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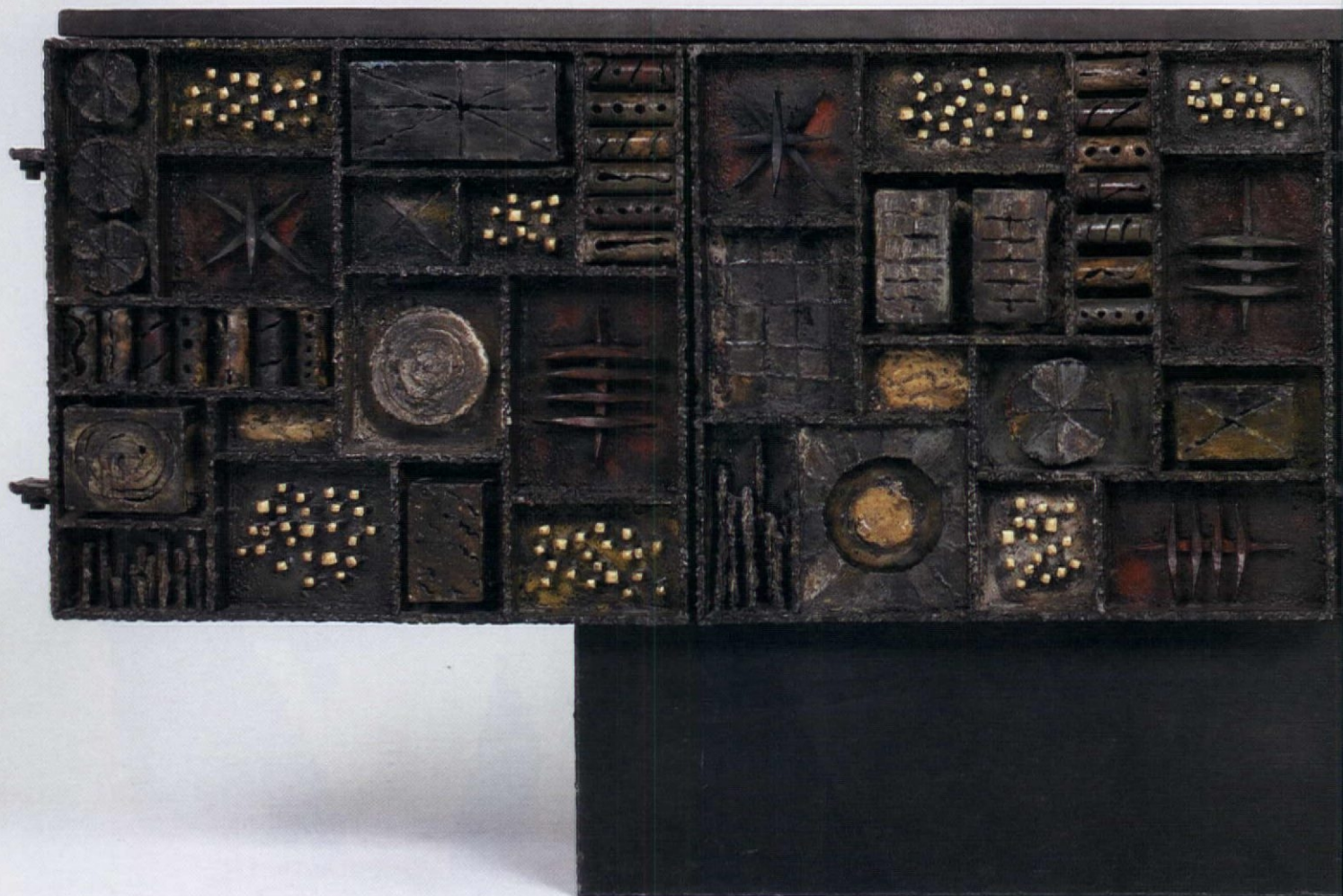
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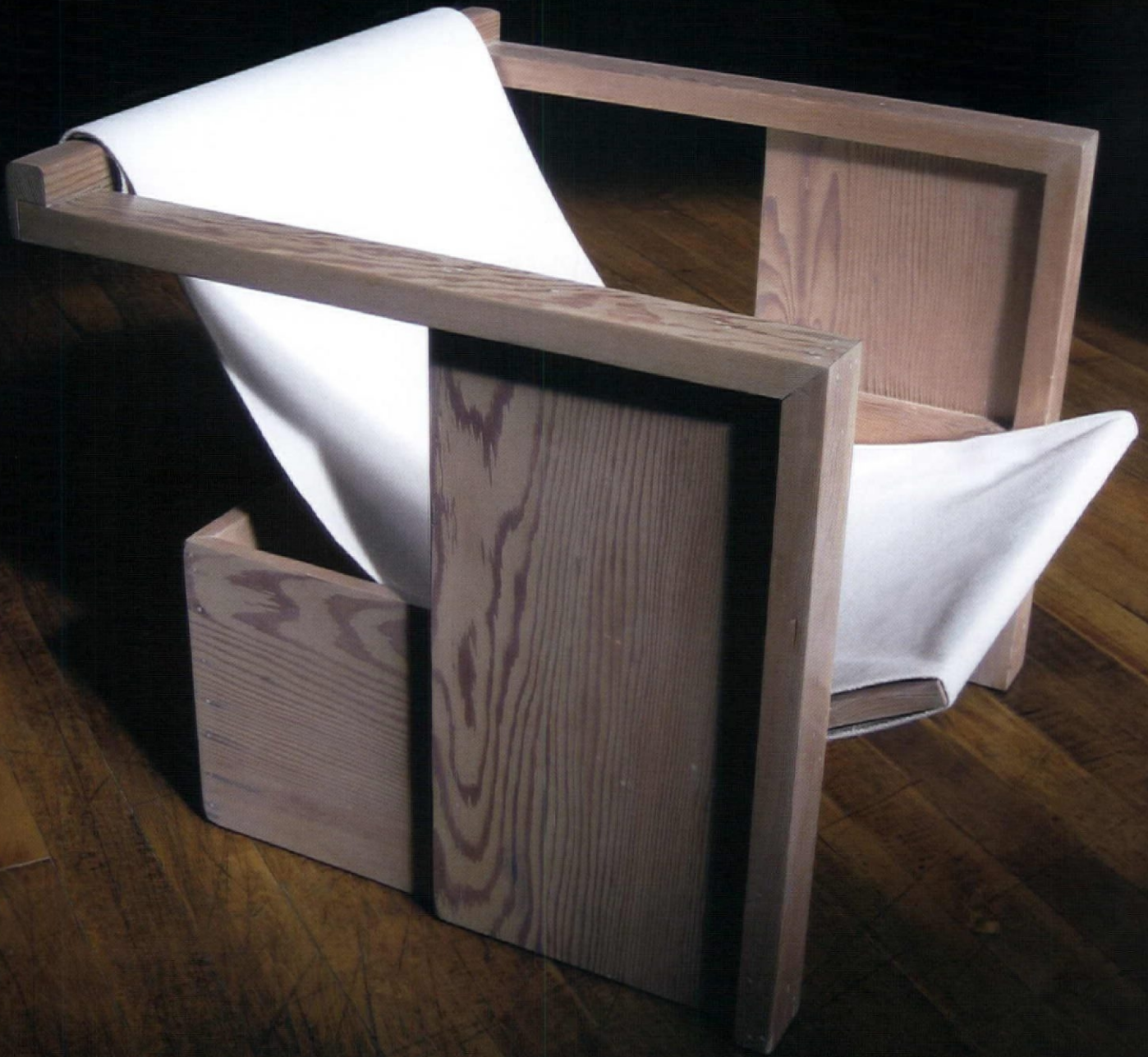
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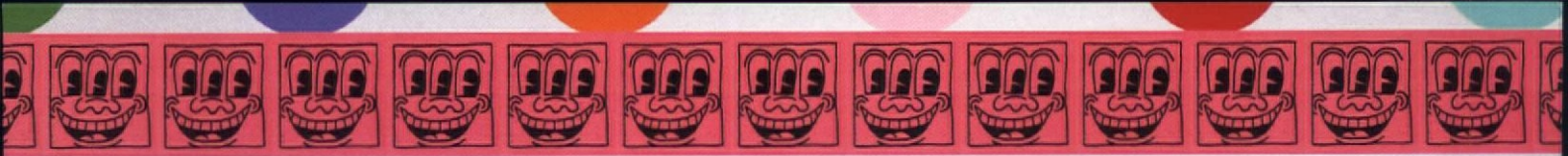


ON THE COVER

A c. 1955 gold-plated brass and Venetian glass necklace by Claire Falkenstein

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A 2003 blown glass vessel in apricot and aubergine by Sonja Blomdahl. Photograph by Lynn Thompson



Paintings and Sculpture 1961-1963

Paintings and Sculpture 1961-1963

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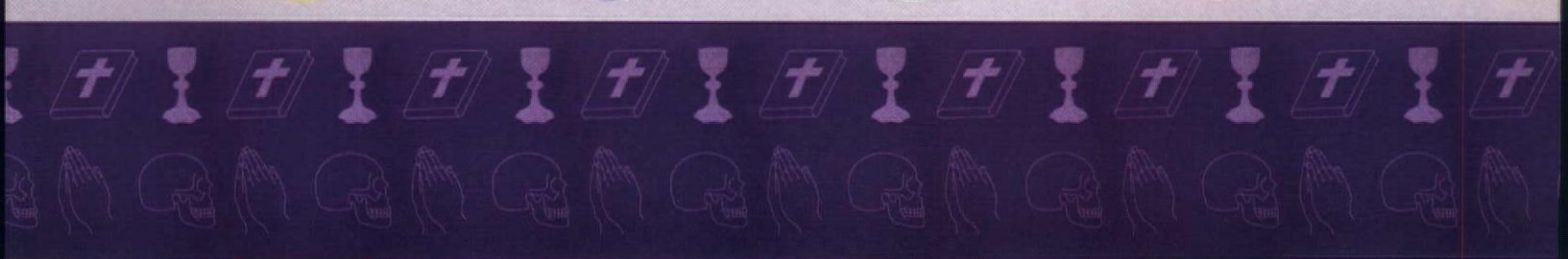
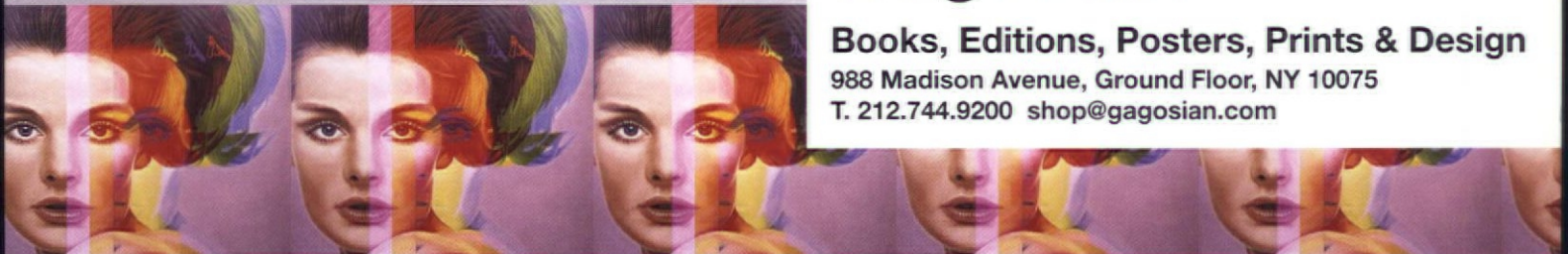


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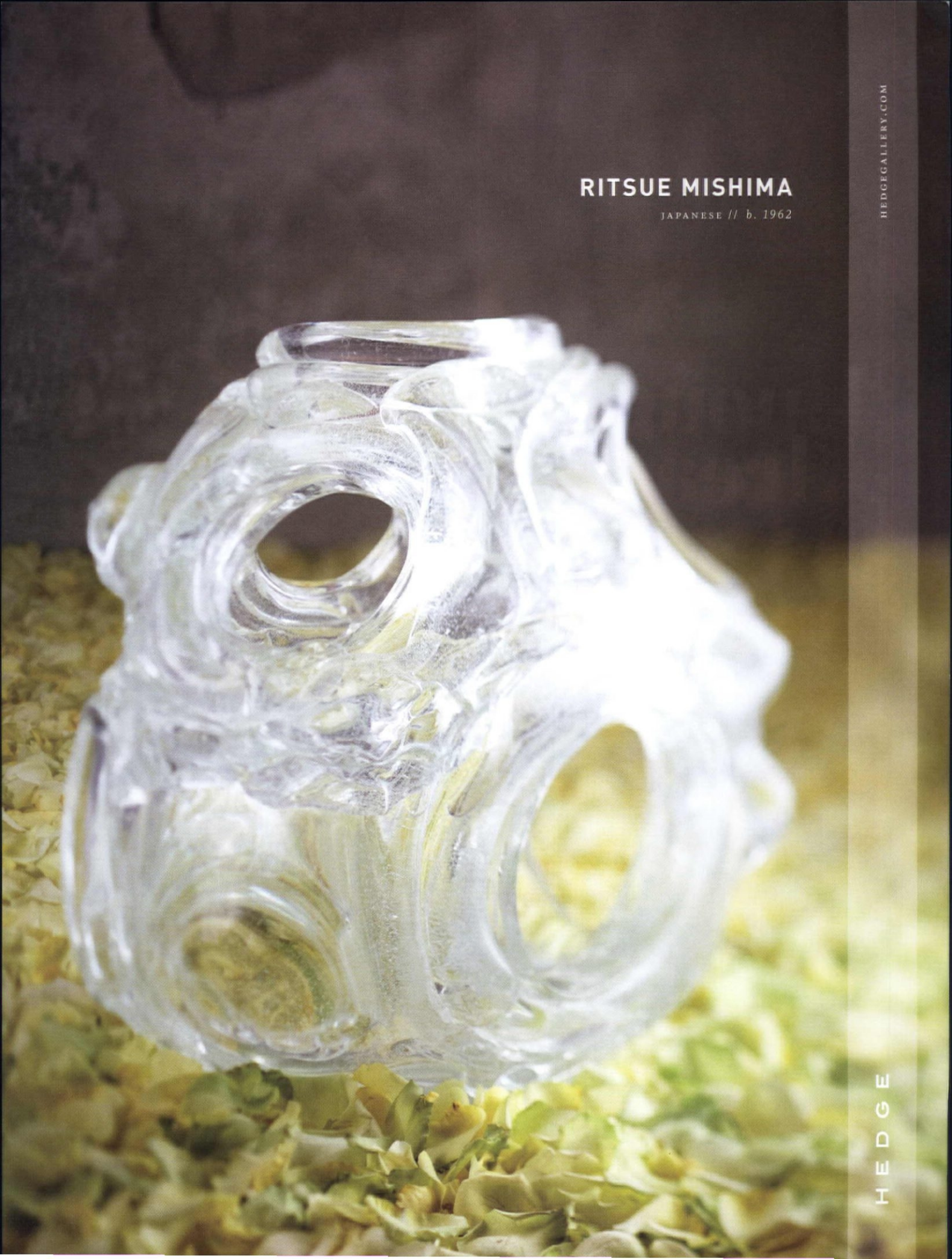


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RITSUE MISHIMA

JAPANESE // b. 1962



FIVE YEARS AGO, the launch of Design Miami as an adjunct to the Art Basel art fair across Biscayne Bay included a roundtable discussion entitled "Is Design Crashing Art's Party?" The parley—chaired, if memory serves, by the New York dealer Murray Moss—was intended to answer the question of whether a "design" show had any right to ride on the coattails of a "fine art" fair. In other words, the question was: were design and art of equal stature?

Needless to say, the issue was not resolved that evening. One panelist, the architect Terence Riley, offered the observation that

Enough Already

Alfred Barr, the first chief of New York's Museum of Modern Art (where Riley was a department head),

had made design part of MoMA's ambit from the start. The designer Gaetano Pesce, another panelist, assayed that art had, like design, always served a function: in many cases, he said, paintings—from the bosomy nudes of the old masters to the notorious *L'Origine du monde* by Gustave Courbet of 1866—had been commissioned as tasteful (more or less) erotica.

Fast-forward to Design Miami 2009, where another public discussion, led by architect Lee Mindel, touched on the nexus (or lack thereof) of design and art. The most interesting comment came from design collector George Lindemann. One reason he enjoys contemporary design, he said, is that, unlike contemporary artists, designers are willing to listen and adhere to the desires of their patrons.

And so the wheel has come full circle. Gone are the days when artists complied with, or fought, the orders of their patrons. Think of Michelangelo and Pope Julius II and their clash over the Sistine Chapel; Bronzino's attempts to please the Medici; van Dyck's currying the favor of Charles I of England; Velázquez's service to the Bourbons; and so on down to Warhol's portrait of Ethel Scull. Today, artists do what their intellects and instincts tell them to do. Collectors can like it or lump it.

Thus design, apparently, now presents an opportunity for the re-assertion of the notion of the involved patron, who can direct the course of a commission. This attitude is just a refinement on a trope that design dealers have been pushing for several years now: the idea of manufactured rarity—a.k.a. "limited editions." The pitch is: "Only ten of these tables/chairs/hot water bottles will be made, so get yours now." In some cases this representation is valid: a new Wendell Castle chair finished in an automobile-grade paint that costs \$5,000 per quart can't be mass-produced. At other times, the notion is a travesty. A "limited edition" piece can be tweaked slightly after the initial run—add grommets; put on a new finish—and, *voilà!*, you have a fresh "limited edition" series.

But what is most tedious and obnoxious, in my view, is the strident attempt to finesse the delineation between "art" and "design." It's not that one field is superior to another: it's that it's a false equation. There is no single acceptable and comprehensive definition for the word "art" any more than there is for the word "design." I would go so far as to say that there are no such things as "art" or "design"—there are only "artists" and "designers," and they decide how they want to be regarded by the world. The intention of these creative spirits is what matters. So, enough already. Let the creators and their works speak for themselves. The rest of us should shut the hell up.



Greg Lynn's huge Sciara Lamp, offered by Johnson Trading Gallery, illustrates the folly of the art versus design debate.

“The question was: were design and art of equal stature?”

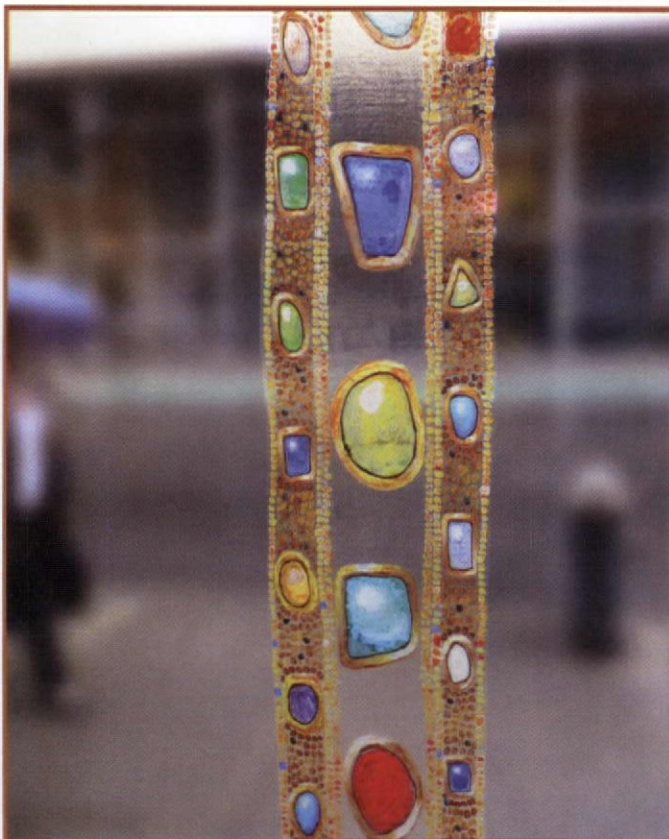
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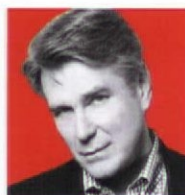


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JOANNA LEHAN ("Man of Vision," page 126) is a New York-based freelance writer and editor who specializes in photography. Lehan has served as an assistant curator at the International Center of Photography and as a books editor at the Aperture Foundation. Her résumé includes work on monographs for photographers Thomas Ruff, Susan Mieselas, and Zwelethu Mthethwa. She writes regularly for *Photograph* and *PDN* magazines, and is currently writing an essay for a book about the visual work of experimental geographer, writer, and artist Trevor Paglen—to be published by Aperture this fall.



KAY BEA JONES ("Suspension Bridge," page 134) is an associate professor at the Knowlton School of Architecture at the Ohio State University. Her articles have appeared in a number of publications, including the *Journal of Architectural Education* and *E(d)A, Esempi di Architettura*. Her current work includes writings on MAXXI, the long-anticipated Zaha Hadid-designed museum of contemporary art in Rome. Jones collects works by Ann Hamilton, Laura Lisbon, Elizabeth Frolet, and Southwestern American artists, including Fritz Scholder and Maria Martinez.

KARLA CAVARRA BRITTON ("P.J.'s First Foray," page 122) holds a Ph.D. in architectural history and theory from Harvard University, and is a lecturer at the Yale School of Architecture. In 2001, Phaidon published her monograph on the multifaceted work of the Belgium-born modernist architect Auguste Perret, a book which appeared in both English and French editions. She is currently editing a book on contemporary sacred architecture, to be published by Yale University Press this year. As a native of the American West, she collects Mexican pottery and Native American weavings.




KAY DOUGLAS & TOM VOSS (Art Directors) are the principals of an award-winning New York graphic design firm, Douglas+Voss. Douglas has designed and launched more than 25 magazines. Voss, a writer and designer, has publishing credits on eight nonfiction books, the majority about decorative arts. MODERN and the duo are a perfect fit: Santiago Calatrava and Steven Holl are among their favorite architects; they collect furniture by George Nakashima and Paul Evans; and their ceramics collection includes works by Peter Voulkos, Ewen Henderson, Ruth Duckworth, and Toshiko Takaezu.

Edited by BEATRICE V. THORNTON

CORRECTION: In the Winter 2010 issue of MODERN, the names of the Los Angeles design gallery Modern One and its co-proprietor, Benjamin Storck, were misspelled. We regret the errors.

FROM TOP: LEILA ALAQUI; HARRIS DEW; CHRIS ZACHER; COURTESY OF KARLA CAVARRA BRITTON; STEVE GIRALT



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Carlos Motta
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Photo courtesy of Fernando Laszlo

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Carlo Mollino Ico Parisi Andrea Branzi Gaetano Pesce Carlo Graffi

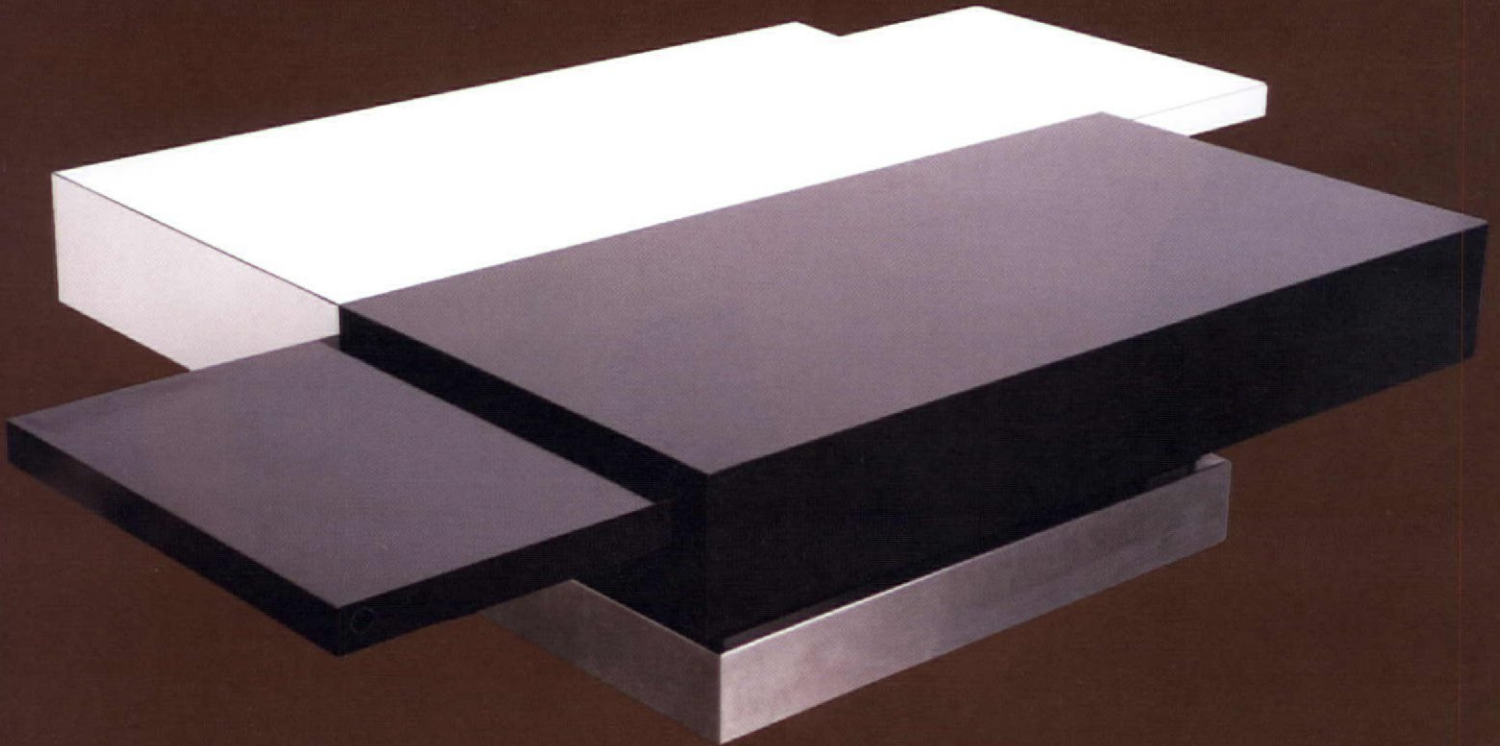




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What Sold, for How Much, & Why?

LOT 244, Christie's "Important 20th Century Decorative Arts & Design" sale in New York, December 8, 2009:

An ebonized wood-and-glass occasional table designed by **CARLO MOLLINO** circa 1949-1950. The piece sold for \$602,500 off of a pre-auction estimate of \$250,000 to \$350,000. Some reasons for the unexpectedly high price:

Mollino's Moment

Carlo Mollino (1905-1973) was the iconoclast nonpareil of twentieth-century Italian design. Unlike Milan-based coevals such as Gio Ponti, he undertook custom assignments almost exclusively, rarely exhibited work internationally, and hardly ever worked far from his native city, Turin. An architect, and designer of furniture, interiors, and theatrical sets, Mollino was also a passionate skier, motorcar racer (and auto designer), pilot, and photographer. In 2005, Christie's sold a 1949 custom-made oak-and-glass Mollino table for \$3.8 million, a record for twentieth-century design eclipsed only by the

famed—or notorious—sale last year of a 1917 armchair, by the Parisian avant-garde designer Eileen Gray, for \$28 million.

