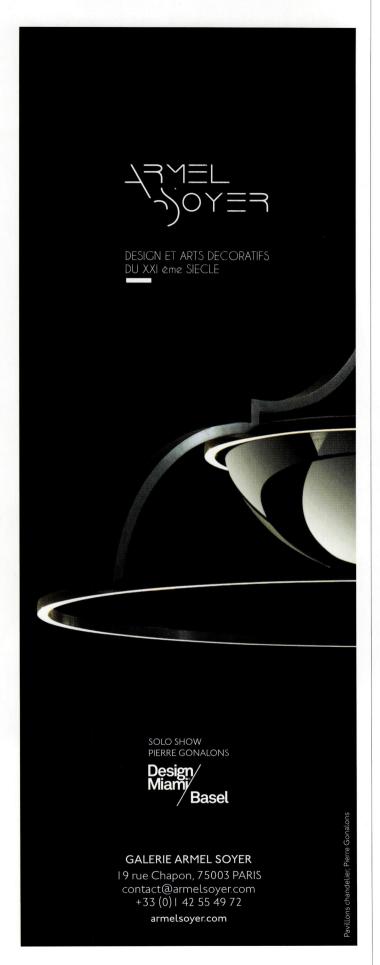
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Sharon McHugh is an architect, writer, and critic, who began writing about architecture in the early 1990s as a way to see what other architects were up to. It quickly turned into a passion for advocating for good design, especially modernism. She is the former U.S. editor of *World Architecture* magazine, a publication of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and is now the U.S correspondent for *World Architecture*

News (London) and Abitare (Milan). She and her husband, architect Walt Maykowskyj, divide their time between Princeton, New Jersey, and New York. Sharon is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Design and studied architectural conservation at the ICCROM in Rome.

Robin Hill is originally from Nottingham, England, but has made Miami Beach his home since 1992. Well known for his architectural photography documenting mid-century modern architecture in Miami, his photos are regularly seen in Architectural Record, Elle Decor, Garden Design, and Landscape Architecture Magazine, as well as in books such as MiMo: Miami Modern Revealed (2004), The Glass House (2011), and the Miami Architecture.



ture Guide (2010). In 2009 his photographs of Frank Lloyd Wright's Florida Southern College were included in the Frank Lloyd Wright: From Within Outward exhibition at the Guggenheim Museums in New York and Bilbao. In 2011 he was voted architectural photographer of the year by the Miami chapter of the American Institute of Architects.



Arlene Hirst, a design journalist, worked at Metropolitan Home as senior editor and then as deputy design director before the publication closed in 2009. She currently contributes to T, the New York Times Magazine's style blog, as well as to Surface Magazine, Interior Design, and Elle Décor Italia. She has covered the Milan Furniture Fair for the last quarter-century and has been a judge at the ICFF in New York since

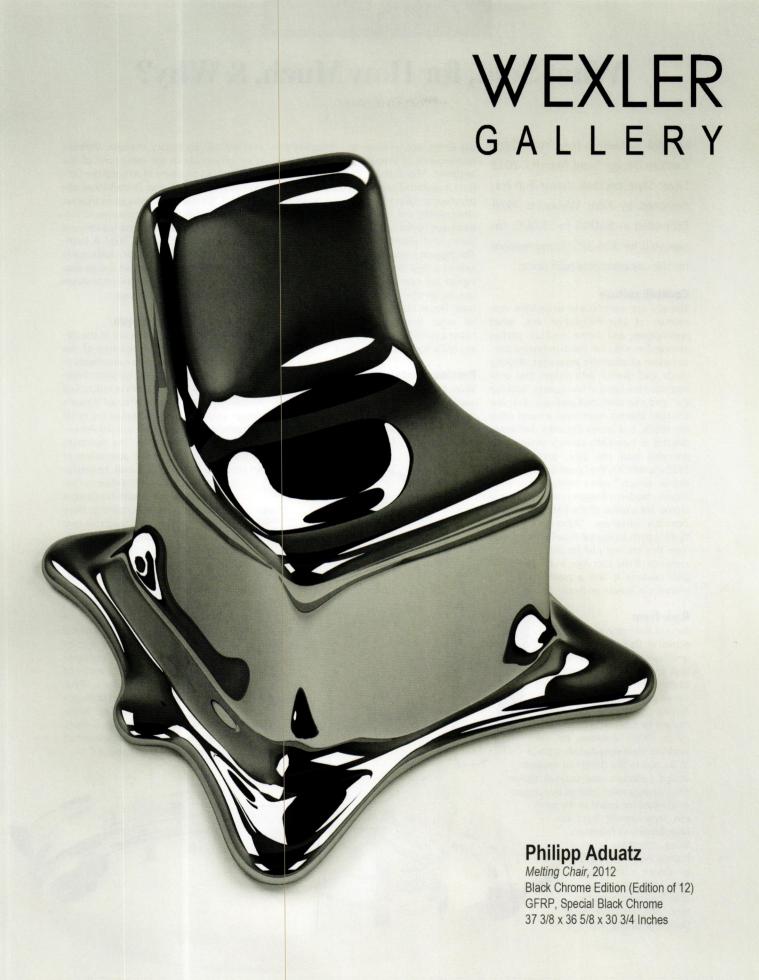
the show started. Arlene considers herself to be a design packrat, collecting such objects as an Olivetti calculator designed by Mario Bellini, a Nathalie du Pasquier Memphis bowl, a cut-off detergent bottle signed by Enzo Mari, and endless numbers of Alessi objects—as well as hundreds of books on design and art. She and her husband divide their time between an Upper East Side Manhattan apartment and a house on Fire Island.

Fred A. Bernstein began collecting architectural drawings while still an undergraduate at Princeton, when his professor, Michael Graves, came to the studio one evening with a series of silk screens of architecture he hoped to sell. He currently contributes to the New York Times, Departures Magazine, and several architecture publications. Fred lives in Brooklyn, in easy biking distance to new



buildings by the likes of Richard Meier, Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, and Weiss/Manfredi architects.

Edited by Kate Darowski



What Sold, for How Much, & Why?

By LUKE BAKER

Lot 154 Sotheby's New York "20th Century Design" sale, March 7, 2012:

Silver Style cocktail shaker and tray designed by Kem Weber, c. 1928. Estimated at \$7,000 to \$9,000, the pair sold for \$34,375. Some reasons for the unexpectedly high price:

Cocktail culture

Shakers are particularly collectible mementos of the Prohibition era, when speakeasies and home cocktail parties emerged as sites for the clandestine consumption of alcoholic beverages. Bootleg liquor was shaken with mixers that both improved the taste of low quality "bathtub gin" and also stretched precious reserves. Cocktail shakers have been around since the 1860s, but James Zemaitis, Sotheby's director of twentieth-century design, who presided over the sale, considers the 1920s and 1930s the "great era of cocktail shaker design," when nearly every wellknown modern designer was issuing a shaker for a piece of the barware market. Zemaitis observes, "Among collectors there is such an appeal in collecting things

from this era, not just for the romance of the Jazz Age, but also because it was a great moment in American design."

Rare form

Born in Germany in 1889, and active in California from 1915 until his death in 1963, Weber is best known for his streamlined designs for furniture and consumer products, particularly his Airline chair (1934) and clock designs for Lawson Time Company (c. 1935). However, his rare works in silver occasionally surface at auction to the delight of moderndesign collectors and cocktail shaker connoisseurs alike. Spurred by consumer demand for goods in the modern style coming from Europe, Brooklyn's Friedman Silver Company contracted Weber in 1928 to design contemporary hollowware suitable for mass manufacday series, also for Friedman) embodies the quintessence of Weber's graceful machine aesthetic. The shaker's smooth cylindrical form is devoid of surface ornamentation; its telescoping base anticipates the horizontal streamlining and industrialized abstraction employed by Norman Bel Geddes, Raymond Loewy, and Gilbert Rohde during the 1930s. The ziggurat gradation of the cap echoes the look of a New York skyscraper. Weber designed just two shakers for Friedman and one for another forward-looking manufacturer, Porter Blanchard. Unrealized designs for other shakers and silver goods are housed with Weber's archive at the University of California Santa Barbara.

Precious metal

Silver by Weber does reliably well on the auction block, and rare lots such as this one frequently exceed expected hammer prices. The stamped mark on the bottom of both pieces enhances the objects' value in both

primary and secondary markets. Weber's silver pieces are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Dallas Museum of Art, and Zemaitis has observed a "tremendous upsurge in interest on the part of American museums to collect design objects by the American émigré designers of the 1920s and '30s." A forthcoming monograph on Weber's historically understudied role in American design also "helps generate a high level of enthusiasm for this material," Zemaitis says.

Shaking up the status quo

Weber was an important figure in the development and commercialization of the art moderne and streamline movements in America. Seeing the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris deeply affected Weber's design sensibility and cemented his belief in modernism to inspire a unique American design vocabulary for the twentieth century. One of the earliest proponents of art moderne on the West Coast, he single-

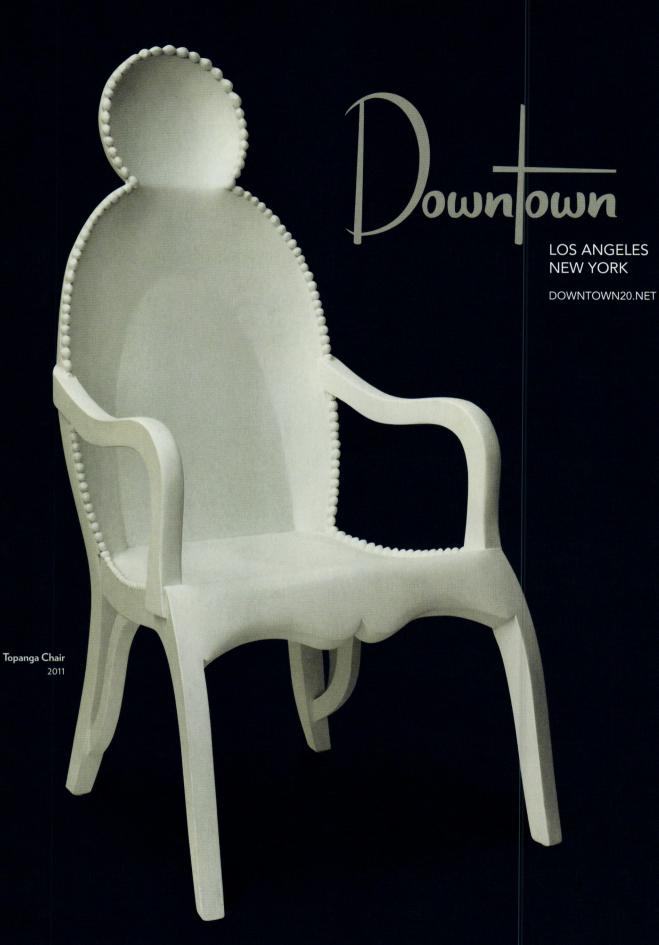
handedly introduced the style to California tastemakers with his designs for the Los Angeles furnishings store Barker Brothers and through his own design studio in Hollywood. In 1928, the same year he designed the Silver Style shaker, Weber cofounded the American Union of Decorative Artists and Craftsmen, which promoted modern American design through exhibitions and publications. Also in 1928 he participated in the International Exposition of Art in Industry organized by Macy's, alongside acclaimed modernists Josef Hoffmann, Ilonka Karasz, and Weber's former instructor Bruno Paul. Weber once remarked that his approach to designing a product mandated "keeping it simple and swift in line, not overly complicated, and yet giving it a certain rich elegance...that is typically American."

ture. The resulting Silver Style line (along with the To-



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EVAN LOBEL HAS OWNED A GALLERY FOR FIFTEEN YEARS and sells some of the most venerable names in design. But in 2011, he became a designer in his own right when he released a collection of furniture called **Night Star**. His cleanlined commodes, tables, and upholstered pieces not only speak to Hollywood Regency style, but also explore the interaction of light and dark by juxtaposing materials. Radiant patterns pepper the collection, emblazoning the doors of a commode in hand-cut ebony, or the surface of a writing desk in pale, lacquered goatskin.

Lobel has a knack for wrestling unwieldy materials into complex arrangements of pattern—take for instance his resin console inset with lacquered slices of bamboo—so it's not surprising that he cites designers like Edward Wormley, Ward Bennett, and Karl Springer (whose works he has sold for years) as pivotal inspirations. It follows that every detail is executed by hand, including the exquisite tufting on a series of sofas and chairs mounted on carved mahogany pedestals. "It's all about wonderful materials," Lobel says. "And, of course, the best craftsmanship possible." lobelmodern.com

—Damaris Colhoun

Evan Lobel's designs include (clockwise from top left) his Night Star commode, Nautilus coffee table, Bond Street sofa, and Snow Leopard bedside tables.



MICHAEL BOYD DEBUTED HIS NEW COLLEC-TION, PLANEfurniture, at Los Angeles's Edward Cella Art and Architecture in April. Not surprisingly, planes and other geometries are central to the collection's minimalistic, case-study feel. So are warm, sustainable materials (jute rope and plywood), striking primary colors (red), and "affordable" price points, all of which place the collection squarely in the wake of pioneering modernists such as Jean Prouvé, Donald Judd, and Gerrit Rietveld. Organized into four series named as sparely as the designs themselves— BLOCKseries, WEDGEseries, PLANKseries, and RODseries—the collection is at once pretentious and utilitarian, as comfortable in a gallery as it is on your patio. boyddesign.com.

-Damaris Colhoun



decorators who wouldn't blink at pairing a low Turkish ottoman with a French moderne chair. It's also a case of revisionist history, inspired in part by George Balanchine, who is quoted on a page of the collection's flipbook. "There are no new steps, only new combinations," the late choreographer declared. Still, even a series of fabric-wrapped tables, finished to gleam like malachite, lapis, or onyx, puts a positive spin on 1970s style. lizobrien.com.

—Damaris Colhoun

PLANEfurniture, Michael Boyd's new line, includes this armchair from the PLANKseries.

Liz O'Brien's Pamela sofa from her Editions collection.

Dresser from Paul Loebach's Great Camp collection.



IN EDITIONS, HER FIRST COLLECTION OF FURNITURE, LIZ O'BRIEN takes a stroll through decorative history, tweaking lines and techniques as she goes. Her Frances dining chair embodies Queen Anne style with sass, showing off cabriole legs and a plucky feminine shape. And her Pamela sofa celebrates the baroque (minus the kitsch) with tactile, scalloped lines. In many ways, Editions is an ode to eclecticism, aimed at

RUSTIC FURNITURE USUALLY VEERS BETWEEN CAMPY (think too much bark) and preppy (Adirondack chairs). But a new collection by Paul Loebach for Mattermade, called Great Camp, finds middle ground and breaks the mold. Inspired by the upstate New York vacation culture of the late nineteenth century, the collection includes a wicker-seated armchair, a credenza, a dresser, and a coatrack sculpted from twig-like pieces of bark-free ash. Carved details and smooth, faceted legs give the collection the appearance of being whittled by hand, but in fact, the elements are fashioned from computerized machining techniques developed specifically for this project, then joined together by hand. Loebach injects a playful shot of color, too (in homage, perhaps, to the autumnal pleasures of these northeastern mountains), offering the chair in yellow, red, or blue in limited editions. mattermatters.com.

-Damaris Colhoun



Art + **Craft** = **Design**

CHRISTOPHER RUSSELL STARTED OUT AS A PAINTER AND DRAFTSMAN but when his wife decided to take a ceramics class he became intrigued by the idea of making objects instead of images. "Once I got started I just never stopped—all of my work is to some degree driven by a simple desire to possess something, to spend time with something, to look at something," he says.

This past spring the Julie Saul Gallery in New York exhibited Russell's After the Golden Age, a ceramic still life comprising multiple elements, including fruit bowls, birds, and obelisks, that is replete with historical references culled from days wandering through museums, taking in prints, paintings, and decorative objects of all sorts. Russell cast every mold himself and perfected the glaze to mimic stone.

He's also recently started to experiment with bronze for a commission he's completing for the Metropolitan Transit Authority's Arts for Transit program, which was launched in the 1980s to oversee the installation of permanent artworks in New York City subway stations. For the Ninth Avenue station in Brooklyn he designed castbronze ornamental gates and finials in the shape of magnified bee-covered honeycombs and flowers, a motif carried over from earlier work in ceramics. The gates (scheduled to be installed this June) were assembled in Queens at the Modern Art Foundry, a family-operated bronze workshop using the lost wax casting technique, the same foundry where Louise Bourgeois's legendary spiders were created. -Danielle Devine

THE DUTCH ARTIST HANS VAN BENTEM is best known for his crystal chandeliers. But don't call them rarified. Shaped into skulls, revolvers, and airplanes, his twinkling creations are more punk rock than formal decor. This summer, at the **Gemeentemuseum** in The Hague, the artist gets another chance to pit



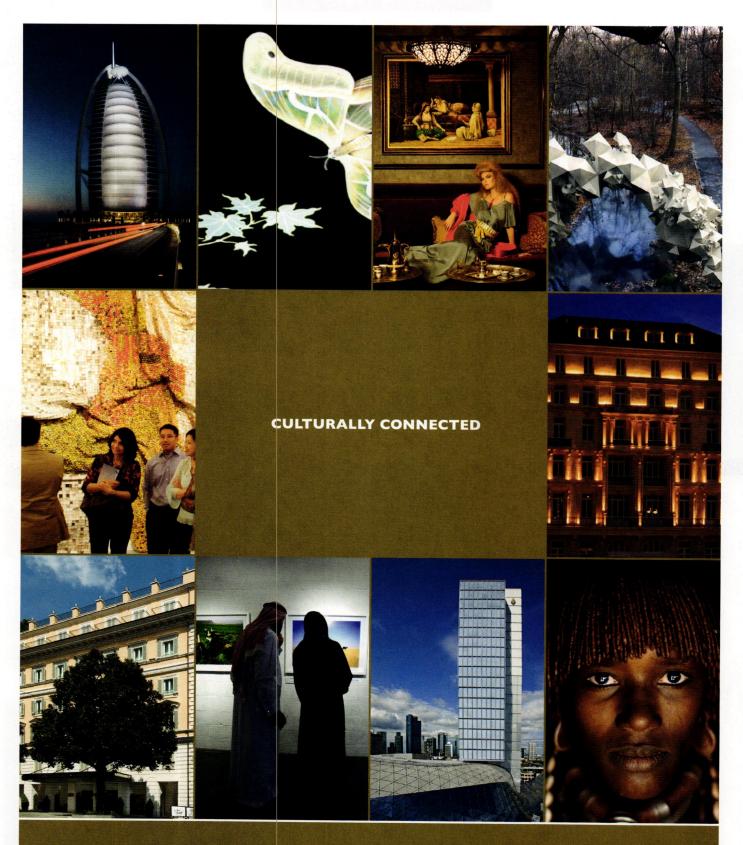
his iconoclastic sensibility against traditional design. In an exhibition titled *Keep on Dreaming*, open June 1 through November 11, the artist will erect six installations inside the museum's most celebrated period rooms, which have remained unchanged since they first opened in 1935. Expect everything from crystal canopy beds to fantastical porcelain robots to creepy, clownish sculptures produced in collaboration with Senegalese artists. And all of it framed by opulent moldings, scenic wallpapers, and Japanese lacquer that speak to a bygone era of Dutch design. gemeentemuseum.nl.

—Damaris Colhoun

Christopher Russell's castbronze honeycomb and bees, part of his ornament for the Ninth Avenue subway station in Brooklyn.

Hans van Bentem's installations run the gamut from whimsical to provocative.





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Fairs: There and Here

THE TWO-CONTINENT, TWO-SEASON DESIGN MIAMI OPENS ITS BASEL EDITION ON JUNE 12, and a key focus of the Swiss show is the annual selection of the Designers of the Future, an awards program now underwritten by W Hotels. The winning designers are often just at the beginning of careers that—if the past is any indicator—are likely

to blossom quickly. (Meaning: watch this space.) This year's winners are an Englishman, a German, and a Canadian, Tom Foulsham established his own studio in London after working for both Thomas Heatherwick and Ron Arad. Markus Kayser founded his own design studio in London and Germany shortly after receiving a masters degree in art and design from London's Royal College of Art in 2011. Philippe Malouin left Montreal to work in England for Tom Dixon and ultimately opened his own Londonbased practice.

-Beth Dunlop



Designers of the Future winners (left to right) Tom Foulsham, Markus Kayser, and Philippe Malouin.

> Carwan Gallery's console made by Misher'Traxler in collaboration with Roger Thome.

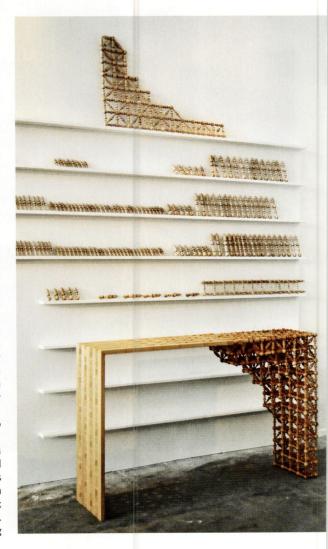
DESIGN DAYS DUBAI, THE FIRST-EVER SUCH SHOW IN THE MIDDLE EAST, drew twenty-two galleries to the largely unfamiliar turf (at least in the worlds of contemporary and collectible design) of the United Arab Emirates. The show, held in a tent in the shadow of the Burj Khalifa (the world's tallest tower), attracted galleries from around the globe, of which only one (R 20th Century) came from the United States. With participants from Africa, South America, Europe, and Asia, the cultural mix was a rich one. The fair's goals, said director Cyril Zammit, were to offer work by both established and emerging designers, opportunities for collaboration, and a platform to showcase work emanating from the Middle East. One scene-stealer came from Beirut's Carwan Gallery, where the Viennese designers Katharina Mischer and Thomas Traxler (who work together as Mischer'Traxler) collaborated on-site with Beirut craftsman Roger Thome to create a console table from 650 pieces of wood. Plans are already under way for the 2013 encore.