Nonconformist Chic

Simon Andrews, the Christie's specialist who ushered the Mollino side table into last December's sale, draws a parallel between Gray and Mollino. Both were balky scions of wealth—he the son of a prosperous engineer; she a member of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy—who, he argues, marched to the hymns of their own design muses. Neither followed a conventional path to modernism. Mollino, says Andrews, had the sensibilities of a "structural engineer," and indeed delighted in taking artful photos of his furniture pieces broken down into their component parts.

Provenance & Prototype

The Mollino side table was consigned by the Steinberg Foundation of Liechtenstein, holder of one of the great art and design collections in the world. The foundation had purchased the table at a 1984 Paris sale of Mollino work, an event celebrated among design cognoscenti. At that time the side table was touted as having been personally owned by Mollino

(Christie's played down the claim in the December auction catalogue, but mentioned it nonetheless). The fact that a cheaper variation of the table was offered by the American retailer Joseph Singer, beginning in 1951, only added to the value of the table offered by Christie's: it became the touchstone—the pristine prototype—for a mass-market piece.

Sex Sells

For all that Mollino can be said to have used the methods of a structural engineer, his furniture has sensuous, sinuous lines that are suggestive of the female body. In his avocation as a photographer, Mollino took scores of carefully choreographed nudes, using a Polaroid camera, during the 1960s (a number of these were included in the exhibition *Italics: Italian Art Between Tradition and Revolution, 1968-2008*, which was mounted at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art this past winter). The contours of the frame of the side table suggest a prone human form with legs raised. The piece, in fact, was included in a 1997 show at London's Design Museum entitled *The Power of Erotic Design*.

As for the Buyer ...

Knowledgeable sources in the design market say that the winning bidders were Stefan Edlis and Gael Neeson, noted contemporary art collectors and philanthropists who live in Chicago and Aspen, Colorado. If correct, the information would seem to ratify a pointed (if pointless) argument that design dealers have been strenuously pushing for the past several years: that great design and great art are one and the same.

Kristin McKirdy

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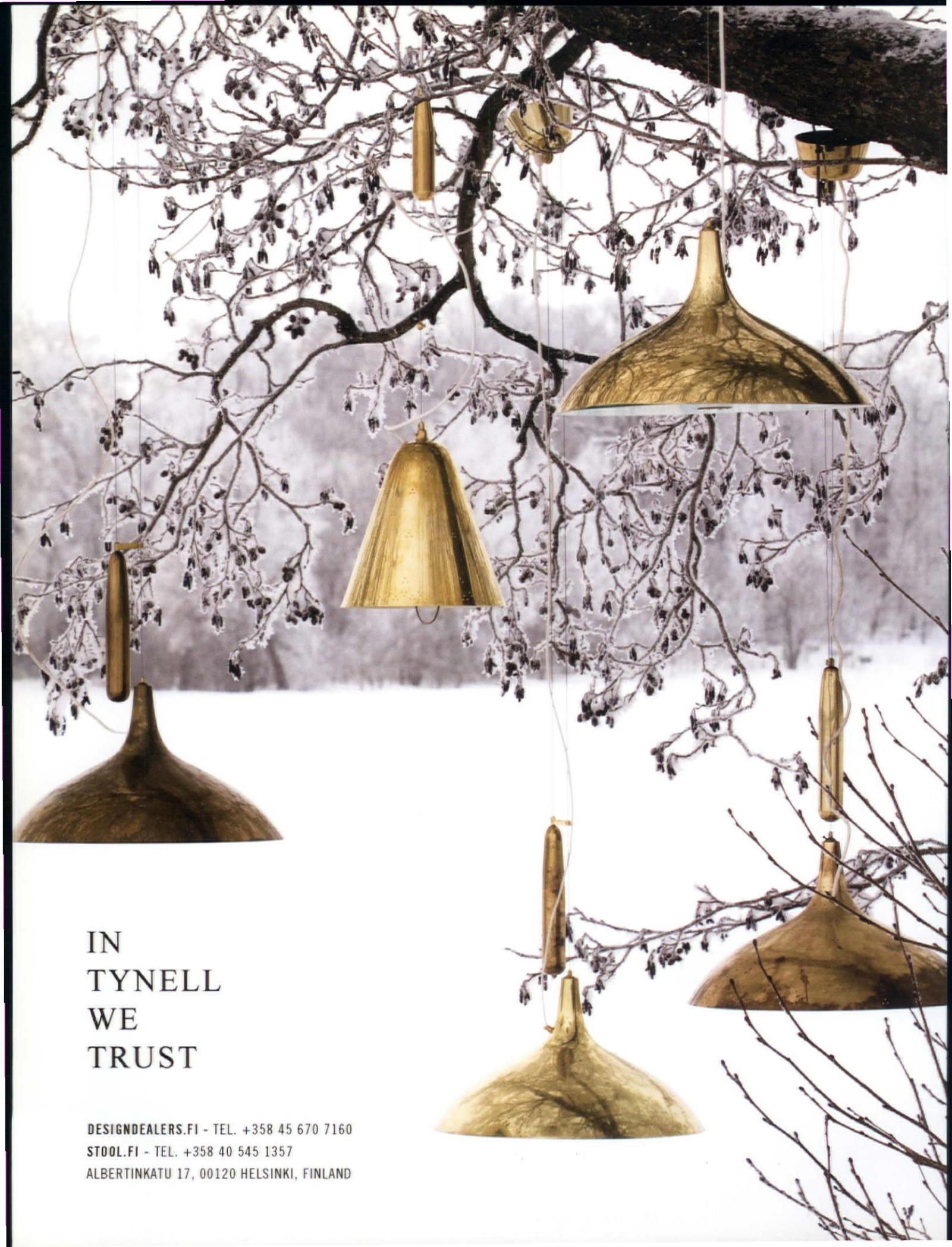
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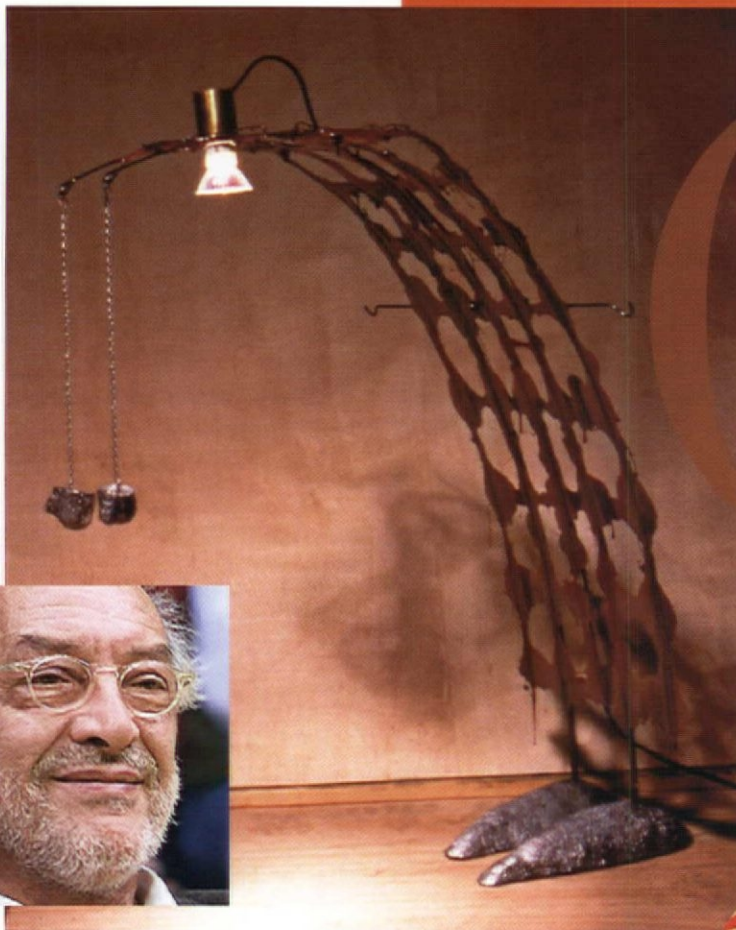
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GAETANO PESCE doesn't do "pretty." Throughout a career that began in the mid-1960s, after he completed his studies in Venice, Pesce has been driven not by aesthetics but rather by an interest in both socio-political currents and the fabrication of works—such as his seminal "Golgotha" chair of the early 1970s, made by draping fiberglass-and-polyester "cloth" over a mold—that allowed for subtle, unique variations by the fabricator, even in a piece that could be mass-produced. Pesce spoke recently with MODERN about the ongoing evolution of his ideas:

What in your opinion is the key mission of design today? The time is right for an object to express more than beauty, nice form, and function. Objects have the potential to express points of view. They can have the characteristics of art, expressed even more powerfully than contemporary art. In the past, art was often a product: there was no photography, for example, and thus no way to remember a place you visited. So you had a painter make a landscape. Then the camera came on the scene, and art lost this purpose. But I am convinced that design has a functional and a cultural side, so can be doubly powerful and expressive.

The Design of Politics, Culture, & Chance

A CHAT WITH ARCHITECT **GAETANO PESCE**, THE LION OF INDEPENDENT THINKING IN THE WORLD OF DESIGN

Interview by BRENT LEWIS

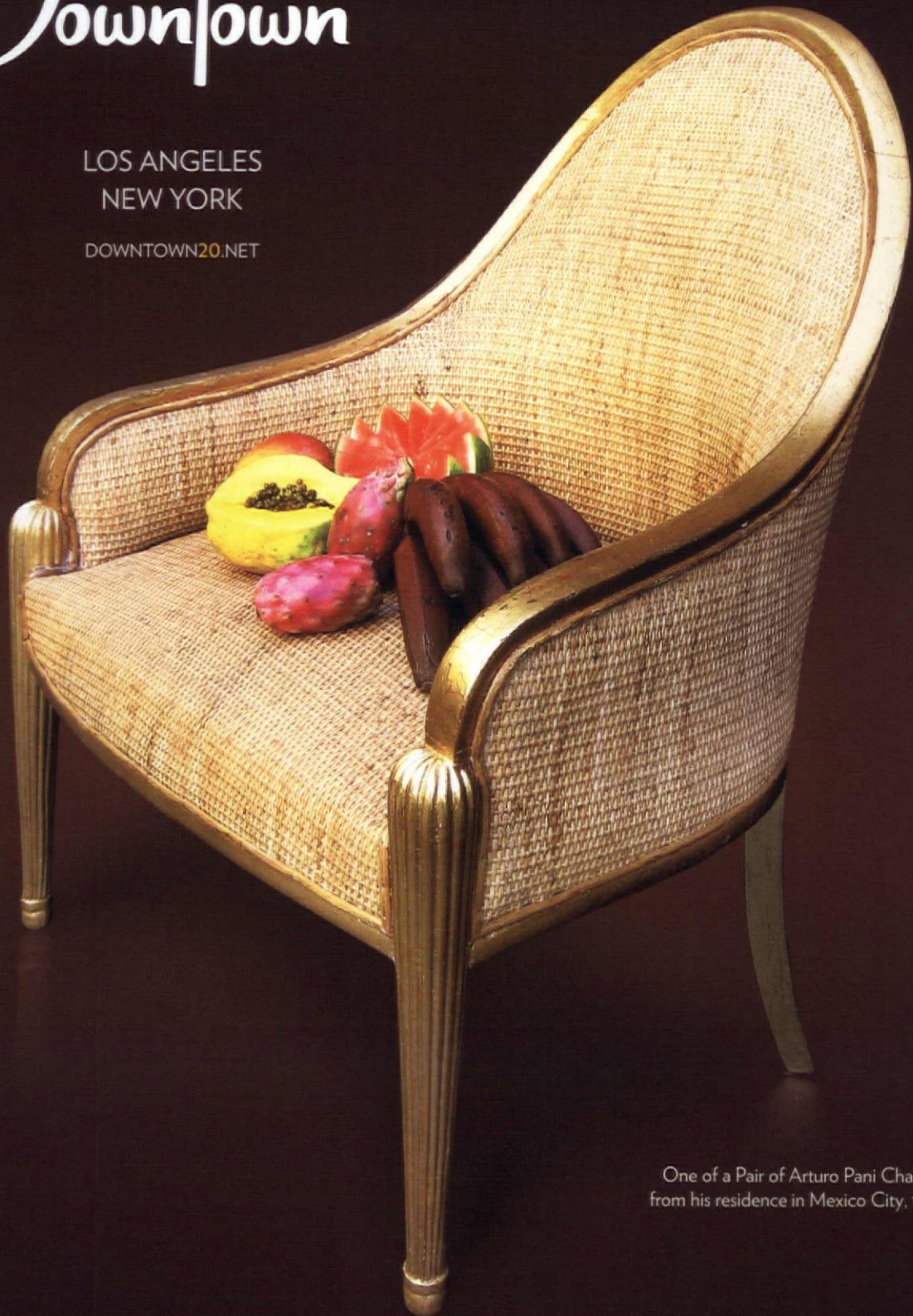


Top: Pesce and his 1993 metal-and-resin "Verbal Abuse" lamp. Above: Pesce's "La Mama" chair and ottoman, originally released in 1968, now produced by B&B Italia.

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One of a Pair of Arturo Pani Chairs
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Above: A view of Pesce's Manhattan design studio. Below: his 1972 fiberglass-and-polyester "Golgotha" chair.



But today, it seems like designers are mainly concerned with perfection of form—much of it sleek and sexy, and focused on the surface. I agree. Forty years ago last year, I issued a chair [the "La Mama" chair from Pesce's "Up" series] with a sensual and soft shape, reminiscent of the body of a woman. But a chain connects the chair to a round ottoman. Though the chair is quite comfortable, what it expresses, ironically, is that women are prisoners of prejudices of men. I was trying to say that a designer can express a political view—not in a traditional medium like a magazine article, but in an industrial object made for a household.

You talk about reflecting humanity in design, which in your work means imperfection, leaving room for randomness and chance. This goes back to the Seventies. At that time I was thinking that society is about difference. Individuals are not all the same; there are different cultures, languages, circumstances of origin, etc. Yet political movements of the day insisted that we are all the same. I tried to say that democracy is not only the assurance of equality but the protection of difference. It would be a tragedy not only for people in general but also for designers not to understand this. In standardized industrial production, when an object is different they call it faulty and throw it out. But I prefer the "faulty" pieces: each has a personality and is different.

This is the idea behind your "diversified series" works? Yes. For instance, cars are all much the same, but in the future I hope that they will be unique for each client. I foresee a third industrial revolution that will have that technological capability. When I first considered how the chain of production can change because of atmospheric pressure, or humidity, or how even a worker's mood can alter a piece, I searched out a new material and designed

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Wolfgang Bauer



A. Loos/M. Schmidt, 1902



A. Loos/F. O. Schmidt, 1902

A. Loos/F. O. Schmidt, 1905





the "Golgotha" chair. The MoMA bought one immediately because they saw it was a new idea. I'm convinced this is still the future. The time of identical copies is behind us; we are entering a time of originality. I think the market is asking for this today.

It's interesting that you say objects have "personalities." Let me tell you about a lamp I designed, which I call "Verbal Abuse." Remember when we were in school, and there were certain friends who weren't very smart? The teacher might say: "You don't understand, you will never succeed in life." I call that verbal abuse. A young person who is told such a thing can react in two ways. One student will think he doesn't care what his teacher says. Another one will believe what the teacher says, and he starts to bend more and more in shame. In life they are bent people.

Above: The 2009 "Montanara" sofa, covered in images of an Alpine lake and waterfall, is one of Pesce's most fanciful designs. Below: He says the "Sunset in New York" sofa, designed in 1980, took on a new, sadder meaning for him after September 11.

Right, and the lamp is weighed down by lead. The lamp stands up straight, but there are places where people can attach one, two, or three weights until the lamp bends so the light illuminates at an angle to suit their needs. But the lamp is a doubly functional object. One: it is practical. Two: it tells a story about verbal abuse.

I'm confused. Are you saying that human beings sometimes bend when they shouldn't, or that we should remain strong and free? Both. We should be strong, but also remain reasonable. Verbal abuse is a fact of life. The wife or husband receives verbal abuse from his or her spouse every day. So do employees from their employer. The lamp is talking about the verbal abuse that can happen from the school to the workplace to the family and house. But remove the weights and the lamp stands tall.



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photo: nicole horton

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So you hope your designs will reach people on an emotional level? Yes, they should stir the imagination and also have a function. We make a chair that goes to a minority—not because it is *for* a minority, but because the minority is created as soon as we bring the chair to market. Certain people with a certain mentality will like that chair and others will not. I often make an object, in the end I have two, three, or ten copies. It's different from saying this object is only done in ten copies. I say this object is unique and I repeat it for those who will enjoy it and buy it.

Three of Pesce's 2004 pliable resin XXXL monumental vases, commissioned by the New York design gallery Moss.

Have the people who buy your work and your clients changed in forty years? Forty or so years ago, I was doing my job and only a few people were interested. Now I do more or less the same kind of work—like a recent sofa, called “Montanara” that represents a landscape of a lake in the Alps. They tell me people like it very much. So that means that something changed from forty years ago. I think people are now more aware of design. But I would like to return to your earlier question about emotion.

Please do. I'd like to talk about the architectural project I designed, mainly for myself, for the World Trade Center site. The “Sunset in New York” sofa I made twenty-nine years ago returned to my thoughts on September 11. I've lived and worked in New York since 1980, and after that day I believed there was a risk of a social, cultural sunset on New York because of the tragedy. We haven't been given a fantastic solution, only arguments and delays. So in a way the tragedy continues. In my project [essentially, a reconstruction of the Twin Towers, connected by a large, heart-shaped bridge], I tried to express something rare in architecture: optimism. When you look at a building, you don't often say, “Now I feel better about things.” That kind of expression is simply beyond most architects. With my design I tried to say: “Look, we have a future if we are optimistic. We have a future if we believe in new things.” **M**

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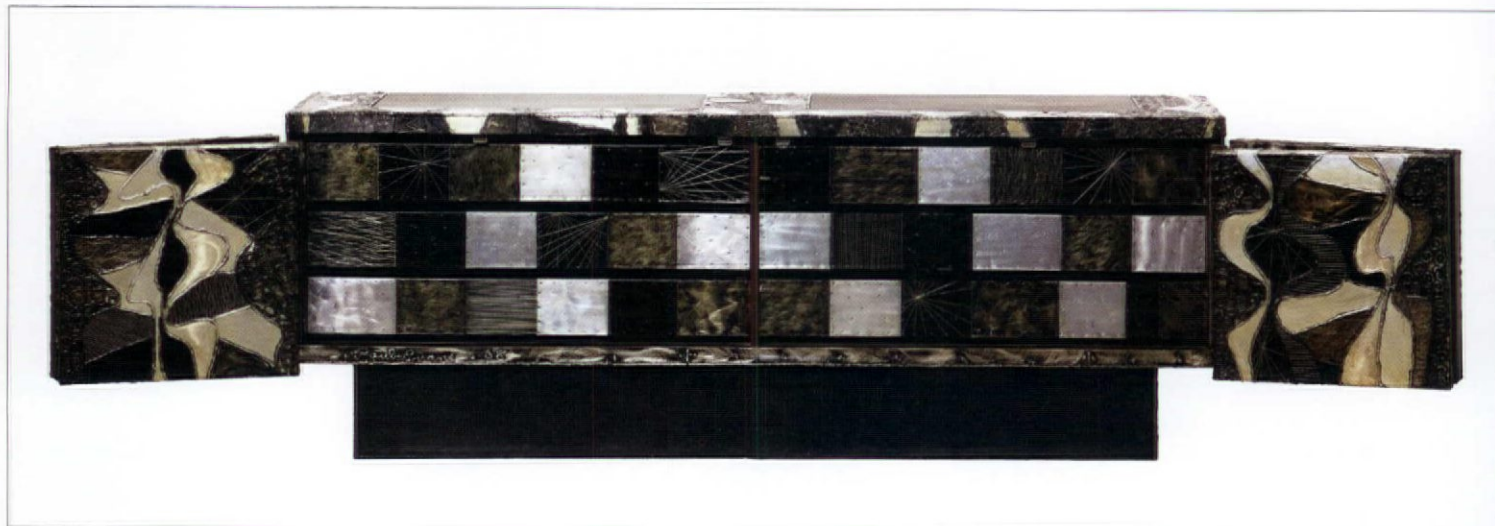
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A Jack Rogers Hopkins walnut
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Monumental "Argente" sideboard Paul Evans, 1968



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Whodunnit?

THE MANY REASONS FOR THE ALLURE OF DESIGNS THAT CAN ONLY BE ASCRIBED TO JOHN AND JANE DOE

By GREGORY CERIO

At Wright, an "Italian c. 1950" desk lamp went for \$1,250 off a low estimate of \$2,000, while "American c. 1960" seating failed to sell.

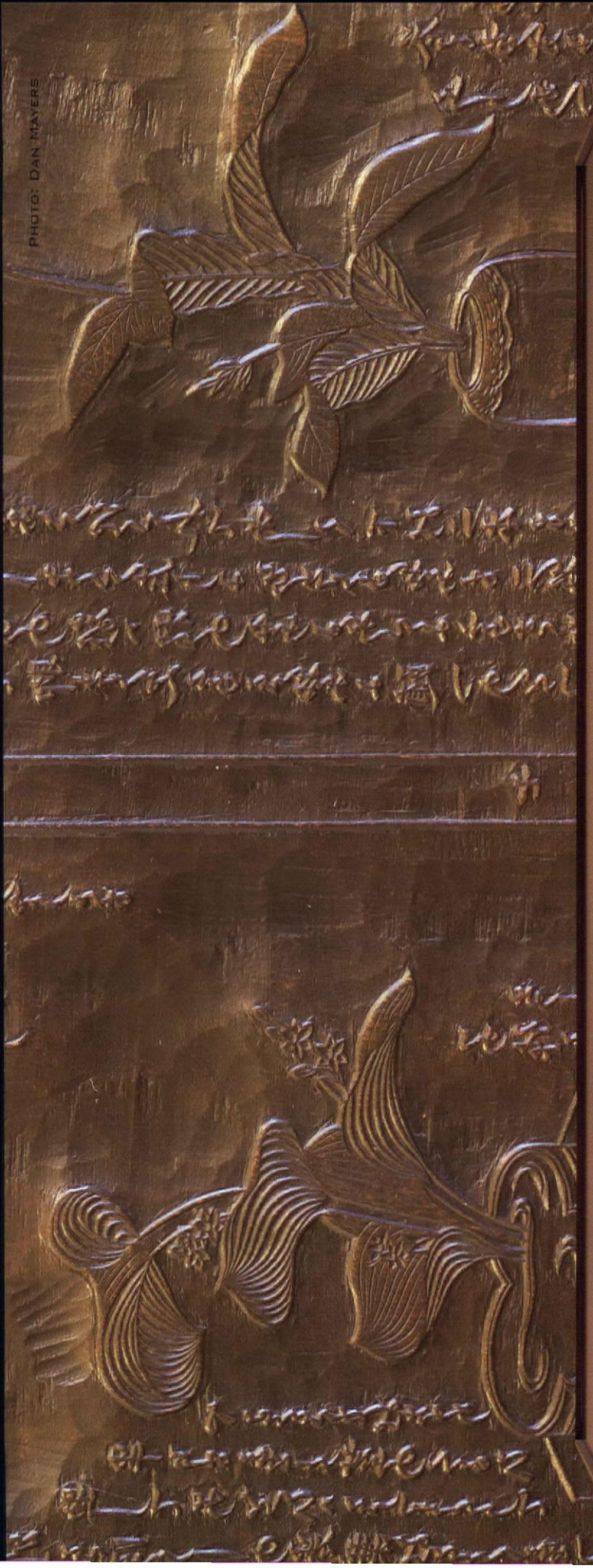
AMONG TOP AUCTION HOUSES, the "cover lot"—the item pictured on the front of the glossy sales catalogue—is traditionally the pick of the litter; the sale's marquee draw. But for his "Modern Design" sale last October, Chicago auctioneer Richard Wright made an unusual, and in retrospect daring, choice of a cover lot image. It showed a man in rear profile lounging on an eccentric orange fabric-upholstered sofa from the 1960s, made of panels of ash plywood that bulged out at their base and furled outward at the top, like flower petals (below). The auction featured items by famous "name" designers such as Oscar Niemeyer, Serge Mouille, and Jean Prouvé and Charlotte Perriand, but arguably the ash sofa—along with a matching club chair, with which the couch was offered *en suite*—was the most aesthetically interesting lot in the auction. "I'd never seen anything like them," says Wright. "The form was amazing—maybe a little kitschy in an 'I Dream of Jeannie' TV show sort of way—but certainly unique. I thought the estimate was reasonable [\$7,000 to \$9,000 for the set] and you can't just keep putting iconic pieces on catalogue covers."

By now you will have guessed that the sofa and chair did not find a buyer. And a chief reason, it is safe to presume, is that the pieces were only described in the catalogue as "American, circa 1960"—attributed to no designer, nor to any manufacturer. In any collecting field—it's almost too obvious to state—famous names sell. But anonymous designs have a variety of attractions—practical, aesthetic, and intellectual. Such pieces



COURTESY OF WRIGHT (2)

PHOTO: DAN MAYERS



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The Italian futurist table lamp (above) would have fetched far more than \$15,625 at Wright had the maker been known; the anonymous trompe l'oeil metal box made in Italy in the 1960s, (right) is on offer at the New York gallery Mondo Cane.



can have a special character that is appreciated by even the most seasoned and selective collectors. "A brilliantly designed but anonymous work has a quality all its own—an air of mystery that makes it especially compelling," the famously fastidious modern design collector John Waddell says. "It stands on its own two feet, inviting recognition without having the crutch of a 'name'."

“WITHOUT THE ‘LUXURY TAX’ A NAME CARRIES, ANONYMOUS DESIGNS ARE ALWAYS, RELATIVELY SPEAKING, A BARGAIN.

And without the “luxury tax” a name carries, anonymous designs are always, relatively speaking, a bargain. “People collect for all kinds of reasons,” says Sally Rosen, owner of the Dallas design gallery *next20*. “Those who collect for investment are only interested in work by known designers.”