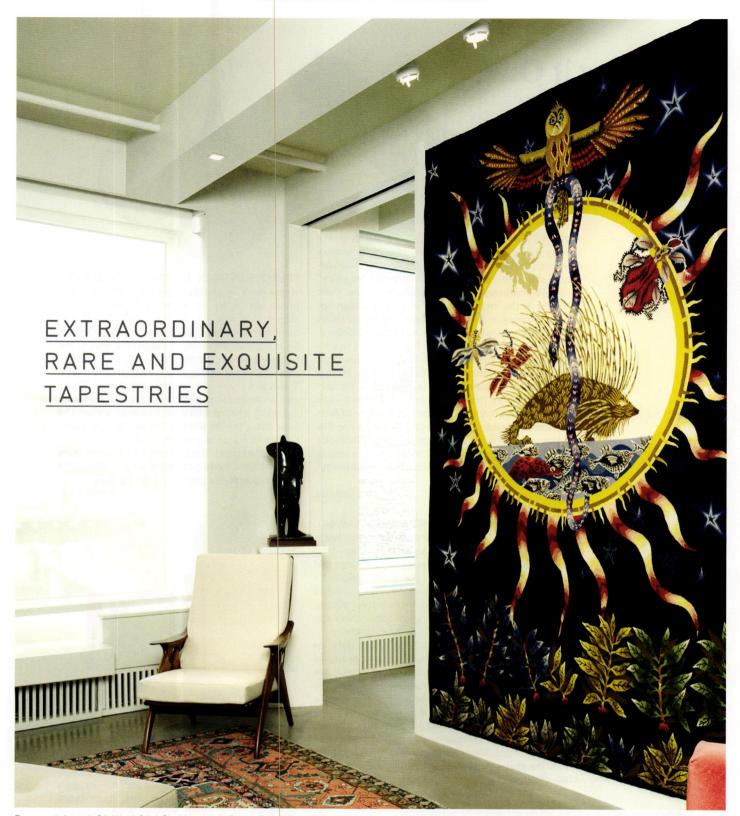
—Beth Dunlop

DOLPHIN PROMOTIONS AND 1STDIBS.COM launched the first of ten new objects and furnishings fairs, scheduled to open in cities across the country, right here in New York. On April 12 through 15, NYC20 drew thirty-six blue-chip dealers to a tent in Lincoln Center. Under a taut white ceiling a crowd of young

collectors wandered through a maze of booths styled as retro-era vignettes. There were plenty of standouts. Paul Donzella showed a bronze console by Philip and Kevin Laverne that resembled a hunk of driftwood freshly hauled from the sea. And Downtown presented a host of works by seminal Mexican designers, including Arturo Pani's feather-shaped fiberglass lounge chairs. But few things defined the atmosphere more vividly than the pop art minidresses at Katy Kane Vintage and Couture Clothing, projecting, like colorful talismans, the idea that our appetite for modernism is as robust as ever. The next stop on the tour was in Los Angeles, where the LA Modernism Show and Sale was open May 4 through May 6. Next up is San Francisco, September 13 to 16.

-Damaris Colhoun





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furniture should be—from a marketer's perspective anvway. Designed in collaboration with "talented designers," their "environmentally-friendly products" make them a "leader in the implementation of an Eco-Design approach." So imagine our delight when we found ourselves genuinely liking some of TuriniBY's designs. Collaboration with French architect Erwan Péron vielded two intriguing concepts. For the first, the Kristal table, Péron trisected an oak-veneered block with three planes of clear PMMA so that it floats above the ground. For the second, he interlocked two tapering horizontal planes—one of oak, the other of the composite Dacquacryl—to form the Alliance sideboard. Our favorite, though, is the Bee collection by the French design agency Fritsch-Durisotti. From the side, the graceful lines of the pieces—seating and tables—open like pods, revealing the internal honeycomb structure. turriniby.com.

—Damaris Colhoun

MILAN'S FAMED SALONE INTERNATIONALE DEL MOBILE, staged every April, is the premier event for design lovers everywhere and it always offers a surfeit of riches—from the fairgrounds itself to all the events and openings that take place throughout the city. For those looking for outdoor furniture, there was an embarrassment of riches this year, with almost every major manufacturer offering new collections. And for discerning collectors, there was also an alluring selection from outside the mainstream.

It's no longer news when fashion houses take on homewares. But this year Marni opted for a more original approach. Its exhibition included a collection of one hundred chairs made in Colombia by ex-prisoners—a project undertaken to help these people re-enter the community. The chairs, made of metal and multicolor PVC cords, are of a type common throughout Colombia, but Marni created new color variations and patterns, so each one is unique. The presentation will tour Marni stores around the globe and funds raised by their sale will go to a Milan charity for children of imprisoned mothers.

Fritsch-Durisotti's

Bee lounger for

TurriniBY.

Nika Zupanc's

pendant lights

for Vistosi.

William Sawaya's polyurethane Fei Fei chair.

Marni's array of chairs made by ex-prisoners.

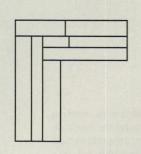


YOUNG SLOVENIAN DESIGNER NIKA ZUPANC, whose work is already bought by collectors (her pieces are listed on artnet.com) presented her idiosyncratic take on outdoor furniture with her Summertime collection at Spazio Rossana Orlandi. Milan's fabled emporium of design. The lines of the pieces are simple, but her vision is far from ordinary since black is not usually a warm weather color choice. Tables and chairs have metallic pink frames. Chairs are upholstered in an outdoor fabric with a sharkskinlike finish, adorned with an embroidered anchor. The table has a toy-like winding mechanism that allows the top to flip up or over—one side is a mirror, the other a blackboard. The poetically pink Venetian glass pendant lights, made in collaboration with Vistosi, the Murano glassmaker, provide a softening allure.

-Arlene Hirst



"Modern is what deserves to become an antique," Dino Gavina, one of the pioneers of Italian design, once claimed. And that status is what Sawaya and Moroni aimed for with Fei Fei, a high-density polyurethane chair designed by William Sawaya and made from five different molds—an ultra sophisticated manufacturing process. "It comes out as just one piece," says Paolo Moroni, who explained that the chair has an interior steel structure to give it rigidity. On the first days of the fair, the Fei Fei attracted museum curators from Indianapolis and Montreal who purchased examples for their collections, betting on the chair's future antique status.



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Museum Walk: All That Glitters

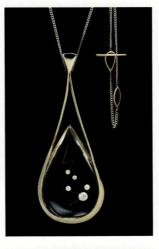




MOSAICS HAVE A LONG AND VENERABLE HISTORY, dating back centuries before the Roman Empire. We have trekked to Venice, Istanbul, Ravenna, and Barcelona (among other places) to see mosaics of both distant and relatively recent history.

The new Fondazione Bisazza near Vicenza, Italy, will be the first museum and study center to celebrate mosaics in contemporary design, though its scope is much wider than mosaics alone. With the curator and writer Maria Cristina Didero as executive director and Bisazza's chief of design Alessandro Mendini on board, the focus will be on contemporary design in the broadest sense. The museum opens on June 8 with the exhibition John Pawson: Plain Space in the temporary galleries.

The permanent installation will be devoted to a remarkable body of work that Bisazza has assembled over the years by asking an array of designers—selected for their wide-ranging imaginations—to reimagine the application of mosaic tile. "We would





like to enrich the collection by working with designers from around the world so that they will start discovering that mosaic tile is not only very beautiful but very flexible," says Rossella Bisazza, who is the foundation's vice president. Among the designers represented are Tord Boontje, Jaime Hayon, Alessandro Mendini, Fabio Novembre, Andrée Putman, Ettore Sottsass, Studio Job, Patricia Urquiola, and Marcel Wanders, fondazionebisazza, it

-Beth Dunlop

MARGARET DE PATTA'S SCULPTURAL BAUBLES elevated the language of jewelry. Half a century later, Space-Light-Structure, the first major retrospective of the work of this groundbreaking figure in the studio jewelry movement, will be at MAD in New York (June 5 through September 23-after being shown at the Oakland Museum of California, which organized it jointly with MAD). Fifty pieces of jewelry, in addition to ceramics and flatware, speak to De Patta's bold, transformative style, like her fluid, space-bending pendants, which jettison conventional symmetries, and the way she illuminated stones from within using a technique she called "opticuts." But De Patta did more than coin a radical new aesthetic. Blending Bauhaus ideals and constructivist style, she crafted cuffs, brooches, and rings that express a modernist's vision. madmuseum.org.

—Damaris Colhoun

CENTURY OF THE CHILD: GROWING BY DESIGN, 1900-2000, at the Museum of Modern Art from July 29 to November 5, will explore projects related to children that are often underrepresented in design history, such as school architecture, playgrounds, nurseries, games, toys, and furniture. The exhibition will showcase the work of famous and unsung modern designers alike, including Richard Neagle (1922-2006). When he designed the Bamboozler clothes tree, suburban homes were mostly filled with unremarkable furniture in pseudo-historical styles. During the 1950s American toymakers, architects, designers, and even art museums, promised to develop a child's creativity through specially designed objects, such as the Bamboozler, that reflected the belief of progressive educators and sociologists that learning could be synonymous with fun. moma.org.

-Adriana Kertzer

Alessandro Mendini's Proust's Armchair, executed in mosaic, on view at the new Fondazione Bisazza near Vicenza, Italy.

Silver Ware by Studio Job at the Foundazione Bisazza.

> Pendant by Margaret De Patta, 1960.

Bamboozler clothes tree by Richard Neagle, c. 1953. AUCTION 07 JUNE

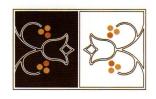
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Louis Kahn's little known jewel

A CLASSIC MODERN HOUSE HAS HAD ONE OWNER FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS

By SHARON MCHUGH



HATBORO, PENNSYLVANIA, is not a place where one would expect to find a modernist house, dominated as it is by colonial style buildings. Yet it was here that Norman Fisher, a family doctor, and his wife, Doris, chose to raise their two daughters, Nina and Claudia, in a house designed for them by the great Louis I. Kahn, who was by then on his way

to becoming one of the most important architects of the twentieth century. They found a site on Mill Road, one of Hatboro's prettiest streets, and hired Kahn in 1961. Over the course of the following seven years the Fishers and their architect developed a spirited relationship in which they engaged in lively conversations about the house's design, often over late night dinners penciled in between Kahn's frequent travels. (He was

busy at the time with promising new commissions like the Salk Institute of Biological Studies, the Kimbell Art Museum, and the capital complex for Bangladesh projects now considered masterpieces.)

There were times when Kahn tested his clients' patience. Doris Fisher, in particular, would get frustrated whenever she asked him to make a change, because rather then modify the plans he would start over again. He ultimately produced five different schemes for the house over four years, which in part accounts for why it took so long to design and build. But another explanation for the long gestation was offered by William Whitaker, the collections manager of the architectural archives at the University of Pennsylvania, who attributed it to "a desire on the part of the architect and clients to attain a high degree of refinement," as evidenced in "the cabinet-like quality of its construction and taut planning." In other words, it took time to get it right.

That time seems to have been well spent given the

Top: Norman Fisher and Louis Kahn at the house.

Bottom: View from the northeast of the two cubic forms rising from rustic stone plinths. Set at a 45-degree angle and connected by an entrance, one cube houses the bedrooms and the other, the living quarters.

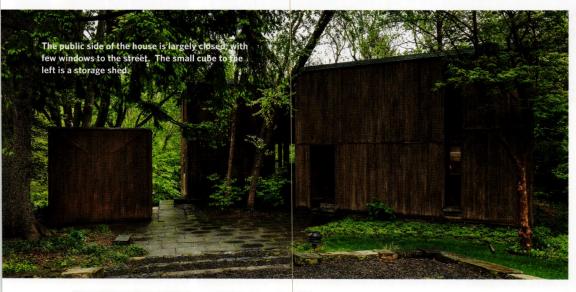


elegantly spare structure that contains only what one needs while enveloping its inhabitants in light. Comprised of two wood cubes set atop stone bases, the Fisher house stands on an acre-and-a-half wooded site with a stream in the backyard. It is notable for its binuclear plan, in which the living quarters are housed in the two separate volumes—one containing the living room, dining room, and kitchen and the other the bedrooms and bathrooms—and for the blending of contemporary design and classical sensibilities, something Kahn was experimenting with at the time.

tation or prestige."

The Fishers too had ideas for the house that would come to influence the design. The vertical siding and rough interior plaster walls are said to reflect their love of the American farmhouse and barns. And the large picture window in the dining room, one of the house's great moments, is of their design. Kahn originally designed that space without a window, saying that there were areas within every house where one should be at repose and he thought this was one of them. In the end, the house reflects a rich mix of ideas that express what Richard Saul Wurman, who at



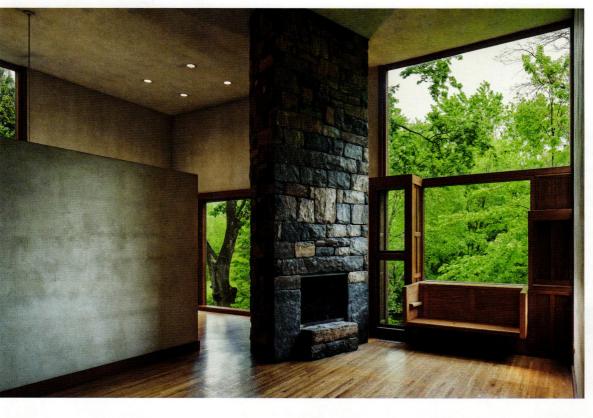


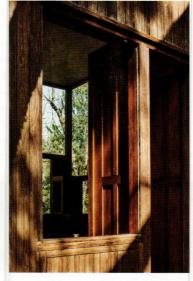
Kahn drew inspiration for the design from his travels and the people and architecture he encountered along the way. Having just returned from Europe, for example, he looked to the Roman ruins and classical architecture he'd seen there for his proportions, as well as to the houses of Jorn Utzon (whom he met in Switzerland), which he described as having "great modesty...a simple roof and an interior made in a frugal way." He likewise found inspiration in the Nantucket saltbox house, which he called "fundamental" and "an architecture of just settlement without any sense of osten-

one point was an architect in Kahn's office, has referred to as "a refined primitivism."

The Fishers had great interest in the design trends of the day, especially the work of Isamu Noguchi and George Nakashima. But to them this was not just a house with a pedigree, it was also the perfect place to raise a family. Nina Fisher, who grew up there, describes it as "comfortable and fundamental. Not a fussy house." She recalls that its unusual plan and the fact that some of the windows were actually just openings covered with shutters were sources for play. "We









Clockwise from top left: A large stone fireplace anchors the living space, dividing the family room and dining area. This was a popular motif that was widely used by other architects, namely Frank Lloyd Wright.

Many of the windows, as the ones pictured here (with built-in seating below), have operable shutters that allow the house to be fully opened to the air, thus eliminating the need for air-conditioning.

The exterior elevation of the house reads as an abstract composition of planes, much like a painting.

could hang a rope to exit the house and spy on our parents," she says.

For the more than forty years they lived there, the Fishers dutifully tended the house like docents, cheerfully opening it up to visiting scholars and architects and furnishing it as a curator would, carefully and with great forethought. Norman Fisher went to great lengths to get the right stain for the exterior cypress siding. Nina Fisher says her mother would find "placeholders" to serve as temporary furniture until she found just the right pieces; she eventually assembled an eclectic collection that included quintessential mid-century objects such as a dining table, bedroom set, and stool by Nakashima (whose studio in nearby New Hope was a frequent family pilgrimage), a Jens Risom sideboard, and an Eames rocking chair, as well as rustic pieces inspired by nature.

For those like me who studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, Kahn was king. He ruled the roost of the hallowed halls of Penn's architecture school, where he taught for many years and where his archive

is housed, a collection of 6,363 drawings, 100 models, and 150 linear feet of files and correspondence that is a treasure trove for scholars and collectors. As a graduate student, I got to know Kahn's buildings in the course of preparing for an exhibition on his work. But it wasn't until my recent visit to the Fisher house that I finally got it—that I understood why he occupies such rare air in the annals of architecture and ranks with Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, and Mies van der Rohe as among









Top and bottom: Views of the entrance hall. The vertical paneling of the doors and walls was a motif Kahn would continue in larger, institutional projects, such as the Salk Institute, albeit in different materials.

Left: The house in a photograph of 1968, soon after completion.



the great modernist architects of the twentieth century. At the Fisher house, Kahn transformed the most humble materials into a work of great beauty, producing, in the end, a building that has a far more commanding presence than its modest size suggests.

In the 1990s the Fishers deeded the house to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which recently announced that it would be sold into new private ownership as the family desired. (The family sold the contents through Locati Auctions in nearby Maple Glen, Pennsylvania, in April.) The house will be forever protected by an easement that guides future alterations and ensures that it is routinely available to the public and scholars as well. We can only hope that the new owners will have the Fishers' impeccable taste and eye for beauty and will find the house the joy to live in that they did.

For readers who would like to learn more about the Fishers and Kahn, a transcription of an interview between Doris Fisher and Kahn in the spring of 1970 appeared in A+U: Architecture and Urbanism, vol. 10 (October 2000).



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An Interview with Eric Dupont By Daniella Ohad



THE ART DEALER ERIC DUPONT, WHOSE PARIS GALLERY HAS MADE ITS NAME IN CONTEMPORARY ART, HAS DEVELOPED A TASTE FOR REFINED, SOPHISTICATED MID-CENTURY DESIGN. HERE, IN THE FIRST OF A SERIES, WE SPEAK WITH HIM ABOUT HIS COLLECTION.

Top: One of Eric Dupont's favorite pieces is this green upholstered armchair from the Multimo series F280 designed by Pierre Paulin (1969).

Above right: A rare low chair, one of a pair, designed by Janine Abraham and Dirk Jan Rol, 1956.

Right:The Pointe de Diamant credenza that Antoine Philippon and Jacqueline Lecoq designed for Behr, 1961, is made of steel and lacquered palissander.



THE APARTMENT ERIC DUPONT SHARES WITH HIS WIFE, HERMINIA IBARRA, in a magnificent Beaux Arts landmark building on a wide Parisian boulevard expresses the individuality of the couple in every object, every form, every color. The Duponts live with a collection that has grown from serious research, deep knowledge, an aesthetic sensibility—and from the desire to live with important objects that are also cornerstones in the story of modern design.

The apartment retains much of its original architectural detail, and the rococo style moldings integrate beautifully with the Duponts' modernist objects and contemporary art. Dupont seeks out areas that have not yet been discovered by the marketplace, rare pieces, prototypes, and objects that did not make it into production. Among the standouts of the collection are a pair of rare low chairs (1956) designed by Janine Abraham and Dirk Jan Rol (recently included in the Chefs d'Œuvres exhibition at the Centre Pompidou-Metz), and a glass-topped desk (1960) and several cabinets designed by Antoine Philippon and Jacqueline Lecoq between 1958 and 1961.

When did you start getting interested in design? Design and its aesthetics have played a role in





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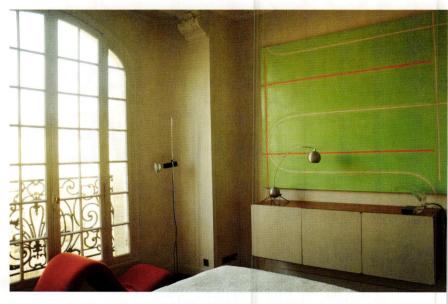
DROUOT-RICHELIEU, PARIS - ROOM 5 & 6 FRIDAY, 22ND JUNE 2012



my life almost as far back as I can remember. As a young adult, I was interested in good design, in sophisticated design, but this was long before I could afford to buy it. I was living in Toulouse, where I had opened my first art gallery, and it was in Toulouse where I first learned the meaning of great design.

Do you remember what you saw in those days that captured your interest?

During the 1980s several galleries in Toulouse began offering French design of the 1930s and 1940s, particularly the work of such art deco masters as Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann and Jean-Michel Frank. This is the material that first sparked my love for design and my appreciation for its power to evoke emotions. But at the time I was mainly preoccupied with building a business and with extending my family, so I could not afford any of these. My period of exploration and educating myself extended into the 1990s, when many of





the progressive galleries began showing French postwar design—by Jean Prouvé and Charlotte Perriand. By the late 1990s, when I was ready to start collecting, I felt confident about my understanding of modern design and knew what I wanted to live with. When Herminia and I bought our apartment, it was clear that we wanted to collect together. We wanted to furnish our home with pieces we loved, with pieces that worked well with our art collection. For the most part our design collection comprises objects that were underappreciated when we bought them—designs we discovered and love.

What do you collect?

My collection is comprised of two major areas: French furniture of the 1950s and 1960s and lighting by Gino Sarfatti.

Top: Among the furnishings of the master bedroom is a hanging cabinet by Philippon and Lecoq, this one produced in 1958 by the Bofinger firm. On top of it (at the right) is an Acrilica table lamp designed by Joe Colombo and produced in 1962 by Oluce; at the left is table lamp, no. 599, designed by Gino Sarfatti and produced by Arteluce in 1968. Paulin's Dos à Dos is in front of the window

Center: Philippon and Lecoq's glass, wood, and lacquer desk was produced by Jules Degorre, 1960–1967.

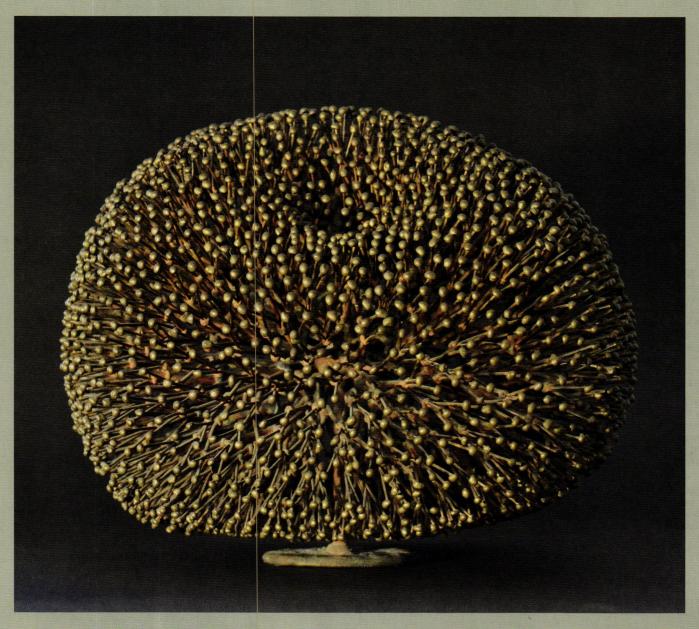
Bottom: Philippon and Lecoq's desk was advertised in various magazines during the 1960s.

Mobilier de grande classe t'une exécution parfaite

Glaces de Coussois

LOST (ITH APT)

SPECIALIZING IN THE WORKS OF HARRY BERTOIA



Harry Bertoia
Bush Form Sculpture
USA
1960's
Copper and bronze
12.5"h, 14.5"d



What is it about the lighting designs of Sarffati that you love?

Sarffati devoted his entire career to designing lights and he was the greatest at it. Experimenting with unorthodox forms and advanced technology he worked for Arteluce [the company that has since merged with Flos], which realized many of his designs. I have found, though, that his most groundbreaking designs often did not enter production because they were too avant-garde for the popular taste. They are the rarest and the most collectible pieces of his work.

Tell me about Antoine Philippon and Jacqueline Lecoq, whose work has a tremendous presence in your collection.