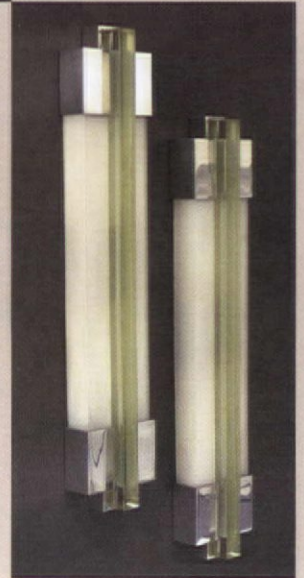
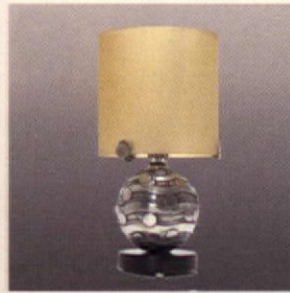
Anonymous pieces tend to appeal mainly to two groups at seemingly polar ends of the collecting spectrum. At one end, there are those whose hunting and gathering is driven by a kind of emotional response led by their own sense of what it worthy and appealing. Even though this approach does not put meat on his table—“Auctions are all about the name game. I put very few anonymous pieces on the block.”—Wright admires it: “I love the idea of buying only what is pleasing to your eye,” he says. “It’s a method that creates collections that are interesting and idiosyncratic.” Rosen points out that some of the greatest collectors of the modern age, such as Peggy Guggenheim, chose things without regard to the ratification of critics or the market (and thus usually got into a field cheaply, before it became fashionable). “They loved what they had and bought it because they had not only connoisseurship and a trained eye, but also because they followed their gut instincts,” she says. Waddell, an exemplar of Rosen’s remarks, says: “I pay particular attention to anonymous pieces in collections and exhibitions; it’s generally a sure eye that put them there.”

The other collecting cohort drawn to anonymous designs are those who select objects not with their hearts but with their brains—or, rather, with the idea of putting their brains to work. In 2007, Patrick Parrish and Greg Wooten, principals of the Manhattan gallery *Mondo Cane*, mounted a group of objects in their space at a sales exhibition under the banner “Anonymous.” The event was a success, both financially and educationally. “Several buyers came in and were able to tell us, ‘oh, that chair’s by so-and-so.’ It was a great learning experience,” Parrish says. “We’ve always liked things we don’t know. Chances are a piece you’ve never seen before might be unique, and what’s more probably is. But for me, I love anonymous designs because I’m really into the

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Three treasures from France, authors unknown: (from top) a 1950s figurally carved table; a c. 1965 free-form mirror; and a c. 1950 18k gold and sapphire ring.

TO COLLECT VIA THE 'BRAND-NAME' METHOD CAN BE OVERRATED, IF NOT DOWNRIGHT LAZY.

research. Just because a piece is anonymous today doesn't mean it will be next week." Numerous collectors of modern design share Parrish's passion for whatever the equivalent of expending shoe-leather is in the Information Age. And odds are their efforts will be rewarded. As Wright says: "In theory, you should be able to document everything made in the second half of the twentieth century."

It bears mentioning that to collect via the "brand-name" method can be overrated, if not outright lazy. "I remember visiting a collector who rattled off the names of the designers of all his pieces," Wright says. "Problem was, each piece was a mediocre example of each designer's work." Echoing him, Rosen notes that even great designers made pieces that, in the production process, turned out badly. When she looks at a piece by a well-known designer, she says her rule of thumb is "would I buy this piece if it were anonymous?" (Incidental *caveat emptor*: Rosen advises that you should never buy an anonymous piece over the Internet, or on the basis of a picture: you always want to examine it firsthand to judge the quality of design and craftsmanship.) Plus, there is the "been there, done that" factor. Even an iconic work by a seminal designer can be yawn-inducing. Granting exceptions for special provenance, early production

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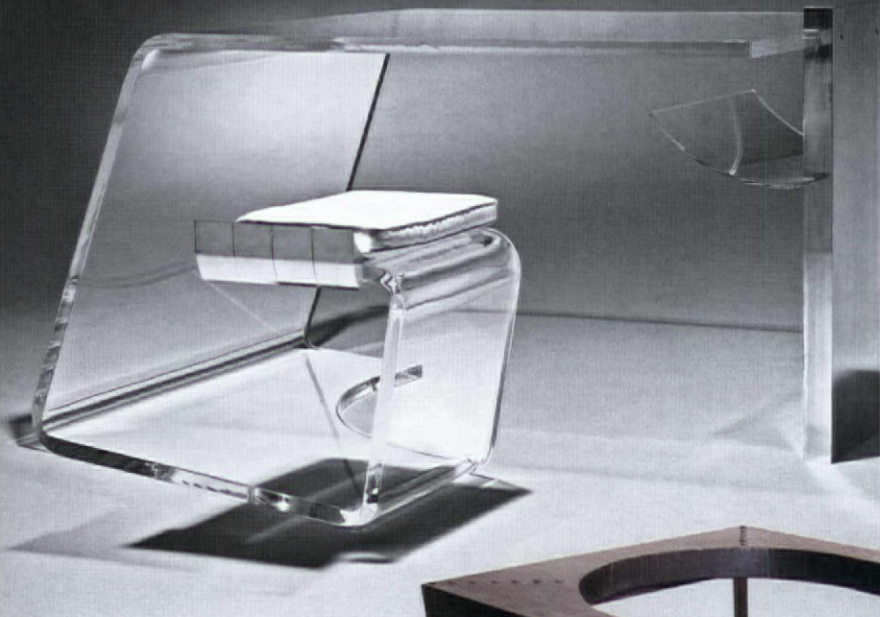
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dates, prototypes, and such, as Parrish says: "When you've seen your five-hundredth example, a piece is not that interesting. If everyone has one, by definition it's not cool."

Besides that, a "famous name" design might have little to do with the famous name at all. "Most of America's celebrated industrial designers maintained offices staffed with people toiling behind the scenes, whose work was sold as that of

NUMEROUS ICONIC WORKS ARE ASCRIBED TO RENOWNED DESIGNERS WHO PROBABLY HAD LESS TO DO WITH THEM THAN DID SOME UNSUNG BUT ACCOMPLISHED DESIGNER IN THE BACK ROOM.



the name on the door," Waddell says. "Numerous iconic works are ascribed to renowned designers who probably had less to do with them than did some unsung but accomplished designer in the back room." For example, there are the familiar mid-century chandeliers known as "George Nelson Bubble Lamps"—wire-ribbed, polymer-skinned lighting fixtures that come in such shapes as flying saucers, spheres, and cigars. As design historian Jeffrey Head notes in an essay on the Bubble Lamps—which were first issued in 1952 by the Howard Miller company and are now made by Modernica—the chandeliers were designed and engineered not by Nelson but by William C. Renwick, an employee of the firm George Nelson & Associates. Ah, the glory of being an "associate."

Finally, there is perhaps the saddest category of anonymity: the work of those who are unknown despite every effort not to be so. Sally Rosen tells a tale of a piece in her inventory: a wonderful American-made brooch crafted in 14k gold and rounded quartz that would have been

the height of suave futuristic design in the late 1950s or early 1960s [shown at top]. "The piece has a signature that's a bit hard to read. I've sent images of it to curators, dealers, and collectors," Rosen says. "But no one recognizes it. At a design fair in Miami, a woman came up to my booth and said she had a signed piece at home and wondered if I'd be familiar with the signature. She drew it on a piece of paper. It was the same as the one on my piece. It was so frustrating. But it encouraged me to continue the search." Does the identity of the designer really matter? That's for Rosen, as it is for all design lovers, to decide. **M**

From top: A 1950s gold-and-quartz brooch signed by an unrecognized maker; a "French c. 1970" acrylic desk that brought a low-ball \$7,500 at Wright; an attractive but anonymous 1920s chair in the Mondo Cane inventory.



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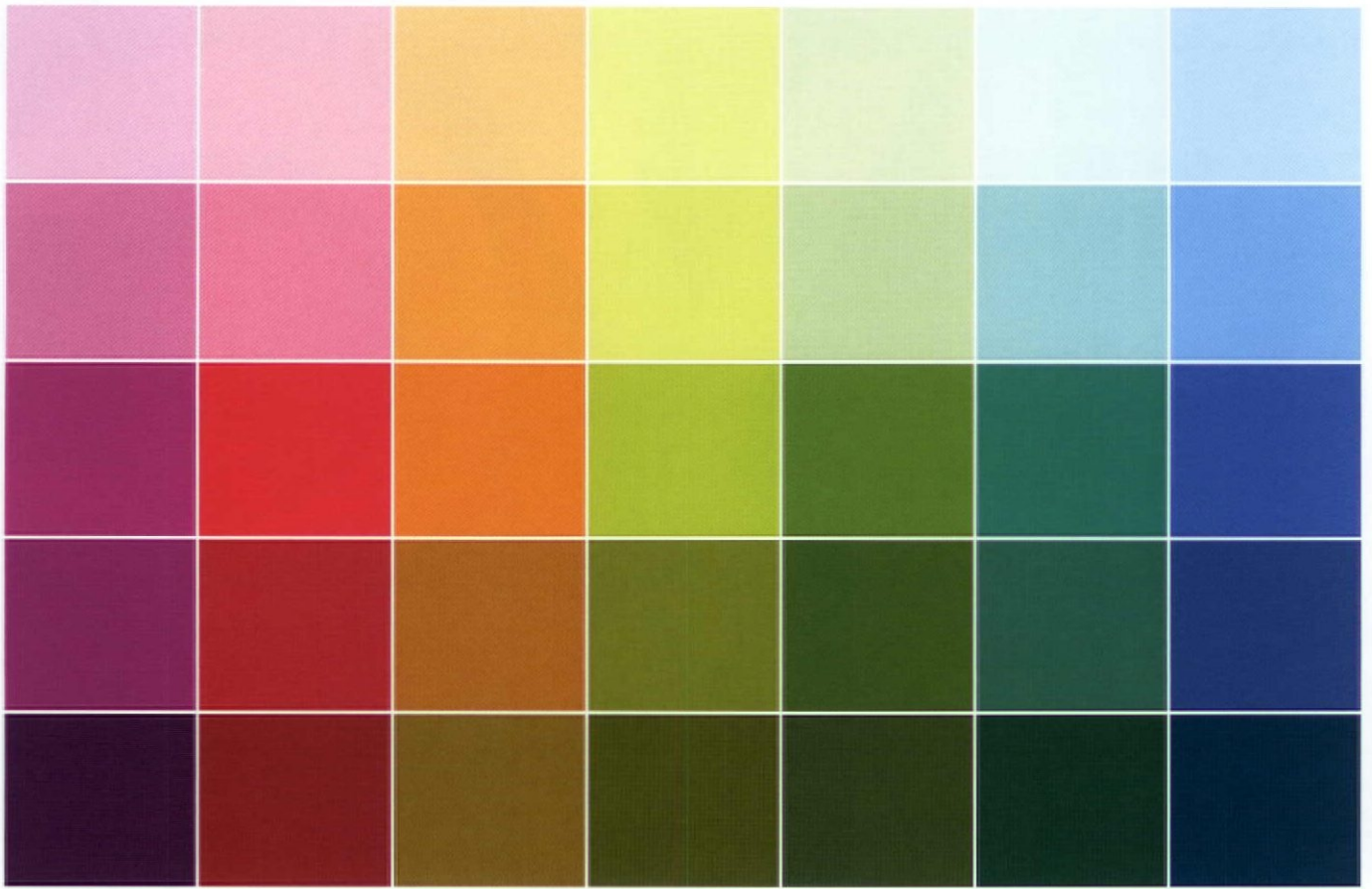
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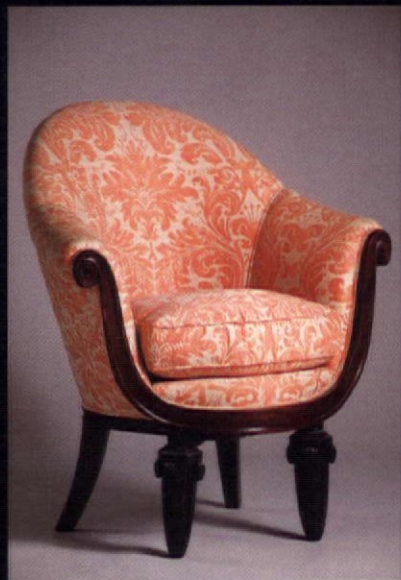
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Günther Uecker (1930 b.), Gate Nailed Shut for the exhibition "kölnisch – klause – (phobien)", 1983, nails and painted doorframe, 230 x 117 x 30 cm, € 140,000 – 180,000

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Collectors & leading figures in the design world discuss new trends & fresh enthusiasms

Edited by DANIELLE DEVINE

◀ WEARABLE ART

"I think one of the great designers under the radar right now is **Claire Falkenstein**, who was an accomplished American sculptor and who like many artists, designers, and architects also designed jewelry. In the 1950s she was discovered by Peggy Guggenheim, who was so impressed by her work that she hired her to design the front gates of her palazzo in Venice. Falkenstein, like Alexander Calder and Art Smith, designed jewelry using inexpensive materials. Rarely did these artists use gold unless it was something very special."

AL EIBER, M.D.,
collector



▲ GREEK DRAMA

"**T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings** was a friend and client of mine. He made some of the most beautiful furniture of the mid-century period, first in England, then in America, and finally in Greece, where he retired. His original Klismos chair was produced in London in 1936; the pair I have were made in Athens in the 1980s and have a white lacquer finish, which is very unusual, since he usually used a clear lacquer to show the wood grain."

JACK LENOR LARSEN,
designer and collector



▲ A WOMB OF ONE'S OWN

"**Wendell Castle's** 'Enclosed Reclining Environment' from 1969 is one of his earliest pieces and was exhibited in his first show in New York. It is perhaps Wendell's most important piece, and it's a real honor and pleasure to own it. It was designed in his stack-laminated style and has a function, which first attracted me to the piece. I have it in my office and actually do take naps in it."

GEORGE LINDEMANN,
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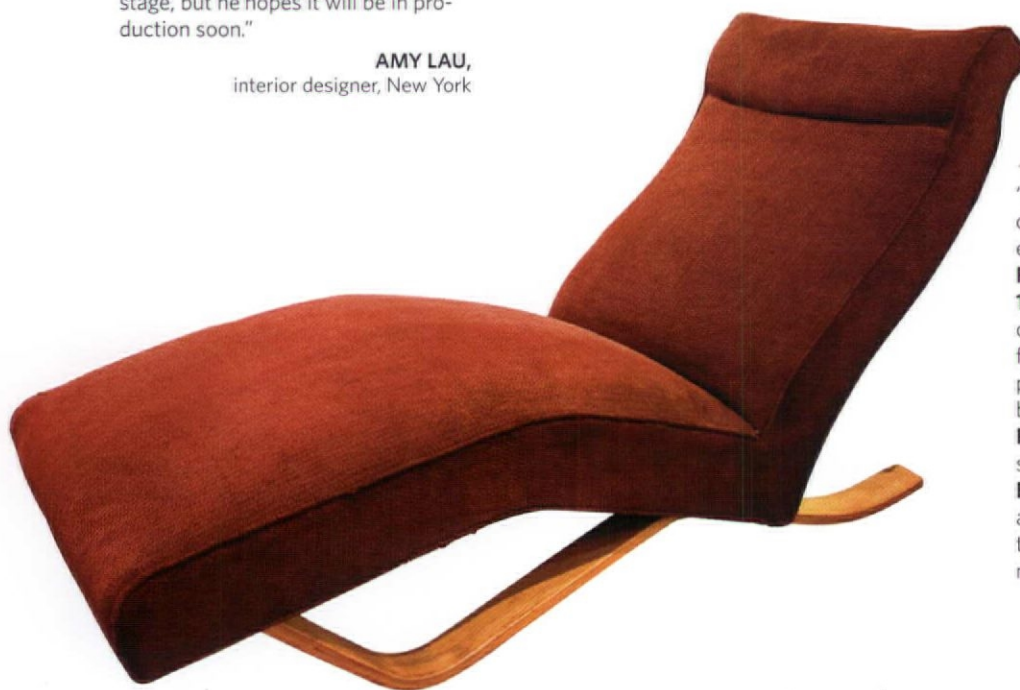
"I'm a huge fan of **Heath Ceramics**. Their pieces have a timeless quality that is so rare in this world of temporary trends. They're handmade in the San Francisco area, so it's a local product and there's so little that's handcrafted anymore. My dishware is Heath. We use Heath tiles in our architectural projects; they're beautifully proportioned and reflect the same kind of design priorities and goals that we have in our work. It's about clean lines, simplicity, and a kind of raw, natural material; colors and tones that are of the earth and part of the earth; and a human inconsistency that is joyous."

LEO MARMOL,
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▶ BRIEF INK COUNTER

"I never would have thought I'd be excited by a calendar, but the London-based designer **Oscar Diaz** has designed one that is absolutely amazing. His calendar has a white sheet of paper for each month, with raised numbers for every day. The embossed numbers are attached to a paper wick, which you insert into a bottle of ink—a different color for each month. The incredible thing is that Oscar calibrated the rate at which ink is absorbed into the embossed paper numerals, so that when a day ends, the corresponding paper number is full of ink. The thing is gorgeous and ingenious. Right now, Oscar's calendar is in the prototype stage, but he hopes it will be in production soon."

AMY LAU,
interior designer, New York



◀ 25 EASY PIECES

"What I love today is the resurgence of great design in simple forms best exemplified by the recent show '**The Future at Home: American Furniture 1940-1955**' presented by the Museum of the City of New York. The exhibition featured twenty-five pieces of compact, lightweight, and flexible furniture by designers like **Carl Anderson** and **Ross Bellah** [chaise from 1942 shown left], **Charles Eames** and **Eero Saarinen**, which grew in appeal among consumers in the mid-twentieth century, paving the way for the mass-marketed furniture of today."

JAMES P. DRUCKMAN,
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◀ MODERNE MAESTRO

"I was introduced to **Gilbert Rohde** and his furniture by a friend who is an expert in mid-century modern design. I immediately bought a small 'ectoplastic' burl desk from the Herman Miller 'Paldao' line of the mid-Thirties. I fell in love with its elegant modern look, sensual biomorphic design, the way the top seems to float, and the leather-upholstered sides. I became intrigued by the fact that Herman Miller brought modernism to America at large, by mass-producing furniture that was flexible, interchangeable, informal, and multifunctional. Rohde is a great American story."

JANE RUSHTON,
collector

▶ LOADED MAGAZINE

"Recently I have started collecting issues of *Flair*, a magazine from the early 1950s. Only twelve issues were ever produced before it folded, due to the high production costs. It was a lifestyle magazine with a very novel approach: each issue was an entirely new experience accompanied by a new logo and die-cut cover, investigating several different categories of modern life—fashion, interior design, art, entertainment, literature, gardening. The layout, use of color, foldouts, and tactile pages were totally ahead of their time, and surely could be a reference for the fantastic set designers of *Mad Men*."

LORI GRAHAM,
interior designer, Washington, D.C.



◀ "PUNK" ROCKS

"I have noticed, particularly in lighting design, the return of gilt-bronze—a very opulent material popular during the baroque period—used to create beautiful streamlined modern objects. When I'm designing for my clients it's important that things are not just rare but inherently and timelessly beautiful. I am particularly interested in the work of New York lighting designer **Art Donovan**. In his 'Steampunk' designs he uses, among other things, recycled clocks to create decadent and intelligent designs that are not just pure and functional but beautiful. You can't quite say if it's art or design, but why can't it be both?"

RAJI RADHAKRISHNAN,
interior designer, Washington, D.C.



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▲ NICE THREADS

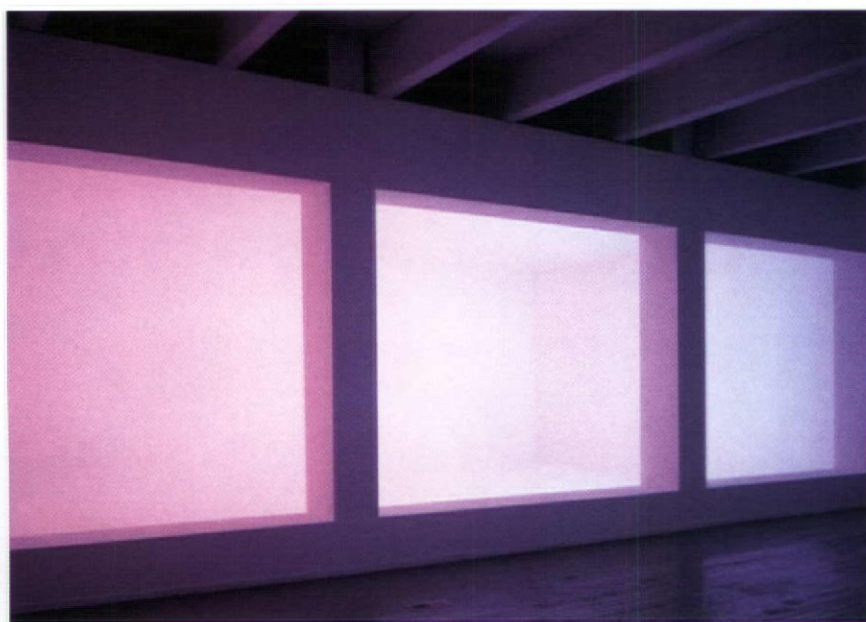
"One of the most influential artists of our time is **Sheila Hicks**. She is a textile phenomenon with an unbelievable talent for texture, color, and scale. I have so much respect and admiration for her progressive vision; she is truly a revolutionary in the design realm."

KELLY WEARSTLER,
interior designer, Los Angeles

▼ GUILTY TREASURE

"This cabinet by Studio Job's duo **Job Smeets** and **Nynke Tynagel** can be seen as a rebellion against the absence of social-political concerns in the design world. They want more for their creations and themselves, and in that sense they could well be at the crossroads of design and art. The inlaid subjects are an inventory of deadly excesses—armed helicopters, nuclear power plants, high-voltage pylons, as well as depictions of surviving animals and skeletons of those unable to escape. The piece presents an 'end of the world' scenario where man is clearly guilty."

EDWARD MITTERRAND & STÉPHANIE CRAMER,
gallerists, Geneva, Switzerland



◀ ILLUMINATING IDEAS

"I am a great believer in the power of art to inspire design. The work of artists like **James Turrell**, for example, has had a significant influence on the work of many architects—the way we design rooms and manipulate light. His explorations into our perceptions of light within a space have led me to focus on a sense of serene, expanded space through the subtle use of indirect light."

JIM OLSON,
partner, Olson Kundig Architects, Seattle

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Ralph Goings, "Gem Top", Watercolor, \$30,000 - 50,000

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In addition to these selections, this auction will feature Fine Art offerings by Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Henri Matisse, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Alexander Calder, Keith Haring and Ed Ruscha. Decorative Arts material includes work by Frank Lloyd Wright, Phillip Lloyd Powell, Sam Maloof, Peter Voulkos and George Nakashima.



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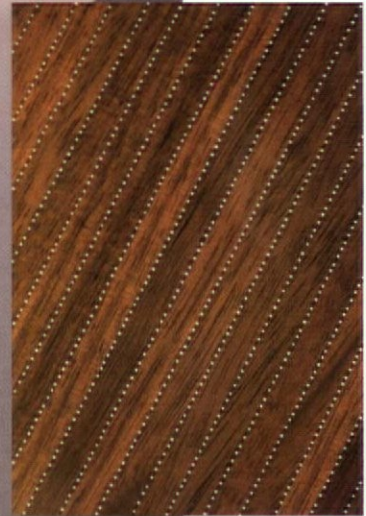
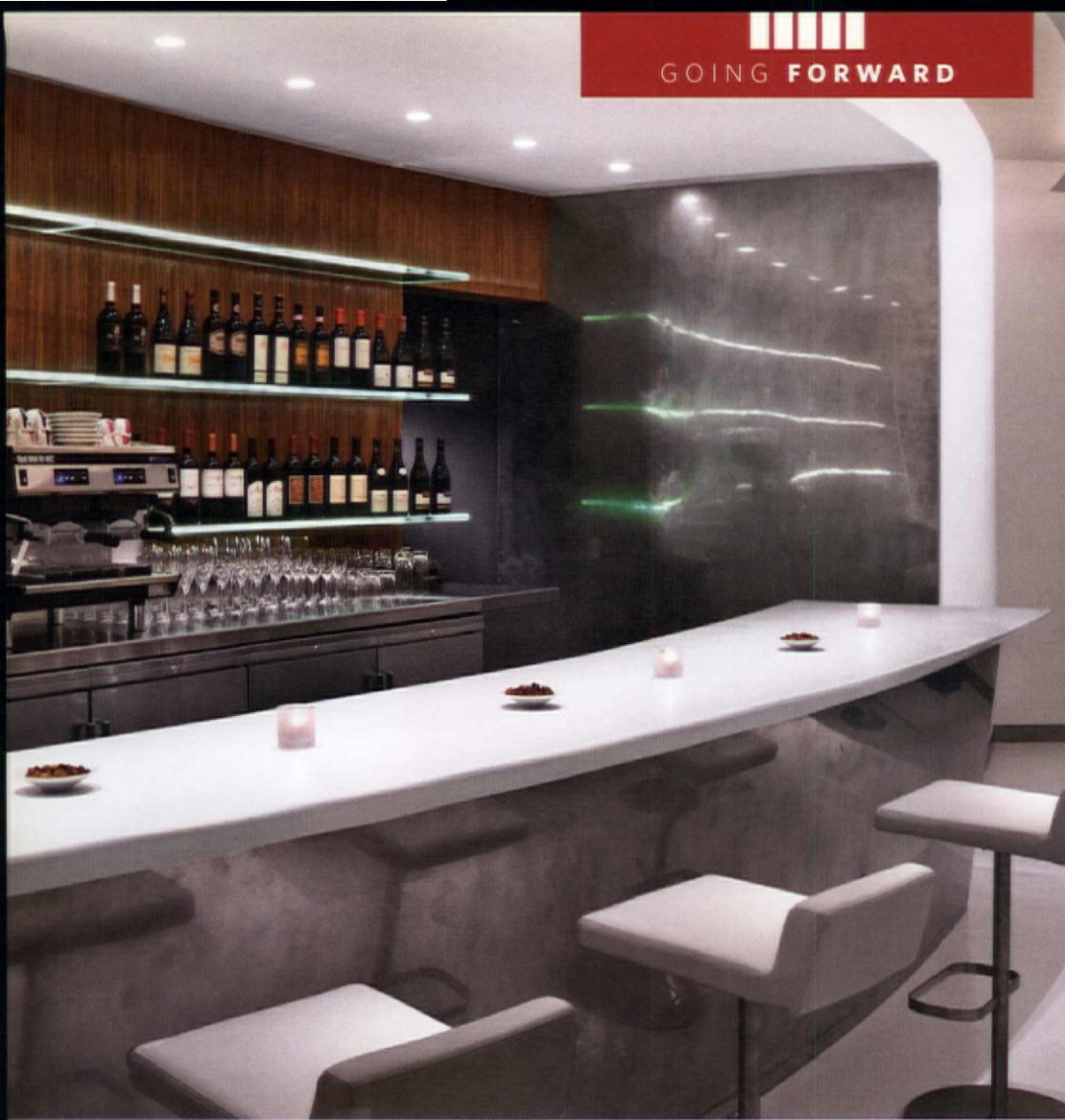
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GLOWING WOOD Luminoso wood paneling comes out of Austria from the firm Litwork. As noted, the material is made by alternating layers of a hardwood—black walnut, black cherry, oak, mahogany, teak, wenge, and maple are all available—with layers of optical fibers. When installed in front of a backlighting source, the Luminoso panels give off a soft radiance. If you place a scrim with an image—a corporate logo, say—in front of the light source, the image will appear on the panel surface. The arrangement of the optical fibers within the wood can be customized. Kikoski used panels with vertical rows of pinpoint fiber-optics to great effect in the walls behind the bar at the Wright, the new restaurant at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

The rear bar wall at the Guggenheim Museum in New York's new restaurant the Wright (above) incorporates Luminoso, the wood and fiber-optic hybrid (inset).