They were a couple of great furniture designers who never managed to gain success in the marketplace. Their aesthetic celebrates a particular moment in the history of modern design in France in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, when designers began to

PRECOGNIZE A PART OF MYSELF IN EVERYTHING I OWN, AND LIVING IN THIS HOME, **SURROUNDED BY THESE THINGS, IS THE FULFILLMENT OF A DREAM**.

Above: The living room in the Duponts' Paris apartment contains a loveseat by Pierre Paulin (1969) next to a Grip lamp by Achille Castiglioni (1985) for Arteluce. Also visible are a low chair by Janine Abraham and Dirk Jan Rol and, at the left, a coffee table by Maria Pergay.

Right: A corridor in the Duponts' apartment, showing a white credenza, designed by Philippon and Lecoq, painted palissander and steel, 1962, produced by Behr.

Below: A mahogany hanging cabinet of four panels designed by Philippon and Lecoq, 1962, produced by Behr.

In your journey into the world of design, is there any design dealer or expert you have found particularly inspiring?

The one and only one was the late Pierre Staudenmeyer. He taught me a lot, and helped me to navigate through the process of defining and refining my own taste. Pierre was ahead of his time, but exemplified the way design should be dealt with. He had a great eye for new talents and produced their designs himself in limited editions; most of these pieces are still considered ultra-collectible. Now, that collecting contemporary design has become a part of our culture—of art fairs, international auctions, and in defining today's taste-he is not here to enjoy the realization of his dream. I first met him in the 1980s at his Neotu Gallery in Paris. He then founded a second gallery, the Re Gallery in New York, which opened in 1997. Pierre was a visionary, whose great eye for design and for young talents resulted in the discovery of some of the stars of our time-Garouste and Bonetti, Martin Szekely, and the Bouroullec brothers, just to name a few. At Neotu, Pierre formulated a concept that stands at the core of most contemporary design galleries today, where a gallery takes on the production of objects and acts as the exclusive retailer of those pieces.





MARTIN VISSER 1922-2009

exhibition of 1960s Dutch modernist furniture



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Top: Maria Pergay's triple-tiered painted steel coffee table was designed in 1968; this example was a special commission of 1972.

Center: Paulin's Dos à Dos of 1966.

Bottom: This small sideboard designed by Philippon and Lecoq for Behr, 1960, is of mahogany and brushed metal, with white paint. challenge the market for postwar industrial production made for the millions by introducing examples of handmade modern design. But the market was not yet ready for this new type of luxurious product, and Philippon and Lecoq ultimately produced only about three hundred pieces altogether.

I noticed the two upholstered seats by Pierre Paulin, which look more like sculptures than pieces of furniture. For the most part Paulin's furniture was industrially produced, permitting the public to discover the comfort of modern living. What areas of his work do you like to collect?

Pierre Paulin had a key role in shaping twentieth-century design, and we are fortunate to have two rare models, a red Dos à Dos from 1966 that belongs to Herminia, and an upholstered armchair from the Multimo series F280, designed in 1969. Paulin worked with Artifort, a furnishing company based in the Netherlands. They produced only seven of each of these models to test the market, but they were not successful and were never put into production. I am totally moved by these two designs.







What does collecting "design" mean to you and what is the difference between collecting art and design?

My home is an important piece of my identity. To me collecting art and design are the same. It is about surrounding myself with things I love and that become integral to my everyday life. I recognize a part of myself in everything I own, and living in this home, surrounded by these things, is the fulfillment of a dream.

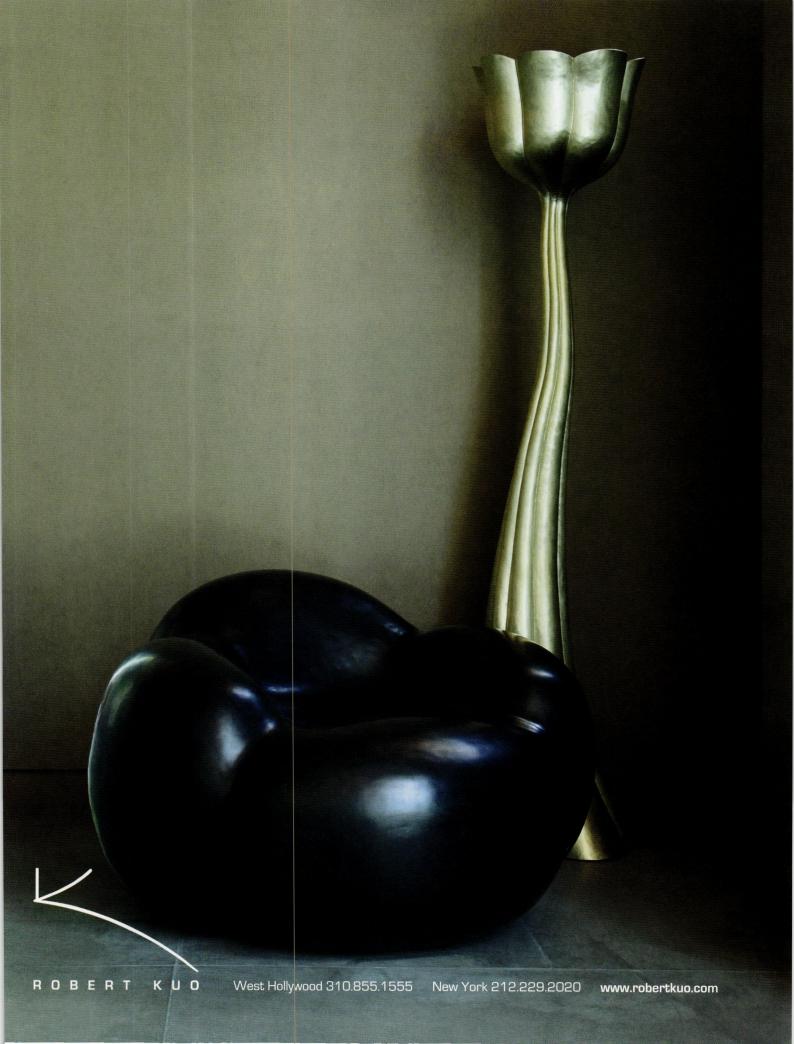
JOUSSE ENTREPRISE, ERIC DUPONT PHOTO MIDDLE: ERIC DUPONT PHOTO BOTTOM: FRANK LANDAU, FRANKFURT

Who do you consider a great design collector?

Didier Krzentowski, the cofounder [with his wife Clémence] and director of Galerie Kreo is a great collector. I respect his taste and his collecting decisions; we inspire each other.

What is the best advice you can give someone who wants to start collecting design?

The first step in creating a collection is to get educated. Visit fairs, auctions, exhibitions, design galleries, museums. My second piece of advice is to follow your heart and trust your feelings, collect what you love.





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In Finland the high note is Aalto

By RAUL BARRENECHE

Above: Alvar Aalto in a photograph of c. 1930.

Above right: Aalto designed the Savoy Restaurant in Helsinki with his first wife, Aino, in cooperation with textile artist Dora Jung and the new Artek firm.

Completed in 1937, the original interior remains intact.

Below right: The Aalto vase, originally commissioned for the Savoy.

Below left and bottom: Aalto designed the Villa Mairea in Noormarkku in 1939. ALVAR AALTO (1898-1976) IS HARDLY ALONE IN THE FIRMAMENT of great twentieth-century Finnish designers. All the world knows Marimekko's bold graphic prints, Eero Saarinen's sweeping airport terminals and sinuous pedestal tables, and the striking glass and ceramics of the venerable design houses littala and Arabia. But it is Aalto, the prolific and humanistic architect and designer known for his warm embrace of organic forms and natural materials, who looms largest on many fronts. Aalto designed furniture that pioneered innovative uses of wood (those perky little three-legged bentwood stools and spare but sumptuous armchairs and tea trolleys, all created in the 1930s for the Finnish company Artek and still in production); the famous wavy glass vessel now simply referred to as the Aalto vase; and influential buildings like the Paimio Sanatorium, Finlandia Hall, and his seminal Villa Mairea in the birch forest of Noormarkku. A synthesis of Nordic and Japanese aesthetics with meticulous, highly original details, his buildings have influenced generations of architects.







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LEATHER CLAD GAMES TABLE DESIGNED BY WILLIAM HAINES CIRCA 1950, ESTATE OF F. HUGH AND MARY HERBERT, BEL AIR, CALIFORNIA



Aalto returned briefly to the spotlight in 1998, when New York's Museum of Modern Art mounted a major retrospective on the centennial of his birth. But with Helsinki's position as World Design Capital 2012 drawing aficionados to Finland with a chockablock calendar of exhibitions, festivals, and other design-related happenings, it's again time to experience the architectural legend's lasting contributions.

The best starting point for a Finnish sojourn is the compact capital city, Helsinki, home to a respectable clutch of Aalto buildings. Many of the dozen or so existing Aalto designs there are workday structures—offices for institutions such as the Finnish Engineering Society (1952), the National Pensions Institute (1956), and the local

AFTER RETREATING NAZI OCCUPIERS BURNED ROVANIEMI TO THE GROUND IN 1944, THE GOVERNMENT ASKED AALTO TO DESIGN A NEW URBAN PLAN FOR THE CAPITAL OF FINNISH LAPLAND





Top: Aalto's National Pensions Institute, Helsinki, 1956. Center: Aalto's house in Munkkiniemi, a

Helsinki suburb, 1936.

Bottom: Aalto's Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, completed in 1975. electric company (1976), their interiors off limits to the public. But there are a few gems around town that are easily visited. Aalto's iconic glass vase was originally commissioned by the Savoy restaurant (Eteläesplanadi 14), a culinary classic that still draws locals with stellar modern Nordic cuisine and panoramic city views from a glass-enclosed dining area that opens to an outdoor terrace in summer. Designed by Aalto and his first wife Aino, in cooperation with textile artist Dora Jung and the then newly established Artek firm, and completed in 1937, the Savoy's original interior is totally intact. Its austere minimalism has remained in vogue for decades without becoming museum-like.

If you're in the market for Aalto furnishings both familiar and rare, head to the recently opened Artek 2nd Cycle shop (Pieni Roobertinkatu 4-6), where the fabled company offers a staggering variety of vintage designs by Aalto and contemporaries such as Ilmari Tapiovaara and Paavo Tynell. A ten-minute walk from both the Savoy and Artek 2nd Cycle is Finlandia Hall, a concert space completed in 1975 just a year before Aalto's death (Mannerheimintie 13; finlandiatalo.fi). Its acoustics are famously flawed (the city remedied that by building the adjoining Musiikktalo in 2011), but its crenellated white marble exterior is pure Aalto.

The pilgrimage to the architect's own house, from his so-called white period, is just a quick jaunt to the leafy suburb of Munkkiniemi. In winter the building blends into the snowy landscape; in summer vines and other vegetation take over and integrate it into nature. Both the house, built in 1936 (Riihitie 20), and Aalto's nearby studio, dating from 1955 (Tiilimäki 20), are managed by the Alvar Aalto Foundation and open for public tours year-round. The foundation's website (alvaraalto.fi) is ground

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zero for all Aalto-related information, including a database and guide to all the architect's existing buildings throughout Finland.

Die-hard Aalto fans willing to venture further afield will get to experience some of the architect's greatest works. Jyväskylä, three to four hours from Helsinki by train (or forty minutes by air), has a major concentration of his buildings, including numerous ones at Jväskylä University and the Alvar Aalto Museum (Alvar Aallon katu 7). Designed by the architect himself in 1973, the museum's exterior is faced with the pale Arabia ceramic tiles (called Halla,

the forest outside. Other out-of-the-way towns with significant Aalto treasures include Paimio in western Finland, where Aalto built his famous tuberculosis sanatorium in 1933 (a commission that also yielded the iconic bentwood Paimio chair).

One surprisingly worthwhile side trip is a visit to Rovaniemi, capital of Finnish Lapland, on the Arctic Circle. Even in frigid February, when daytime high temperatures of -17F plummet to -35F at night, this city of sixty-one thousand is filled with adventure tourists snowmobiling and dogsledding through the frozen Doctor Zhivago-like landscape. The city itself is Aalto's largest built work. After retreating Nazi occupiers burned Rovaniemi to the ground in 1944, the government asked Aalto to design a new urban plan. His design is conceived to suggest a giant reindeer head (though it's impossible to understand from the ground) with major roads and public parks outlining "antlers" and the animal's elongated visage. (Reindeer far outnumber humans in Lapland.) An easier experience is a visit to the trio of public buildings that Aalto designed as a civic hub for the rebuilt city in the 1960s, a library and town hall in pristine condition, and a music hall that is currently closed for a major renovation. As is true of all the architect's designs, walking through these buildings, feeling Aalto's fluid interior spaces, touching his carefully detailed handrails and doorknobs, and sensing the Finnish respect for nature is to understand why he is one of the twentieth century's greatest designers.

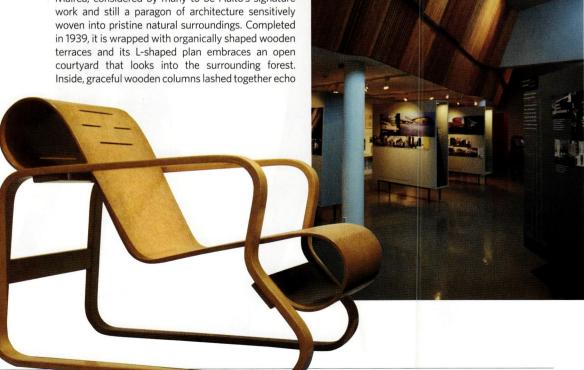
the Finnish word for frost for their color and icy finish) that graced many of his buildings. Inside there's a permanent exhibition of Aalto's architecture, as well as examples of his furniture, glassware, and other objects; one interior wall, clad in rippling wood, recalls Aalto's design for the 1939 New York World's Fair.

Noormarkku, some 140 miles away, is home to Villa Mairea, considered by many to be Aalto's signature

Top: The Town Hall Aalto created for Rovaniemi. Bottom right: The Alvar

Aalto Museum in Jväskylä features a permanent exhibition of his work.

Bottom left: The Paimio chair, 1931-1932, was designed to ease the breathing of tuberculosis sufferers at the Paimio Sanatorium, designed by Aalto and completed in 1933.





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An Affair of the Heart



Top to bottom: Jerome
Ackerman stands next to
Evelyn Ackerman
in the light-filled studio they
added to their Culver City,
California,
home in the 1960s.

The King panel, a rare experiment in stained glass of the early 1970s, reflects Evelyn's ability to use abstraction, tight composition, and a restricted color palette to create visual impact in a small piece. Collection of the artists.

Evelyn began designing mosaics in 1955 and executed the early ones, such as this Young Warrior wall panel, herself. Later the mosaics were executed for the Ackermans by a family of artisans in Mexico. Collection of the artists.

Vase with Female Figure of 1952 represents the couple's first artistic collaboration: Jerry threw the stoneware vessel and Evelyn executed the sgraffito decoration. Collection of the artists. LOS ANGELES-BASED CURATORS
AND CONSULTANTS JO LAURIA
AND DALE CAROLYN GLUCKMAN
REFLECT WITH JEROME AND EVELYN
ACKERMAN ON THEIR ENDURING
DESIGN COLLABORATION

AS CURATORIAL COLLEAGUES at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in the 1990s, Jo Lauria (in decorative arts) and Dale Carolyn Gluckman (in costumes and textiles) independently discovered and fell in love with the husband-and-wife designer-artist team of Evelyn and Jerome (Jerry) Ackerman and their work. Later Jo and Dale curated two retrospectives of the Ackermans' creations—Masters of Mid-Century California Modernism: Evelyn and Jerome Ackerman at the Mingei International Museum, San Diego (2009); and A Marriage of Craft and Design: The Work of Evelyn and Jerome Ackerman at the Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles (2011).

Jo Lauria: I was introduced to Jerry's talents through his studio pottery in the late 1990s when working on the exhibition *Color and Fire: Defining Moments in Studio Ceramics, 1950–2000,* but I soon realized Jerry was part of an accomplished and successful design team with Evelyn, his wife of over fifty years.

Dale Carolyn Gluckman: When my husband and I married, his mother gave us a small hooked rug with the initials "E.A." I had no idea who E.A. was. When I met Evelyn Ackerman many years later at LACMA, where she was a volunteer researcher on our eighteenth-century exhibition, the penny still didn't drop. We became fast friends, however, and eventually I met Jerry and learned of their design careers. Then I realized whose initials were on our rug: Evelyn Ackerman's.



After leaving LACMA to pursue their individual projects, Jo and Dale joined forces and their complementary specialist knowledge to organize a long overdue retrospective of the fifty-year design collaboration of the Ackermans.

Jo: We realized how under-recognized they were. We wanted to put them in the spotlight, make their work known to a wider population. The more we learned about their remarkable body of work, the more we realized how important they were to the development of California mid-century modernism.

The Ackermans played a central role in shaping a distinctive California decorative style—one characterized by the use of natural materials, textural contrasts, and saturated colors. Their attractive and well-made objects for the home reflected the principles of modern design as defined by the philosophy of the Bauhaus. They built on the Bauhaus belief that the "applied" and "fine" arts were equally important and vital. Over the course of their professional careers, they integrated their knowledge of fine art, craft, and folk art to create a body of work that has





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D_JACQUES MONORY (BORN IN 1934) Ring, silver and bullet Maeght ed. 1930. 1 500 / 2 000 €



Above left: Evelyn created the design and color palette for the California Poppies wall hanging and then sent a detailed drawing with color samples to artisans in Kashmir, India, who handstitched it, 1970. Later versions were hand-hooked in Japan.

Collection of the artists.

Above right: The Ackermans have lived with the Cats mosaic table in their home ever since Evelyn designed and produced it in 1955. Collection of the artists.

The Fantasy Landscape mosaic was built in sections in the Ackermans' studio and installed on the side of an apartment building on Kiowa Street in Los Angeles in 1956. It is registered with the Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles.

become a benchmark of the California mid-century aesthetic.

Jerry Ackerman: We believed in the Bauhaus philosophy of combining fine art, craft and industry to produce quality goods, striving to make things of which we could be proud. Utilizing our design and fine art backgrounds, our goal was to create affordable, commercially viable decorative accessories.

Evelyn Lipton (born in 1924) and Jerome Ackerman (born in 1920) lived six blocks apart in Detroit. They attended the same schools and both studied art, but they didn't know each other growing up. They met in 1948 and married the same year while continuing their studies at Wayne University (now Wayne State University) in Detroit. In 1949 the newlywed art students saw the exhibition For Modern Living—a survey of modern design organized by Alexander Girard—at the Detroit Institute of Arts. What they saw changed their lives.

Jerry: It opened our eyes to an exciting new way of thinking. There were examples of Eames furniture, V'soske carpets, Kurt Versen lighting. We walked through all that and just said, "Wow!" We thought if the Eameses could do it, so could we.

By 1952 Jerry and Evelyn had each earned MFA degrees—she in fine arts from Wayne and he in ceramics from Alfred University in upstate New York—and had settled in Los Angeles, where they opened their first studio, Jenev. They were drawn to the warm climate, dynamic art and design community, and the postwar economic and housing boom that created a demand for well-designed, handcrafted home accessories.



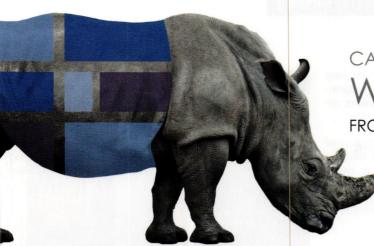


Jerry: Evelyn and I were both interested in experimenting with new materials and new ways of using materials. At that time in California there was a progressive attitude that encouraged experimentation, and we exploited this freedom in our design approach.

The Ackermans began to put into practice their idea that a pair of designer craftsmen could succeed through ingenuity, talent, and hard work. Throughout the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, the couple successfully sold to the contract furnishings and interior design markets while attracting critical notice in important museum shows, notably the famous California Design series at the Pasadena Art Museum. The Ackermans hold the distinction of being included in every California Design exhibition-with more than fifty works exhibited-underscoring the importance of their work. Their partnership was a harmonious blend of complementary talents and temperaments: Jerome was the "idea guy" and salesman, while Evelyn was happiest behind the scenes, designing in the studio. Their unique artistic collaboration permeated every aspect of design and production.

Evelyn Ackerman: How many couples can work together and last? Not many. If I couldn't do something, he did it. If he couldn't do it, I did. We just worked all the time; it's what we wanted to do

In 1956 Jenev became ERA Industries, and their line grew to include a wide variety of limited-production decorative accessories such as mosaic wall plaques and tables, woven and hooked tapestries and rugs, architectural elements that included carved wood panels, and hardware. Evelyn created designs in a wide range of styles, from geometric to biomorphic abstraction to whimsical stylization, and Jerry would find new or traditional raw materials, adapting industrial manufacturing techniques, or connecting with handcraft workshops around the



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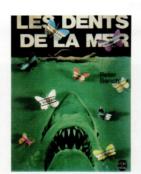
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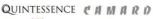




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Above right: The Ackermans' kitchen reflects their design aesthetic with a Saarineninspired table and chairs complemented by an arrangement of Jerry's recent hand-thrown stoneware vessels. Evelyn's carved wood Signs of the Zodiac panels of 1964 hang at the right with a 1947 painting by Jerry. Glimpsed through the doorway is the handwoven Cat and Bird tapestry of 1962.

Center left: A youthful Jerry and Evelyn at a potter's wheel in the Jenev Design Studio, which they set up in West Los Angeles in 1952.

Bottom left: Evelyn's Queen tapestry echoes the warm California colors of a room pictured on the cover of the April 12, 1964, issue of the Los Angeles Times Home magazine.

Bottom center: In 1953 and 1954 Jerry designed the models, molds, and glazes for these functional slip-cast earthenware vessels, which were produced in limited editions in the 1950s. Collection of the artists.

world to make them. Their imagery ranged from simple yet sophisticated abstract designs to charming stylized birds, monkeys, kings and queens, zodiac symbols, and figures derived from folklore.

Jerry: We utilized skilled craftsmen and industrial methods wherever feasible all over the world to execute our designs. This enabled us to create limited production runs in small artisan workshops. As time passed, our business grew and Evelyn continued to amaze me with her creative talent in so many directions.

Dale: The key to their success, in addition to very hard work and enormous talent, was threefold: Evelyn's ability to interpret a design across mediums (the same imagery in mosaic, tapestry, and etched metal, for example); to produce in warm and cool color schemes; and to scale pieces to modest homes (and sometimes not so modest ones). These last two made ERA products appeal to the broadest possible clientele and meant that Ackerman furnishings lent warmth, texture, and a very California palette of high-key colors to interior spaces.

Jo: Ackerman pieces have a timeless appeal for people who want to live with beautiful, well-made decorative objects and textiles. Today, their classic mid-century work is being rediscovered by a new generation of collectors and design enthusiasts.

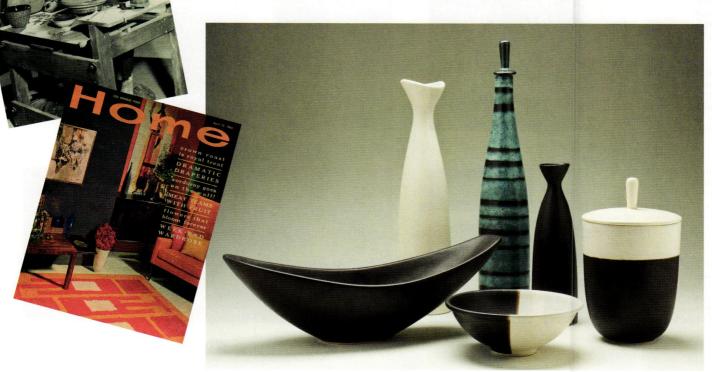
Perhaps their daughter Laura Ackerman Shaw sums it up best:

Laura Ackerman Shaw: My parents pursued their pas-



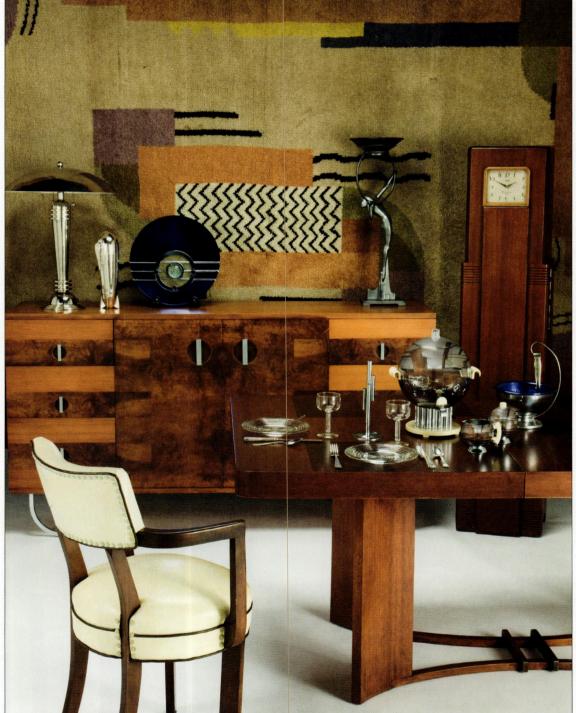
sion with a shared bond of love and mutual respect. They brought together their creativity, optimism, versatility, and hard work in a joint life and career that spanned six decades—truly a love story of longevity and success.

The authors wish to thank Laura Ackerman-Shaw for her invaluable assistance with providing photographs and captions.



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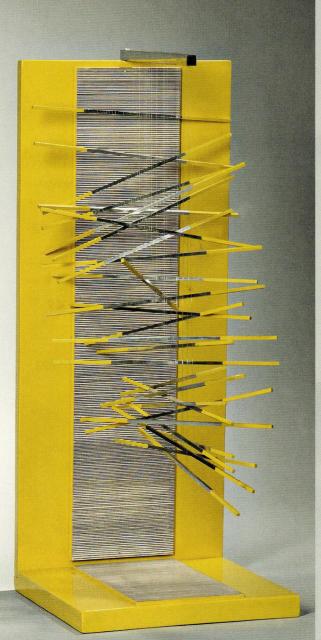
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Moss 2.0

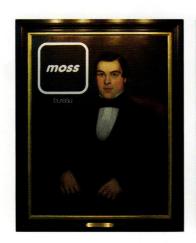
RENOWNED DESIGN RETAIL
PIONEER MURRAY MOSS LOOKS
BACK ON HIS CAREER AS HE
EMBARKS ON A NEW PATH

By Arlene Hirst

"I DECIDED TO KILL RETAIL AS WE KNOW IT," Murray Moss says, explaining why he closed his globally renowned Soho store Moss in February. The news sent shock waves throughout the industry and upset design lovers everywhere. Moss himself has been dubbed "the high priest of modernist retailing" and a "design deity" by the *New York Times*. His shop was called "the best design store in the world" by the *International Herald Tribune*. No less a legendary figure than Dieter Rams, the famed German designer, has been quoted as saying it radiated "quality. It's perfect."

for the sixty-three-year-old retailer. His second act is already in process. He has moved the company, including all of his employees, to a loft-like space he has named the Moss Bureau in Manhattan's gritty Garment District. Here, he will offer an advisory service to manufacturers and designers, provide curatorial and interior design services, stage small exhibitions of "important contemporary studio work"—and continue to sell a limited range of manufactured products. The Bureau is open to the public.

When Moss first set up shop in New York's





More than just a shop, the space became a gallery in the late 1990s for the blossoming design art movement. Moss blazed a trail for the entire field, introducing audiences to the work of the Campana brothers, Tord Boontje, Hella Jongerius, and Claudy Jongstra to name drop just a few. In the process, he launched several careers. Almost all of his artists have gone on to become stars in the design art marketplace and many have scored lucrative commissions from design-savvy manufacturers (Vitra for Jongerius; Moroso for Boontje). "Moss was wonderful," says David Revere

McFadden, chief curator of the Museum of
Art and Design in Manhattan. "He exhibited people who may have not been
on the hit list, but they became so after
showing there."

But the performance isn't over

trendy Soho district in 1994, American appreciation, or even awareness, of modern design was at its lowest ebb. Almost single-handedly he turned an indifferent public into design aficionados. The shop—a pristine white box he had repainted every week—looked and felt like a museum, with everything locked behind glass or raised on a platform and accompanied by a white card stating the item's provenance, designer, manufacturer, materials, and manufacturing process. In fact, it offered more information than many museums.

From the very beginning, crowds thronged to view the latest displays, brilliantly conceived and designed by this masterful retailer and showman, and they eagerly snapped up products from such firms as Alessi, Kartell, Flos, and Luceplan. (At the time people could have found wares from



these companies elsewhere if they looked hard enough—and knew what they were looking for but not in one place and never clearly identified.) Moss even managed to elevate Tupperware to the heights of design nirvana, staging a show that attracted Manhattan's black-clad upper crust. The average Tupperware sale came to two thousand dollars. Moss was so successful in introducing Americans to certain Italian brands that today all the companies mentioned above have shops of their own on Greene Street, the very same Soho thoroughfare as his. Flos, in fact, moved in next door, inhabiting a space that Moss once used as a gallery; the opening that connected the two spaces was maintained, so you could easily move from one to the other.

"None of us would be here if it hadn't been for Murray," says Piero Gandini, CEO of Flos and one of Moss's staunchest admirers. And that success became the problem: there was much less reason to shop at Moss anymore. That, along with the crippling recession of 2008 and its lingering effects, saw business virtually disappear. "Moss lost its foundation pieces," says Michael Maharam of the eponymously named textile company, who had exhibited at Moss for five years. "He was left with a museum, and man doesn't live by a museum alone."

Then there was the rent. In 1994 the space cost Moss about seventy thousand dollars a year. By 2012 that figure had risen almost tenfold to over six hundred thousand dollars. Keeping the store open no longer made economic sense. "Retail doesn't work anymore," Moss says. "Pretending it does is a disservice to the industry."

Yet a scant two weeks after he closed up shop, the cherub-faced entrepreneur opened his new venture, a place he describes as a "think tank for design." The Bureau will continue to repre-

sent and show work from the likes of Studio Job, Maarten Baas, Hella Jongerius, Kiki van Eijk, and Joost van Bleiswijk-designer/artists whose careers Moss pioneered and in whose future he passionately believes-and he'll also continue to seek out rising new talents. This fall he will curate an exhibition for London's Stephen Friedman Gallery that will contrast fine versus applied arts, and will be followed by an auction. Moss will also continue teaching and lecturing. He's hoping to give monthly seminars at design schools such as Harvard and Yale, where he will offer what he's calling intense student critiques-fifteen minutes for \$250. "In fifteen minutes I can save someone a year, showing them how to put their own show on the road," he says.

Mossonline.com, the company's website, is alive and well and now the best place to see what Murray has for sale. The Bureau is still a gallery; just a vastly different kind of one. Moss wanted the new space to be "non-theatrical." The retail store was a stage set, he says. Here, he wants people to feel that they're backstage. At first glance, part of the space appears extremely businesslike. Two walls are lined with desks fitted with Apple computers, with a series of low filing cabinets down the middle. But, in a typical Moss-tongue-in-cheek twist, these classic workplace units are topped with placemats by Luisa Cevese, plates by Jongerius, and figurines from Nymphenburg. The vintage office chairs-one is from 1902-provide another visual jolt in the modern surroundings. In a far corner, a nineteendollar folding chair stands in front of Jean Nouvel's iconic Less table. The stark contrast of pedestrian and sublime provides the new leitmotif.

Murray Moss has always defined the cutting edge, dictating trends to scores of likeminded retailers and dealers. His influence











Facing page: "Merton Lyman Moss"; interior of Moss Bureau, 256 West 36th Street, 10th Floor, NY, NY; Bolle bottles by Tapio Wirkkala, 1968, for Venini. This page, from top: Teddy Bears banquette chair by Fernando and Humberto Campana, 2004, for Estudio Campana, Brazil; Panton chair by Verner Panton, 1960, for Vitra; Favela chair by Fernando and Humberto Campana, 2003, for Edra, Italy; Clay Furniture stool by Maarten Baas, 2008; and Fractal table.MGX by Matthias Bär, Gernot Oberfell, and Jan Wertell for .MGX by Materialise, Belgium.

UP CLOSE

has always been far-reaching. Is his Bureau the future? He has said that he's not creating a template for all to follow, but a new blueprint is definitely in evidence. High mixes with low, humor is leavened with drama, and industrial production plays against uniqueness. These kinds of contradictions have always been part of his philosophy, but here, unlike at the store, the contrasts are no longer subtle.

Moss, who says his design was inspired by old pictures of the Bauhaus, is still a master of stagecraft. A portrait of the Bureau's "founder," taken from a painting Moss purchased from the antiques dealer Israel Sack years ago, is prominently displayed, complete with its

ersatz nameplate identifying "Merton Lyman Moss" — and a bizarrely detailed life story, which says that Merton was an 1865 Yale graduate who went on to found a retail business empire in the pre-Robber Baron era. In another coup de théâtre Moss's business and life partner, Franklin Getchell, a former top-level television executive and an often unherald-

ed but critical

presence, is installed in a corner of the space behind a single multi-chromatic door by Richard Woods. "It means," says Moss, "that there's no privacy you need to invade."

And Moss is still very much the champion of up-and-coming talent. The Bureau is currently displaying the work of Cathy A. McClure, a Seattle-based artist who eviscerates stuffed mechanical toys and then coats the carcasses in bronze. Moss Bureau staged its first show to coincide with the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in May, when satellite events always spring up around the city.

For the exhibition, he installed

a gaudy carousel, eight feet in diameter, bedecked with a bevy of McClure's creatures. He also presented Brooklynbased artist Julia Kunen's miniature, otherworldly ceramic landscapes, German ceramist Johannes Nagel's distorted abstract vessels, and Londonbased Kelly McCallum's conceptual taxidermy. The roster, filled with new names, serves as proof positive that Moss is forging ahead.

The move has clearly energized him. "Our industry has shrunk, not grown. We haven't banded together and we need to organize. And I want to be the referee. Our goal is to influence industry and get everyone on board so that we can all survive."

Here's hoping he's successful, for what would the design world be like without Murray Moss? He has had more influence than any museum curator or dealer on the way people view design, educating and informing an entire generation. He has made design "cool," turning lots of young hipsters into knowing connoisseurs. He has launched important careers and supported struggling small companies. Designers and manufacturers have constantly turned to him for advice and counsel. He has won countless awards and honors. And, if the past is any predictor of the future, there will be much more to come.

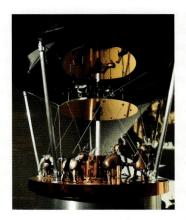
Top, clockwise: Front and back of Coded Message plate from the Biscuit collection by Studio Job (Job Smeets and Nynke Tynagel), 2006, for Koninklijke Tichelaar Makkum, Netherlands. Carlos Slim platter from the MexICON series by Tony Moxham and

Mauricio Paniagua, 2010, for DFC.

Center: Carousel with bronzed mechanical toys by Cathy A. McClure.

Bottom: Richard Woods's door to Franklin Getchell's "office" at Moss Bureau.









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Fairs, Exhibitions & Events

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DECORATION & DESIGN BUILDING New York, NY History of the Interior Series Through June 2012 ddbuilding.com Five week program in partnership with NYSID.

CARRÉ RIVE GAUCHE Paris, France Wild Thing June 1 to June 3 carrerivegauche.com

MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN New York, NY Space-Light-Structure: The Jewelry of Margaret de Patta June 5 to September 23 madmuseum.org

WRIGHT AUCTION Chicago, IL Important Design Auction June 7 wright20.com

CHRISTIE'S New York, NY Important 20th Century Decorative Art & Design Auction June 14 christies.com RAGO ARTS AND AUCTION CENTER New Jersey Modern Design Auction June 17 ragoarts.com

LAFON-VOSSELER
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Paris, France
Gio Ponti/ Retrospective
1930-1970
June 1 to July 21
galeriejacqueslafon.com

BONHAMS
New York, NY
20th Century
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Preview June 9 to 11
Auction June 12
bonhams.com/20thC
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postwar, and works by
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DESIGN MIAMI/BASEL Basel, Switzerland Preview June 11 June 12 to 17 designmiami.com Dealers, collectors, designers, curators, and critics from around the world in celebration of design culture, and



HERITAGE AUCTIONS
Dallas, TX
20th Century Design
Auction June 13
ha.com
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and Modernist Design.

PHILLIPS DE PURY New York, NY Design Auction June 15 phillipsdpury.com

JULY

ART HAMPTONS Bridgehampton, NY Opening Preview July 12 July 13 to 15 arthamptons.com

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART New York, NY Century of the Child: Growing by Design, 1900-2000 July 29 to November 5 moma.org MoMA's survey of 20th century design for children.

AUGUST

BARBICAN MUSEUM London, England Bauhaus-Art as Life on view through August 12 barbican.org.uk

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM London, England British Design: 1948-2012 Innovation in the Modern Age on view through August 12 vam.ac.uk Over 300 British design objects.

NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM Kansa City, MO Inventing the Modern World: Decorative Arts at the World's Fairs, 1851-1939 on view through August 19, 2012 nelson-atkins.org

COLUMBIA MUSEUM OF ART Columbia, SC The Art of Seating: 200 Years of American Design on view through August 26 columbiamuseum.org

SEPTEMBER

FRIEDMAN BENDA New York, NY Andrea Branzi September 11 to October 13 friedmanbenda.com

SAN FRANCISCO 20TH CENTURY ART AND DESIGN FAIR San Francisco, CA Preview gala, September 13 September 14 to 16 sf20.net

PIERRE BERGÉ & ASSOCIÉS Paris, France Artists Jewels Auction September 20 pba-auctions.com

EXPOSITION CHICAGO Chicago, IL September 20 to 23 expositionchicago.com The inaugural international exposition of contemporary and modern art and design.

COLLECTING DESIGN at New York School of Interior Design New York, NY Morning course: September 25 to December 11 Evening course: September 24 to December 10 nysid.edu/collectingdesign Fall program with optional CEU certificate in partnership with NYSID. Sponsored by Phillips de Pury and Jumeirah Group.

OCTOBER

DESIGN ÉLYSÉES Paris, France October 18 to 22 designelysees.fr

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R 20th Century, New York/ Salon 94, New York/

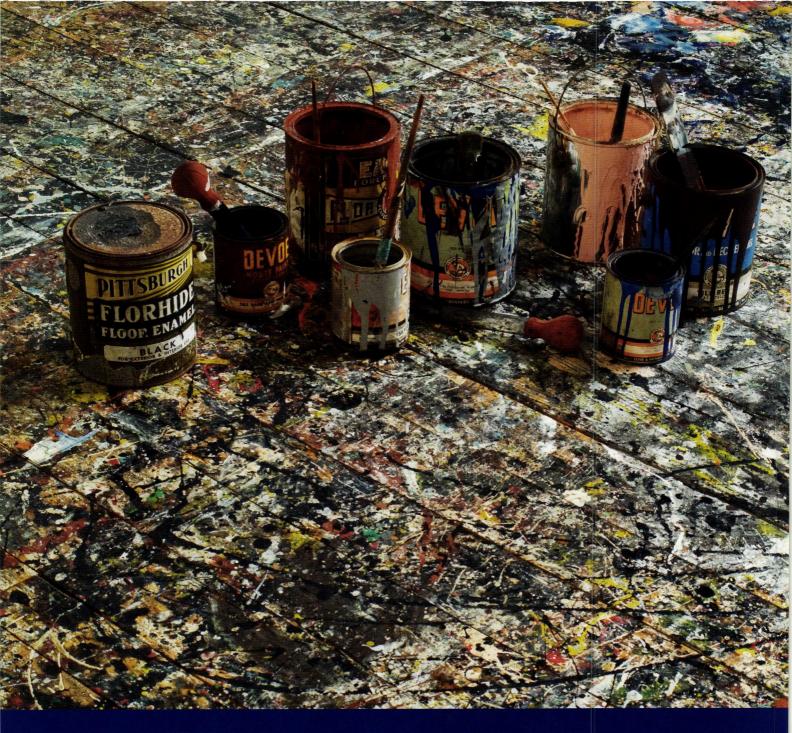
Pierre Marie Giraud, Brussels/

Antonella Villanova, Florence/ presenting Manfred Bischoff Armel Soyer, Paris/ presenting Pierre Gonalons Erastudio Apartment-Gallery, Milan/ presenting Vincenzo De Cotiis Granville Gallery, Paris/ presenting Matali Crasset Victor Hunt Designart Dealer, Brussels/ presenting Humans Since 1982

Maria Pergay, Ring Chair, 1968/ Image courtesy of Demisch Danant







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MODERN

NOTABLE BOOKS ON ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN, AND PHOTOGRAPHY WITH A MODERNIST EDGE

By MICHAEL J. LASSELL





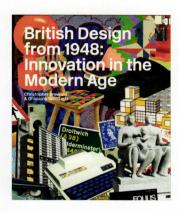
Descended from a Santa Barbara land-grant family, Gesner is a veteran of D-Day and a former archaeologist who taught himself architecture while working as a builder. Houses of the Sundown Sea, a look at some fifteen of his hundred-plus buildings from the 1950s to the 1970s, is the first protracted take on his idiosyncratic work.

Perhaps Gesner's best-known building is the Wave House in Malibu, which he partially sketched on his surfboard with a grease pencil while sitting in the Pacific. This multipartite house, which looks more like Saarinen's TWA Terminal than any Bauhaus or Prairie-style precedent, helped inspire Jørn Utzon's Sydney Opera House.

Gesner has dedicated his work to nature, to natural materials and to the natural assets of his sites. He glories in views of the ocean in particular. His intent is to make a house as close to nature as possible, whether hanging off a canyon wall on stilts or cantilevered over the ocean. Well worth knowing for his aesthetics alone, he's equally noteworthy for the green building techniques to which he is particularly committed.

Houses of the Sundown Sea: The Architectural Vision of Harry Gesner

By Lisa Germany Photography by Juergen Nogai Abrams, 240 pages, \$75



TO CELEBRATE THE 2012 OLYMPICS, London's venerable Victoria and Albert Museum has mounted a major show called British Design from 1948, which happens to be the year London last staged the Olympic Games. Curators Christopher Breward and Ghislaine Wood have assembled a meandering exhibition that celebrates all things British in the realm of design, from cars and cameras, to mod togs from the 1960s, buildings named after pickles, art by Hockney and Henry Moore, housing schemes, and punk rock album covers, all of it produced by one of the most tradition-bound societies on earth in the sixty-four years between London Olympics.

Books about design shows differ in obvious ways from the shows themselves, just as films made from novels differ from their sources. They are correlative, not identical. In this case, both show and book seem to share a scrapbooking approach to the available material rather than a theoretical or chronological one, which makes this a book to dip into over time. Articles come from the curators, experts, and some of the U.K.'s prime movers, including Paul Smith, Sir Terence Conran, and Tom Dixon. Speaking volumes is the book's last image, Zaha Hadid's London Aquatics Centre of 2011, built for this year's Olympics. Design in Britain has come a long way since the "austerity" games of 1948.

British Design from 1948: Innovation In the Modern Age

Edited by Christopher Breward and Ghislaine Wood V&A Publishing, 400 pages, \$75



PHAIDON

MINIMALIST ARCHITECT JOHN PAWSON'S A Visual Inventory couldn't be a simpler book (on first glance): It's a selection of 272 digital photographs from the cache of 230,000 images he has taken on his extensive travels. They are paired on the page with short captions that address the nature of their inspiration vis-à-vis the art of building.

Most of the pairings involve something natural and something manmade, sometimes a famous or iconic vernacular building. A computer circuit board sits across the page from the terra-cotta floor tiles of a twelfth-century abbey in Provence; a convoy of interlocking caterpillars on the ground in Spain mirrors an impossibly elaborate Gothic revival staircase by George Gilbert Scott.

But the real pith of the book is in the brief captions. Of a photo of five nuns in white habits kneeling in front of a dark, deeply carved baroque choir screen, Pawson writes, "Each hooded, white-robed figure reads as an absence rather than a presence." This is a cogent clue to the methodology of minimalism and its ability to manipulate positive and negative space, to create deeply satisfying rooms from "nothing" except proportion, materials, and illumination. On closer examination, this is a rich book from a transforming mind and would make an excellent addition to the syllabus of any architecture course in the nation—or even a daily mediation guide for anyone in the profession.

A Visual Inventory

By John Pawson Phaidon, 320 pages, \$49.95



FRENCH INDUSTRIAL
DESIGNER Matali Crasset has
created everything from hotels
to housewares, collecting a
great deal of acclaim along
the way. She specializes in
multipurpose, metamorphic
furniture, lamps, housewares,
and complete environments, all
of them immediately identifiable
as her work.

This vibrant monograph is arranged in reverse chronological chapters, which means the higher profile, more mature projects start the book (good strategy). Crasset, who resembles Joan of Arc in designer glasses, trained in Milan and in Paris, where she worked with Philippe Starck for five years. She has managed to develop a visual vocabulary that is at once innocent and sophisticated, highly colorful, modern, natural, and human-centered, which is no small feat.

One of her wittiest pieces is one of the oldest, a plain-Jane dining chair that becomes an overblown armchair thanks to a built-in inflatable "slipcover." Her architectural and interior projects are probably the most impressive, from a hotel in Tunisia to a private home in France where the kitchen comes equipped with three ceiling-high stainless-steelfronted storage cabinets that spell the word E-A-T. The book itself is innovatively devised by Florian Lambl, a reminder of how nice it is when a design book takes on the act of design as well as its documentation.