21st Century Alchemy

INTRODUCING A NEW DEPARTMENT ON THE THEMES & DREAMS DRIVING CONTEMPORARY DESIGN. FIRST UP: **MIRACLE MATERIALS**

By STEPHEN MILNE

FOR ARCHITECT ANDRE KIKOSKI, it was love at first sight. "This is an amazing material," he says, "so beautiful and ethereal. Is it wood? Is it lighting? It is poetry!"

Luminoso, the object of Kikoski's ardor, is a composite material in which optical fibers are sandwiched between thin layers of wood. Perhaps only an architect, or an industrial designer, could be sent into raptures by such a new building product. But to a degree that few people realize, the design process is driven not only by drafting, doodling, philosophizing, or imagination, but also by novel, hitherto inconceivable materials. A visit to Material ConneXion, a New York City-based global materials consultancy and resource archive, provided an introduction to other products made of elementary natural substances that, via a sort of alchemy, scientists and engineers have endowed with almost supernatural qualities. Here are three of the most intriguing:



An image on a scrim, placed between the backlight source and Luminoso paneling, will appear on the surface of the material.

The 22nd annual International Contemporary Furniture Fair, May 15-18, 2010 will turn New York City's Jacob K. Javits Convention Center into a global summit for what's best and what's next in design.

The 22nd annual International Contemporary Furniture Fair
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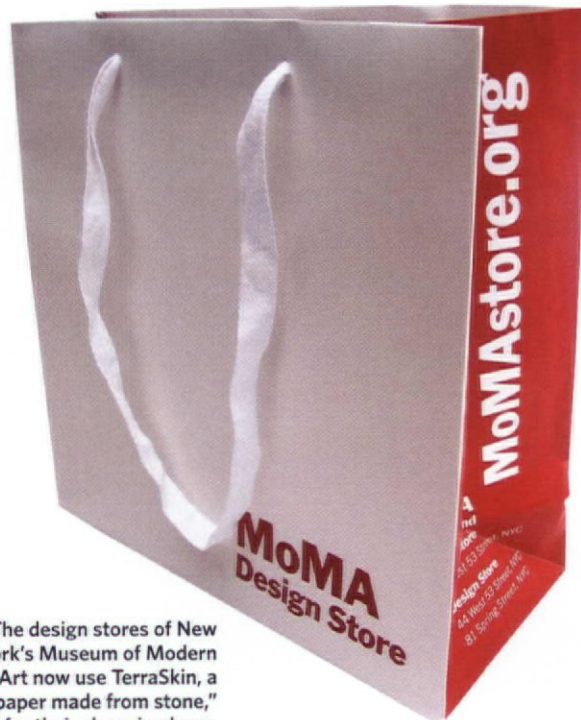
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Though NanoStone is made from real slate, the rock is cut so thinly it will bend like leather.

“TerraSkin has a number of eco-conscious attributes: no trees are farmed, and neither water nor bleach is used in production, thus eliminating worries about water pollution.”

PAPER FROM STONE Perhaps the most surprising new material is called **TerraSkin**: a paper made from a blend of calcium carbonate and a small quantity of nontoxic resin. Design & Source Production in New York and Johnson Paper of Chicago markets the white sheets, opaque or translucent, which have similar characteristics to regular paper in terms of strength and durability. They can be folded or cut, and are also water-resistant. The product has a number of eco-conscious attributes: no trees are farmed, and neither water nor bleach is used in production, thus eliminating worries about water pollution. And if thrown away, TerraSkin will degrade back into mineral powder within a few months. In terms of printing applications, inks do not bleed because the paper is fiberless (images and type stay sharper), and 20 to 30 percent less ink is required. TerraSkin already has earned hipness points in the design world: the Museum of Modern Art’s stores use it for their shopping bags and gift boxes. And there’s the sweet irony: who’d have thought that after all these centuries, we’d be writing on stone again?



The design stores of New York’s Museum of Modern Art now use TerraSkin, a “paper made from stone,” for their shopping bags.

FLEXIBLE ROCK The German firm Richter Veneer Technology has developed a surfacing material made of slate called **NanoStone**. The company slices rock into ultrathin sheets—little more than one-hundredth of an inch thick—which are then bonded with polyester resin and glass fibers to a slim fleece or leather substrate. Contrary to all laws of physics, you might think, the slate becomes as lightweight and pliable as vinyl. Richter touts NanoStone, which comes in black, gray, or earth tones, as a novel material for covering cabinetry or for wrapping architectural elements such as columns. The product has already been used to accent automobile interiors and, sources say, will be used in a line of Armani handbags.

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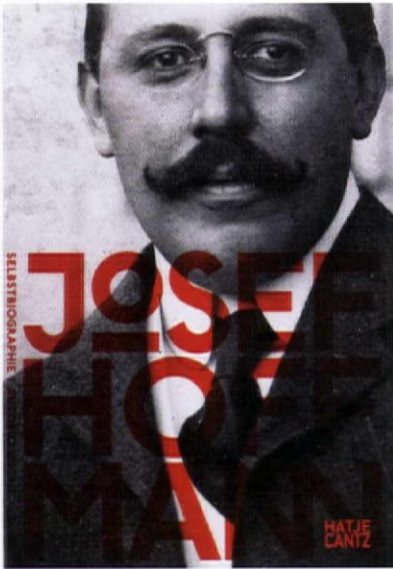
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*Arnaldo Pomodoro (Italian, b. 1926), Rotante primo sezionale n. 1
[Rotating First Section No. 1], 1966, sold for \$486,000 January 29, 2010*

Nakashima Walnut Desk, to be offered March 27, 2010

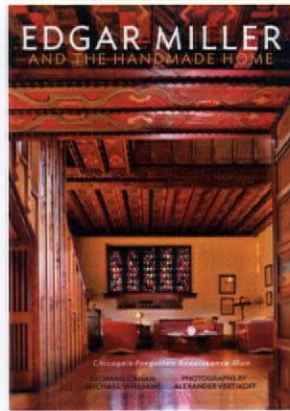


RADIANT RE-ISSUES, THE STORY OF A NEGLECTED DESIGN SAVANT, AND A NOVEL
CERTAIN TO BE RELISHED BY LOVERS OF BOTH DESIGN AND LITERATURE



JOSEF HOFFMANN (1870–1956)—the human bridge between the historicist design styles of nineteenth century Middle Europe and the advent of the region’s modernist movement in the twentieth—wrote his terse **Autobiography** in or about 1948, though it was not published until 1972. Dry and wry by turns, Hoffmann’s story suffers from presumption that the reader already knows much about his life, work, and times. The present re-issue is welcomingly enhanced—if not necessarily invigorated—by copious, comprehensive, and almost too-exacting footnotes. Still, the book, with text in both German and English, provides an authoritative chronology of such seminal events as the founding of the Vienna Secession artists’ union in 1897 and the establishment of the Wiener Werkstätte in 1903. Above all, this edition of Hoffmann’s autobiography serves as a kind of guidebook for design lovers interested in further exploring the development of modernist work and ideals.

**JOSEF HOFFMANN:
AUTOBIOGRAPHY**
Hatje Cantz, 144 pages,
paperback, \$30



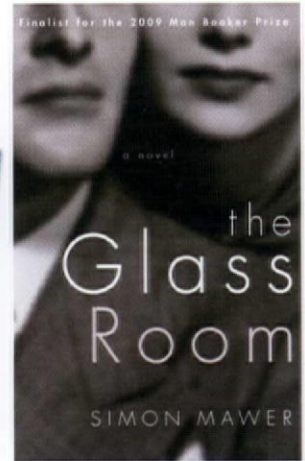
CHICAGO AND its environs have been such a thoroughly explored crucible of architectural and design innovation—from the work of Daniel Burnham, Louis Sullivan, and Frank Lloyd Wright to that of Mies, Bertrand Goldberg, and Harry Weese—it is hard to believe that any ingenious local architect and designer has not found a niche in the city’s pantheon. But as the newly published **Edgar Miller and the Handmade Home** demonstrates, some brilliant creative spirits somehow slip the notice of the eminences of design studies. Perhaps one reason this is so in Miller’s case lies in the book’s subtitle: “Chicago’s Forgotten Renaissance Man.” “Forgotten” is not the key word: “Renaissance” is. Miller, whose career thrived in the 1920s and 1930s and who died in 1993 at age 94, simply mastered too many skills to be easily categorized. That aside, Miller’s oeuvre is amazing; his decorative wood carvings rival those of Eliel Saarinen in his Scandinavian Folklore period; his stained-glass windows arguably surpass those of Wright; his sculptural bas-reliefs are the nonpareil of streamline moderne; and he was a deft painter and muralist. We enjoy you to buy this lavishly illustrated, illuminating volume.

**EDGAR MILLER AND THE
HANDMADE HOME**
By RICHARD CAHAN,
MICHAEL WILLIAMS, &
ALEXANDER VERTIKOFF
CityFiles Press, 400 pages, \$50



ALONG WITH composition of music, the use of color in art and design is undoubtedly the most difficult aesthetic practice to describe in lucid and practical terms. Both disciplines are so fraught with emotion, instinct, and subjectivity that they defy attempts to set concrete principles and guidelines. In 1963, with **Interaction of Color**, Josef Albers, the Bauhaus-trained artist then teaching at Yale, laid out strategies that were not so much hard-and-fast rules as suggestive and inspirational tenets for exploring the relationships between hues. That year the university press published a painstakingly printed (Albers insisted on perfection), unbound double portfolio of the book—one part silk screens, the other explicatory text—in an edition of 200. It sold out quickly, and more than 200,000 small-format paperback editions of Albers’s book have been sold since. Recently, the Yale press released a new large-format, slip-cased, and bound edition of the two volumes that make up *Interaction of Color*, as carefully prepared as the 1963 original. This lustrous work deserves a place in any ardent modernist’s library.

INTERACTION OF COLOR
By JOSEF ALBERS
Yale University Press, 145 color
plates, \$200



THIS SPACE rarely affords opportunities to review fiction, so we’ll seize upon the recent news that the Villa Tugendhat—the Ludwig Mies van der Rohe residential masterpiece, completed in 1930, in the city of Brno in today’s Czech Republic—is about to undergo a much-needed restoration to bring to your attention Simon Mawer’s wondrous novel **The Glass Room**. Mawer’s book traces the history of the house—which is given the alias “the Villa Landauer”—from the commission granted by a progressive Jewish Austrian automaker and his newlywed gentile wife to the German modernist architect Rainer von Abt (i.e., Mies), and through the structure’s subsequent maltreatment and neglect by Czech, German, and Soviet authorities in wars both hot and cold. While the theme of Mawer’s novel is the desperate human impulse to find order and harmony in the midst of chaos, the house itself becomes a character in the drama, as a powerful emblem of the force of rationality against blinkered willfulness.

THE GLASS ROOM
By SIMON MAWER
Other Press, 405 pages,
paperback, \$14.95

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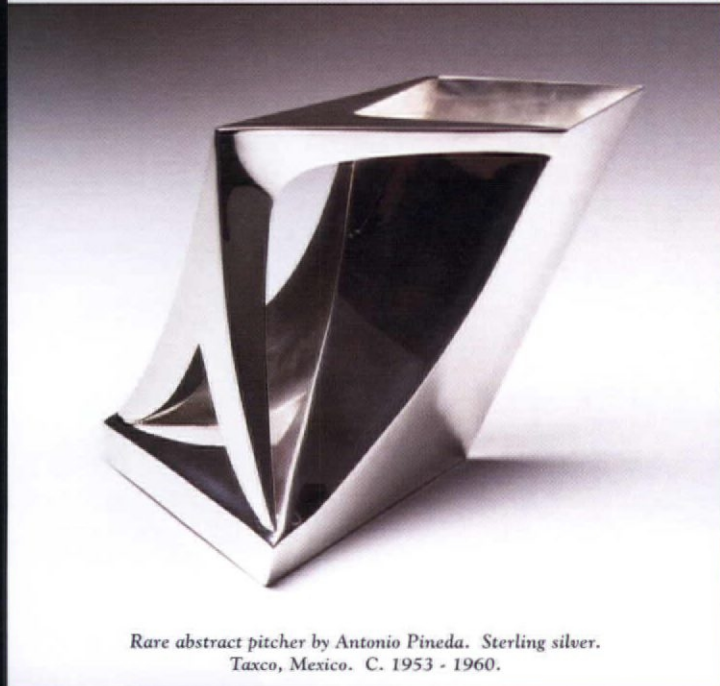
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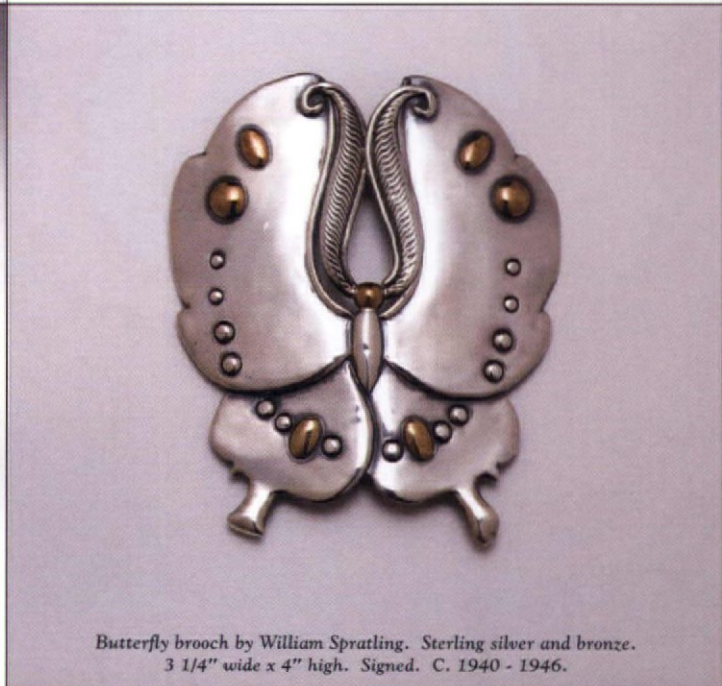
Silver kinetic necklace by Arnaldo Pomodoro.
Pendant is 4 1/2" long x 3" wide, with chain, 17" long. Milan, Italy. C. 1967.



Pop Art pendant/brooch by Roy Lichtenstein. Enamel on silver.
Designed for "Multiples". Signed. 3" high x 2 1/2" wide. C. 1968.



Rare abstract pitcher by Antonio Pineda. Sterling silver.
Taxco, Mexico. C. 1953 - 1960.



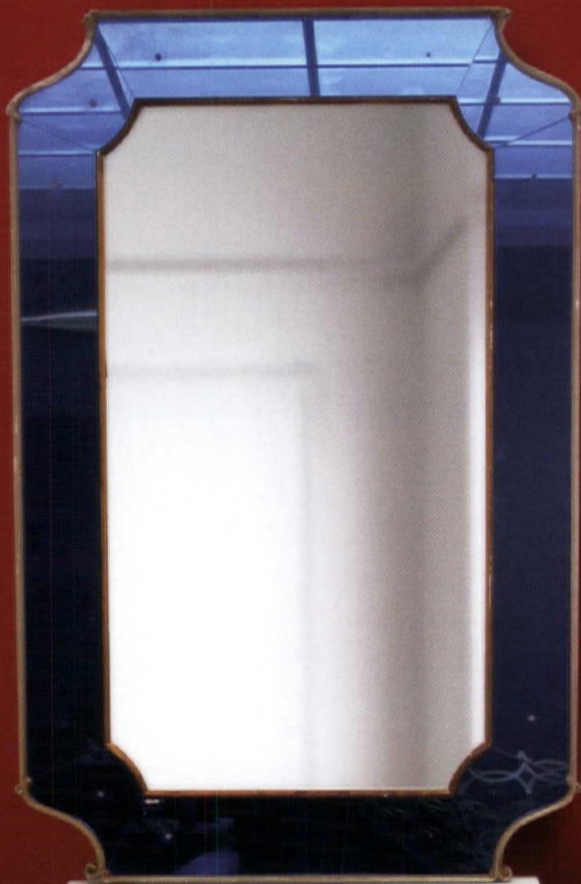
Butterfly brooch by William Spratling. Sterling silver and bronze.
3 1/4" wide x 4" high. Signed. C. 1940 - 1946.

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Curator's Eye

WE ASKED CUSTODIANS OF LEADING TWENTIETH-CENTURY AND CONTEMPORARY DECORATIVE-ARTS COLLECTIONS TO DISCUSS **ONE OBJECT** THAT THEY FEEL IS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY. HERE IS A GALLERY OF THEIR CHOICES. Edited by Chloe Lieske



RUDE OSOLNIK
CANDLESTICKS
Macassar ebony
Fabricated 1988
Designed 1940s

"AT MID-CENTURY, the lathe was widely regarded as an implement of generic design, better suited to the mass production of chair legs, spindles, and banisters than to experiments in modern aesthetics. But in the early 1950s a handful of artists, including James Prestini, Bob Stocksdale, and Rude Osolnik, were challenging this notion with sleek wooden housewares, turned individually by hand yet exhibiting the crisp lines and efficient execution favored by a post-war society enamored of industrial design. Osolnik's candlesticks quickly garnered attention, receiving the 1955 Award of Good Design from the Furniture Association of America. Near the end of his six-decade career, the artist claimed to have turned more than 100,000 candlesticks. They elevated Osolnik's position in the fledgling studio craft movement, and cemented his role as a founder of the field of wood art, which has grown at exponential rates since the 1970s. Osolnik turned candlesticks in a variety of woods, including ebony, of which this set is one of the most sumptuous examples."

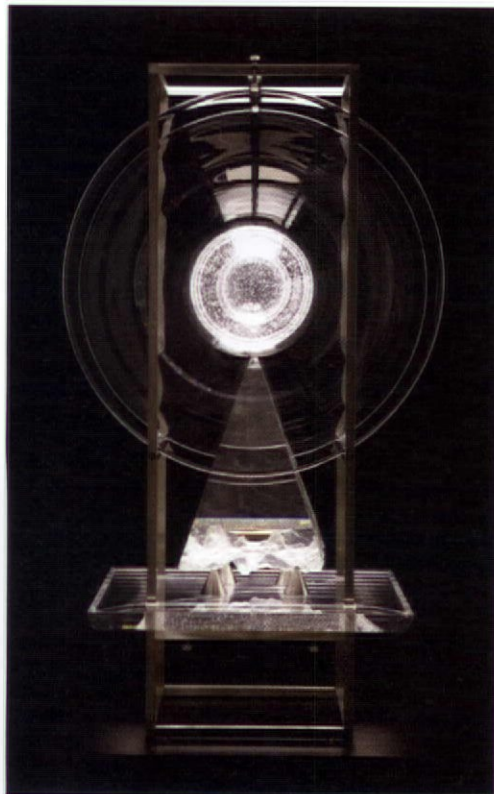
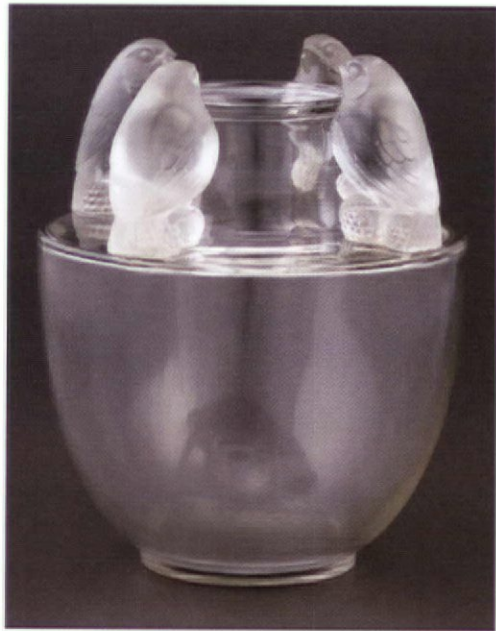
NICHOLAS R. BELL, curator, Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.

"Osolnik's candlesticks quickly garnered attention, receiving the 1955 Award of Good Design."

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3. ERIC HILTON

Light Bird Alignment, 1988

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Curator's Eye

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DONNA LOVEDAY, head of curatorial, Design Museum, London

JOE COLOMBO
THE BOBY TROLLEY
Designed 1969



"The Bobby helped make plastic a valid material for use in the home and office environment."

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Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, 1980
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The Property of Max Factor III sold to benefit various charities

FRANK STELLA

Untitled (Polar Coordinate), 1963
Acrylic, gouache, crayon, glitter
and monotype, 38-5/8 x 38 in.
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Curator's Eye

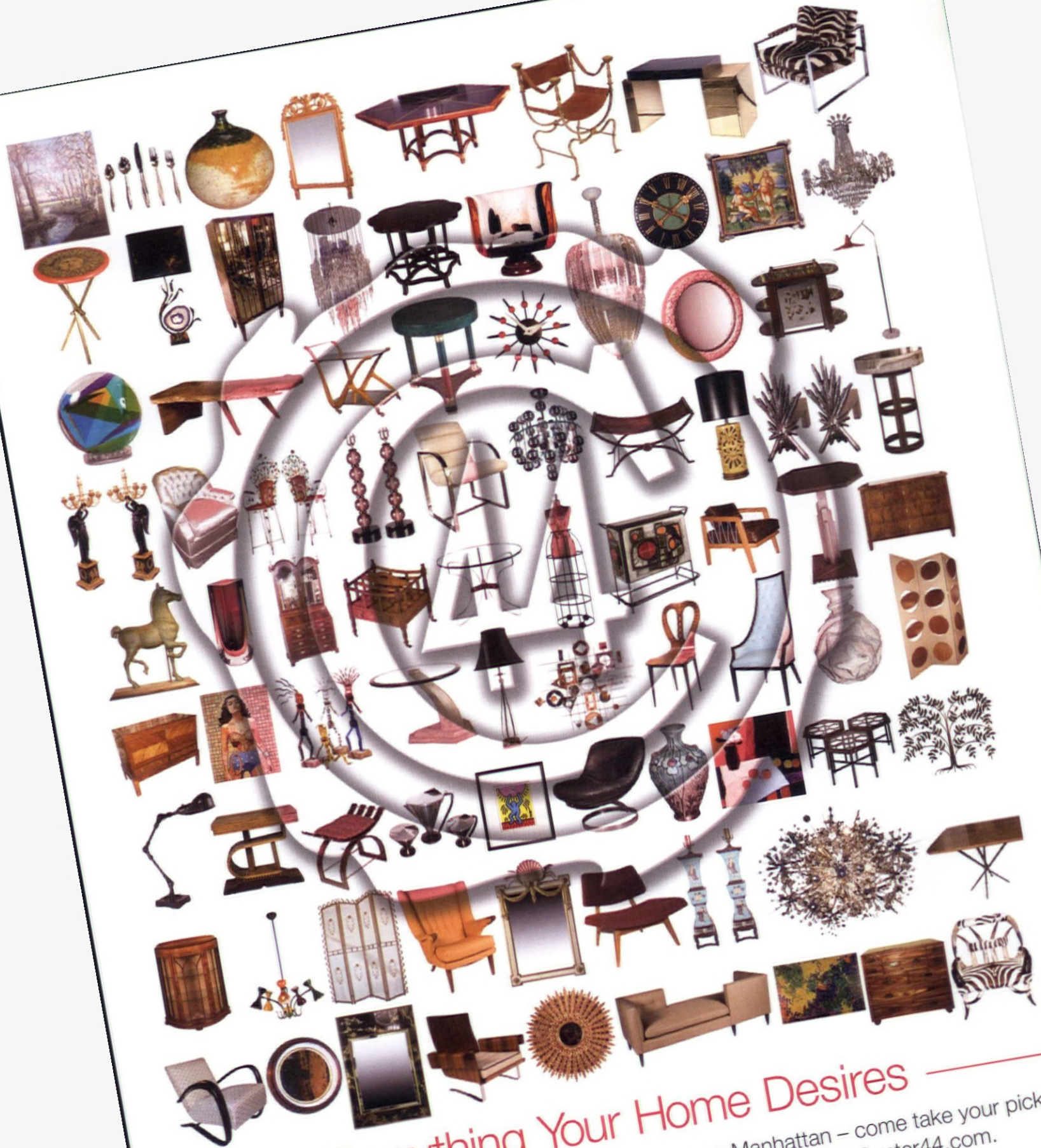


ATTRIBUTED TO
ADOLF HEGENBARTH
VASE, 1925
Glass, enamel

"WHEN CUBISM left the confines of the canvas, the results could be startling. Here, it produced a writhing orgy of cubist men and women. The planar figures, all rendered in black lines against etched surfaces, snake their way around the vase in a frenzied dance—foot to head, elbow to neck. The vase's daring composition and meticulous execution make for a truly extraordinary example of 1920s European design. Though European glass of the period was rarely so provocative, the enameled wares produced in Czechoslovakia—a traditional glassmaking center—often embraced avant-garde aesthetics. It followed the lead of Prague, a city where cubism spilled into architecture, furniture, and other media. The vase bears the initials "AH," probably those of the designer Adolf Hegenbarth, who taught at the glass school in Steinschönau (today, Kamenický Šenov), north of Prague."

SCOTT ERBES, curator of decorative arts and design,
the Speed Art Museum, Louisville

*"The vase's
daring composition
and meticulous
execution make
for a truly
extraordinary
example of 1920s
European design."*



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Curator's Eye

"Brajkovic creates hybrid shapes at once comfortably antique and stridently contemporary."