Matali Crasset: Works

By Matali Crasset, Alexandra Midal, Zoe Ryan Rizzoli, 320 pages, \$75

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America A MIAMI PHOTOGRAPHER IS SEDUCED BY THE RUGGED the Brutal POWER OF AMERICA'S BRUTALIST BUILDINGS

Text and photos by Robin Hill

BRUTALISM IS WELL-NAMED, a provocative architectural style that the words sculptural and threatening, honest and overbearing, monumental and claustrophobic all battle to describe. The architect Paul Rudolph may have brought the style to America a half-century ago with his lovedhated-loved-hated Art and Architecture Building for the Yale School of Architecture, where he was dean, but in his wake, every major metropolis and many small to medium-sized towns across the United States came to feature raw concrete monoliths shaped into city halls, parking garages, federal courthouses, and public housing projects, many designed by lesser architects than Rudolph and certainly lesser architects than Rudolph's inspiration, Le Corbusier.

find myself in what the venerable Ada Louise Huxtable once called "the architectural abyss." That chasm finds its widest berth in brutal-

ism. I started my architecshooting vernacular mid-Glass House and the cam-Frank Lloyd Wright buildings. But not-always-easy

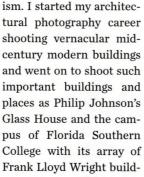
brutalist buildings continued to intrigue me. A few years ago, I decided to start photographing these behemoths.

A good starting point was New Haven and the Yale Art and Architecture Building, finished in 1963. At the time its structural monumentality, complex interior layout (there are thirty levels on seven stories), and rugged honesty came together to win hyperbolic praise spearheaded by none other than Huxtable, who proclaimed the building a "spectacular tour de force."

From the start there were serious criticisms of it as well, both in terms of its function and its form. The epic photographs of Ezra Stoller documented its raw sculptural power, made all the more heroic through his gorgeous high contrast black-and-white prints, which gave the building an aura of invincibility and strength. But they did not

document the human response to the building: students often found themselves lost in the labyrinthine maze of concrete corridors and differing levels of a building frigid in winter and sweltering in summer. And alas, the invincibility that Stoller's images portray was once and for all seriously brought into question by a suspicious fire in 1969. Yet at the time, the combination of Rudolph's architecture and Stoller's photography gave great momentum to brutalism.

As an architectural photographer, I often



Above: When photographing Paul Rudolph's Art and Architecture building of 1963 for the Yale School of Architecture in New Haven, I was happy to find two students walking by, providing a sense of human scale.

Below: Up on the roof of the building I found exposed concrete and stark staircases defining the space.



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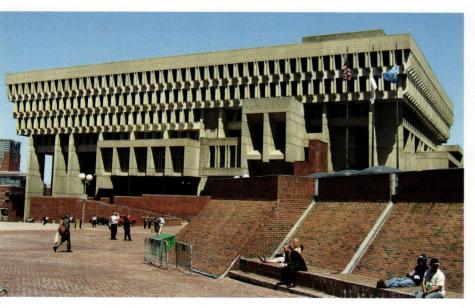
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www.designelysees.fr

In New Haven I ventured down a side street to find two students strolling past the concrete, allowing my image to show both the size and scale of the building and offer a differing view from Stoller's classic full-frontal images.

A lone cyclist careering down Northeast Second Avenue past the Miami Dade County School Board building designed by T. Trip Russell and Associates, gave some dimension to the muscular proportions of this ominous looking structure, with its jagged teeth descending from the roofline and its massive square arch protruding over an open plaza.

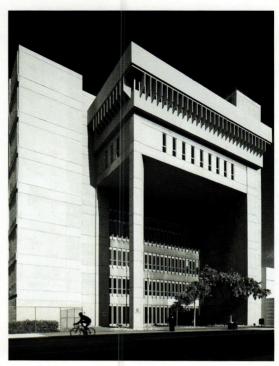
Perhaps the most revered and reviled bru-



Above: Though this is not my photograph, the 1969 City Hall in Boston designed by Kallmann McKinnell and Knowles, is a lightning rod for Bostonians, who either love or hate its brutal and imposing presence in the heart of the city.

Above right: T. Trip Russell and Associates' Miami-Dade County School Board building dwarfs the lone cyclist I photographed riding by it. Its cavernous front plaza looms over Northeast Second Avenue, adding a sense of drama to the streetscape.

Bottom: The former City Hall of West Palm Beach reminds me of an inverted ziggurat, a geometry it shares with the City Hall in Boston talist building in America is Boston City Hall, which has managed to generate controversy since its completion in 1969. Designed by Kallmann McKinnell and Knowles, it is either (as it was hailed at the beginning) a bold testimony to monumental governmental architecture or a badly aging, malfunctioning eyesore, as its critics would say. Nonetheless, it generated its own offspring, including the former City Hall in West Palm Beach. Set on its own plaza, this T-shaped building projects its upper stories over the lower portion in an inverted ziggurat. Further north in Orlando I found the public library designed in 1966 by John M. Johansen. Now occupying an entire city block, the structure offers the very



definition of architectural chutzpah, yet it's also a bold statement of social purpose and government largesse, and its rigorous geometry was a delight to photograph.

Two other brutalist structures in New Haven stand adjacent to one another—the Temple Street Parking Garage by Rudolph and the twenty-three-story Knights of Columbus Headquarters designed by Kevin Roche and John Dinkeloo in 1970. Rudolph's Temple Street Garage rips through the heart of downtown New Haven, yet its gently undulating forms are delicate and eloquent. When I looked through my viewfinder, Rudolph's exquisite knowledge of geometric form came squarely into view, providing a surprisingly



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NEW YORK quiet composition, quite at odds with the muscularity of the construction. It is this type of contradiction that I find so compelling about brutalism: brutal and defiant on one hand and distinctive and sculptural on the other.

Roche Dinkeloo's Knights of Columbus tower rises with imposing authority over downtown New Haven, the cylindrical corners lending the building a simple but dramatic geometric form. The design is fortress-like, with the cylindrical forms covered in burned brick—quite unusual for a brutalist building, which usually feature reinforced concrete.

Many of these buildings have not fared well, particularly in the Northeast, where the climate plays havoc with the raw concrete, creating dark stains and maintenance headaches. Another famous Rudolph building, the Orange County Government Center in Goshen, New York, is now under threat of demolition but is also the subject of a preservation effort led by the World Monuments Fund. The building is a lightning rod for those who vehemently hate it and a powerful symbol to those who recognize it as the work of a master architect, providing us with another seemingly unbridgeable example of the architectural abyss.

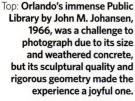
As an architectural photographer seeking out strong interplays of light and shadow I find these

DOS:

buildings to be honest beasts, full of dark courage and awesome force. I am inspired by the immensity of the architecture, lured in by the pure sculptural force of the geometry, and haunted by the lingering memory of Stoller's photographs. Yet at the same time, the immensity of the buildings conflicts with my innate love of the human scale. I want my photographs to express that dichotomy.

Standing outside the Miami-Dade County School Board building, which critics have lauded as a "monumental presence," I asked a passerby: "Excuse me sir, I'm writing an article about the building behind you, could you please let me know what you think of it?" His reply: "Go directly to jail, do not pass go, do not collect \$200!"

To preserve or not to preserve is the question on many people's lips when it comes to considering brutalism, but with the passage of time we may well come to realize that these difficult buildings are worth the effort to preserve as a key part of our cultural history. To the passerby in Miami who retorted that these buildings should be sent "directly to jail," I would suggest that perhaps they should be offered a get out of jail free card!



Bottom: Photographing Rudolph's Temple Street Parking Garage and Roche Dinkeloo's striking Knights of Columbus Headquarters in New Haven provided me with an intriguing juxtaposition of differing geometries, one filling the horizontal plane, the other piercing the vertical.





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Lucio Fontana, Concetto spaziale (Space concept). Oil on canvas, 55 \times 46 cm (detail). Estimate: CHF 400'000 / 600'000 resp. USD 430'000 / 650'000.

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Floor lamps by Jean Royère

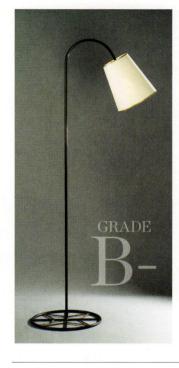
ALINE CHASTEL, THE DIRECTOR OF THE GALLERY CHASTEL-MARÉCHAL IN PARIS, WHICH SPECIALIZES IN MID-CENTURY FRENCH DECORATIVE ARTS, ASSESSES THE MASTER'S DESIGNS

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FRENCH DECORATORS of the twentieth century, Jean Royère was born in Paris into a bourgeois family in 1902. He gave up a career in the family import-export business to become a decorator. From 1931 to 1933 he trained in a furniture factory in Faubourg Saint-Antoine in Paris where he learned every aspect of the business, from the day-to-day technical and administrative tasks to the fabrication of furniture. In 1931 he obtained his first private commissions, and by 1933 he was hired to furnish a brasserie, Le Carlton, on the Champs-Elysées, an effort that garnered much praise from the press and launched his career.

Royère was in many ways a unique talent, an autodidact for whom creative freedom was not bridled by a formal academic education. From 1934 to 1939 he participated in many major French expositions and was offered numerous private commissions. Always attentive to his clients' orders, Rovère would compose interiors where humor, poetry, and color prevailed. He employed different decorative motifs such as dots, circles, curvilinear lines, crosses, chevrons, and crosshatching, and used them on all his pieces. By the end of the 1930s Royère had created a unique decorative repertoire. A polyglot with an excellent command of English, he liked to travel and opened numerous offices in the Middle East and in South America between 1946 and 1957. His success was international. He retired in 1972 and died in Pennsylvania on May 14, 1981.

Throughout his career, Royère relied on a number of artisans to fabricate his designs. For this reason, certain technical details have varying, detectable differences in execution.

Today his work enjoys a flood of interest from the art market. My choice of six floor lamps is representative of his creations. And although his lamps were manufactured in a number of different colors, the ideal is to have the original.



Royère kept this particular standing lamp until nearly the end of his life. An iron stem rises gracefully from a base whose openwork star-shaped motif is derived from the baskets of ski poles of the period, thus the name. Though simple, the lamp displays the playful creativity of a man with an unlimited sense of imagination.

Rovère sold the lamp at the

auction of his personal collec-

tion on June 19, 1980, less than

a year before his death, and at

the time the price was far low-

Ski floor lamp, circa 1942

er than its current value. Original black and gold lacquered iron, height 61 inches

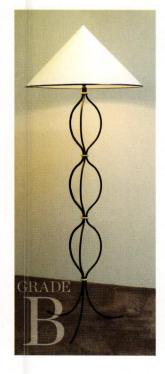
Price: \$50.000-\$60.000

Anneaux floor lamp, circa 1939

This lamp, the feet of which are three curved iron stems, is topped by an elegant shade resembling a Chinese hat. Royère used the sculptural body of the lamp as a motif for the feet of some of his consoles, for end tables, and for ceiling fixtures. Typically, he would appropriate a form, making it his own by reshaping it to create a sense of movement. When displayed in the De l'idée à la Forme exhibition, organized by the association Porza and held at the Musée Galliera in Paris in 1939, the lamp was shown next to Royère's Éléphanteau chair. This modestly sized lamp is rare to the market; this particular example shows the effects of wear and tear.

Black and white lacquered iron, height 61 inches

Price: \$60,000-\$70,000





Mille Pattes floor lamp, circa 1951 The Milles Pattes floor lamp was a very successful model. These lamps always constructed with iron stems, most often round, though extremely rare examples are square. The stems are generally made of solid iron with the electrical cord running through the middle of the body; occasionally, however, one of the stems is hollowed to enclose the cord. The model was produced in different colors, including dark and light green, black, and navy blue. The strength of the design comes from the powerfully rhythmic juxtaposition of repetitive and curvilinear lines, forming a lamp that is at once architectural and sculptural and yet completely transparent.

Black and white lacquered wrought iron, height 67 3% inches Price: \$80,000-\$100,000

Antibes floor lamp, circa 1937

This gilt-iron lamp is of a rare elegance, with a striking contrast between the graceful base and the voluminous grouping of shades at the top. The base is composed of three perfectly proportioned curving legs, while the arms are rectilinear and spread out in a star shape. The model was first shown at the Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne in Paris in 1937, Equilibrium, elegance, and contrast are words that can be used to describe this light of classical character. It can be found in different colors.

Original gilt-iron patina, height 69 inches

Price: \$120,000-\$140,000



Champignons floor lamp, circa 1939

The Champignons lamp is a good illustration of Royère's desire to use modern materials for purely decorative means. Created in 1939, it uses metal tubing for the base and stems and perforated sheet metal for the shades. Rovère's love for color shows up here in the deep red lacquered metal. He had already presented a luminous suspension lamp of double cased cylindrical metal sparsely perforated with two rows of dots at the 1937 Exposition International des Arts et Techniques in Paris and he had used perforated sheet metal for the furnishing of Henri Lazard's dining room in 1938, where both the table and console have lacquered cone-shaped feet made entirely of perforated blue metal. Like a number of young designers of this time, Royère was concerned with democratizing "beauty" and with developing a mass-produced line of furniture. On occasion, he used paper

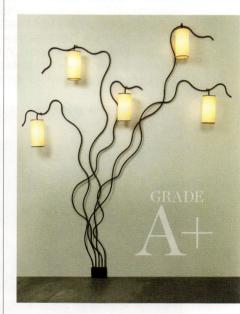
for the perforated shades, but it's important to note that in those cases, the price is far lower than the estimate below.

Lacquered metal foot and stems and perforated sheet metal shades, height 63 3/4 inches

Price: \$180,000-\$200,000



Liane floor lamp, circa 1955 Royère's inspiration for the Liane came from a trip he took to northern Europe in 1943, when he recorded with humor and precision the interior decorations he saw in the different capitals he visited. At "le Svensk Team" in Stockholm, he wrote, "I saw rooms where vines went multiple times across the walls zigzagging around paintings and mirrors." One of his first sketches for the Liane wall light is from 1952, a project for the renovation of a windmill on the outskirts of Paris. The earliest known realization of the design was made



for the Hôtel Capitole in Beirut in 1953. Royère, as was his habit, did not stop there, and went on to create a pair of three branched sconces, a chandelier, and this floor lamp, which was shown at the Société des Artistes Décorateurs Sa-Ion in Paris in 1959. The beauty of this lamp resides in the lightness of its curvilinear lines and its overall harmonious arrangement.

Black patinated iron, height 90 1/2 inches

Price: \$350,000-\$450,000



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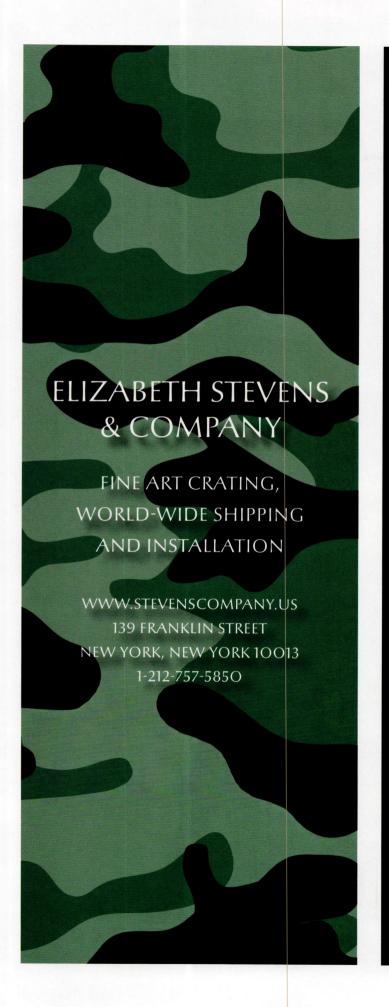












SPACE-LIGHT-STRUCTURE: THE JEWELRY OF MARGARET DE PATTA

JUNE 5 TO SEPTEMBER 23, 2012



Light-Space - Structure. The Jewelity of Margaret De Potta is co-organized by the Museum of Arts and Design, New York and the Oakland Museum of California. The exhibition is made possible by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Margaret De Patta. Pin. 1960-1964, Sterling silver, beach stones, pebbles. Gift of Eugene Bietawski, The Margaret De Patta Bequest, through the American Craft Council, 1977. Photo: John Bigelow Taylor.



museum of arts and design

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WE ASKED CUSTODIANS OF LEADING TWENTIETH-CENTURY AND CONTEMPORARY DESIGN COLLECTIONS TO DISCUSS ONE OBJECT THAT THEY FEEL IS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY, HERE IS A GALLERY OF THEIR CHOICES.

"Gentille meticulously applied minute fragments of eggshell to a wooden base. Set against black pigment, the ephemeral shell materializes as a precious craquelure."

Thomas Gentille's ability to show the expressive potential of nontraditional materials has made him a key figure in contemporary jewelry. His 1987 armlet Britannia, completed while the artist prepared for a show at London's Victoria and Albert Museum, is a marriage of robust form and refined surface. Using sharpened bamboo sticks, Gentille meticulously applied minute fragments of eggshell to a wooden base. Set against black pigment, the ephemeral shell materializes as a precious craquelure. Although the use of eggshell to pattern surfaces is not without precedent—it appears in traditional Japanese lacquer work and art deco revivals of the technique by Jean Dunand and others— Gentille developed his process without reference to historical forerunners. Instead, beginning in the 1970s, he experimented for years to create a lacquer-free process.

Britannia is currently on view in the MFA's recently opened Daphne and Peter Farago Gallery for contemporary decorative arts, as part of the inaugural installation, *Crafting Contemporary: Selections from the Daphne Farago Collection*, running until April 2013.

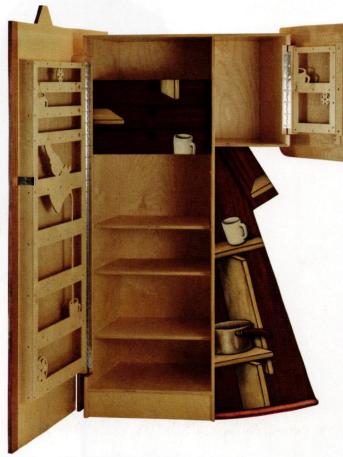




"His Magritte-like surrealistic blending of everyday objects, images from American cinema, and references to Japanese art are well seasoned with an ironic sense of American humor."

JOHN CEDERQUIST

BLUTO'S DINER Mixed woods, epoxy resin, aniline dye, and lithography ink 2005



This large-scale cabinet by the California artist John Cederquist is from a series created during the first decade of this century based on the shapes of historic Japanese kosode. However, via trompe l'oeil imagery, Cederquist creates a kimono unlike any you may have seen. Inspired by sources as varied as Japanese woodblock prints and American animated films, he depicts noodles levitating out of a pot while a cartoon figure from *Popeye* pours coffee in a disorderly restaurant kitchen. Plates and cutlery threaten to careen off shelves that tip, suggesting a realistic fold in the fabric. Cederquist, one of the most talented members of his generation of studio furniture makers, is known for his ability to create exceptionally vivid pictorial representations in his inlaid and stained-wood furniture. His Magritte-like surrealistic blending of everyday objects, images from American cinema, and references to Japanese art are well seasoned with an ironic sense of American humor. This new acquisition has just debuted at RAM alongside one of the artist's chairs from the same decade.

BRUCE W. PEPICH

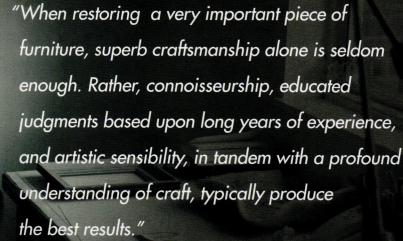
Executive Director and Curator of Collections Racine Art Museum, Racine, Wisconsin "In the 1950s, when most fashion designers emulated the refined sensibilities of Parisian couture, Cashin sculpted a new image for the fashion-conscious American woman"



This nubby blue wool ensemble features the textured materials and uncluttered silhouette characteristic of the designs of California-born Bonnie Cashin. In the 1950s, when most fashion designers emulated the refined sensibilities of Parisian couture, Cashin sculpted a new image for the fashion-conscious American woman, espousing a minimalist sensibility that juxtaposed pure lines and layered compositions. Uniting her streamlined approach to seaming and detail with the bold colors and surprising textures of Dorothy Liebes's textiles, she created an iconic American look: casual but elegant and deceptively simple. For years Cashin worked with Liebes, one of the premier colorists of the twentieth century, who revolutionized textile design through her novel color combinations and use of new materials ranging from wood splints to metallic Lurex. Wearing Cashin clothing and Liebes textiles meant actively participating in an avant-garde aesthetic unique to American culture.

KATE IRVIN

Curator, Department of Costume and Textiles Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence



-MIGUEL SACO

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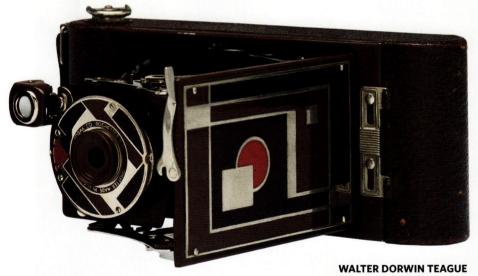
MIGUEL SACO

Conservation and Restoration of Fine Furniture

"In order to increase their appeal, Eastman Kodak Company enlisted prominent graphic and industrial designers such as Teague to design or redesign the cameras."

Founded in 1889 by George Eastman, the Eastman Company (which became the Eastman Kodak Company in 1901) revolutionized photography by manufacturing portable hand-held cameras. Beginning with the introduction of the Brownie in 1900, Kodak released a successive line of moderately priced cameras, which appealed to a growing market of consumers. In order to increase their appeal, the company enlisted prominent graphic and industrial designers such as Teague to design or redesign the cameras. One of the foremost American industrial designers of the 1930s and 1940s, Teague abandoned his initial career in graphic design to pursue the design of functional objects. In 1928 he landed as his first client the Eastman Kodak Company, for which he created a line of "modern" cameras reflecting his background in graphic design and his interest in geometric formalism as both an applied deco-





#1A GIFT CAMERA WITH CASE
Manufactured by the Eastman Kodak Company
Leather, Bakelite, chrome-plated and
enameled steel (camera); enameled and
chrome-inlaid cedar (case)

rative motif (his art deco geometric designs for the #2 Beau Brownie and the #1A Gift) and as a structural form (his squared #2A Beau Brownie, the rectangular #1A Gift, and the ovoid Bantam Special). Released for the 1930 Christmas sale season, the #1A Gift was available only through 1931, a likely consequence of its fifteen-dollar price—nearly three times the cost of Teague's similarly styled #2 Beau Brownie models.