SEBASTIAN BRAJKOVIC

LATHE V CHAIR, 2008

Bronze, embroidered upholstery
Designed 2006



"THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN's collecting thrust in the past few years has been to examine the ways in which an awareness of history among designers is translated into objects that speak a contemporary language. A brilliant collision between past and present was choreographed by Dutch designer Sebastian Brajkovic in his 'Lathe' series of furniture designs. The designer has spoken about the harmony revealed by the apparent contradictions in his designs, in which 'past and future, although opposites, work well together.' Using familiar furniture forms from the nineteenth century, specifically rococo-revival side chairs, the artist creates hybrid shapes at once comfortably antique and stridently contemporary. His design process begins with pencil and paper; he modifies these designs using a computer software program that 'morphs' the form and its embroidered upholstery to give the visual impression that the chair is caught in a fleeting moment of spinning around a central point. Hence, the name Lathe chair. The museum is proud to be the first in the United States to acquire the work of this inventive and provocative young designer."

DAVID REVERE MCFADDEN, chief curator and vice president, Museum of Arts and Design, New York

david bowers
charles pfahl
gabriel grün
jason shawn alexander
michael lucero
marilyn manson
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Photo: Emily Vogel

Curator's Eye

"KANSAS CITY has played an important role in the development of modern art ceramics since the 1960s, and no single artist embodied, promoted, and informed this more than Ken Ferguson. His 'Four-Legged Vessel' from 1992 displays his sense of humor, place, and history, as the hares and tortoise that adorn the surface act as both functional and decorative elements. The long ears of the hares parallel the vessel's legs, while another pair of hares curl onto the rim as handles, and a tortoise serves as the knob. Ferguson, constantly mining the collection at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, examined and analyzed collections of British eighteenth-century slipware, Japanese ceramics, and ancient Chinese bronzes. Taking his cue from the dark green verdigris surface of twelfth-century B.C.E. Chinese bronzes, Ferguson developed a thick green slip over black clay that would create the illusion of an antiqued, organic patina. One of Ferguson's most important contributions to the world of contemporary craft and design was in his teaching: countless students and colleagues either came to Kansas City or attended his workshops around the country, learning how to study, manipulate, and improvise traditional forms to create a new genre of art."

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

KENNETH FERGUSON
FOUR-LEGGED VESSEL, 1992
Stoneware with slip



*"Ferguson's
'Four-Legged
Vessel' from 1992
displays his sense
of humor, place,
and history."*

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Jousse Entreprise booth at Design Miami/Basel 2009. Courtesy of Design Miami/Basel (June 15-19).

MARCH

Friends With You Website Launch www.friendswithyou.com

Friends With You, the Miami-based artists and graphic designers' collaborative, has been described as the American answer to Takashi Murakami and Japanimation. The FWY philosophy is refreshingly and deceptively simple, "...happiness is cool." The newly-launched website showcases FWY's work with such corporate and cultural heavyweights as Target, Volkswagen, and the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

A Swiss Private Collection Mitterrand + Cramer Exhibition Geneva, Switzerland

January 21-March 6, 2010
www.mitterrand-cramer.com
Featuring artists Pierre Bismuth, Tracey Emin, Liam Gillick, Louise Lawler, Robert Longo, Vera Lutter, Robert Mapplethorpe, Vik Muniz, Carsten Nicolai, Hans Op de Beeck, David Ratcliff, Yehudit Sasportas and Erwin Wurm.

Record Pictures: Photographs by Michael Collins

JAGR Projects, The New Gallery
Philadelphia, PA
February 12-April 30, 2010
www.jagrprojects.com
Record Picture: a highly detailed, matter of fact image traditionally commissioned by government and industry for technical documentation. Created from 8x10 photographic negatives, Michael Collins' monumental 4x5 foot prints yield a shockingly sharp richness of detail, chronicling historically significant landscapes around London.

CONTEMPORARY KOREAN DESIGN R 20TH CENTURY GALLERY

New York, NY
Opening Reception March 1, 2010
March 2-16, 2010
www.r20thcentury.com

Exhibition featuring works by Byung-Hoon Choi, Hun-Chung Lee, Dae-Sup Kwon, Zong-Sun Bahk and Jin Jang.

Joris Laarman Lab

Friedman Benda, New York, NY
March 4-April 10, 2010
www.friedmanbenda.com

A new body of work by Dutch designer Joris Laarman will be unveiled at Friedman Benda. Laarman's unique aesthetics merge cutting edge technology and the life-sciences to create unexpected beauty.

Kristin McKirdy

Galerie Jousse Entreprise
Paris, France
Preview March 18, 2010
March 19-April 24, 2010
www.jousse-entreprise.com
French-American artist has been living in France 20 years; this event features 20-25 new pieces from her time in Paris.

Animal Architecture

Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin
Paris, France

March 20-May 7, 2010
www.galerieperrotin.com
Solo show by Daniel Arsham that blurs the line between art, architecture and performance.

The Colors Are Bright

Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin
Paris, France

March 20-May 7, 2010
www.galerieperrotin.com
Solo show of Peter Coffin's films, installations and sculptures that function through visual, poetic, and at times, ironic analogies.

Pavillion des ARTS & DESIGN PARIS

Tuileries, Paris, France
March 24-28, 2010
www.padparis.net

The 14th edition expects 40,000 visitors and will feature furniture, drawings, paintings, sculpture from 1860 to present, antiquities, modernism, photography, design, primitive arts, Asian art, contemporary glass, jewelry, silver, carpets, and tapestries.

20th Century Furniture & Decorative Arts

Skinner Auctioneers & Appraisers,
Boston, MA

Preview March 25-27, 2010
Auction March 27, 2010
www.skinnerinc.com

Auction of 20th-century furniture and decorative arts. Skinner's 20th Century Design department offers Tiffany Lamps, art glass, art pottery, metalwork, and furniture from the Art Nouveau, Arts & Crafts, Art Deco and Modern Movements.

CHICAGO modernism

Chicago, IL
March 26-28, 2010
www.chicagomodernism.net
Benefiting Chicago Bauhaus and Chicago Art Deco Society.

Fairs, Exhibitions & Events

SCANDANAVIAN DESIGN

Pierre Bergé & Associés
Brussels, Belgium
Sunday, March 28, 2010
www.pba-auctions.com

For any information please contact:
Sandor Guterman + 33 (0) 49 49 90 33 - sgutermann@pba-auctions.com,
Francois Epin + 33(01) 49 49 90 13 - fepin@pba-auctions.com or Valentine Roelants + 33 (0)2 504 80 30 - vroelants@pba-auctions.com

APRIL

AD 20/21 Art & Design of the 20th and 21st centuries & The Boston

Print Fair
The Cyclorama, Boston Center for the Arts, Boston, MA
Gala Preview April 8 to benefit
BOSTON ARCHITECTURAL COLLEGE
April 8-11, 2010
www.ad2021.com

50 Select Exhibitors from the US & Europe. Fine art, jewelry, furniture, glass, ceramics, sculpture, photography, fine prints, drawings, and more. The only show of its kind in New England.

JULES LELEU - Art Déco Furniture 1924-1934

Galerie Claude OHG,
Cologne, Germany
April 12-May 29, 2010
www.galerie-claude.de

The 28 exhibits of Jules Leleu's work originate exclusively from the private collection of the Galerie Claude, and aim to emphasize the view of Leleu as a true creator of contemporary furniture and provide insights into the artist's creation.

Galleria Colombari

Milan, Italy
April 14, 2010
www.galleriacolombari.com

The event features nine different galleries and stores, and will take place on April 14 from 6-9 pm. Cocktails will be served in the inside courts of the area and in three of the galleries.

The 13th Annual International Sculpture Objects & Functional Art Fair: SOFA NEW YORK 2010

New York, NY
Opening Night Preview Gala April 15, 2010
April 16-19, 2010 at the Park Avenue Armory
www.sofaexpo.com

SOFA: New York focuses on three-dimensional, contemporary artworks. With a strong education emphasis, SOFA Fairs include an acclaimed Lecture Series, free with paid admission. A VIP Program includes exclusive events tailored to high-profile gallery clients and collector/museum groups.

20th Century Decorative Arts

Bonhams, Los Angeles, CA
Preview April 16-18, 2010
Auction April 20, 2010
www.bonhams.com/us
Auction of 20th century and decorative arts.

Jan Yoors Tapestry Exhibition

reGENERATION, New York, NY
On View April 16-July 17, 2010
Opening Reception Friday April 16, 6-9 PM
www.regenerationfurniture.com
www.janyoors.com
Large hand-crafted tapestries from the estate of Belgian artist Jan Yoors.

Los Angeles Antiques Show

Barker Hangar, Santa Monica
Air Center,
Santa Monica, CA
April 21-April 25, 2010
www.losangelesantiqueshow.com
Sixty-five top antique dealers from around the country and a few international dealers will be selling authenticated antiques.

ART COLOGNE

Cologne, Germany
April 21-25, 2010
www.artcologne.com
Featuring modern, post-war, contemporary, Open Space, and New Contemporaries galleries, ART COLOGNE's proven platforms will showcase 180 galleries presenting young and cutting-edge international art.

Christie's Green Auction: a Bid to Save the Earth
 New York, NY
 April 22, 2010
 Silent Auction April 8-May 6, 2010,
www.charitybuzz.com
www.abidosavetheearth.org
 Christie's Inaugural Green Auction, coinciding with the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, will raise awareness and funds for the protection of our planet. Bid on world renowned works of art, travel packages, and unique celebrity experiences.

2010 Appraisers Association of America Award Luncheon
 New York Athletic Club, NYC
 Tuesday, April 27, 2010
www.appraisersassoc.org
 Honoring Martin Z. Margulies in conversation with Henry Buhl.

Post War + Contemporary Art
 Wright, Chicago, IL
 April 27, 2010
www.wright20.com
 Featuring select works of the 20th century, the sale includes a 1966 Günther Uecker painting and exceptional works from the collection of Kazimir Karpuzsko, a collector of mid-century Constructivist and Chicago Bauhaus works. Select works from movements including Abstract Expressionism, Pop, Minimalism, Photorealism, Conceptualism, and Graffiti among others will also be offered in this auction.

CONTEMPORARY ART including the Collection of Jonathan Zebina
 Pierre Bergé & Associés
 Tuesday, April 27, 2010
www.pba-auctions.com
 For more information please contact:
 Wilfred Vacher + 33 (0)2 504 80 30
 - wvacher@pba-auctions.com, Fabian Bejean Leibenson 33 (0)1 49 49 90 32
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DESIGN
 Phillips de Pury, London, UK
 Auction April 28, 2010
www.phillipsdepur.com
 The Design department at Phillips de Pury & Company offers functional works by pioneering designers, manufacturers, and ateliers from the 20th and 21st centuries as well as conceptual form-driven contemporary design.



Jules Leleu coffee table Nr. 2075, c. 1933; rosewood and nickel-plated bronze; 49.5 x 107 cm. Courtesy of Galerie Claude OHG (April 12-May 29).

Auction 65
 W.G. HERR Art & Auction House,
 Cologne, Germany
 April 29, 2010
www.herr-auktionen.de
 Primary focus of auction is Art Nouveau, Art Deco, Bauhaus, design of the 20th-century, paintings, graphics, sculptures, and photographs.

LOS ANGELES modernism
 Los Angeles, CA
 April 30, May 1-2, 2010
www.lamodernism.com
 Benefiting Cal Arts Community Arts Partnership.

The Merchandise Mart
 International Antiques Fair
 April 30-May 3, 2010
 Preview Night April 29, benefiting
 Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
www.merchandisemartantiques.com
 A collection of antiques for the 21st century.

Designer Discoveries: Ten ASID-IL
 designers will scour The Fair to pick one unique object that speaks to them! Look for the signs onsite of the winning objects throughout The Fair and vote for your favorite on Thursday night!

Designer on Call: Looking for great design advice? ASID-IL designers are available for one-hour sessions on Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoon (April 30-May 2). Visit the website www.merchandisemartantiques.com, to choose which designer best fits your style. Space is limited.

RSVP and a \$10 fee is required, which automatically enters you for a chance to win two tickets to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

MAY

35th Anniversary of The Manhattan Art & Antiques Center
 The Manhattan Art & Antiques Center, New York, NY
 May 2010
www.the-maac.com
 The Manhattan Art & Antiques Center is celebrating its 35th Anniversary with a gala event in May. Contact info@the-maac.com or 212 355-4400 for details.



Bernhardt Design's Corvo chairs, designed by Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance. Courtesy of the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (May 15-18).

Wendell Castle Rockin'
 Barry Friedman Ltd, New York, NY
 May 6-June 26, 2010
www.barryfriedmanltd.com

Art Nouveau & Art Deco, Design, Books, Wine, 20th c. Sculptures and Paintings
 KOLLERGENEVE, Geneva, Switzerland
 Preview May 10-18, 2010
 Auction May 19-20, 2010
www.kollerauktionen.ch
 Auction of Art Nouveau and Art Deco, design, books, wine, 20th-century sculptures and paintings.

International Contemporary Furniture Fair
 Jacob K. Javits Convention Center
 New York, NY
 May 15-18, 2010
www.icff.com

During the Fair's four days, the Javits Center will host 550 exhibitors and entertain more than 24,000 interior designers, architects, retailers, designers, manufacturers, representatives, distributors, and developers.

Design Auctions
 Palais Dorotheum, Vienna, Austria
 Auctions May 17-21, 2010
www.dorotheum.com
 Auctions of Contemporary Art, Modern Art, Design, Art Nouveau, Silver, Jewelry, and Watches.

MODERN ART & DESIGN AUCTION
 LAMA - Los Angeles Modern Auctions
 Los Angeles, CA
 May 23, 2010
www.lamodern.com
 Featuring offerings by Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Henri Matisse, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Alexander Calder, Keith Haring and Ed Ruscha. Decorative Arts material includes work by Frank Lloyd Wright, Phillip Lloyd Powell, Peter Voukos and George Nakashima.

Scandinavian Design
 Wright, Chicago, IL
 May 25, 2010
www.wright20.com

Decorative Arts & Design Auction
 Heritage Auction Galleries
 Dallas, TX
 Live Auction May 26, 2010
 Lot Viewing May 21-25, 2010
www.ha.com

Featuring furniture, ceramics, glass, marbles, bronzes, lighting, mirrors, centerpieces, and clocks in the most popular styles of the last three centuries.

JUNE

Modern & Contemporary Art Auction
 Heritage Auction Galleries
 Dallas, TX
 June 9, 2010
www.ha.com/5043
 Featuring paintings, sculpture and works on paper by the foremost artists of the late 19th and 20th centuries, as well as works by significant contemporary artists.

London International Fine Art Fair
 Olympia, London, UK
 June 4-13, 2010
www.lifaf.com
 Essential art and antiques event for over 30,000 international private buyers, curators, interior designers and devotees.

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 Socrates Sculpture Park
 Long Island City, NY
 Weekend Market Hours: Saturday, June 5, 2010, 11am-7pm / free admission - Sunday, June 6, 2010, 11am-5pm / free admission
 Preview Benefit Event: Friday, June 4, 2010, 6pm-8pm (contact Socrates Sculpture Park to purchase tickets)
www.socratessculpturepark.org
 An open air marketplace featuring a curated selection of skillfully crafted products.

Important Design Sale
 Wright, Chicago, IL
 June 8, 2010
www.wright20.com

Design Miami/Basel
 Basel, Switzerland
 June 15-19, 2010
www.designmiami.com
 VIP Opening Monday June 14th, 2010
 Design Miami/Basel brings together dealers, collectors, designers, curators, and critics from around the world in celebration of design culture and commerce.

SUPERDESIGN
 The Apartment, London, UK
www.superdesign-london.com
www.theapartment.uk.com
 Event taking place during i Saloni in Milan. Please see website for event details.

2010 MODERNISM

CHICAGO modernism

benefiting chicago bauhaus
& chicago art deco society
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chicagomodernism.net

SAN FRANCISCO

20th century modernism
benefiting sfmoma
september 16-19, 2010
sf20.net

NEW SHOW!

DALLAS 20th century
modernism
october 8-10, 2010
dolphinsairs.com

MIAMI modernism

benefiting wolfsonian-fiu
february 4-6, 2011
miamimodernism.net

PALM SPRINGS modernism

benefiting modernism week
february 18-20, 2011
palmspringsmodernism.com

LOS ANGELES modernism

benefiting cal arts community
arts partnership
april 30, may 1-2, 2010
lamodernism.com



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KÖLN INTERNATIONALER KUNSTMARKT 2010

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A PAIR OF BRONZE AND ORMOLU CANDELABRAS ON MARBLE PLINTHS, 32 IN. (81 CM) M&J DUNCAN, EAST SUSSEX
PAULE VÉZELAY, TWO RED FORMS, OIL ON CANVAS, 1968, WHITFORD FINE ART, LONDON

MODERNISM TRACED AN ENERGETIC &
ECCENTRIC PATH THROUGH MEXICO,
AS TODAY'S DESIGN COLLECTORS ARE
JUST BEGINNING TO APPRECIATE

By JORGE S. ARANGO



MEXICAN UPRISING



DOWNTOWN's booth at last year's Los Angeles Antiques Show exhibited iron tables and chairs by Arturo Pani, an upholstered neoclassical sofa and armchairs by Roberto and Mito Block, and other pieces.



ROBERTO AND MITO BLOCK

Console, 1940s
Gilded-iron base and *églomisé* top

names like Ponti or Saarinen. At least not yet. If a handful of galleries and auction houses are onto something, however, Mexican twentieth-century design may be the next big thing.

"It's a weird anomaly in the market that it hasn't received more attention," says Nicholas Kilner, creative director of the New York design gallery Sebastian+Barquet, which showed nothing but Mexican mid-century furniture at Design Miami last December. "Mexico has an impressive modernist history. There was a vivid design avant-garde that flourished in concert with the rise of artists like Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera."

LAST DECEMBER at the Chicago auction house Wright, when the hammer fell on a 1960s Pepe Mendoza occasional table, the bidding had risen to more than \$8,000, considerably more than the \$3,000-to-\$5,000 estimate. At a Los Angeles Modern Auctions sale two days before, paddles dropped into laps when the price reached a more reasonable sum—just under \$4,300—for a pair of circa 1955 Arturo Pani lounge chairs with an identical estimate.

These were hardly "stop the presses" sales results, but still: Pepe Mendoza? Arturo Pani? Design-savvy as you may be, you could be forgiven for a lack of recognition. Both were Mexican mid-century designers, and although Pani was the brother of internationally renowned architect Mario Pani, neither is likely to produce the "Ah, yes, of course" reaction elicited by

FUELED BY Marxist ideology and *mexicanidad*—the Mexican embrace of a pre-Columbian identity, which awoke after the country's 1910 revolution—the nation emerged as a Latin American-flavored incubator of modernist thought in the 1930s. The Bauhaus diaspora was flooding Mexico City with its refugees, among them Hannes Meyer, Josef and Anni Albers, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Michael van Beur-en, and Klaus Grabe. Notions of egalitarian, coolly rational design enthralled Mexican architects and designers. Luis Barragán traveled to Paris to attend Le Corbusier's lectures. The architect Juan O'Gorman—who designed the adjoining studios of Kahlo and Rivera—became almost messianic about rationalism, creating



PEPE MENDOZA

Occasional tables, 1960
Brass, copper laminate, and ceramic

Clockwise from top:

ARTURO PANI

Lounge chair, 1955

Sheaf of Wheat table, 1940s

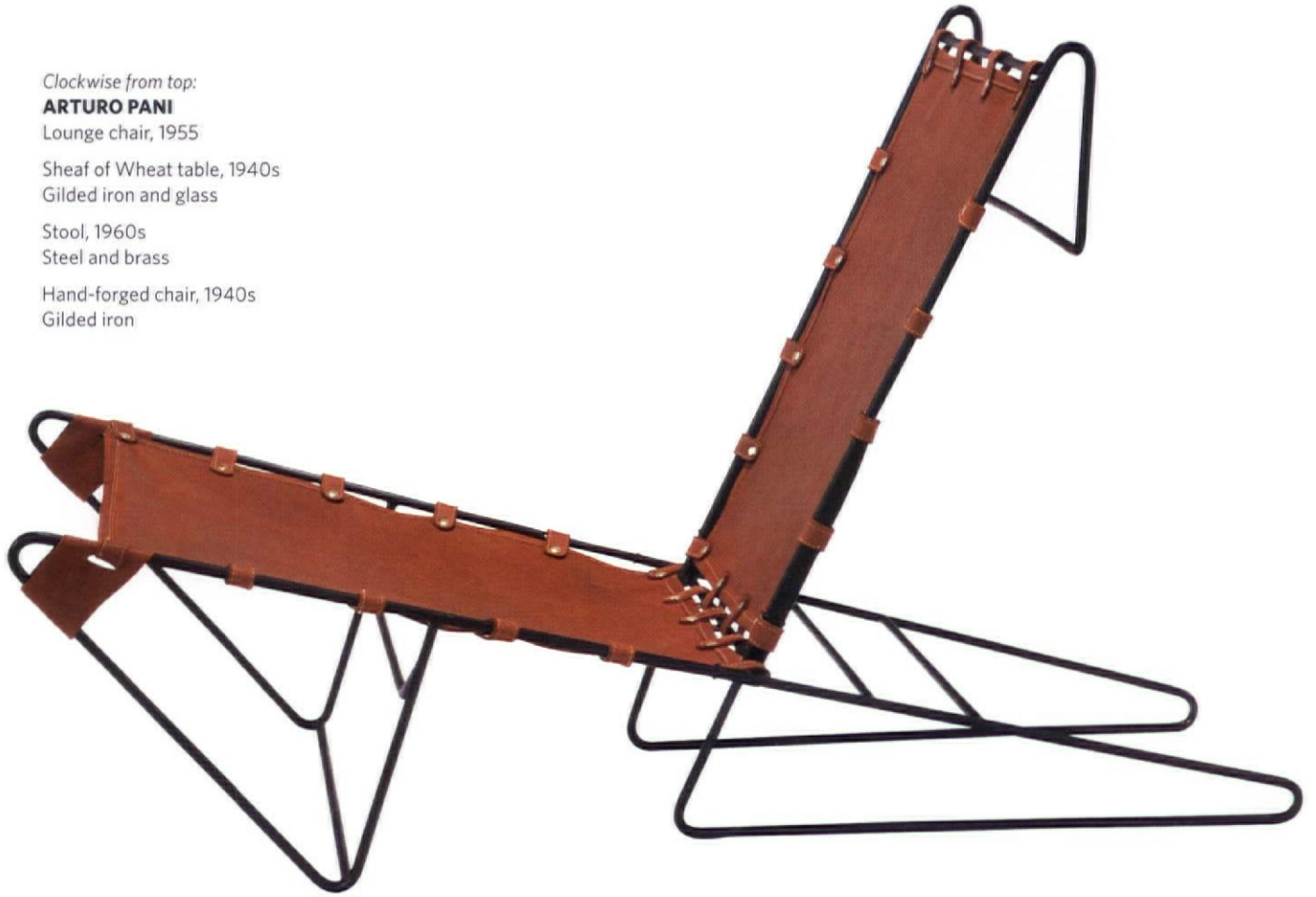
Gilded iron and glass

Stool, 1960s

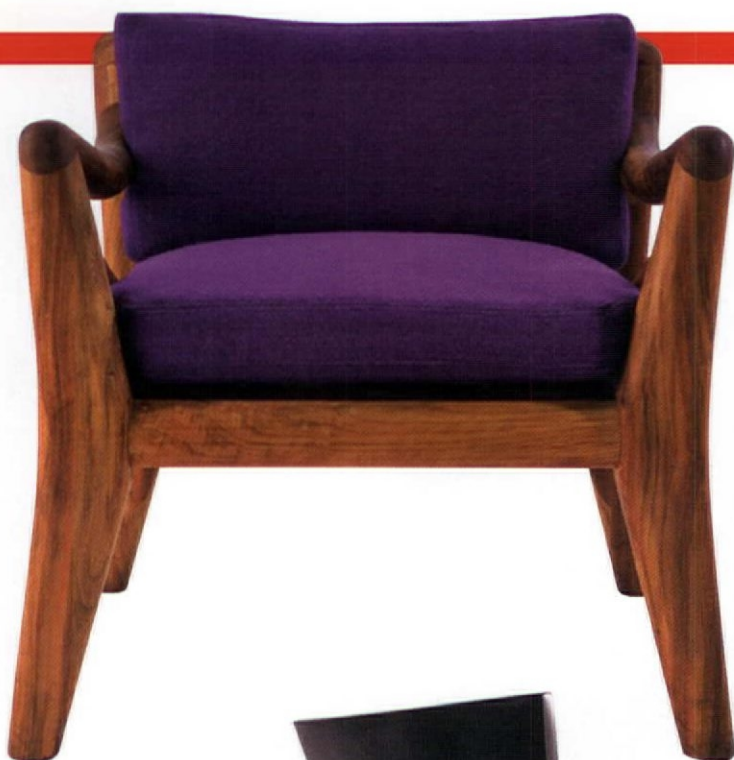
Steel and brass

Hand-forged chair, 1940s

Gilded iron



FROM TOP: MARIO DE LOPEZ, COURTESY OF LOS ANGELES MODERN AUCTIONS; DOWNTOWN



From top:
CLARA PORSET
 Totonaca armchair, 1950s-60s
 Wood and upholstery

ARTURO PANI
 X-Back chair, 1940s
 Mahogany, upholstery, bronze
 nailhead

LUIS BARRAGÁN
 "Barcelona" chair and stool, 1950s
 Wood and leather



spare-box structures all over Mexico City. Clara Porset, a Cuban designer who fled the Machado dictatorship and settled in Mexico, studied with the Alberses at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Another designer, Diego Matthai, was a pupil of Mathias Goeritz, whose own work was heavily influenced by the Bauhaus.

So why is the importance of furniture produced in this fertile intellectual environment from the 1930s through the 1960s only now coming to light? One issue lies with the country of origin itself, says Ana Elena Mallet, a scholar of Mexican modern design. "There are no literary or academic references to Mexican design in the twentieth century," she says. There are no curricula at Mexican universities, either. "They deal more with technical innovation than history. We're still fighting to conserve many of the historical modern buildings from the first part of the century. Design is just not recognized as an art form in Mexico."

Mallet has been passionately trying to rectify the situation by organizing exhibitions and developing scholarship. Her June 2007 book, *Vida y Diseño en Mexico Siglo XX (Life and Design in 20th Century Mexico)*, is the seminal text on the subject. But she's had a time of it. It took her four years of coaxing to finally place an exhibition about Michael van Beuren at the Museo Franz Mayer, Mexico City's decorative arts and design museum. The show is scheduled to open in June.

Dealers such as Sebastian+Barquet and the Los Angeles galleries Downtown and Blackman Cruz have been stocking up on Mexican twentieth-century design for years, while slowly building a market for the pieces. Adam Blackman and David Cruz were showing

From top:

MICHAEL VAN BEUREN

Domus chair, 1950

Wood and upholstery

Furniture from Domus's Pine line,

1957

Natural and Lacquered Pine

MICHAEL VAN BEUREN,

KLAUS GRABE, AND MORLEY

WEBB

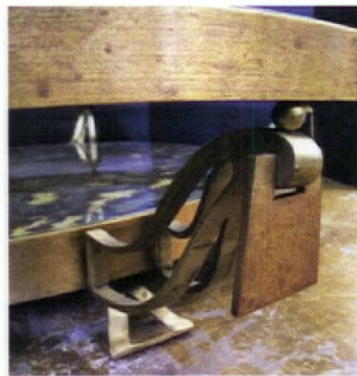
Daybed, 1941

Primavera wood and leather





From top:
ROBERTO AND MITO BLOCK
 Occasional table, 1940s
 Gilded bronze and glass
 Detail of coffee table
 Coffee table, 1940s
 Gilt-bronze and églomisé



Mexican work as far back as 1993. "I'm from Mexico, and I grew up with modern furniture," says Cruz, who adds that most buyers are on the West Coast: "The houses are more suited to it here in terms of scale. It fits well. And the pieces have a certain glamour to them. It's a new take on modernism."

This new take is a considerable market driver, believes Carina Villinger, senior specialist/vice president for twentieth-century decorative art and design at Christie's. "Traditionally, the modern market has been focused toward Europe. But now that those markets have been appreciated and researched, people are looking to others." Christie's recently sold a Barragán lounge chair and stool for \$13,500 and, in 2008, a Michael van Beuren chaise for \$18,750.

THE FURNITURE tends to fall into two general camps: early work influenced by neoclassicism, which catered to the Mexican bourgeoisie; and austere furniture influenced by the Bauhaus and the International Style, which appealed to intellectuals and a young entrepreneurial class. Arturo Pani and the French-born brothers Roberto and Mito Block belong to the former. Highly successful interior decorators, they became known primarily for their ironwork, mostly produced during the 1940s and 1950s. The French precedents are clear. Blackman mistook the first Pani piece he encountered for an André Arbus, and Richard Wright at Wright compares some of Pani's work to that of Jean Royère. The difference, says Downtown's co-





PEDRO FRIEDEBERG

Settee, 1963
Carved and painted wood, gilt, steel, and hide

"Hand" chair, 1960s
Carved laminated pine

TALK TO THE HAND

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG could never resist tweaking convention. His famous "**Hand**" chair (right), which debuted in the early 1960s, was, he says, "a protest" against the rationalism of the cerebral Mexican modernists. Inspired in equal parts by surrealism and fragments of monumental classical sculpture Friedeberg encountered in Rome, the chair became a lightning rod for debate. Critics who appreciated the Pop ethos of artists such as Claes Oldenberg and Andy Warhol hailed it. But to many, Friedeberg remembers, "it looked horrible, especially to those in the *machista* culture of Mexico. To sit in it, to put one's behind in a hand, felt unmasculine."

The chair's renewed popularity—it has been seen in decors and galleries everywhere in recent months—seems to vindicate the artist, who, at 75, has just been honored with a retrospective at Mexico City's Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes. "Modern design is living a kind of mannerist moment," Friedeberg says, citing the concurrent rage for the animal- and botanically-inspired forms in the work of François-Xavier Lalanne (who died last year) and his wife, Claude. (The Lalannes' pieces have been the cynosure of several recent auctions, most notably the Christie's sale from the estate of Yves Saint Laurent and his partner, Pierre Bergé).

"I always hated good taste, from whatever culture," says Friedeberg. "I find bad taste more interesting."



A WHO'S WHO OF MEXICAN MODERNISM



ARTURO PANI

Occasional tables, 1970
Gilt and enameled steel, marble

FRANCISCO ARTIGAS (1916–96)—A Mies-inspired architect who created furniture for his residential projects. His chunky modernist pieces are fairly scarce.

LUIS BARRAGÁN (1902–88)—An architect whose furnishings are highly desirable, though some claim Clara Porset (see below) was the actual author of his furniture. “It’s a tricky question,” admits Nicholas Kilner of Sebastian+Barquet. “There are no drawings of his furniture designs in his archives.” Yet Kilner cites the famous Casa Prieto, whose owners commissioned Barragán to create an entirely new, top-to-bottom décor: “He even melted down the family silver and had it recast. A man who would go to those lengths—it seems unlikely he wouldn’t design the furniture.”

ROBERTO AND MITO BLOCK (1920s–?)—Decorators with offices on trendy Paseo de la Reforma, these brothers offered an elegant, streamlined neoclassicism: Greek-key motifs, tapered forms. Primarily metalwork, sometimes with *verre églomisé* elements.

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG (1936–)—The surrealist prankster of the period. His work is often at auction and is handled by many galleries around the world. www.pedrofriedeberg.com

DIEGO MATTHAI (1945–)—Architect and designer who often incorporated modern materials such as chrome into vernacular Mexican forms. www.matthai.net

PEPE MENDOZA (dates unknown)—Information about this designer is sketchy. Supposedly he ran a foundry in Mexico that made decorative hardware. His work is characterized by a cloisonné-type technique, as well as “elaborate metalwork and exuberant forms,” says Alexander Heminway of the auction house Phillips de Pury. He may have produced hardware for California modernist designers Jerome and Evelyn Ackerman in the 1960s.

ARTURO PANI (1915–81)—The most classical of the lot, he often used luxurious materials such as gilt bronze. Robert Willson, of the L.A. gallery Downtown, says Pani was the go-to decorator for members of Mexico City’s social elite, “like Albert Hadley or someone of that stature in New York.”

CLARA PORSET (1895–1981)—As important as Barragán, says Kilner,



PEDRO RAMÍREZ VÁZQUEZ
“Equipal” chair, 1964
Chrome-plated steel and leather

though “it’s incredibly rare to come across furniture of hers.” Scholar Ana Elena Mallet says Porset did a very limited number of pieces, and they were largely unappreciated in Mexico, despite her great international acclaim at the time (her furniture for Acapulco’s Pierre Marqués hotel was given away when the building was remodeled). Known for channeling Mexican folk culture into modern forms, “she did what Robsjohn-Gibbings did with classical Greek furniture, but with Mayan pieces,” says Willson.

DON SHOEMAKER (1917–1990)—An American living in Michoacán in the 1960s, he made organic modern furniture from native Mexican woods like cocobolo, caoba, pine, and tropical walnut.

WILLIAM SPRATLING (1900–67)—A famed silversmith and another American ex-pat—he moved to the city of Taxco in 1929. His jewelry, inspired by pre-Columbian forms, is avidly collected. Trained as an architect, Spratling designed some furniture based on Mesoamerican imagery, but examples are extremely rare.

MICHAEL VAN BEUREN (1911–2005)—Mallet calls him “the first industrial designer for the Mexican middle class.” This former Bauhaus student manufactured furniture in Mexico under the “Muebles van Beuren” and “Domus” trademarks. A chaise longue he designed with Klaus Grabe and Morely Webb won first prize in the 1941 Museum of Modern Art competition “Organic Design in Home Furnishings” (which featured some of the first bent-plywood designs by Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen). The chaise was produced for Bloomingdale’s and sold for \$69.98.

PEDRO RAMÍREZ VÁZQUEZ (1919–)—A well-known architect who has designed a large number of religious and government structures in Mexico City. His furniture designs appear infrequently in galleries and at auction. His signature furniture piece—the 1964 “Equipal” chair—is generally priced in the range of \$10,000.

owner Robert Willson, is scale: "They're beefed up. I'd call them French on steroids."

The more rigorously modern designers included Barragán and Porset, as well as William Spratling and van Beuren and architects like Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, Diego Matthai (both still working today), and Francisco Artigas. Alexander Heminway, Phillips de Pury's New York director of design, says the appeal of this furniture lies in "its sturdiness and warmth of materials." People like Barragán, he explains, were "absorbing the modernist ideas but melding them with the craft traditions of Mexico. It's very human, local, and loyal to Mexican tradition." Many pieces are actually modernist reinterpretations of centuries-old designs, made in villages but ubiquitous in households in every stratum in Mexican society. One example is Pedro Ramírez Vázquez's 1964 "Equipal" chair, in which a frame of cross-hatched steel rods and a finished leather cushion echo a furniture form—a pigskin seat atop a frame made of reeds or cactus fibers—that dates from pre-Columbian times.

Then there are idiosyncratic figures like Italian-born Pedro Friedeberg (his iconic "Hand" chair defies categorization) and the American expat Don Shoemaker (whose quirky designs celebrate indigenous woods like cocobolo and resemble both Californian Studio design and Brazilian modernist work). Indeed, the far-flung origins of many of these practitioners prompts an interesting question: Can this furniture really be called Mexican? Dealers such as Kilner believe so: "Much of it was a response to Mexico's visual identity. The designers were responding to something fundamentally Mexican."

What that "something" is can probably only be felt rather than described. As a nation with a richer and stranger history than most others in the world—so much beauty, so much cruelty; so much joy and so much sorrow—Mexico will always be an enigma, and it should be no surprise that the land would develop a singular, perplexing, and alluring language of design. ■

JORGE ARANGO is a design writer, editor, and stylist from New York. He is the co-author of *Harlem Style* (2002) and *Ex Arte* (2009).



From top:
DON SHOEMAKER
Chair, 1960s
Wood and rush



Bookends, 1960s
Rosewood



Stool, 1960s
Rosewood and leather



UNDER the HOOD

Edsel Ford's traditionally styled stately home near Detroit harbors a surprising quintet of gemlike modernist spaces by **WALTER DORWIN TEAGUE**

AT FIRST SIGHT, the house of Edsel Ford—son and only child of automaking giant Henry—and his wife, Eleanor, seems like the archetypal dwelling of an early-twentieth-century captain of industry. Located in the tony Detroit suburb of Grosse Pointe Shores and designed by Albert Kahn, an architect best remembered for his pioneering open-plan factories and his office towers, the house, completed in 1929 and now a museum, is an elegant rendition of Old World style. The exterior, with its crandelled sandstone walls and shingled limestone roof, draws its inspiration from homes in the Cotswold region of England. The theme continues inside: on the first floor an English staircase from the 1600s greets guests in the entrance hall, and most of the public rooms are decorated with elaborate ceiling moldings, and fitted with antique wood paneling and furnishings. A magazine of the day described the spaces as a “pageant of English history.”

But there is one room on the first floor that often gives visitors a start: the so-called “Modern Room.” Far from antique paneling, the space is clad in bubinga and oak veneers, squares of taupe-colored leather, and peach-tinted mirrored glass. It is one of a clutch of rooms—including two bedrooms, a study, and a bathroom for his sons—that Ford commissioned from Walter Dorwin Teague in the mid-1930s.

Teague, along with Donald Deskey and Henry Dreyfuss,

was one of the most prestigious industrial designers of America’s “Machine Age”—the term for the era when the streamlined art deco look took root in the United States. Teague came from Indiana to New York to study art, and became a prominent graphic designer in the advertising industry, but a trip to Europe in 1926 sparked his interest in modernism. A recommendation from Richard F. Bach at the Metropolitan Museum of Art brought Teague to the attention of the Eastman Kodak Company, where Teague began his industrial design career, creating cameras as well as exhibition spaces.

Teague’s work for Kodak brought him to the attention of executives at the Ford Motor Company—and Edsel Ford, who had an artistic and design-friendly bent and was an enthusiastic fan. As former Ford House vice president Judith Dressel noted in an essay for the Detroit Area Art Deco Society’s newsletter, “Throughout the 1930s, Edsel Ford retained Walter Dorwin Teague to design Ford Motor Company’s pavilions and new-product exhibits at world’s fairs, auto shows and dealer showrooms.” A major Teague project for Ford was to

While the architecture and décor of the Ford house predominately take their cues from Olde English aesthetics seen here in the façade (top left) and the baronial gallery, with its elaborate vaulted ceiling (top right), one public space, the so-called Modern Room (opposite page), designed by Walter Dorwin Teague, offers a vivid, forward-looking counterpoint that testifies to Edsel Ford’s appreciation for the new.

By **JOSEPHINE SHEA** PHOTOGRAPHS BY BALTHAZAR KORAB





Teague designed a bedroom for the Ford's eldest child, Henry II, that is sleek, bright, elegant, and efficiently organized. The suite included a tidy, tiled bathroom that would not be out of place in a contemporary house.



JOSEPHINE SHEA



craft the interior—everything from choosing wall colors to designing attendants' uniforms—in the company's dramatic, Kahn-designed showcase building at the 1933–1934 Chicago Century of Progress exposition.

At work and at home, Edsel Ford embraced the modern spirit. He spearheaded the production of the 1936 Lincoln Zephyr, the first successful aerodynamically streamlined American car. The redesigned rooms at Ford House echo Teague's work at the Chicago fair: smooth wall surfaces, inset wall-mounted mirrors, and low built-in furniture that reinforce the horizontal line. Rooms feature distinctive copper, bronze, or brass trim. In the Modern Room, lighting is provided by concealed overhead cove lights, custom bronze sconces, and floor lamps with tubular glass edging.

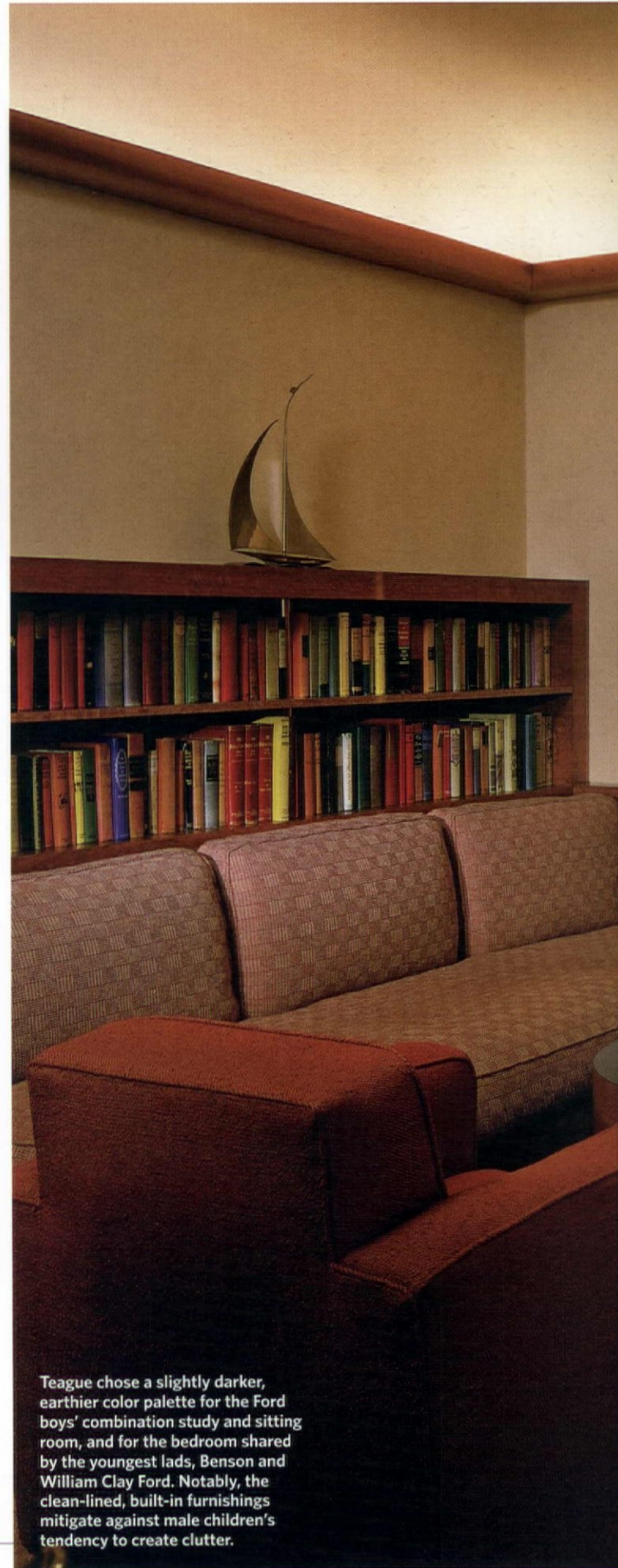
Teague included a record player housed within a built-in cabinet, a radio in a coffee table, and a speaker reminiscent of a taillight in the fireplace wall. A custom Steinway piano provided another musical entertainment alternative. With sleek lines uninterrupted by ornament, the grand piano and matching bench—which Steinway vowed never to replicate—are finished in bubinga veneer with the grain applied horizontally, echoing the fireplace wall. Upstairs, Teague designed copper cove lighting fixtures for the bedroom and adjoining study shared by the Fords' younger sons, Benson and William Clay Ford. (The Fords' only daughter, Josephine, preferred to deco-



rate her bedroom with chintz curtains and period English and French antiques.) In the boys' rooms, the furnishings are low and sleek, and, like the wainscoting, are made with horizontal wood veneer. The wall-to-wall carpeting and upholstery are in soothing earth tones. Art—prints by the expressionist painter Lyonel Feininger, a Waylande Gregory terra-cotta horse head, and Franz Hagenauer statues—enliven the décor while referencing Ford family pastimes, including sailing, horseback riding, and skiing.

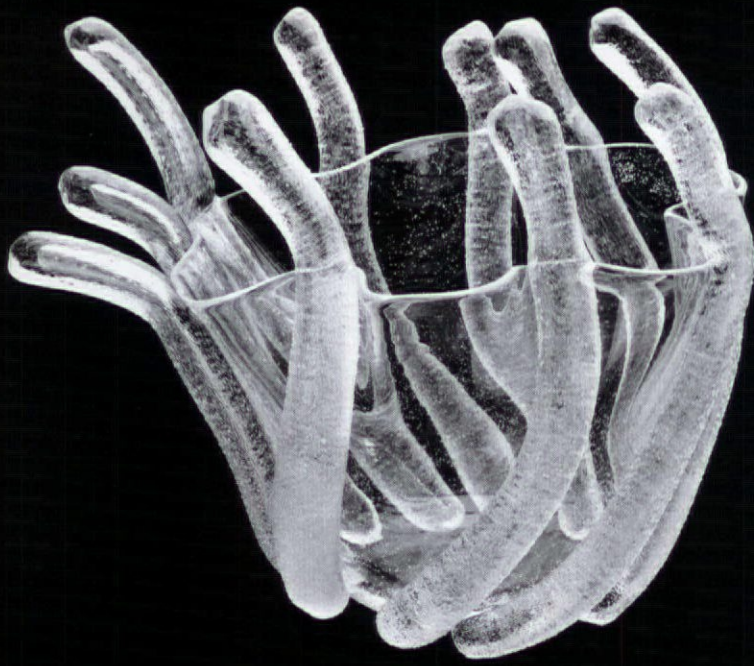
Across the hallway, in the bedroom created for the eldest child, Henry Ford II, a work by the famed ceramist Maija Grotell rests on a built-in record player trimmed in oak and curly maple. Along with table lamps, sconces, and fixed reading lights, Teague designed an overhead brass lighting channel that bisects the room. It recalls lighting that Le Corbusier employed in his design for the 1929 Villa Savoye, a residential masterwork in the Paris suburbs. A final, elegant Teague touch is the gray glass-walled bathroom with black floor tiles, which adjoins the room. For sanitary fixtures, Teague used designs from Crane's "Neuvogue" line by Henry Dreyfuss and Roy Zinkil. A then state-of-the-art gas-fired built-in space heater completes the tableau of what "modern" was in the 1930s.

Edsel was proud of the modernist spaces he commissioned. A photograph shows him leaning against the Modern Room fireplace wall, enjoying a moment during Josephine's wedding reception on January 2, 1943. Tragically, Edsel Ford died later that year. In 1976, after witnessing real estate developers demolish Anna Dodge's nearby mansion, "Rose Terrace," to make way for the precursors of today's McMansions, Eleanor Ford made provisions in her will for the preservation of their family home and these rooms. Now all are invited to share in the intriguing mix of the mannered and the modern at the Edsel & Eleanor Ford House. **M**



Teague chose a slightly darker, earthier color palette for the Ford boys' combination study and sitting room, and for the bedroom shared by the youngest lads, Benson and William Clay Ford. Notably, the clean-lined, built-in furnishings mitigate against male children's tendency to create clutter.





GLASS CEILING BROKEN

WOMEN WERE LONG DISCOURAGED FROM ENTERING THE WORLD OF ARTFUL GLASSMAKING. PROFILES OF THREE WHO HAVE CHANGED THAT STATE OF AFFAIRS



By PAUL O'DONNELL

Right: Ritsue Mishima poses with her 2007 design *Virus* at the San Francisco gallery Hedge.

Below: Two more iterations of Mishima designs from 2007: *Galassia*, left, and *Cellula coppa*, right.

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Ritsue Mishima's *Vento del Nord* vessel; Alison Berger's 2009 *Silver Pendants* for Holly Hunt, made in an edition of 50; a 13-inch in diameter apricot/aubergine blown glass vessel by Sonja Blomdahl, executed in 2003.



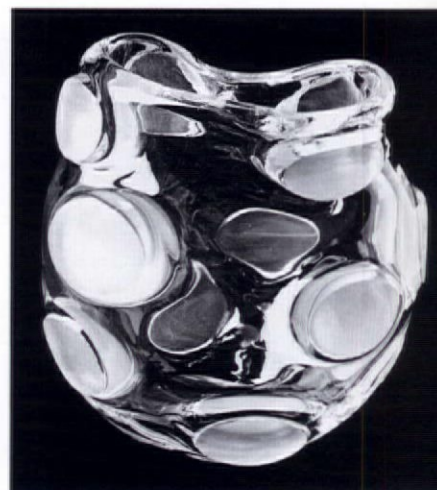
RITSUE MISHIMA

THE WORLD OF ART AND DESIGN is prone to occasional bouts of “glass madness”—the term New York gallery owner Douglas Heller uses to describe the periodic outbursts of aesthetic enthusiasm that give rise to stylistic fads (such as the early-eighteenth-century craze for English cameo glass) and mint the careers of stars such as René Lalique and Louis Comfort Tiffany. With glass appearing in the work of artists such as Jeff Koons and Kiki Smith at one end of the aesthetic spectrum and, at the other, the ubiquitous sight of kitchen islands lit by Venetian glass pendants, the signs are that glass enthusiasm has reached yet another historic highpoint.

The work of the three glass artists profiled here embodies many reasons for the trend. The artists are all motivated by blown glass's transformative spontaneity; they work at the crux of art, design, and craft; and they are women. This last point is not an idle one. As members of the Studio Glass movement, female glassblowers have finally reached parity in what one insider calls “the last bastion of testosterone in the arts.”

Until she walked onto a factory floor on the island of Murano, the center of Venetian glassmaking, 13 years ago, **RITSUE MISHIMA** had never seen glass blown before. Now supremely skilled and sensitive to the material, Mishima and her work represent the most rarefied of the many developments in the world of glassmaking over the last 30 years: the idea that glass can be used to create pure sculpture.

Born in Kyoto, Mishima was a freelance stylist who worked on advertising photo shoots and floral installations when she came to Italy to live with her then husband. When a friend who had started working with glass invited Mishima to Murano, her first impulse was to ask the Murano masters to make her a vase she could use for flowers. She saw glass as a medium for making only useful things. But as she returned again and again



SONJA BLOMDAHL

SONJA BLOMDAHL gave up her “hot shop”—a glassmaker’s atelier with a furnace—in Seattle last year after more than a quarter-century of keeping her fire stoked days, nights, and weekends. In the 1970s, when the Studio Glass movement was “small, intense, and new,” Blomdahl says, by definition artists had to have their own places. But in Seattle these days, she jokes, “there’s a Starbucks, a yogurt shop, and a hot shop on every corner,” allowing her to rent furnace time.

Blomdahl can also rely on rented furnace time because she is turning her own production toward rondels—relatively easy-to-make discs of glass that go into room dividers, screens, and architectural elements—in lieu of the symmetrical containers that have always been her trademark. “Vessels were my preferred form since my early days,” she says, when she left her native Massachusetts to be a teaching assistant at Pilchuck Glass School, founded in the woods north of Seattle by one of the original evangelists of Studio Glass, Dale Chihuly. “People were pushing glass in a lot of different directions—what I call rolling it in the dirt. I kept making vessels.” Mixing disciplined lines with seductive color, Blomdahl’s vases and bowls seem an attempt to render the art-versus-craft debate moot with sheer beauty.

Because of her name, and an early stint at Sweden’s famed glass firm Orrefors, critics often describe the purity of her shapes in terms of Scandinavian design. But, says Blomdahl a little wearily, “if my name wasn’t Scandinavian, my work wouldn’t get labeled that way.” Indeed, the *incalmo* technique that most people associate with her is a Venetian process she learned at Pilchuck from the Italian master glassblower Checco Ongaro. Characterized by a transparent band between layers of colored glass, *incalmo* changes glass’s optical effects and provides insight into the crafting of the object.

Recognizing that she’s a pioneer by virtue of her gender and her long history in the field, Blomdahl sees her new architectural pieces as a way to expand what she calls “my little place in the world. I want the opportunity to make a new statement, and new kind of impact.”



to work with the artisans, “this functional aspect vanished,” Mishima says.

Working from a clay model, Mishima consults with her maestro on how to execute the design and tailor it to the realities of glass. “I play the role of conductor,” Mishima says. “My initiative guides all the parts of the process. But as the maestro and I work together, what emerges is always a surprise.” Antonio Ametrano, exhibition director of the San Francisco design gallery Hedge, where a large installation of Mishima’s work was mounted two and a half years ago, calls the teamwork at a furnace a process of “reciprocal inspiration.”

Her pieces today—the majority in clear crystal, some in frosted glass—are inspired by forms from nature as disparate as the moon and subatomic quarks. Some, like “Big Mirror Stone,” can be seen as functional objects, but others cannot. “Defining Mishima’s works as containers doesn’t do them justice,” says Ametrano, “but calling them sculpture that can’t be used doesn’t give a clear picture, either. It’s a blurred line.” Would that all blurry things could be so compelling.



This page: A group of *incalmo* vessels by Blomdahl made in 2006.

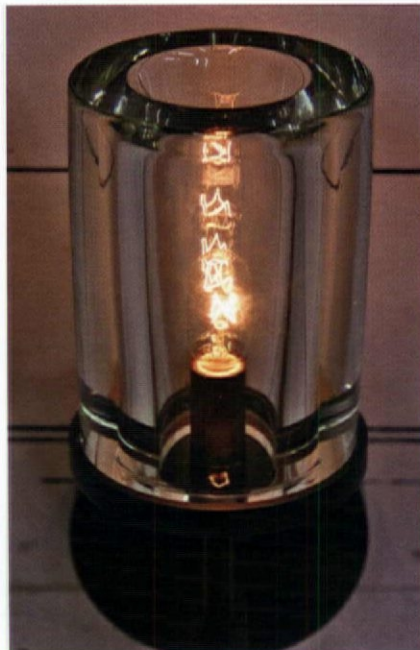
Opposite page: A tripartite window made of blown glass rondels—the center panel is eight feet tall; the side panels are six feet tall—created in 2007 by Blomdahl and Dick Weiss for a private house in San Francisco.