This camera and more than sixty other important examples of international design from the collection of the Columbia Museum of Art are featured in the exhibition *The Columbia Design League (CDL) Selects: Modern Design from the Collection*, on view at the museum to July 29.

BRIAN J. LANG

Curator of Decorative Arts Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina



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"Designed by Marianne Rath, these works are remarkable for their seemingly freeform shapes, recalling molten glass, and their jewel-like colors."

The celebrated display of glass presented by J. and L. Lobmeyr of Vienna at the 1925 Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes in Paris astounded audiences with its new techniques, showcased to full effect in this centerpiece and bowls from the Rare Earth series. Designed by Marianne Rath, these works are remarkable for their seemingly freeform shapes, recalling molten glass, and their jewel-like colors. The color transforms in reflected or transmitted light—from emerald green to persimmon, from pale green to chartreuse, and from lilac to fuchsia. Lobmeyr pushed the boundaries of science and the decorative arts by experimenting with elements such as uranium and other rare earth materials in glassmaking. Such innovations were one of the major motivations of global events like the Paris fair where what was modern was celebrated on an international stage. These dazzling pieces are included in the exhibition *Inventing the Modern World: Decorative Arts at the World's Fairs, 1851–1939,* on view at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art until August 19.

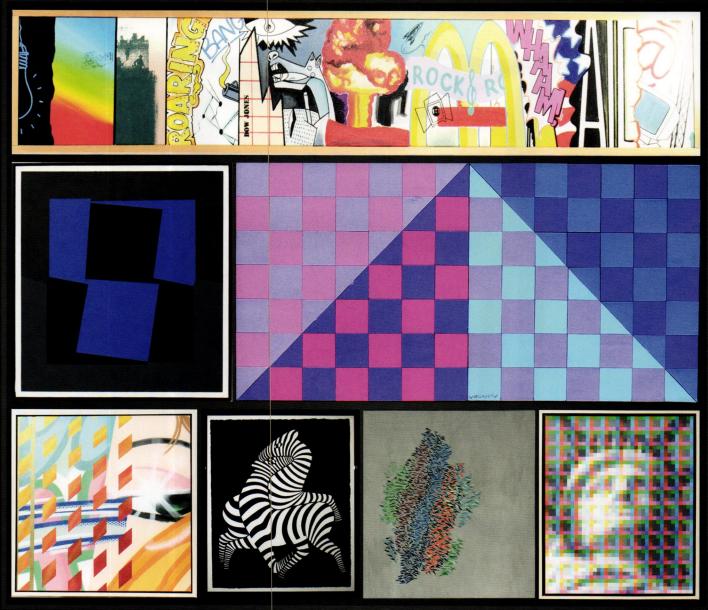
CATHERINE L. FUTTER

Helen Jane and R. Hugh "Pat" Uhlmann Curator of Decorative Arts Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri



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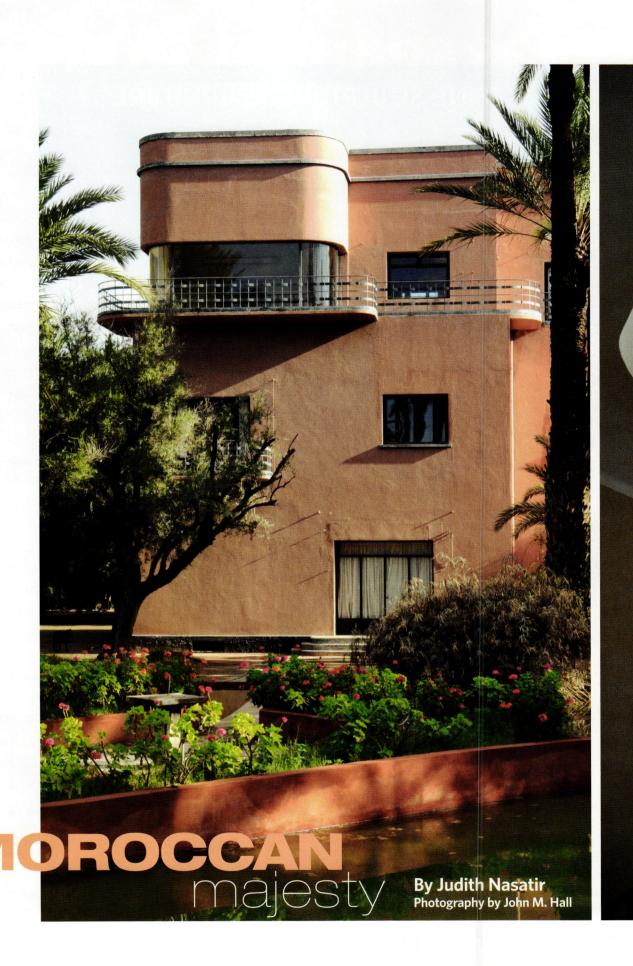


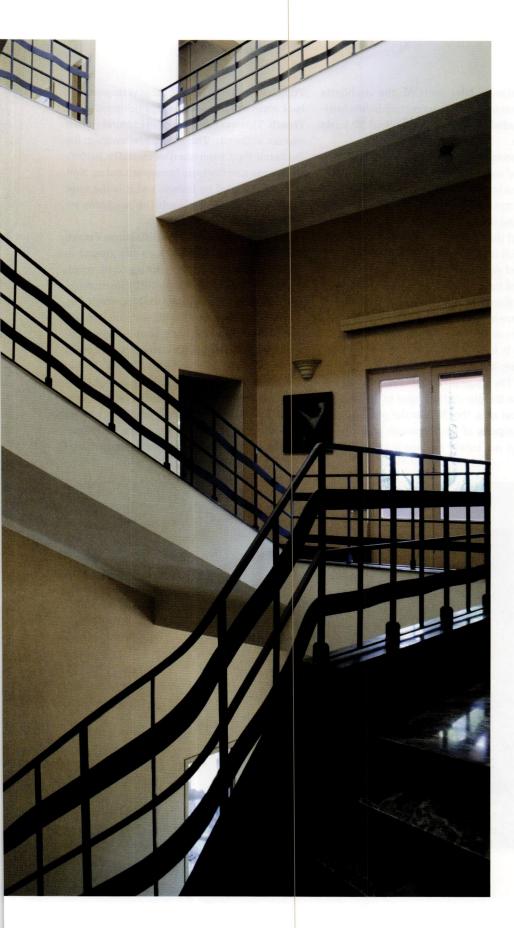
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FREE INDOOR PARKING





O YOU BELIEVE in love at first sight, a love that conquers all? If you do, the story of Christine and Aziz Alaoui and their remarkable seven-acre art deco Eden, Villa Bled Rokninea three-story, ten-thousandsquare-foot concrete and stone main house, plus guesthouse, water tower, and lush gardens, all created by Paul Sinoir for the Audibert family between 1928 and 1930 in Marrakech's Palmeraie district-will reaffirm your magical thinking. If not, the tale is one for the Arabian Nights, relayed with relish by Christine Alaoui and the New York-based artist Yasmina Alaoui, one of the family's three children.

Christine and Aziz Alaoui first visited Bled Roknine in 1989 with a French friend who wanted to share the mystery of the place, which was something of a local legend with a history veiled in obscurity. The property's original owners had abandoned it sometime after the end of the French Protectorate of Morocco in 1956.

When the Alaouis first saw their Paul Sinoir-designed art deco-era, three-story house, it was painted a pale gray, rather than the terra-cotta-pink hue so common in Marrakech.

The dramatic interior stair has stone treads and risers, and an intricately detailed hand-forged railing.

As the Alaouis later learned, the Audiberts hailed from southern France; their family business included the famed shop Le Petit Savon de Marseille.

"The caretaker was still living on the land with his family," says Christine Alaoui. "But the owners were no longer paying him, so he gave tours of the property to make ends meet." For the Alaouis, just walking through the gardens and seeing the exterior of the house proved life-changing. "We not only fell in love with the house because of its beauty and mystery, but were in a state of shock because of its exceptional size. The homes designed by European architects in the 1930s tended to be on a much smaller scale."

The two decided that day that they would do whatever it took to possess the property, even though they had not had even a glimpse into the interior. "The whole process was very complicated because the title still belonged to the French," Mrs. Alaoui says, "but by law the place had become a property of the Moroccan government, which had not legally claimed it yet. After the

French Protectorate ended, the government took back agricultural properties that belonged to the French. This was considered agricultural since it was not in the city. There were few homes in the Palmeraie then. Even when we moved in, in 1990, there were absolutely no houses around us. Now we're surrounded by homes, and it is the most residential part of Marrakech. Our neighbors are people like Paloma Picasso!"

When Sinoir designed Bled Roknine, French architects were rather thick on the ground in Morocco, reshaping many aspects of its urban landscapes. Henri Prost (1874–1959), for example, developed modern city plans for Marrakech, Fes, Rabat, and Casablanca. With Antoine Marchisio he also designed La Mamounia, the legendary hotel in Marrakech that, since its opening in 1923, has hosted everyone from Charlie Chaplin to Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Alfred Hitchcock (who filmed *The Man Who Knew Too Much* there). Although Sinoir's traces are less apparent in Marrakech (and in France, for that matter, where he appears to have shared

The Alaouis furnished the interiors with numerous period pieces, including the glorious pair of armchairs by Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann. Hanging above the sofa are, from left to right: a French Fauvist oil; two canvases by painter George A. Gonzalez (1966-), a family friend; and a painting by Algerian artist Lamine Azzouzi (1971-). The floor is original, made of tiles imported from France.









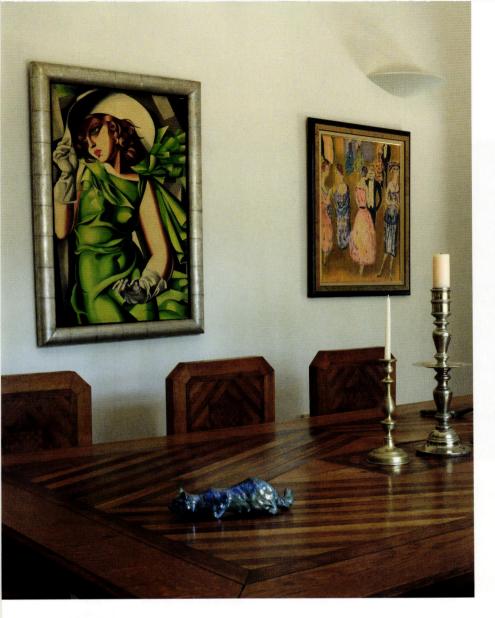


Clockwise from top left: One of two glass vases on the living room console by Schneider, a French glass firm that flourished in the 1930s.

The low black chest and two totems were a gift from Serge Lutens (1942-), the renowned art director and photographer who designed them for his own house in the Medina, the ancient walled city of Marrakech. The Alaouis initially commissioned Michel Vu (1941-), a Franco-Vietnamese sculptor living in Essaouira, Morocco, to create two sculptures for the living room; ultimately, only the white marble of a woman wearing a traditional veil was completed. The maquette for the other sculpture rests on the console in the dining room.

"This desk is signed by Louis Majorelle, the famed French ébénist and the father of Jacques Majorelle, the painter," says Christine Alaoui. "The chairs are from the 1940s, and we have a whole set of them. Each has a hook for a handbag. They came from a restaurant we used to own in Paris called Nicolas; the restaurant's former owner purchased them at a sale from the Ritz Hotel in Paris."

Gonzalez painted the portrait of the French actress Isabelle Adjani, a mutual friend, that hangs over the piano.



At the left on the dining room wall is a copy of a work by the Polish artist Tamara de Lempicka in the collection of the Musée d'art Moderne in Paris. It is one of several Lempicka copies painted by the art dealer Real Lessard (who with his lover, the con artist and dealer Fernand Legros sold numerous forgeries), for the New York production of Tamara, John Krizanc's play about the deco era artist. To the right is an unsigned French nineteenthcentury oil. a Paris-based practice with Hippolyte "Pol" Abraham in the mid-1920s), his Moorish deco tendencies also appear in the two-story live-work studio and workshop he designed in 1931 for the French painter Jacques Majorelle. Now a museum of Berber art, the ultramarine blue-painted structure stands in the heart of the Jardin Majorelle, the artist's Marrakech garden haven, which Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé purchased in 1980 and which, since 2011, has been owned by the Fondation Pierre Bergé–Yves Saint Laurent.

The day the Alaouis decided to open the house for the first time, they had a celebratory barbecue on the property with their three children and the friend who'd first shown them the house and his family. "Since the keys the French people had given us were all rusted," Christine Alaoui says, "we had to dismantle the cellar windows to go in. I can't tell you the dust and the animals that were inside the house: bats, scorpions, spiders, birds!"

Yasmina, who was then eleven or twelve, re-

calls it as a scorcher of a day, with temperatures above 120 degrees Fahrenheit. "My father and a friend crawled in. They were in the pitch dark, and there were bats everywhere. It took them what seemed like forever to reach the main floor." The pair eventually spotted a sliver of light, which led them to the kitchen; they ultimately groped their way through the living room, pulled back yards of dusty curtains, cracked open the jalousies, and made their way to the front door. "When they opened it," Yasmina says, "the first thing we saw was this amazing, amazing staircase. I think we were about fifteen people, all covered in dust, running around the house and going every which way. Every single door was closed, and we didn't know what was behind any of them. One person would vell: 'I found this amazing room,' and we'd all rush over."

The main house required major renovations after its long abandonment—plumbing, electricity, painting, heating systems, and so on. But the Alaouis kept the space as close to the original as possible. As Christine Alaoui says: "Even the keys to the doors are from the '30s. The tiles and the bathroom equipment were originally brought in from France. The marble came from Italy. We have incredible cast-iron radiators incorporated in the wall, which you hardly see and they still work perfectly."

The front door opens to a tiled entrance hall with furnishings by Louis Majorelle, the famed ébéniste from Nancy, France, and the father of Jacques Majorelle. The sinuous black and gray marble stair with its music-staff-like forged-iron railings rises to the right of the entry. Clerestory windows that ring the walls of the uppermost landing flood the stairwell with light.

To the left of the entrance hall is a remarkable double-height living room, actually two contiguous spaces overlooking the gardens and divided by a pair of black marble columns that, Mrs. Alaoui says, "support the house." These, she thinks, "were brought in from Italy at the time, which seems unreal, since they're so big!" Among the living room furnishings is a pair of chairs designed by Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann.

Also on the ground floor is the kitchen, a cozier living room carved out of the kitchen during the renovation, and a dining room with a table and chairs that have witnessed more history than seems fair, much less reasonable. They date to the

1920s and were designed specifically for the Villa Taylor in Marrakech. The Alaouis acquired them from the Comtesse Boule de Breteuil, "a famous hostess in Marrakech who," Christine Alaoui says, "received the whole world in her house, Villa Taylor, considered as the most beautiful in North Africa. My husband and I were invited for the last New Year's Eve dinner at the Comtesse de Breteuil's with our close friend the designer Bill Willis, and a very few people. We had no idea at that time that the table would be in our house the following year."

The table has been the foundation for sublime moments, including Charlie Chaplin playing the mythical scene of the dance of the bread rolls from *Gold Rush* on it for the Comtesse de Breteuil's young son. It has also done its duty on weightier occasions, says Mrs. Alaoui, citing an excerpt from her friend Celia Sandys's book *Chasing Churchill* (Sandys is Churchill's grand-daughter): "Dinner that January night in 1943 at the Villa Taylor had a family air. Churchill and Roosevelt made short, affectionate speeches to each other, and the President proposed



A passionate collector of photography, Christine Alaoui has a number of original prints from the nineteenth-century French publication *Galerie Contemporaine*; these include the four hanging over an English bar cabinet in the dining room: Émile Zola by Étienne Carjat; Charles Garnier by Nadar; Henri Monnier by Carjat; and Pierre Loti by Yve Delphin.

The painting centered above the console in the dining room is by Azzouzi. On the right is a group of original prints from Alfred Stieglitz's journal Camera Work, among them Edward Steichen's The Silhouette and Stieglitz's Hand of Man. The ivory candlesticks on the console are French and date to the 1930s.



proceeded, the final documents from the Casablanca Conference were brought to the table for the two leaders' approval, but this did not deter Churchill from singing and everyone joining in the choruses." On an everyday basis, it has hosted the Aga Khan and Rita Hayworth, who honeymooned at Villa Taylor; Yves Saint Laurent, Hubert de Givenchy, Elizabeth Taylor, Irene Pappas, Rudolph Nureyev, Mick Jagger, Anthony Quinn, Henry Kissinger, Truman Capote, William Burroughs, Paul Bowles, Paul Reynaud, the queen of Denmark, Prince Michael of Kent and his wife, Marcello Mastroianni, Catherine Deneuve, Beverly Sills, and Alexis, Baron de Rédé, just to name some names.

the health of the King. Even as these festivities

Hanging in the private quarters upstairs are two more de Lempickas by Lessard. All the floors are either French tile or marble, and original to the house; each room has a different tile pattern underfoot.

The second floor contains two bedroom suites. One is the master, with an extraordinary bath in black and white marble. The step-up, step-down configuration of the tub is nothing



if not unusual—ancient and modern at the same time. Its depth and length may not be the most comfortable for bathing (how and where do you sit?), but it was, Yasmina recalls, something of an indoor pool for her younger brother and sister and their friends when they first moved in.

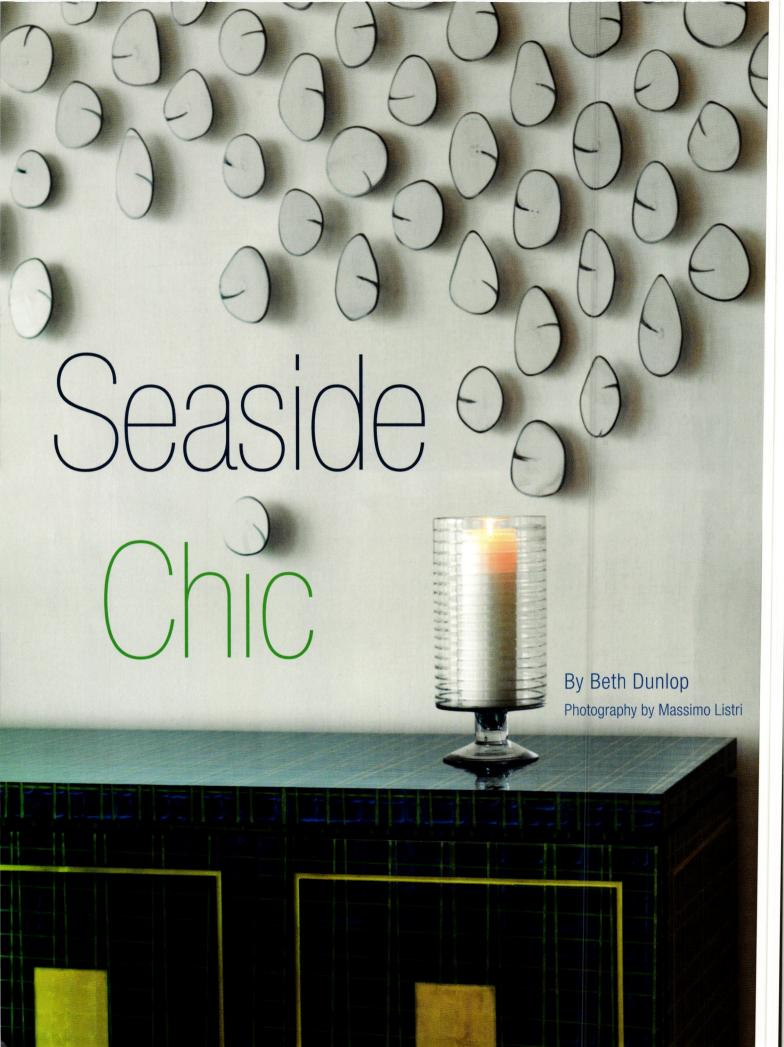
The third floor houses a bedroom suite with a bath lined entirely in onyx. Also on that floor is a home office with a Majorelle-designed desk, a wonderfully large living room or lounge area with an adjacent sunroom that looks out to the Atlas Mountains, the Palmeraie, and the Alaouis' own lush gardens, with more than two hundred palm, olive, citrus, fruit, and carob trees, as well as jacarandas and acacias, to name a few.

Art is everywhere, and Christine Alaoui has a passion for photographs. Most of the furnishings she acquired from a dealer in Burgundy, whom she met through an artist friend, Renato Parrigi, who happened to be collecting 1930s furniture at the time. Kismet? Sure. But for the Alaouis and Bled Roknine, Kismet, or whatever you want to call it, was just the start of the adventure.

Judith Nasatir is a New York-based writer specializing in design.











THE CORNER PERCH OF THE LIVING ROOM IN THIS SUNNY OCEANFRONT APARTMENT in Bal Harbour, Florida has the feel and the perspective of a sleek, contemporary ocean liner. The designer, Frank de Biasi, had one major mandate here—that this apartment should not look like it was in New York. "I always try to understand how my clients envision life, how they entertain, how they envision their space," he says. His objective was to create a living space that had a casual ease but retained a certain sophisticated outlook.

The apartment is what one might call a pied-à-plage—a winter getaway overlooking a broad expanse of beach and the vast

Facing page: Designer Frank de Biasi designed this patterned sideboard when he could not find what he wanted for the dining room. Above it is a metal wall sculpture by Carolina Sardi.

Above: Upholstered Fendi
Casa furniture gives the living
room a nautical feel, as do
the Pol Chambost lamp and
Serge Mouille Spider ceiling
lamp. On the floor is a rug by
Doug and Gene Meyer. The
oak Guillerme et Chambron
chairs are from the 1950s.

Left: Interior designer Frank de Biasi.



Above: In the master bedroom a pair of photos by Sze Tsung Leong from the Yossi Milo Gallery in New York City hangs above the bed.

Below: Milo Baughman chairs upholstered in chartreuse leather flank a dining table designed and crafted by BDDW of New York. The sideboard below Carolina Sardi's wall art was crafted in resin by Kinon.

Facing page: Christophe
Côme lamps from the
Cristina Grajales Gallery
stand like two beacons
beneath the wild seas
photographed in Hawaii
by Jeffrey Rothstein.
The pillows on the oak
Guillerme et Chambron
armchairs are by Nigel
Atkinson of London.

blue-green sea. As such it's designed to make sure that its occupants forget the doldrums of winter while shunning the clichés of Florida (and tropical) design. The palette is crisp and vivid, blues and greens especially. ("It seemed only natural," de Biasi says.)

The furniture is carefully chosen to reflect the kind of timelessness imparted by postwar design, with the addition of such contemporary pieces as a chandelier by Jeff Zimmerman of New York and a wall sculpture by the Argentine-born Carolina Sardi, who lives in Miami, though de Biasi first encountered her work in Paris. "I love to travel," he says. His travels lead him through New York's design

galleries to Morocco's bazaars and Paris's Marché aux Puces—eyes wide open at all times. De Biasi has footholds in New York, Paris, Morocco, and Miami (and homes in all four, though his office is New York-based) and clients spread much farther around the world.

Born and reared in Richmond, Virginia, he first worked at Christie's doing estate appraisals and honing his eye as he visited the homes of important collectors across the country. During that period he met the designer Peter Marino—"by chance," de Biasi says—and went to work for him,

spending thirteen years running the firm's residential interiors department. In 2006 he founded his own firm.

For this apartment he sought to bring the inside out and the outside in. In the living room blue and white upholstered furniture stands on a rug the color of sand, while a Serge Mouille light hovers overhead in place of the more expected ceiling fan. A pair of mid-century French chairs from Guillerme et Chambron

are carefully crafted, yet there's a hint of driftwood in their form, too. Behind the chairs is a vast photo diptych shot in Hawaii by Jeffrey Rothstein; it is a crescendo of crashing waves full of the ocean's ferocious energy. Lamps from the contemporary French designer Christophe Côme stand like bookends atop the bookshelf just below the photos.

In the dining room eight chrome Milo Baughman chairs from the 1970s are pulled up to an American claro walnut table commissioned from BDDW in New York. The chairs are upholstered in calfskin leather and are, de Biasi says, "very chartreuse." He designed the plaid-patterned sideboard, which was then fabricated in cast resin by Kinon—"If I can't find the perfect piece, I just make it," he says. The sculpture by Carolina Sardi-this one is typical of her approach of breaking down large swathes of steel or other metal into small and almost fragile elements-fills the wall above. It's an abstract work in white enameled metal that seems to offer any number of fitting metaphors for the apartment: is it shells, or perhaps gulls, a spray of seafoam, or clouds?

The connections are seamless and sophisticated, and in no way obvious. The pale elongated photos that hang over the bed—they are by the important Mexican-born American-based photographer Sze Tsung Leong and are part of his *Horizons* series begun in 2001—offer a distant echo of the real and reimagined seascapes found in the rest of the apartment. Rest assured that there is not a theme here, just a subtle connection of person to place.







"Misida Manda Managara Managar William Company of the Company of th Bořek Šípek in the garden of his cottage near Novy Bor, Czech Republic, a center for Czech glassmaking The rattan and lacquered wood Helena chairs were designed for Driade, 1988. Šípek at his factory in Novy Bor with the glass master Ivan Kubela, with whom he has worked since 1986.



By Nancy Frick Battaglia

n Prague all things point to the castle. Ancient, huge, and visible from nearly every part of the city, Prague Castle is the seat of the Czech Republic. Bořek Šípek left his mark on this icon of Czech history as the court architect during the presidency of his friend Václav Havel, from 1993 to 2003. But the Czech native son is also a prolific glass artist and designer of

furniture, porcelain, and silver objects.

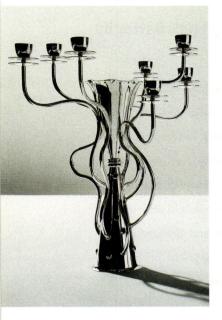
One European curator comments that Bořek Šípek has already had "three lifetimes of artistic productivity"

Today glass and architecture are the sixty-three-year-old Šípek's focus. Glass, of course, is part of the Czech national artistic legacy, and Šípek's fellow Czechs, as well as museum cu-

rators and collectors, place him among the most skilled glass artists in the world. But a vast body of work preceded that.

Šípek gained renown in the design world in the late 1980s and early 1990s with highly referential furniture and the functional objects he designed for Driade, Vitra, Neotu, Sèvres, and Steltman. David McFadden, chief curator of the Museum of Arts and Design in Manhattan, points out that Šípek "always experimented with a wide range of materials and techniques. While his pieces are clearly





Šípek's Simon candelabra, 1988, is an ode to the baroque. The double-sided Steltman desk was designed for Steltman Galleries in

Amsterdam in 1987.

Among them are furniture with folkloric references, baroque impulses, and a good dose of humor, such as the wicker chairs Šípek designed for Driade that were as personal as they were functional. Then there was his unforgettable Bambi chair—an enticing feminine seat on fawnlike legs. Or the wood and terrazzo Steltman desk for Steltman Galleries in Amsterdam; the desk has five legs and the terrazzo top has black granite inlays to indicate the position of those legs, just another witty gesture at once subtle and obvious.

Craig Miller, the twentieth-century design expert who is senior curator of design arts and director of design initiatives at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, has known Šípek since the mid-1980s. "I was working at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and went to visit him in Amsterdam," said Miller. "There was enormous creativity in this period by a group of younger postmodernist European designers that included Šípek, Philippe Starck, Michelle De Lucchi, and Sylvain Duibuisson. Šípek was over the top, rich, original. He may have been a little exotic for Americans' more conservative taste in furniture. In the 1990s he began to work more and more in architecture and, of course always with glass."

Under Miller's direction, the Denver Art Museum held a solo exhibition of Šípek's work in 1996, Bořek Šípek: Auratic Architecture and Design, which included sixty examples of his ceramics, metalwork, furniture, glass, and architectural models. Other solo museum exhibitions have been at the Musée des Tissus et des Arts Décoratifs in Lyon (in 1987); the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (1991); the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany (1992); and the Národní Museum (National Museum) in Prague (1998).

Šípek was born in Prague in 1949. His parents died when he was young and he was adopted by Rene Roubicek and Miluse Roubickova, glass artists now in their nineties whose work is in collections and museums throughout the United States and Europe. Tina Oldknow, curator of modern glass at the Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, New York, observes that Šípek's style in blown glass was influenced by these pioneering artists, especially Miluse Roubickova. "Šípek's work is colorful, fun, with a *joie de vivre* that is not always seen in Czech glass," Oldknow says.

Marketa Vejrostova, the curator of glass at the Moravian Gallery in Brno—the second largest museum in the Czech Republic—concurs, praising Šípek's glass for its imagination, playfulness, and colors. The compotes decorated with glass fruit toppling over the rim are, simply, classics.

Glass is not necessarily a solo art, or craft. Šípek has worked with the same master craftsman, Ivan Kubela, since 1986. Indeed, Milan Hlaves, a senior curator at the Museum of Decorative Arts-Prague is quick to point out that Šípek has a special talent for "being maximally able to use the skills of the master craftsmen at the factory and all the characteristics of glass. His is a modern mannerism."

For all that, Šípek's education was actually focused on architecture. At fifteen he began four years of study at Prague's School for Arts and Crafts and then moved to Germany to study





architecture at the University of Applied Arts in Hamburg, from which he graduated in 1974. He studied philosophy at the Technical University in Stuttgart and eventually received a doctorate in architecture from the Technical University of Delft. He's remarked, though, that his study of philosophy was a gift to his architecture, an idea elaborated on in an essay by architectural historian Gavin Keeney called "Šípek is not Šípek" first published in 1996.

Today he is a professor of architecture at the Prague Academy of Applied Arts, a professor of design at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, and the dean of architecture at the Tech-

nical University of Liberec, which is not far from his glass factory in Novy Bor. He travels and works constantly on architectural projects around the globe: private houses in Shanghai, a department store in Tokyo, the Skoda pavilion for the international automobile exhibition in Hanover, Germany, a circular apartment complex in the Dutch city of Apeldoorn, the Opera House in Kyoto. He's designed hotels and boutiques in Prague. Among the best known is the Hotel Neruda, a convent dating from 1348 that he transformed into a showcase of his own "neobaroque" (the term he himself uses) aesthetic.



rial dedicated to slavery in Senegal. During the Salone Internazionale del Mobile 2012 in Milan Šípek exhibited with his friend Ingo Mauer at the Spazio Krizia showroom, showing off enormous new pieces including a candelabra and a bowl for flowers.

In Prague, he's at home in the Mala Strana section of the city, just a ten minute walk from Prague Castle. His office-apartment-studio occupies a rather small L-shaped space in a corner of the fifth floor of an ancient courtyard building (the foundation is some seven hundred years old, the building itself about four hundred). On the ground floor he has a gallery,

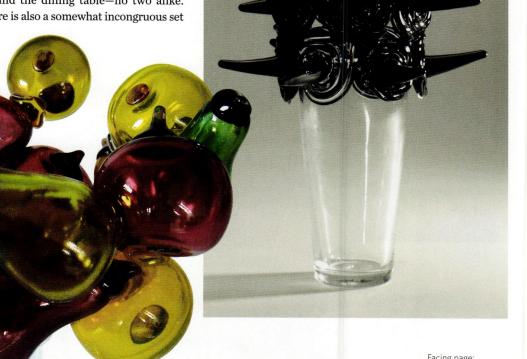
open by appointment. There is a small retail shop for his glass across the Vetava River, between the Museum of Decorative Arts and the Old Town Square.

In the living area of the apartment Šípek generally keeps eight of his own chairs around the dining table-no two alike. There is also a somewhat incongruous set

of All-Clad cookware that has made its way to his fifth-floor walkup from southwestern Pennsylvania; he reports that cooking is a favorite pastime and he has designed and owned three restaurants in Prague. On one wall of the room hangs Absolut Šípek, a photograph by Jan Saudek of a lithe and beautiful blond woman swathed in a revealing veil next to a tall piece of Šípek's glass art.

A new eight-piece collection called Blacks is about to be released from the factory in Novy Bor. Asked for his inspiration for the collection Šípek answers simply, "I wanted to try something using black." Even now, he clearly does not take himself too seriously. M

The Orfeo stand for Driade, 2010, overflows with fruit. Šípek's new Blacks collection includes his Rosa Canina vase, 2012.



Facing page:

Though Šípek designed many spaces in Prague Castle, except for the addition of hundreds of his Olga chairs he did not touch the grand Spanish Hall, seen in this 1998 photo.

Šípek designed a new entrance to the office of the president of the Czech Republic at Prague Castle in 1997, while serving as court architect under President Václav Havel.

Šípek's witty ceiling design turns the tables on the Moon Glow Restaurant in the Oriental Hotel, Hiroshima, Japan.

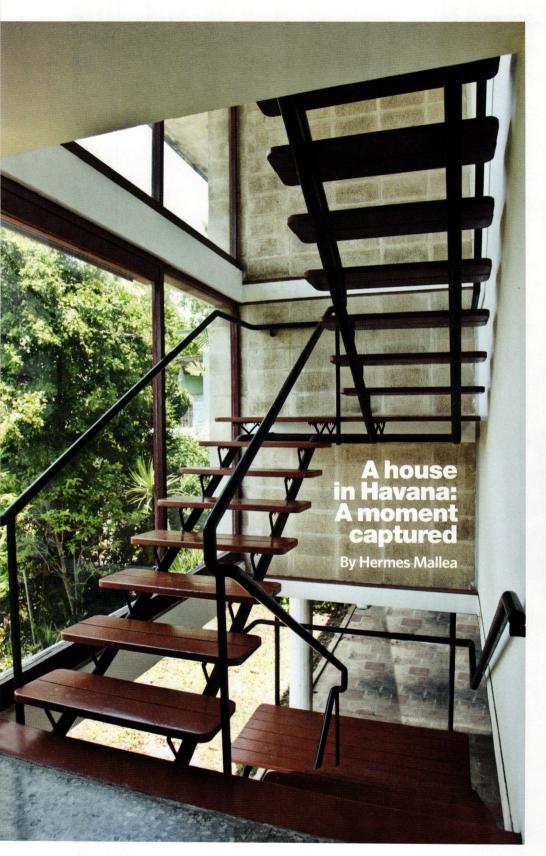
Nancy Frick Battaglia, who has lived in Chicago, Los Angeles, and California's Marin and Sonoma Counties, now writes from New York.











he Pérez Farfante house speaks volumes about the sophisticated lifestyle in Havana on the eve of the 1959 Revolution, when the Cuban city was known as the Paris of the Americas in no small measure because of the excellence of its architecture. In the century between 1860 and 1960 Havana followed world architecture trends step-by-step to produce a prodigious body of beautiful residential buildings, includ-



ing any number of unknown modernist gems, among them this house built for two sisters in the city's Nuevo Vedado neighborhood. Such houses represent the culmination of the Cuban quest not just to emulate European and American architectural styles but to create highly original interpretations of mid-century modernism that would express Cuba's national identity.



Sixty years after its construction, the house remains a clear articulation of the personal style of the sisters who commissioned it-Olga and Isabel Pérez Farfante-members of Havana's mid-century intelligentsia, a golden generation for whom building a contemporary house was an expression of progressive values. The daughters of a small-town grocer and his schoolteacher wife who emphasized the importance of education on their children, both sisters balanced academic careers with family lives at a time when doing so was unusual for a woman-Olga as a dentist and teacher, Isabel as a Havana University biology professor who had graduated summa cum laude from Harvard. They chose a site with dramatic views in Nuevo Vedado just as the neighborhood was being thin concrete slab protects the house from sun and rain. Asymmetries of massing, windows, and corner treatments dispel the idea that its design is traditional, however. Concrete floor slabs are expressed as continuous horizontal planes on the facades. The walls are infilled from slab to slab with concrete block, glass, or wood louvers, allowing the function of an interior space to be read on the exterior. The rear facade, too, reflects the interior, including strip windows at the bathrooms, and perforations in the block wall to ventilate the service areas.

Architect Frank Martinez designed the house to address the traditional Cuban concept of extended family living, creating a duplex where two households had complete privacy under the same roof, yet could live communally when de-

The wooden louvers can be adjusted to maximize the breezes and views of the landscape.

This wicker butterfly chair, a Cuban adaptation of a popular mid-century design, stands in front of a louvered wall that permits breezes to blow through the public areas.

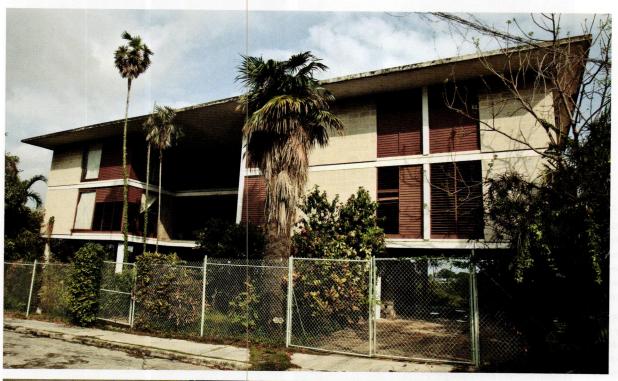


developed—joining other young professionals building houses that reflected a mid-1950s climate of optimism fueled by America's postwar prosperity that had reached Havana's upper and middle classes.

Although the house is unmistakably modern—and the exterior appearance is marred today by a chain-link fence at the street level—the front has the elegance of a classical temple. Columns support the roof, and at the roofline a projecting

sired. In it he aimed for an international modernism with a Cuban flavor, recognizing the value of time-tested elements like adjustable wood louvers and the spatial ambiguity of outdoor spaces that function as living rooms and open-air galleries that are more than circulation spaces. The house is raised on slim concrete columns (or pilotis) above an open ground floor with space for cars, service areas, the entry stair, and a shaded seating area. Breezes circulating the air through this level help cool the living spaces above.

The house reveals itself as one moves around and through it, but nothing prepares the visitor for the dramatic views that are framed by the architecture, the focal points that keep the eye mov-







Top: The house is raised on pilotis above the ground floor, defining a covered terrace, space for parking, a service area, and the entry stair. The shaded vertical recess separates the public and private zones of both upper floors.

Bottom:

As in traditional Havana houses, balconies connect the residents to the life of the street. The louver walls can be slid away to incorporate this outdoor space into the core of the house.

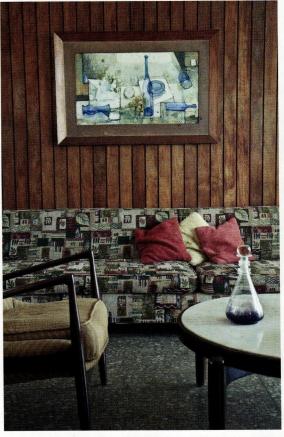
The dining room corner is supported by a three-story-tall cast-concrete column visible behind the upper floors' wood louvers.

A 1950s still life by Cuban painter Angel Acosta Leon hangs against the stained-wood paneling on one wall of the second floor living room.

A Cuban-made midcentury wicker chair stands in the second floor dressing room, a space that buffers the master bedroom from the public areas.

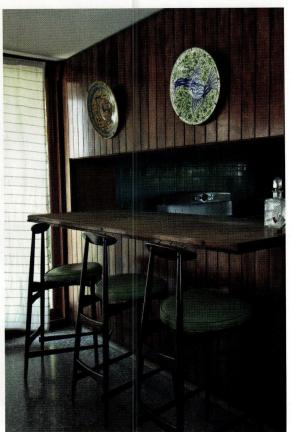
The stained wood paneling of the living rooms (shown is the third floor) flows into the dining room, where one section cleverly drops down to form a bar and a pass-through into the kitchen. The barstools are original—Cuban-made interpretations of midcentury designs.

At the entry to the second floor apartment are a pair of Hans Wegner Sawbuck armchairs and a Scandinavian table and dining chairs.









ing inside, or the sense of delight when a wall slides away to turn an interior space into an open air one. Public rooms and bedrooms are placed at opposite ends of the structure, separated by a vertical recess containing what family members have called their "pre-living rooms," which form the core of the house. Sliding open the louvered doors to the front balcony doubles the width of this core. When the corresponding louvers on the rear elevation are then slid open the core seems to dematerialize altogether, as the whole center of the house opens to views of the Havana woods and the ocean beyond.

The tubular steel and wood staircase, continu-

ally changing in the light, is visible from the front

columns that rise three stories. This continuity of materials blurs the distinction between interior and exterior-an achievement of the best of Havana's mid-century modernist houses.

The sisters furnished the house with advice from the architect, and remarkably much remains-Scandinavian classics by Hans Wegner and Knoll's iconic Harry Bertoia chair as well as Cuban-made pieces that perfectly complement the 1950s architecture. The sisters also shared a love of contemporary Cuban painting, and works by Victor Manuel, Mirta Serra, and Hipólito Hidalgo de Caviedes are likewise still found throughout the house.



tical accent rising in its glass

box. Thanks to the dramatic site and the lightweight design of the stairs, the user has a sense of drifting high above the landscape.

In a nod to the modern American lifestyle that Cubans were always emulating, the kitchen connects directly to the public areas. But middleclass Cubans of the 1950s had cooks and housekeepers long after the same income group in the United States had given up their servants, and the kitchen forms part of a clever series of service spaces, including laundry and maid's bath, that are provided with their own set of spiral stairs, allowing servants to move around the house without going through the family rooms.

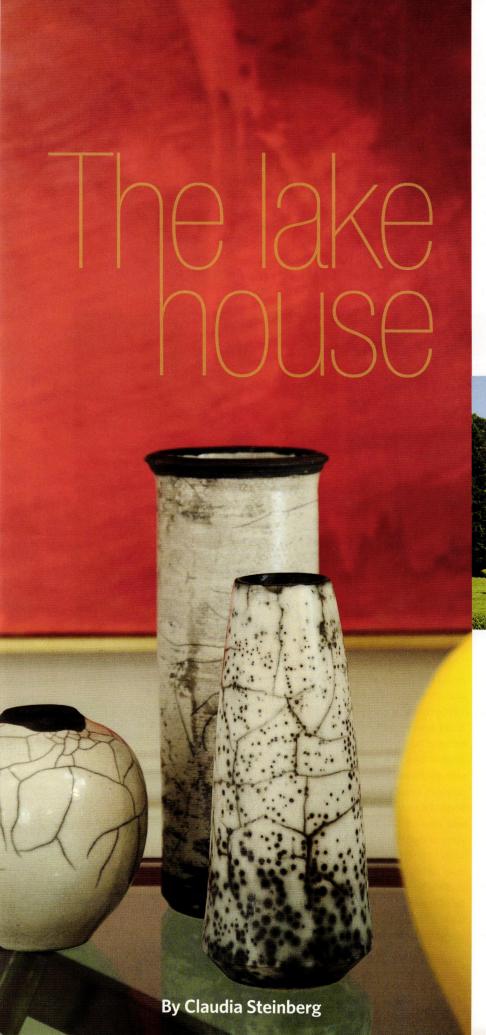
Construction materials used on the exterior were carried indoors: the weathered concreteblock walls that meet the white concrete floor slabs, the glass and wood louvers, the concrete

Along with other "Tropical Modernist" houses in Havana, the Pérez Farfante house reflects a climate of architectural experimentation in the 1950s that was energized by the construction of hotel towers designed by important New York architects, university lectures by visitors like Walter Gropius, the flow of international design publications, and the training in American colleges received by many of the island's architects. In successfully synthesizing Cuba's past and present the Pérez Farfante house demonstrated that it was possible for the island's architects to be true to progressive ideals while being inspired by the core values of Cuba's traditional architecture. In other words, it was possible to be of the modern world while remaining essentially Cuban-a concern that has been central to the island nation since its inception.

The mid-century kitchen wall clock is probably an American import.

The third floor master bedroom has a monastic feeling. A Harry Bertoia chair contrasts with the cement-block walls, castconcrete column, wood louvers, and terrazzo floor.

Hermes Mallea, a Cuban-American architect is the author of The Great Houses of Havana: A Century of Cuban Style, published earlier this year by Monacelli Press.



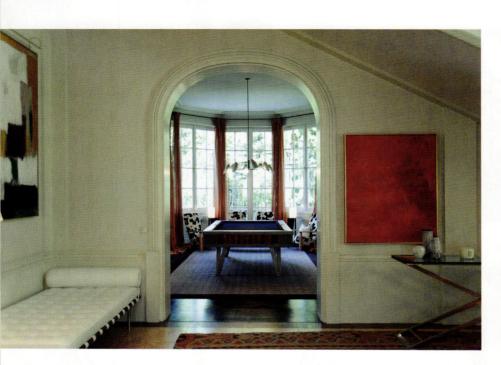
riving up the tree-lined gravel road toward the neo-baroque mansion with its sweeping roofline, curving turrets, and tall columns, one might think it had belonged to Austrian aristocrats for generations. The three-story building—painted Hapsburg yellow like every other self-respecting



edifice in the region—is now a piedà-terre for an Austrian-born financier and his American wife who
like to attend the Salzburg Festival between July and September.
"A typical European story: the son
who made good overseas buys a big
house in his home country," explains the New York-based interior designer Robert Couturier with
the irrefutable wisdom of his trade.







This page: The entrance hall's sinuous architecture contrasts with angular furniture of the Barcelona daybed and a glass table with an X-shaped metalbase. In the billiard room, boldly patterned wallpaper, a custom leather-lined nook, and cowhide-covered Cappellini chairs contradict the romantic mood.