Above: Berger at work in her Los Angeles studio.

Right: The *Cylinder Sconce*, a 2009 Berger design.

Far right: Berger's 2009 *Lens Sconce* was inspired by the facets in the crystals in a pair of 1920s earrings that she found at a flea market.



ALISON BERGER

After working in Frank Gehry's office in Los Angeles for two years, **ALISON BERGER** had an epiphany. "I asked myself, 'How many women architects can I think of?'" she recalls. "Not many, was the answer. I realized it would be hard to really distinguish myself in the field."

Berger had been blowing glass since she was a teenager in Dallas, and had studied with Dale Chihuly while getting her architecture degree at the Rhode Island School of Design. Glass gave her an alternative vocabulary; her knowledge of design history gave her a subject. "My influences came from the world of industrial design," Berger says—not only the work of architect-designers like Gio Ponti and Charles Eames, but the anonymous authors of everyday items like inkwells and magnifying lenses.

Berger's fascination has translated into one-off pieces that suggest both decanters from a

CAROLINE WILLIAMSON; COURTESY OF ALISON BERGER GLASSWORKS (3)



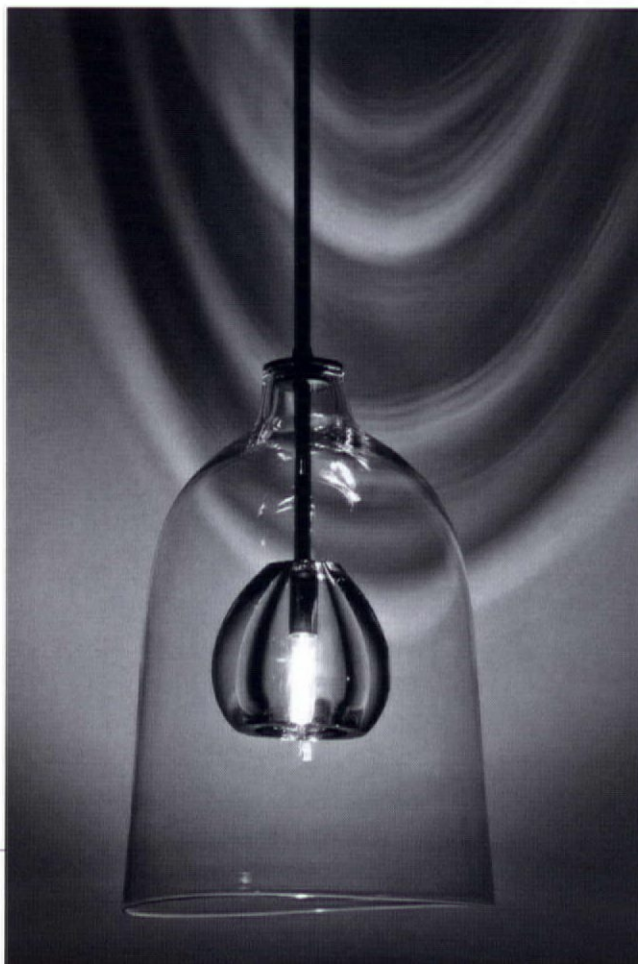


gentleman's club and antique laboratory beakers. She has created lighting and tableware designs for home décor purveyors like Holly Hunt and Hermès that balance nostalgia with clean modernity. "I take artifacts and strip them of their decorative connotation," she says. "It's reinterpretation without being a reproduction."

As an architect, Berger saw every building as a vessel for light. She approaches her glasswares (which she hands off to a crew for production) in a similar way—as small structures. "I start with a planned section and an elevation," she says, but soon the molten glass takes over. "Things happen that far exceed expectation. You get distracted, or you push the material more than you intended. And that's when you get a shape you could never have imagined." **M**

Above: Berger's *Amber Tree Lights* line was designed in 2005.

Right: A fixture within a fixture, Berger created her *Bell Light* in 2004.







P.J.'s First Foray

By **KARLA CAVARRA BRITTON**

A little-heralded house in Westchester County, New York, holds a distinguished place in the history of modern American architecture

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT DAMORA & ROBERT GREGSON

Above: A 1976 Robert Damora photo of the façade of the Booth House.

Opposite page: Robert Gregson's image takes in the gently rising wooded landscape that surrounds the house.

BEFORE PHILIP JOHNSON'S famed Glass House of 1949, there was the Booth House. His first completed commission, Johnson built this house in 1946 in the village of Bedford, New York, for a young advertising executive and his wife, who were interested in a home from which to commute to Manhattan. More importantly, they wanted a residence both practical and yet open to the rustic beauty of the surrounding forest.

The Booth House proved to be an archetype for the principles that would later be at work in the Glass House. The earlier house already demonstrates Johnson's talent for creating a relationship between a structure and the natural environment. The architect's design subtly speaks of a poetic sensitivity evident in the house's material precision and articulated simplicity. Elements such as the dominating island fireplace



surrounded by a glazed enclosure are also already in place.

Unlike the Glass House, where Johnson shaped the landscape with carefully created vistas, the Booth House was set within an existing topography. Sited on the graded crest of a wooded slope, it takes full advantage of the towering trees that enclose the house. Nature enters into the house as an almost physical presence. While the Glass House has a temple-like quality, the Booth House strives to be only a comforting shelter for daily family life—a fact valued by the late architect and pioneering architectural photographer Robert Damora and his widow, architect Sirkka Damora, who acquired the house in 1955 and lived there appreciatively for 55 years.

Johnson conceived a simple plan for his first commission. The intent was to provide a sophisticated modern habitation at minimal cost. The design echoes the concept of a basic rectangular project with extensive fenestration that Johnson laid out in his article “As Simple as That,” in the July 1945 edition of *Ladies’ Home Journal*. Johnson’s original plan for the Booth House included a podium of gray block, which would create a level building platform on a slope that dropped ten feet across the diagonal. The house itself would sit at the rear edge of this podium, while a fourteen-square-foot studio building was to sit apart at the downhill corner of the podium. (In fact, neither the podium nor the studio



This page, from top: A view of the front entryway to the house; a corridor connects the bedrooms to the living room, passing the entrance to the kitchen, at left; Damora’s basement study and archive room.

Opposite page, from top: A photo of the quietly furnished living room shows how the brick fireplace serves as the axis of the architecture; the north end of the house demonstrates how Johnson’s design lends grace to humble cement block.



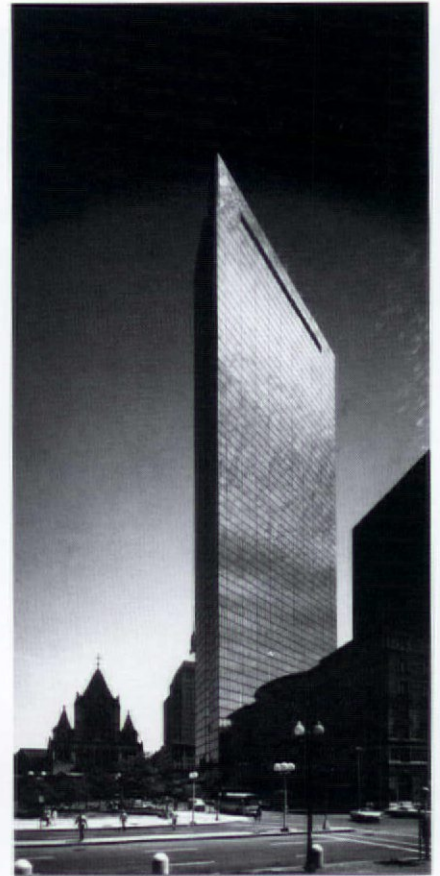
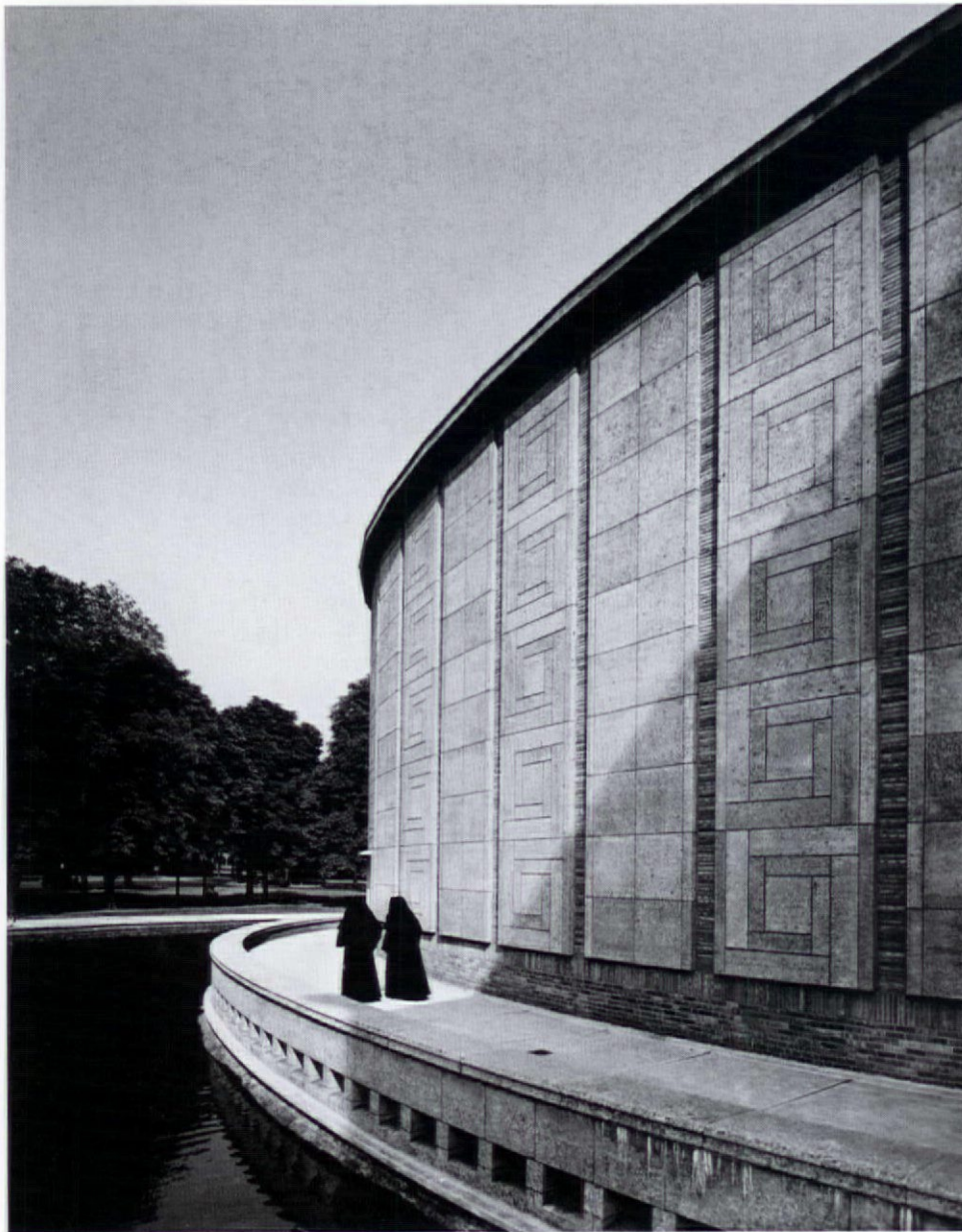


was ever constructed due to budget constraints. The site was prepared by simply grading the earth. Damora eventually added a separate studio space at the top of the driveway for his photographic work, and created a windowed work space in the partial basement as an archival study.)

Saying that this first house was his own “de Mandrot house” (invoking Le Corbusier’s 1932 *Maison de Mandrot* in Le Pradet, France), Johnson provided for two bedrooms accessible by an open corridor, separated from the main living area by the kitchen. The living area, in turn, is set off by the large masonry fireplace. The house is reached by an uphill gravel road, which calls attention to the subtle features of the house as one approaches it from below, heightening the awareness of the landscape as it varies with the seasons.

As in the Glass House, the dominant feature of the interior is the way the solidity of the brick fireplace is countered by the immateriality of the glass walls—in this case twenty-eight feet of floor to ceiling glass that encloses most of the living space. The windows make it possible, as Sirkka Damora says, to sit mesmerized on a cold winter’s night by a warm fire in the expansive brick hearth while watching the snowflakes drift through the trees. This experience is evocative of a remark Johnson made about the Glass House: [continued on page 140]





Left: Damora's striking 1941 image of the Kleinhans Music Hall in Buffalo, New York.

Above: His 1977 photo of the Hancock Building in Boston gives the edifice an air of power and drama.

Below: Damora's camera peers through the undergrowth at the Marcel Breuer House in New Canaan, Connecticut, in this 1948 shot.

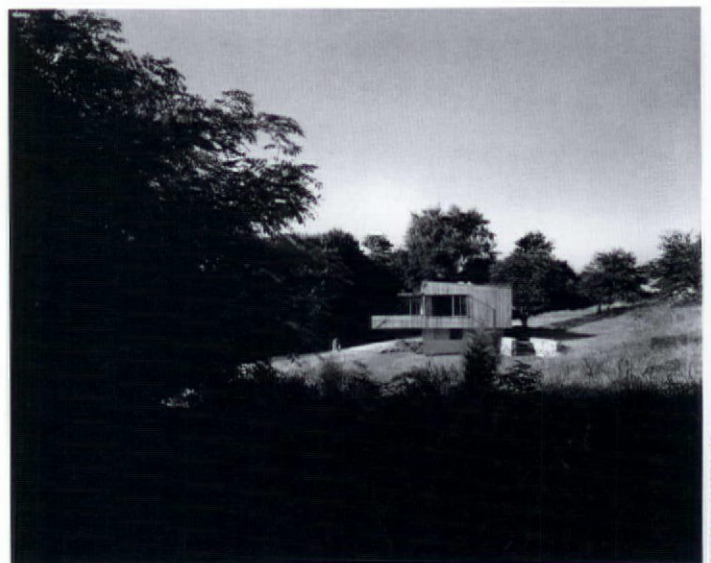
MAN OF VISION

A tribute to the art and architecture of Robert Damora

By JOANNA LEHAN

"IT HIT ME LIKE A TON OF BRICKS." That is a funny way to describe one's response to an architectural exhibition, but that unintentional pun is how Robert Damora often spoke of his visceral response to Philip Johnson's "Modern Architecture: An International Exhibition" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Damora was a twenty-year-old photographic assistant, and a night student at the New York University School of Architecture, when he visited that watershed 1932 exhibition, which inaugurated MoMA's Department of Architecture. Seven years later he was back, shooting MoMA's newly built West 53rd Street icon of modernism



ROBERT DAMORA (3)

Right: Damora created a lush, complex composition of diagonals, shadows, and flora in this 1962 image of a house of his own design, built on Cape Cod.

for *The Architectural Forum*, the leading journal of the day. Damora was well on his way to becoming the professional Walter Gropius hailed as “the best photographer of architecture in this country.”

Damora hit his stride in that golden post-war moment when both modern architecture and the notion of photography as a true art form were at last ensconced in the American cultural canon. This historic conjunction provided fertile ground for architectural photography—previously considered by those in and out of the field as a matter of documentation—to rise to the level of art. Names such as Ezra Stoller and Julius Shulman might become better known, but Damora was deeply admired by peers such as Balthazar Korab—architect Eero Saarinen’s lensman of choice—who called him “the dean of American architectural photography.”

Graduating from Yale’s architectural school in 1953, Damora emerged with a fervent belief in the possibilities of modern architecture. During the 1950s he headed a project for Universal Atlas Cements (part of U.S. Steel) called “Seeds for Architecture,” which commissioned such top modernists as Gropius, Marcel Breuer, and Louis Kahn to design exploratory projects using affordable concrete. Damora’s own built projects reflected democratic ideals, notably his modular Cape House, *Architectural Record*’s “House of the Year” of 1962, a model home constructed from six pre-fabricated mass-produced components, which could be erected in two days in a variety of forms.

But Damora’s most enduring legacy will surely be the work he undertook with his 8-x-10-inch view camera. Familiarity with modern architecture’s tenets convinced Damora that a revolutionary type of structure required new approaches to photographic representation. “Modern architecture is concerned with the volume of buildings rather than the façade that captivated Renaissance architecture,” he once said. He strove to develop what he called “volumetric” photography, and achieved that goal with technical virtuosity as well as a natural talent for the composition of images.

We can see the radical departure Damora made from static façade photography in a 1948 photograph he made of Marcel Breuer’s house in New Canaan, Connecticut. Though the house is relatively small in the frame, the image possesses a sense of expansive space thanks to a composition that moves us through a foreground of dark thicket to the bright, cleared rise on which the house perches. The effect is almost anthropological—as if Damora crept up upon this exotic new breed of dwelling, with its dramatic cantilevered deck, while exploring the pastoral New England woods.

Damora’s 1941 photograph of Eiel and Eero Saarinen’s Kleinhans Music Hall in Buffalo is another example of his precise and theatrical



compositional sense. Two nuns traverse the center of the frame, the twin black columns of their habits echoed in the vertical panels on the Saarinen’s curvilinear structure, as well as in the dark tree trunks in the surrounding Frederick Law Olmsted-designed park. Though the visual harmony and evocations of austerity and spirituality seem coincidental, Damora had a clear sense of purpose (not to mention perseverance) when creating this image. The reflecting pool was drained when he arrived, and he had it filled. The nuns, who happened to be nearby, were recruited to stroll the walkway many times before Damora took a shot in which their forms just clear the diagonal shadow in the right corner of the frame.

Robert Damora died last year at the age of 97, having recently enjoyed the launch of a Yale School of Architecture retrospective exhibition, “Robert Damora: 70 Years of Total Architecture.” They were indeed 70 years well spent, with consuming twin passions for architecture and photography, and a singular optimism in their potential to elevate the human spirit.

[For more information on Robert Damora and the Booth House, go to www.robertdamora.com]



Dan Cooper in 1950

All but forgotten today, designer **Dan Cooper** was one of the most suave tastemakers in mid-century America

SMOOTH OPERATOR



By **WILLIAM L. HAMILTON**

A "Butterfly" table from the PAKTO line of "demountable," or ready-to-assemble, furnishings that Cooper and his studio began designing in 1942. The pieces packed flat for shipping, and four rooms of furniture could fit in a six-by-six-foot container. The furniture, manufactured by Drexel Furniture Company and sold at Bloomingdale's and Abraham & Straus, was made of oak plywood veneered with limed oak. The table was included in a MoMA exhibition, "Useful Objects in Wartime: Fifth Annual Exhibition of Useful Objects under \$10.00." The basic "Butterfly" table sold for \$7.50.

FROM TOP: AMERICAN TEXTILE HISTORY MUSEUM; COLLECTION OF LARRY WEINBERG; PHOTO BY RALPH SMITH FOR MODERN



THE CASE OF DAN COOPER—you've heard of him?—is a strange one, more like a Ross Macdonald novel than the story of a signal figure in modern design history.

Let's start at the end: A big red-haired man, well-dressed to the point that you could describe him as dapper, probably smoking a cigarette, collapses on a Manhattan sidewalk in March of 1965 and dies of an aneurysm as he is being admitted to St. Luke's Hospital. He's buried in a family plot in Freedom, New Hampshire, a town near the Maine border that had 1,434 residents by the year 2008. At the time of his death, *The New York Times*—it turns out the man used to be important—gives him a column on the obituary page: "Dan Cooper Dead, Textile Designer." Though the newspaper calls him a "leading decorator," the *Times* left out a few facts.

The 1948 W. T. Grant house in Greenwich, Connecticut, designed by architect Edward Durell Stone, affords a look at Cooper's post-war high-end residential interior design work. At the same time, though, he commissioned affordable Swedish Modern furnishings to display in his showroom, making him a key figure in introducing America to mid-century Scandinavian design. The fabric at right is an example of Cooper's "Spectrum" pattern.

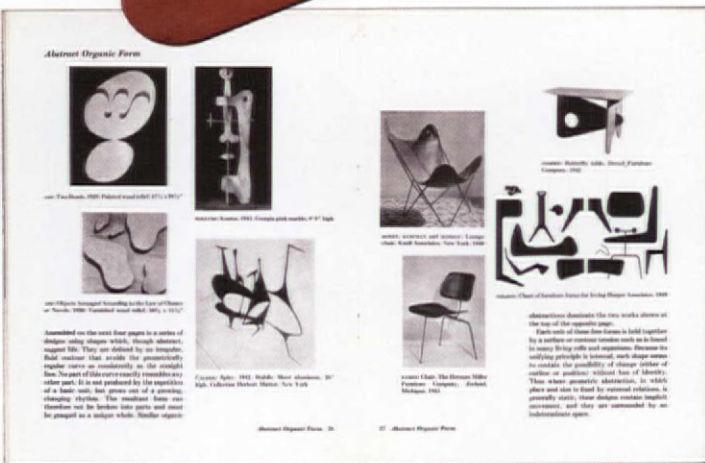
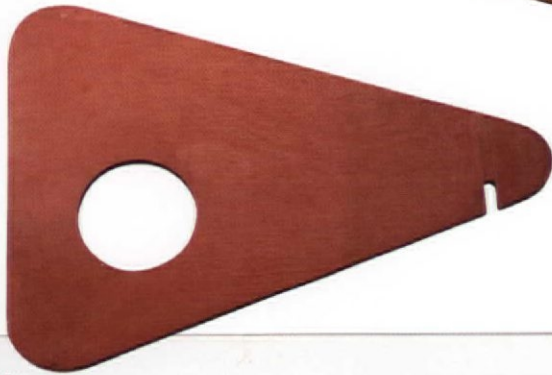




Left: the PAKTO "Butterfly" table disassembled.

Center: pages from the catalogue to the 1949 MoMA show "Modern Art in Your Life" display the "Butterfly" table alongside art and other furniture embracing organic forms, including a Charles Eames chair and Jean Arp and Alexander Calder artwork.

Below: an armchair from the ready-to-assemble PATKO collection. The fabric on the chair is Cooper's "Daisies" pattern.



During his forty-one-year career as a designer, Cooper, who established his own firm in 1924, was included in three Museum of Modern Art exhibitions, for furniture and textiles, his work shown alongside that of contemporaries like Charles Eames and Isamu Noguchi, Anni Albers and Louise Bourgeois. His private clients included Nelson Rockefeller, whose New York offices he designed, and the Shah of Iran, who flew him to Tehran to present his plans for a new embassy in Washington—a commission for which he beat out the venerable Paris firm Maison Jansen. He collaborated with the vanguard of modernist architects in America. He was involved with Edward Durell Stone on three important commissions, including the A. Conger Goodyear house in Old Westbury, NY. (Goodyear was president and a founder of the Museum of Modern Art.) Cooper worked with George Nelson on the Manhattan town house of Sherman Fairchild, an inventor and aircraft mogul who was a co-founder of Pan American and American Airlines. The structure, a "machine for living"—in Le Corbusier's famous phrase—had no streetside windows, and its severity so startled the city that *Fortune* magazine put it on its cover.

In his showrooms, Cooper introduced New York to the textiles of Britain's short-lived Omega Workshops and to Scandinavian design. He gave a young Jens Risom, the Danish-born designer, his first job in America. During the war, Cooper promoted and popularized the then novel concepts of ready-to-assemble furniture and prefabricated housing, working on contract with the government. His designs were sold at Bloomingdale's and Georg Jensen, and by major department stores in Los Angeles, Dallas, and Atlanta. Dan Cooper fabrics eventually draped the country, from turnpike restaurants to corporate headquarters, colleges, libraries, railroads, steamships, and airplanes. Always signed "Dan Cooper" in the selvedge, the bold prints and textured weaves in stripes and plaids were the look of post-war America on the move. In an interview, he called the style "carpet-slipper modern," conjoining—as did Russel and Mary Wright in the 1930s—European modernism with colonial comfort.

By 1950, Cooper's multi-faceted firm occupied the penthouse of the RCA Building in Rockefeller Center. Publications such as *Vogue*, *Glamour*, and *Women's Wear Daily* showcased his brief foray into fashion. ABC hung 180 yards of "Rosemont,"



a gold cotton and jute Cooper fabric, as the studio backdrop for the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debate.

Fame, however, fades more quickly than fabric. By 1965, buried in Freedom, Cooper was already unknown. Edward Durell Stone's 1962 autobiography makes no mention of him. In 1989, Diane Montenegro, a master of science candidate in textiles, fashion merchandising, and design at the University of Rhode Island, was shown several of Cooper's fabrics and decided to pursue him. "Nobody had ever heard of him," she said in a recent conversation. "It was like bringing back a ghost." Montenegro contacted Cooper's surviving sister, Mary Frances Doyle, who was living in Effingham Falls, New Hampshire, in an early-nineteenth-century house filled with her brother's modern designs. Doyle ran Cooper's business for a time after

From 1950 to 1954, Cooper's showroom was located in the penthouse of the RCA Building in Rockefeller Center. The space was set up to entertain magazine editors, and could accommodate fashion photo shoots—testimony to Cooper's media savvy. The textile at right is his "Dew" pattern, one of the four fabrics included in a Museum of the City of New York exhibition.





Above: Cooper's office in his showroom on East 70th Street, located in a five-story, 18-room mansion he bought from the Archdiocese of New York in 1944 for \$37,000. Cooper sold the building in 1949.

for a time after his death, closing it nine years later. She had kept everything—textile and wallpaper samples, furniture, and annual albums of designs and news clippings—in oversized books covered in Cooper's fabrics. Montenegro organized the materials and eventually arranged for the archive's deposit at the American Textile History Museum in Lowell, Mass. Her thesis was presented in 2000.

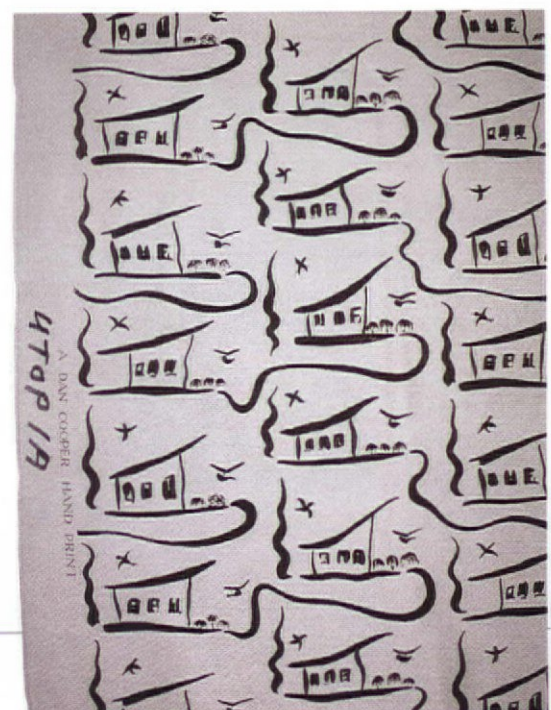
WHO WAS DAN COOPER? It depends on who you ask.