One needs to know periods well in order to trespass surefootedly into other eras

The summer residence on the banks of the Attersee, a lake with blue glacial waters that attracted Gustav Klimt, Sigmund Freud, and Gustav Mahler a century ago, is the latest of about a dozen collaborations between Couturier and these clients over the last twenty years, the rest of them set in choice locations in the United States, from Aspen, Colorado, to Manhattan's Upper East Side, Southampton, and Greenwich, Connecticut. Just once, after a disagreement, did this polite but tough financier choose another decorator. A disaster, of course, so he remorsefully returned to the proven expert on his own hidden desires: "I know much better what he wants than he does," Couturier explains with a smile.

It's a delight to find that a man so comfortable with chandeliers from Italian palazzos and Louis XIV chairs would trust his advisor enough to embrace happily the clashing composition that greets the visitor here. Behind the massive wooden front door, who would expect ev-





ery room to be filled with prime modern furniture, all the pieces less than eighty years old and many much younger? Instead of nineteenth-century antiques to match the building's style, avant-garde spirits like Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Verner Panton, and Ron Arad conspire against too much aesthetic comfort. The designer—who names Marie Antoinette's Petit Trianon at Versailles as his favorite structure and owns a loft filled with eighteenth-century treasures above his office in Soho—had never before tried to convince his clients of such an undiluted confrontation between the old the new. "Everything we had done together so far was in a much more classical vein, except for

the art— they have a large collection of paintings by the abstract expressionist Giorgio Cavallon," Couturier says. He confesses to a total disregard for periods but believes that one needs to know them well in order to trespass sure-footedly into other eras and regions. At the Attersee retreat he applied radically more than his usual strategy of combining everything to achieve an eclectic yet in the end overall harmonious effect: here the mix declares an open conflict, with no resolution intended.

The house is not as old as it appears to be at first glance. It is, in fact, newer than most of its furnishings. To Couturier's well-trained eye, the Attersee mansion could not conceal its

Ron Arad's Big Easy chair adds a contemporary notion of baroque voluptuousness to the curvy wrought-iron banister.



"If we had bought Biedermeier furniture, the whole thing

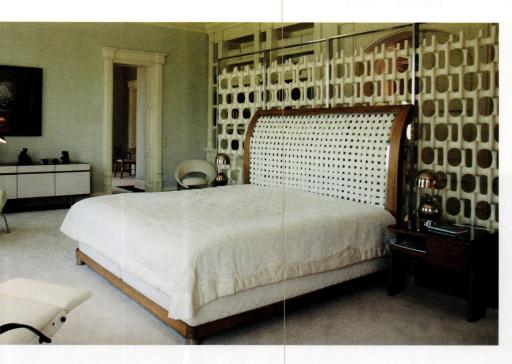
true identity as an expensive but rather insensitive 1970s copy of a mid-nineteenth-century building. "If we had bought Biedermeier furniture, the whole thing would have looked like a movie set," he explains with a shudder, imagining the von Trapp family waltzing down the grand stairs. Even in its empty state it lacked any sense of grandeur and was still deserving of the most offensive word in his vocabulary: gemütlich. To this lover of Bach and the rigors of authentic baroque architecture, the only way to combat the coziness of this faux château was to employ the weapons of modernity: "Doing the house in a very contemporary manner made the pastiche look almost real while it

made the contemporary stuff feel even sharper."

His clients readily agreed to the concept of an unmitigated disconnect between the envelope and the interior. Once the decision was made, a mad rush ensued to transform the entire house in less than four months. "There is always a mad rush," Couturier explains with a shrug, and he actually likes making the instant decisions this kind of pressure demands. While he was hunting for Jean Royère pieces at auction, buying skinny Italian sofas for the living room, and commissioning Ingo Maurer to create floating paper lamps for the entrance hall, many of the confection-like moldings were removed, and almost the entire fifteen-thousand-square-foot



vould have looked like a movie set" Robert Couturier



house was painted in shades of white. The billiard room alone was clad in wallpaper—a straw-like paper with a large geometric pattern—and the master bedroom received a coat of the palest robin's egg blue, a dreamy contrast to the precise shapes of the contemporary white furniture.

The rug in the entrance hall is the single major antique acquired during the two-week international shopping spree. Bought for its history as well as its beauty, it had once adorned the lobby of the Vienna State Opera before making its way to Connecticut, where Couturier spotted it before bringing it back home to Austria. Now a pair of saffron leather Arne Jacobsen Egg chairs occupies this rug as if to assert the new regime that has taken over the house. Under the current rule, life is easy: "My clients didn't entertain any fantasies about becoming the lord and lady of the manor, but remained who they are," Couturier says. If it weren't for the famous rose-scented summer wind wafting through the rooms or the vistas of the lake and the Alps, "the interior could be anywhere," he notes with satisfaction: "It could belong to a villa in Los Angeles."

Facing page:

Top: African wooden staffs from the client's collection complement the modern canon.

Bottom: Two graceful B Modern leather sofas from Bellini (2001) placed back-to-back divide the living room into separate social areas. The symmetry of the paired French side tables, Fontana Arte lamps, Tulip chairs from B and B Italia, and Le Corbusier chaises bestows a sense of order on the crowded space. The 1960s biomorphic gilt-bronze table by J.H. Design glows with a precious patina all its own, while a Mariano Fortuny floor lamp adds a theatrical touch.

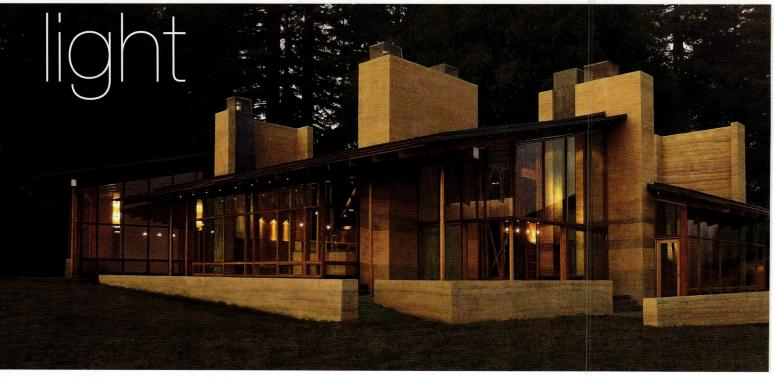
This page

A perforated cast-plastic four-panel screen behind the custom bed with a lattice headboard fences off traditional built-in bookshelves. A David Weeks Tripod floor lamp and Dennis Miller Ox chair are at the left.

The bedside lights are a Felix Aublet design of 1925, now produced by Ecart International.



The edge



wo miles from the Pacific Ocean, near

the town of Bodega in western Sonoma

County, is a rammed-earth house that

straddles both the manmade and natu-

Architects, who designed this four-bedroom,

ral worlds. This is architecture that establishes clear distinctions between the transparent and the opaque, between light and dark. "It's the edge between completely wild and completely controlled, like night and day," says the architect, James Cutler of Seattle's Cutler Anderson

five-thousand-square-foot house for a vintner and his family. "It's a contrast in compression and release."

The site was both instructive and challenging, defined by a ridge that separates a redwood forest's darkened tree line from a bright and airy vineyard. The house faces west-southwest and offers up views, on a clear day, past the rows of Pinot vines, looking between the hills all the way to the Pacific. It follows 240 feet from northwest to southeast along the defining ridge, and drops six

By J. Michael Welton Photography by Art Grice The site was both instructive and challenging, defined by a ridge that separates a redwood forest's darkened tree line from a bright and airy vineyard









Clockwise, from left:

Architect James
Cutler's design for a
residence near Bodega,
California, in Sonoma
County, is a study in
contrasts between two
ecosystems: a manmade
vineyard and a natural
redwood forest.

A hallway from the front door leads to the living room, from dark to light. The architecture juxtaposes walls and thin support columns.

This view from the east-southeast highlights the aesthetic effect of Cutler's rammed-earth construction, here forming the walls of one of the private bedroom sections.

Facing the forest, the northern side of the residence uses random placement of windows to emphasize opacity, contrasted to the transparency of the open, light-filled vineyard side of the house.

feet along the way, stepping down, section by section, as it tracks the descent. The rooflines are staggered on that slope, fractured to fit the random circumstances of the site. "It was a hell of a math problem," Cutler says.

The house wraps around a large bay tree (bays grow closer to the house than the redwoods just to the north) that stands inside a ninety-degree bend created by the two center sections. To place the house straight into the woods would have meant cutting into the forest, something the architect sought mightily to avoid. Instead, as his clients held rod and tape for him, Cutler spent a

full day surveying both field (the vineyard would be planted during the design phase) and forest. "I shot the grades and spotted the trees myself," he says. That gave him an intimate knowledge of the land and its finer qualities.

Though it's unusual for an architect to do his own surveying, it's a telling indicator of Cutler's careful and selective approach to design, which explores the ways people relate to both the natural and manmade worlds. "He does a thorough investigation of the site," says architect Peter Bohlin, who collaborated with Cutler on the design of Bill Gates's 1995 house in Medina, Wash-

ington. "I'll walk it, but he'll spend a great deal of energy to get to the nature of places and how we make them—and to get to the nature of people, too."

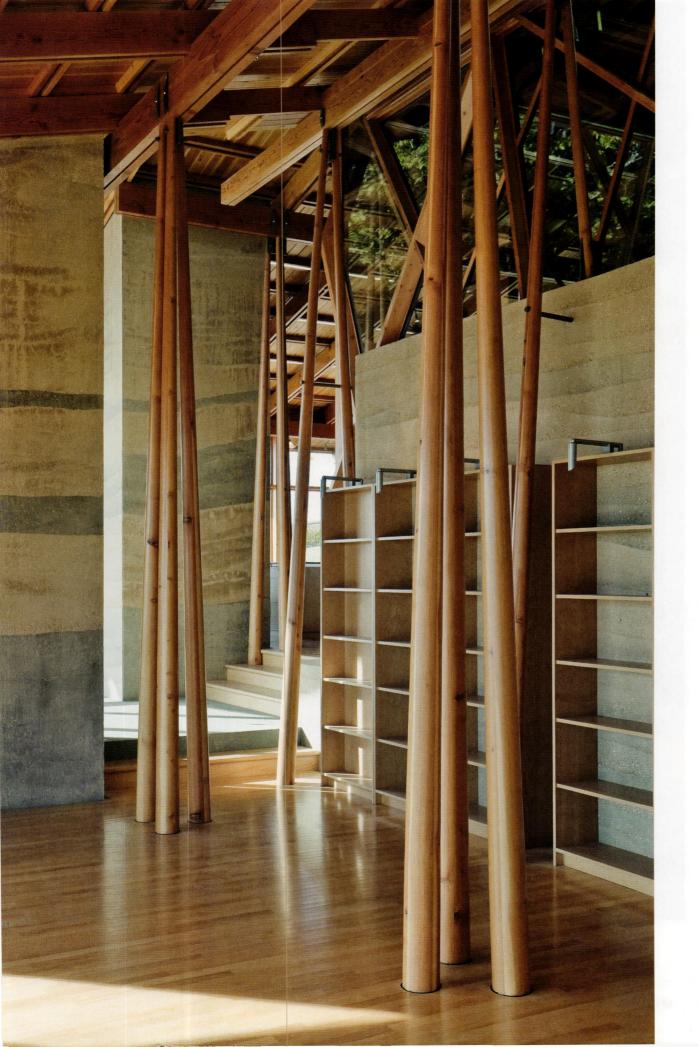
In the case of the Bodega residence, Cutler showed his client a rammedearth house he'd designed a few years earlier in Napa (the architect is known for environmentally sensitive buildings of wood, earth and stone). "The client saw it and said: 'I've got to have it," Cutler says. Rammed earth involves compacting five-to-ten-inch layers of moist soil, gravel, clay, or silt into metal or plywood forms using cement as a binder. Built on site, the resulting wall is earthquake-resistant and combines structure and finish, since the color is derived from the local earth from which it is made. For this house Cutler used soil from a pit south of Sonoma and treated the walls with a clear sealer. They were tested for strength at 2,500 psi-a rating almost as strong



Above: The entrance hallway opens into the light-filled living room on what the architect calls the "view side" of the house.

Right: The five sections of the house are connected by small corridors, or "buckles in space." Facing page: Cutler used golden-toned Douglas fir for built-ins and the tripod roof supports.



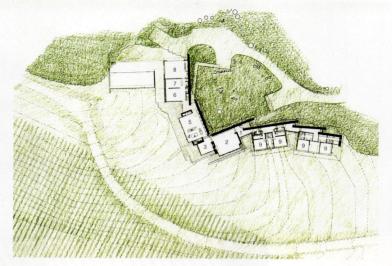




as concrete. The walls are three feet wide at the base and narrow to twenty-six inches at the top. As they rise, alternating dark and light striations are evident, an apparent haphazard result of the rammed earth process. But they're not haphazard at all. "The striations are deliberate—I drew them that way, on occasion going to the forms and marking them up," Cutler says.

The design of each of the house's five sections was driven by its place along the ridge. The living room is about twelve feet forward of the front door, which is accessed by way of a paved walk from the guest parking area. The living, dining, and kitchen areas wrap the big bay tree, while a 180-degree turn from the entry axis takes one to the private bedroom wings. A step inside the living room reveals a light-filled space flooded by floor-to-ceiling windows that frame the view of the gridded vineyard to the south. On the northern exposure, the rammed-earth walls are punctuated with smaller amounts of glass, including clerestories that emphasize the messy vitality of the forest. "The window mullions on the forest side are random and wacky," Cutler says. "They're like the branches of a tree."

Then there's the architect's play with the color of his materials. "When you make something dark darker, it makes something light lighter, and vice versa," Cutler says. "There are places here where they slip by each other, where the contrast is shocking—the wood is like golden



candles." He's referring to the Douglas fir with which he sculpted panels, doors, built-ins, and especially an elegant series of floor-to-ceiling tripod columns. They're actually groups of slender Douglas fir poles bolted together to support the frames of the series of roofs, which slope gently to complement the cant of the rammed earth walls. "The tripods are tree-like," he says. "The wood is naturally very light in color, and it gets lighter when it's next to the massive rammed earth walls. It helps define the edge."

Cutler has juxtaposed the slim golden tripods against the solid visceral walls of tamped earth—the walls themselves inserted into a highly powerful site — to deliver a visual definition of grace under pressure. "Sometimes it all just clicks, when the land has the criteria to make you grow," he says. "All I did was reinforce what I experienced in the forest." That was an experience, obviously, where power and imagination joined forces.

Plan of the house prepared by Cutler Anderson Architects.

J. Michael Welton writes about architecture, art and design for a number of national and international publications. He also publishes an online design magazine at architects and artisans.com.



Facing page: The square dining room, surrounded on two sides by glass, is connected to both the kitchen and living room.

Above left: On a clear day, the view looks over the vineyard and through the hills to the Pacific Ocean two miles away.

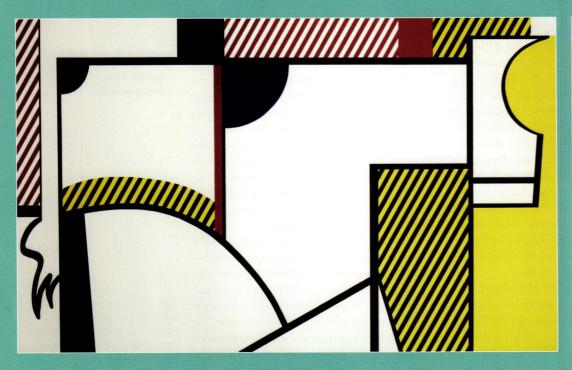


Above right: The kitchen is centrally located between the dining room and the family room, all contained within one of the five separate segments of the house.

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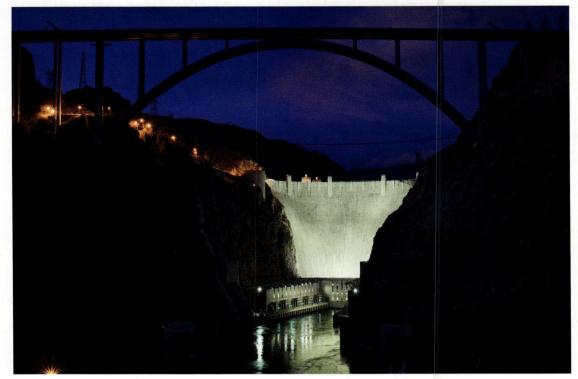
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Spanning the Decades

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THE FIRST TIME I VISITED THE HOOVER DAM, the focus wasn't on form, but function. I was sixteen, touring the American West with forty other teens, and entirely unprepared for what I was about to see just thirty miles from Las Vegas. Our bus let us out onto the curving roadway atop the dam; elevators carried us down 530 feet into the chasm of the Colorado River. On a blistering August day, the air at the base of the dam was wintry. That was just one indication of the structure's ability to alter nature. The other was the row of turbines turning the full force of the river into electricity.

I'm lucky I got to see the dam that way, as a kind of machine, rather than as an art deco icon (which it also is). Because, when architecture soars the way Hoover Dam soars, function tends to be the the driving force. And Hoover Dam was all about function. The goal of the Depression-era project was to protect the Southwest from devastating floods and at the same time to irrigate and electrify the region. Has any other building had to do so much? The dam's basic shape was determined by engineers, who directed the pouring of more than three-and-a-quarter-million cubic yards of concrete. There was no time for frills—either applied detail or the careful editing of architects like Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, whose "less" took more premeditation.

But the Bureau of Reclamation had the wisdom to hire Gordon B. Kaufmann, a Californian whose other Depression-era masterpiece is the Los Angeles Times headquarters. After reviewing the bureau's original scheme, which called for classical ornamentation, Kaufmann turned to a style more in keeping with the gee-whiz aspects of the project. The intake towers would look like rocket ships, the "fins" dividing the spillways like rudders. And because deco relies on simple gestures, all it took was a little tapering of the concrete and an occasional aluminum accent. In fact, Kaufmann's decorative elements are nearly indistinguishable, style-wise, from the equipment at the base of the dam, the turbines designed for maximum efficiency.

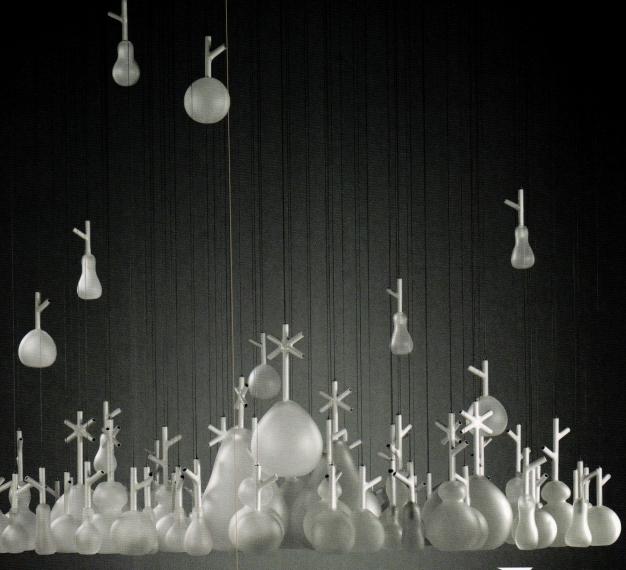
Over the years, I returned to Hoover Dam many times—often as a respite from Las Vegas, where the tacky architecture would drive me to seek more solid footing. As the Sunbelt population boomed, the roadway over the dam became impossibly congested. The government's solution was to build a new bridge across the Colorado River. For years before construction began in 2005, state and federal agencies debated whether the bridge should be visible from the dam; had I known of the controversy, I probably would have said "hide it around a bend"—don't mess with greatness.

Instead, the Federal Highway Administration decided on a site just fifteen hundred feet downstream from the dam. And then the government did an amazing thing: it built a bridge that is nearly as heroic as the dam itself. The need to suspend a roadway across a craggy canyon nearly nine hundred feet above the river demanded a remarkable sequence of events: towers were built on opposite sides of the canyon; formwork for a concrete arch was hung by cables from the towers; the formwork was filled, creating one of the largest concrete arches in the world. As the towers and cables were removed, steel girders were slid into place atop the arch, creating a sleek roadway across the canyon (and a head-scratcher for anyone who hasn't seen photos of the construction process).

The result is a structure—officially the Mike O'Callaghan-Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge—that is worthy of its surroundings, both natural and manmade. Not only does it not detract from the tableau but, almost incredibly to those of us who tend to accept change grudgingly, it actually improves it. The arch of the bridge and the horseshoe of the dam create a kind of ellipse, each curve appearing to complete the other.

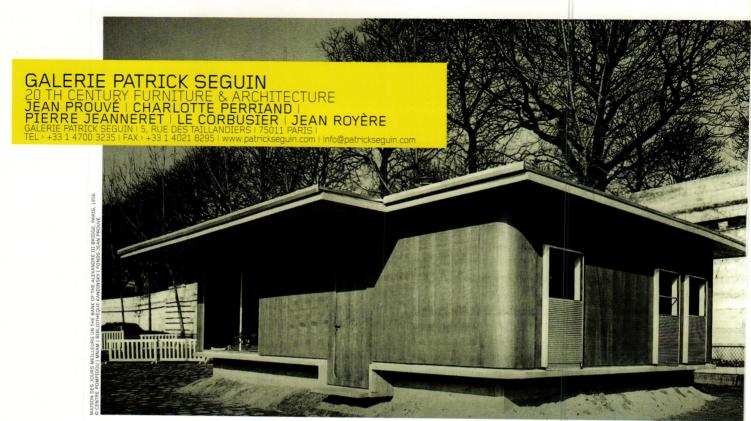
What the dam and the bridge have in common is that, in both cases, practical considerations took the lead, with architecture paying close attention. There's a lesson for designers. Form doesn't always have to follow function. But for the best results, it shouldn't wander too far off the path.

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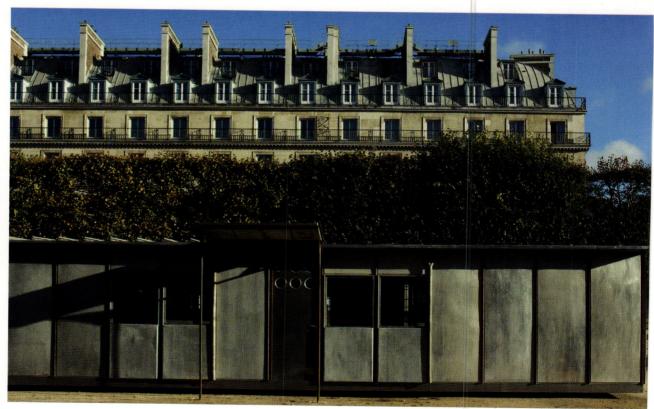


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