"Not a friendly guy," Jens Risom said recently. "A slightly unusual character who thought of himself as an outstanding artist and designer." Risom, who worked for Cooper for three years designing fabrics and furniture, explained: "He was opinionated and jealous. There was a constant play of 'Is this my design or yours?'"

In fact, Cooper put his own name on everything his showroom produced, and took the credit too, making attributions difficult—part of the problem of appraising Cooper's contribution to American design. For example, Risom executed most of the furniture for the 1940 "House of Ideas," an experimental two-story model home designed by Edward Durrell Stone and Cooper for *Collier's* magazine and built on a terrace at Rockefeller Center. Cooper, a tireless self-promoter—he had two publicists—walked away with the accolades.

Montenegro says she believes Cooper's unorthodox practices, which may have kept him out of the critical canon of

Below: Cooper's "Utopia" pattern commemorates the "Pint House," a modular one-room housing experiment on which he collaborated with Edward Durrell Stone in 1940. The fabric depicts Cooper's idea of the American dream: that every family could possess their own clean, efficient, and modern (if small) house.



twentieth-century designers, may ultimately be considered his true significance: his originality as a marketer and his entrepreneurial eye. She compared him to branding standard-bearers of today such as Ralph Lauren and Martha Stewart.

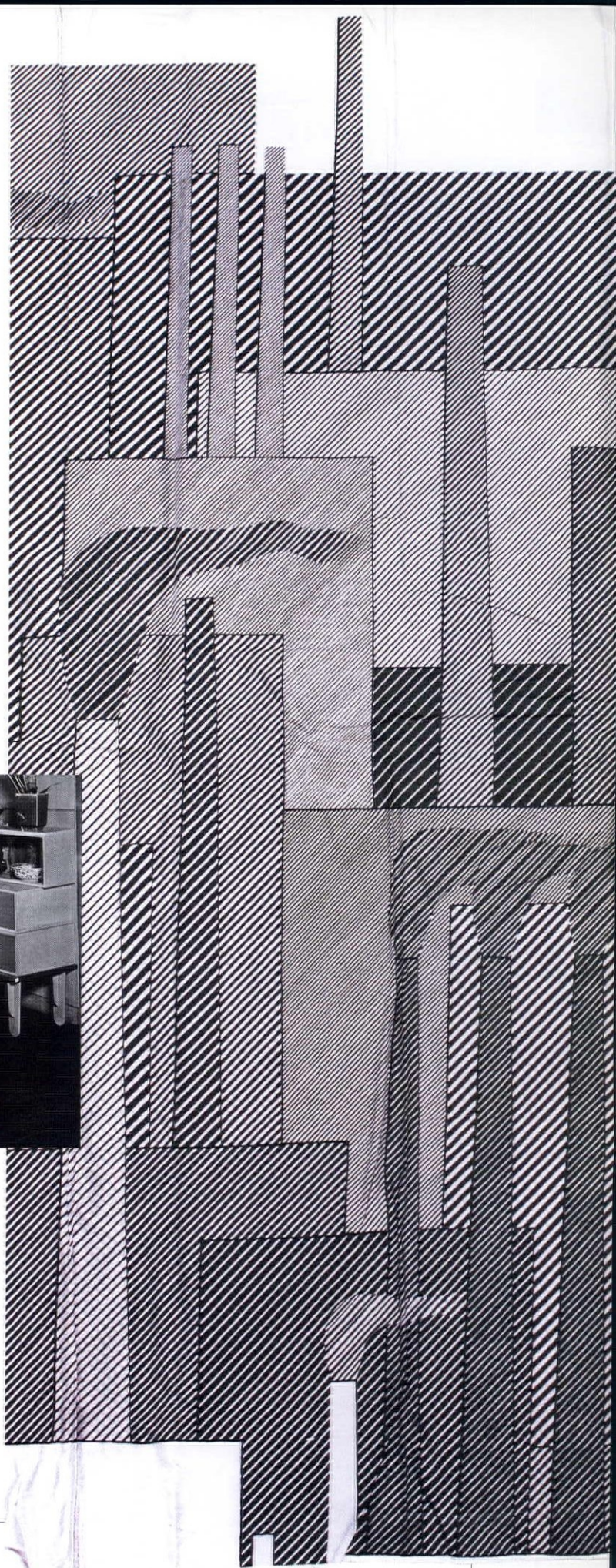
Cooper licensed and sold designs, though rarely manufacturing them, and demanded royalties on the use of his name. His designers, like Risom, were salaried employees who received no extra remuneration. Cooper anticipated several trends, including the post-war market for design that was affordable, attractive, and attuned to a way of life being invented by young middle-class families. And he brought previously exclusive interior decoration to the average homemaker's door, selling good taste directly to the public as though it were a set of encyclopedias. A successful designer "must study the front page and the economic page," Cooper told an interviewer in 1961.

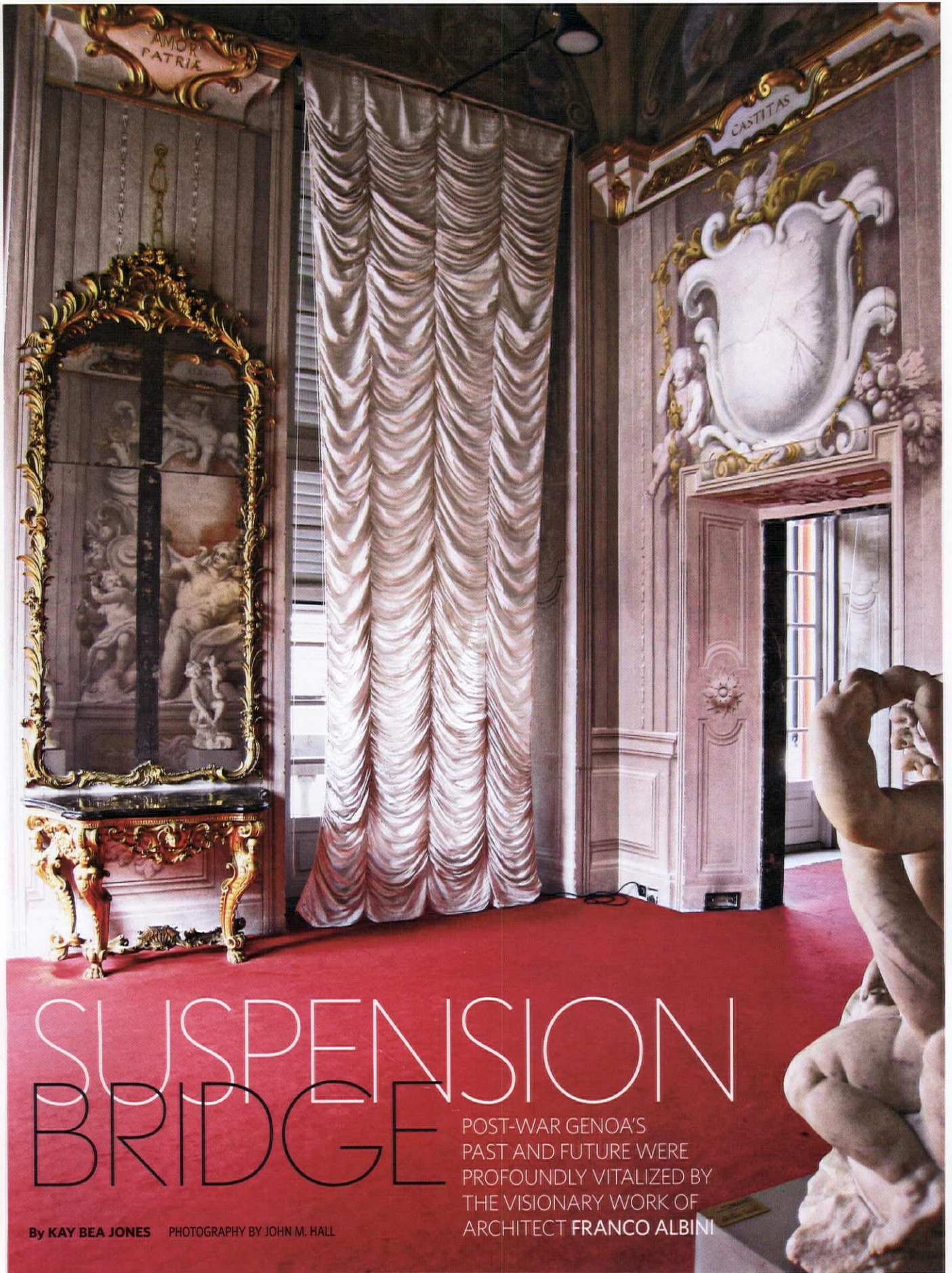
In a November 2009 exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York, "The Future at Home: American Furniture, 1940-1955," Cooper's work made a modest appearance. In addition to four fabrics, a toy-like "Butterfly" table from his PAKTO line of "demountable," or ready-to-assemble, furniture quietly took its place among pieces by masters of mid-century modern design, like the proverbial mouse who lives in a mansion. Perhaps it won't disappear back into the woodwork. **M**



Above: a 1942 publicity photo for the PAKTO furniture collection. The drapery fabric is "Springfever," one of Cooper's most popular patterns.

Right: Cooper created the "Metropole" textile pattern, right, as a tribute to corporate America. Large companies were among his chief clients—Alfred P. Sloan of GM commissioned Cooper to decorate the reception room at the GM Futurama exhibit at the 1939 World's Fair, for example—and he frequently crafted custom fabrics that reflected a firm's desired public image. When used for curtains or backdrops in reception areas, boardrooms, corporate dining rooms, and such spaces, Cooper's textiles became a forceful branding element.





SUSPENSION BRIDGE

POST-WAR GENOA'S
PAST AND FUTURE WERE
PROFOUNDLY VITALIZED BY
THE VISIONARY WORK OF
ARCHITECT FRANCO ALBINI

By KAY BEA JONES PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN M. HALL

Albini's renovation of the baroque Palazzo Rosso was achieved with means both simple—wall-to-wall carpet, slender lighting armatures—and stirring, such as the suspended spiral staircase that connects all the building's levels.





THE ITALIAN RATIONALIST

architect Franco Albini designed furniture, museums, gallery exhibitions, public housing, and urban master plans primarily in Italy during the period that stretched from the Fascist era to the post-war democracy. He was prolific among fellow Milanese progressives. He was a contemporary of other eminent architects such as Gio Ponti, Giuseppe Terragni, and Ernesto Nathan Rogers, and like them helped define the character of modern Italian cities. But Albini's work stands out—not only for his attention to craft and his sensitivity to local contexts, but more so for his experimental use of glass and steel, employed in commissions that revitalized ancient structures and historic museums. Albini achieved a profound integration of modernity and tradition, with stunningly advanced insertions into painted baroque palaces and dense, stone-clad urban centers. Nowhere was Albini's work more effective than in Genoa.

As an important port city, Genoa had suffered heavy damage in World War II. Though poised to reinvigorate their country's cities, Albini and his colleagues met resistance after the conflict. Some of the best examples of new architecture had been affiliated with Fascism, and the modern style was abruptly out of favor. Modernists like Albini—who believed in clean, pure, minimalist form—faced opposition on two fronts: one from adherents of abstract “organic” design; the other from emerging neo-historic movements. Fortunately, Caterina Marcenaro, an art collector and museum curator who oversaw the artistic patrimony of the city of Genoa, shared Albini's vision. Familiar with his exhibition designs, Marcenaro saw him as the perfect designer to rejuvenate dusty collections and present them to modern audiences. In 1949, she offered Albini his first major museum commission: to redesign the interior of the Palazzo Bianco, an assignment that altered Italian museum design for the rest of the century.

Albini's keynote was transparency. In early



Huge panes of glass installed with minimal brass joinery closed off the open-air loggias of the Palazzo Rosso (top) and Palazzo Bianco (bottom) to create more gallery space.



In the Museum of Sant'Agostino, Albini and his partner, Franca Helg, created a suspended plaster vaulted ceiling to display remnants of frescoes.



Above: in the Sant'Agostino, thick steel beams—symbols of the modern world's graver zeitgeist—stand in contrast to spiritual artwork and artifacts.

Top right and below: two views of ancient relics in the circular stone-clad chambers of the underground Treasure Rooms of the San Lorenzo Museum.



work on domestic and commercial interiors he perfected techniques for crafting suspended shelving and exhibition armatures, as well as expressing a sense of lightness with translucent curtains, reflective surfaces, glass furniture, and bamboo chairs. He loved to dangle forms in open space. In the Palazzo Bianco, Albini removed paintings from monumental frames, and built stairs that hovered over the ground. He used tensile cables and planes of glass to let in daylight, impart a sense of weightlessness, and open up views.

Three subsequent projects in Genoa during the 1950s—a new museum, a public office building, and another baroque palazzo gallery interior—reveal Albini at his most clever, deliberate, and versatile. Following the success of his work on the Palazzo Bianco, Marcenaro commissioned Albini to devise accommodations for the small but precious collection of artifacts of the Cathedral of San Lorenzo. The church's "Treasure Rooms" would hold ancient, delicate relics—including early-Christian sacerdotal vestments and an ark that supposedly holds the ashes of John the Baptist—that demanded a unique space with strictly devised atmospheric conditions. Albini, inspired by the treasure rooms of Atreus in Mycenae, Greece, housed the collection in four underground chambers. The rooms, which have patterned stone paving

and cast concrete ceilings made of triangular forms, seem suspended in time—honoring both the past and the present.

Then, located above Genoa's grand Strada Nuova, an inspired instance of Renaissance urban design, sit Albini's new municipal offices. In his addition to the town hall, the baroque Palazzo Doria Tursi, Albini stacked ten stories of terraced offices clad in local stone. Each level includes clerestory lighting, delineated overhangs, and views of the Mediterranean port. It's debatable which aspect of the building is Albini's finest achievement. On the one hand, he ensured that the new structure's impact on the ambience of the historic city center was slight. On the other, the building includes flat grass-covered rooftops that serve as gardens—green architecture a half-century before its time.

In 1952, he began a seven-year interior renovation of the Palazzo Rosso—the building's roof needed replacement, but otherwise the project was similar to the one he undertook on the Palazzo Bianco. A chief aspect of Albini's attempt to modernize the historic art collections of noble Genoese families was to focus light and attention on the artifacts instead of on period furniture and decoration. Yet the Palazzo Rosso's historic frescoes also deserved recognition, and Albini and his partner, Franca Helg, sought ways to reduce the impact of their



renovations. Again, they used minimal hardware and suspended glass panels to enhance the flow of daylight while protecting the collection from the elements. Even better, the design team took the paintings with their massive frames, and installed them on pivot mounts with handles, allowing visitors to position them for ideal viewing light. Albini's boldest intervention was his solution to the problem of the palazzo's varied floor heights: a suspended spiral stair that is an elegant example of precision and craft.

A few years after completing the Palazzo Rosso, Marcenaro gave Albini his largest museum commission in Genoa: the Museum of Sant'Agostino. The medieval church that stood on the site was devastated by Allied bombing. Now the location would become a museum for displaying fragmentary architectural artifacts, including, statuary, reliefs, and frescoes, from Sant'Agostino and other churches in Genoa that had been destroyed. The collection, consisting largely of carved stone, allowed for daylight to flood the interior. Albini stacked three glass-clad levels, tracing the footprint of original Sant'Agostino church. At this point in his career, however, Albini's architectural philosophy had changed. He used enormous steel beams to cross long spans, an allusion to the gravity of the modern condition. Inside Sant'Agostino, Albini employed steel in a white marble ramp-stair

and in structural elements used to suspend—to striking effect—antique frescoes within a modern equivalent of their original vaulted architecture. The museum was not completed until 1979, two years after Albini's death.

Albini's Genoese *capolavoro*—Italian for “masterpiece”—is the small residence tucked under the Palazzo Rosso's new roof, commissioned by Marcenaro. Very recently restored and opened to the public, the apartment has few doors, allowing a flow between private areas, workspace, and library, and views from attic windows that look over the narrow *caruggi*, the characteristic medieval alleyways of Genoa. Masterpieces in her prized collection of artworks were brilliantly installed. Albini's furniture and lighting designs—bookshelves on tapered columns and bamboo chairs—completed the atmosphere by softening the typically hard lines of modern domestic architecture. Gio Ponti published an article on the curator's apartment, discreetly calling it “the house of an art lover,” in his magazine *Domus* in 1955, and stating: “This interior by Albini represents the perfect house, one in which he finds his motive for mixing the ancient and the modern, and that tendency, widespread among our best architects, has come to define the Italian character.” Perhaps there is no finer, nor more economical, tribute to Albini's work. **M**

Three views of Albini's addition to Genoa's city hall show off the green roofs—decades ahead of their time—and the pure lines of the building's stone staircase.



In 1939, Damora took this iconic image of New York's newly built Museum of Modern Art.

P.J.'s First Foray

[continued from page 115] that when it snows, the house resembles a “celestial elevator.” Indeed, the Damora family recalls watching the pink light of the aurora borealis from the Booth House’s tranquil interior.

At the time of its construction, the Booth House was in the vanguard of post-war modern residential design. The house was an early experiment toward addressing the urgent need for housing following the war: in the *Ladies’ Home Journal* article on Johnson’s home design, architectural editor Richard Pratt editorialized on the need for research “into materials, methods, industrial co-ordination, financing and community planning—all designed to make homes better, less expensive, and more secure.”

Prior to World War II, there had been much discussion within the architectural community regarding the need for an approach to residential design that would make quality living environments accessible to the general population. This discourse emphasized seeking economical construction, especially through new building technologies. Architects envisioned a new spatial planning for middle class people who lived without domestic help, and the intention was to de-isolate family members from each other in the course of daily tasks. A desire to integrate nature and the outdoors into a shelter also drove these design experiments.

The war put these efforts on hold, but following the peace there was an explosion of building in the United States. Many forward-thinking architects suddenly found the opportunity to realize long-dreamed-of structural concepts.

The Booth House attempts to do just that. It is built of economical materials such as concrete block and plate glass. Like the early “Case Study” houses in Los Angeles, the Booth House investigated the use of unconventional construction techniques to achieve affordability. Interestingly, these explorations predate Frank Lloyd Wright’s 1947 master plan for a community in Pleasantville, New York, that introduced his Usonian concept to the Northeast.

Evocative of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s Farnsworth House of 1951, the Booth House also speaks of a distilled architectural purity that addresses a simplified and disciplined understanding of dwelling. As Sirkka Damora puts it, “The Mies hallmark of reductive rectilinear design—with minimal interruption of the flow of space within a building and out to the exterior landscape—was clearly evident in Johnson’s architecture of the period.”

The Booth House proved to be a striking harbinger of the outpouring of mid-century modernist houses created by the Bauhaus-inspired “Harvard Five” (Marcel Breuer, Eliot Noyes, Landis Gores, John Johansen, and Philip Johnson), and other collaborators such as Victor Christ-Janer, in and around New Canaan, Connecticut, to which Bedford is adjacent. Well over 100 modern houses were constructed from 1947 through the 1970s, and given its proximity to the media capital of New York, the area became a backdrop to sell anything desired or perceived to be “modern.” In 1949, for example, an organized single-day tour of seven of the original houses drew 5,000 people.

Interestingly, many of these mid-century modern masterpieces of residential architecture acquired long-term inhabitants early in their existence. For the Damoras, their home was not only a prevailing influence on their private family life, but also a full embodiment of their professional aspirations for what Walter Gropius called “total architecture.” When one finds an environment that both soothes the soul and expresses one’s deepest convictions about life, there is little motivation to move on. As a result, many of these houses have been away from the public eye for a half-century or more as their owners happily and quietly enjoyed these self-sufficient environments.

But now the original generation of owners has reached advanced years, and a number of these houses resurface to public view as they come on the market. In some regrettable cases, the houses have been bought and then demolished to make way for the larger houses characteristic of a more profligate era. Yet the Booth House still stands as a jewel from a remarkable period in modern American architecture when design, efficiency, economy, and serenity were understood to be mutually compatible and desirable. **M**

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Baby, Are You for Real?

LOS ANGELES AUCTIONEER **PETER LOUGHREY** OFFERS A TALE OF AESTHETIC DETECTIVE WORK

OCCASIONALLY I AM ASKED by a potential purchaser, "How do you know this is real?" Although I'm tempted to answer with a quip about ontology, I know the question is not about philosophy. It's really about proof—documented proof—of authenticity. What it comes down to is this: "I prove it and you'll buy it."

With modern furniture, such concerns can often be satisfied by simply pointing to a label or showing the purchaser a book that features the design. But fine art is much trickier. Recently, I represented a painting by Keith Haring that had apparently never been published. The seller, who was the original owner, had acquired it directly from the artist, and it had never been exhibited. While it had a bold, confident signature, I knew the painting would have to be authenticated before I could sell it. Fortunately, Haring's

This untitled 1981 Keith Haring painting sold at LAMA's December 6, 2009, auction for \$88,812, off of a pre-sale estimate of \$25,000 to \$35,000.

works can be reviewed by the Keith Haring Foundation—the recognized authority on the artist's work. Ideally an organization like this has the ability to check its records and supply confirmation by way of the artist's own notes, photographs, or receipts, and provide a smoking gun, if you will. Absent that gun, its opinion is considered conclusive.

I submitted detailed photographs of the work, but the foundation was reluctant to render an opinion and requested a better image of the signature. Getting a tight close-up of the signature meant removing the piece from the original frame. When I did so, I noticed something I hadn't seen before: a distinct and clear fingerprint in the signature. It appeared to have been left while the paint was wet. I excitedly informed the foundation, but the people there logically reasoned it could be anyone's fingerprint—perhaps even the framer's—and in any case they didn't have Haring's fingerprints on file. However, they were intrigued. Haring, when making his early chalk drawings on subway hoardings, had been arrested several times for vandalism. The foundation contacted the New York Police Department to see if it could access his fingerprints. Amazingly, the NYPD sent digital images of the prints to the foundation the same day. Shortly thereafter, the foundation sent me an email saying it was ready to issue an opinion that the work was authentic.

The opinion itself didn't change anything about the painting. It simply gave the buyer confidence in its authenticity. Or, to put it another way, an answer to the question "How do I know it's real?" What Plato would think is another matter.

Peter Loughrey is the co-founder and proprietor of Los Angeles Modern Auctions.



Romare Bearden (1911-1988), *The Savoy*, 1975, mixed media collage on board, 36 1/4 x 46 inches



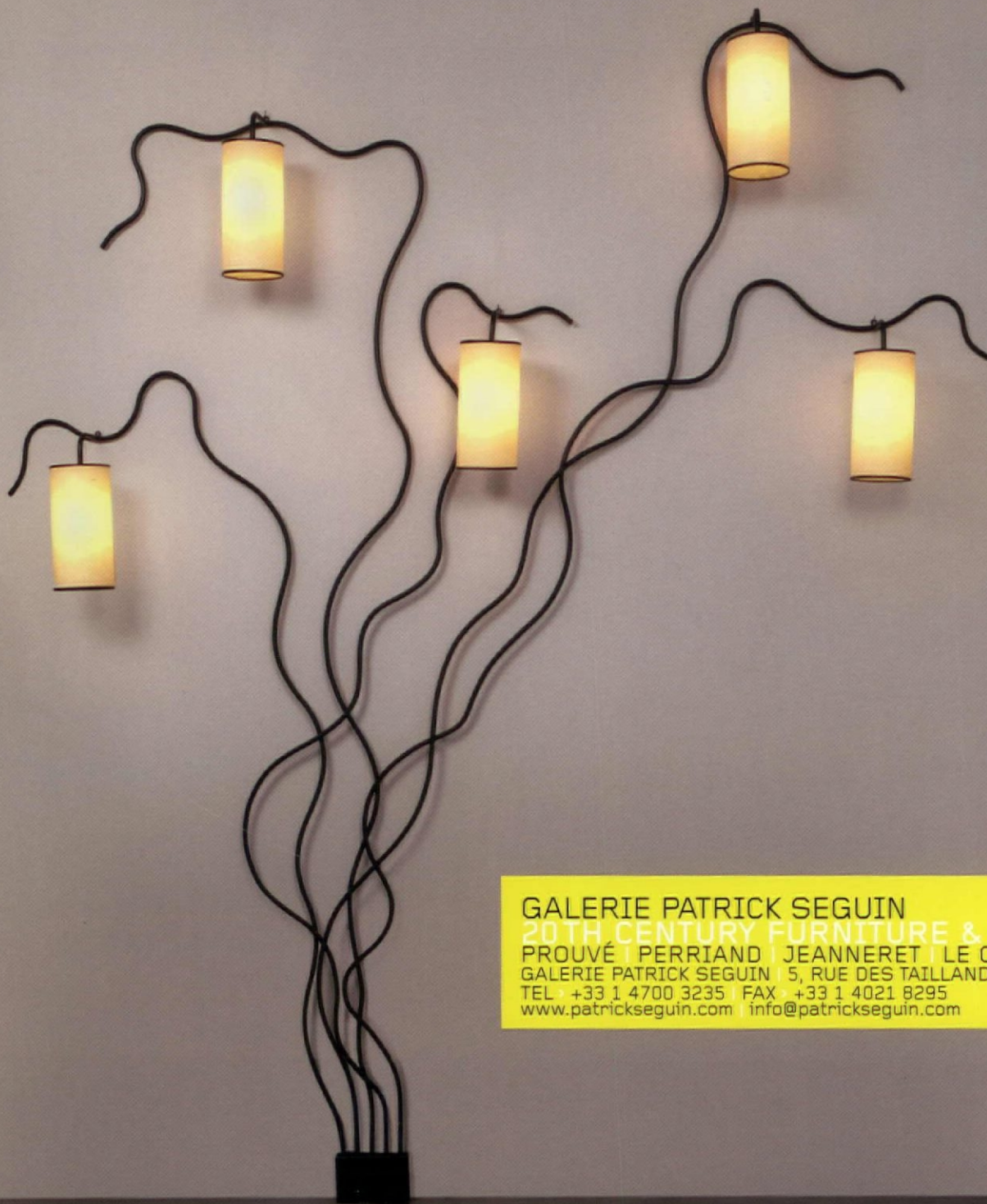
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