

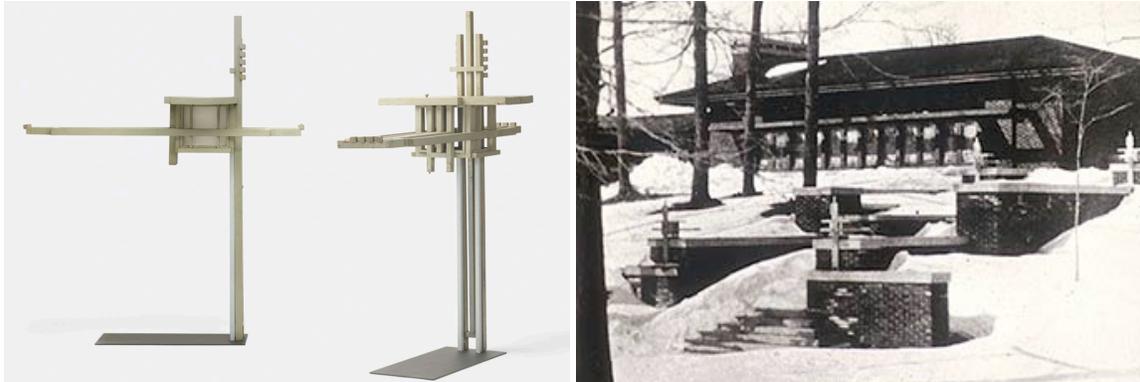
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Inside the Walls: Architects Design

January 18 – February 17, 2018

Friedman Benda Gallery



Left: Frank Lloyd Wright, Pair of exterior light fixtures, Francis W. Little House, Wayzata, MN. Right: Francis W. Little House Exterior

New York, NY – Friedman Benda presents its annual guest-curated exhibition *Inside the Walls: Architects Design*, a survey of seminal architect-designed furniture curated by Mark McDonald. With representations spanning over a century, the exhibition will present a broad range of pivotal architects from the US, Europe, and Asia—such as Marcel Breuer, Charles and Ray Eames, Frank Gehry, Philip Johnson, Charlotte Perriand, Warren Platner, Gio Ponti, Ettore Sottsass, Kenzō Tange, and Mies van der Rohe—with a focus on three groundbreaking figures—Gerrit Thomas Rietveld, Rudolph Schindler, and Frank Lloyd Wright, whose global reach continues today.

Drawing on archival photographs of interiors and historical ephemera, this exhibition charts revolutionary developments in architecture and design across the 20th century. Testaments to the innovative use of new technologies born out of post-war scarcity, works such as Charles and Ray Eames's *Storage Unit (ESU) 400* (1950) and Charlotte Perriand's *Bibliothèque 'Maison du mexique'* (1953) epitomize the ingenious use of materials like the lighter weight Fiberglas, Masonite, bent plywood and tubular steel.

This presentation will be a unique opportunity to analyze the relationship between architectural aesthetic and design ethos on a smaller, more intimate scale and investigate various approaches to reconciling interior and exterior spaces, the commercial versus the residential and the private versus the public sphere.

Examples of furniture originally designed for specific commissions will be juxtaposed with furniture and fittings unrelated to a particular project. At the centerpiece of the exhibition will be the cantilevered exterior light fixtures from Frank Lloyd Wright's 1914 Francis W. Little House

in Wayzata, Minnesota. Exemplary of Wright's 'organic architecture' approach to interior/exterior cohesion, a reproduction of Francis W. Little House's living room and exterior facades is on permanent display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

About Mark McDonald

For the past four decades, Mark McDonald has been a preeminent dealer of 20th Century modernist design. In 1983, McDonald opened the legendary Fifty/50 Gallery with Mark Isaacson and Ralph Cutler in Greenwich Village with the first-ever Eames retrospective. An avid expert and collector of furniture designed by architects, McDonald has organized landmark exhibitions on furniture design, mid-century studio jewelry, ceramics and lighting as well as served as an advisor for numerous prestigious collectors, artists estates, and museums, including the Vitra Design Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Montreal Museum of Decorative Arts, The Daphne Farago Jewelry Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Brooklyn Museum. After recently closing his eponymous gallery in Hudson, NY, McDonald currently serves as a private advisor to clients and museums, and maintains an online gallery: www.markmcdonald.biz

About Friedman Benda

Friedman Benda is dedicated to presenting established and emerging designers who create historically significant work and are at the forefront of their practice. Founded in 2007, the gallery's exhibitions and publications have played a vital role in the rise of the design market and education, and take a comprehensive approach to work that intersects the fields of design, craft and art. Friedman Benda represents an international roster of designers spanning five continents and multiple generations.

For further information please visit www.friedmanbenda.com

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Marcel Breuer [Hungarian, 1902-1981]

Side Chair B5, 1926/1927

Nickeled tubular steel, blue Eisengarn

32.75 x 17.75 x 23.75 inches

83.5 x 45 x 60 cm

Literature

Bauhaus-Archiv-Museum: Experiment Bauhaus, Berlin, 1988, pgs. 106-7.

Collection

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

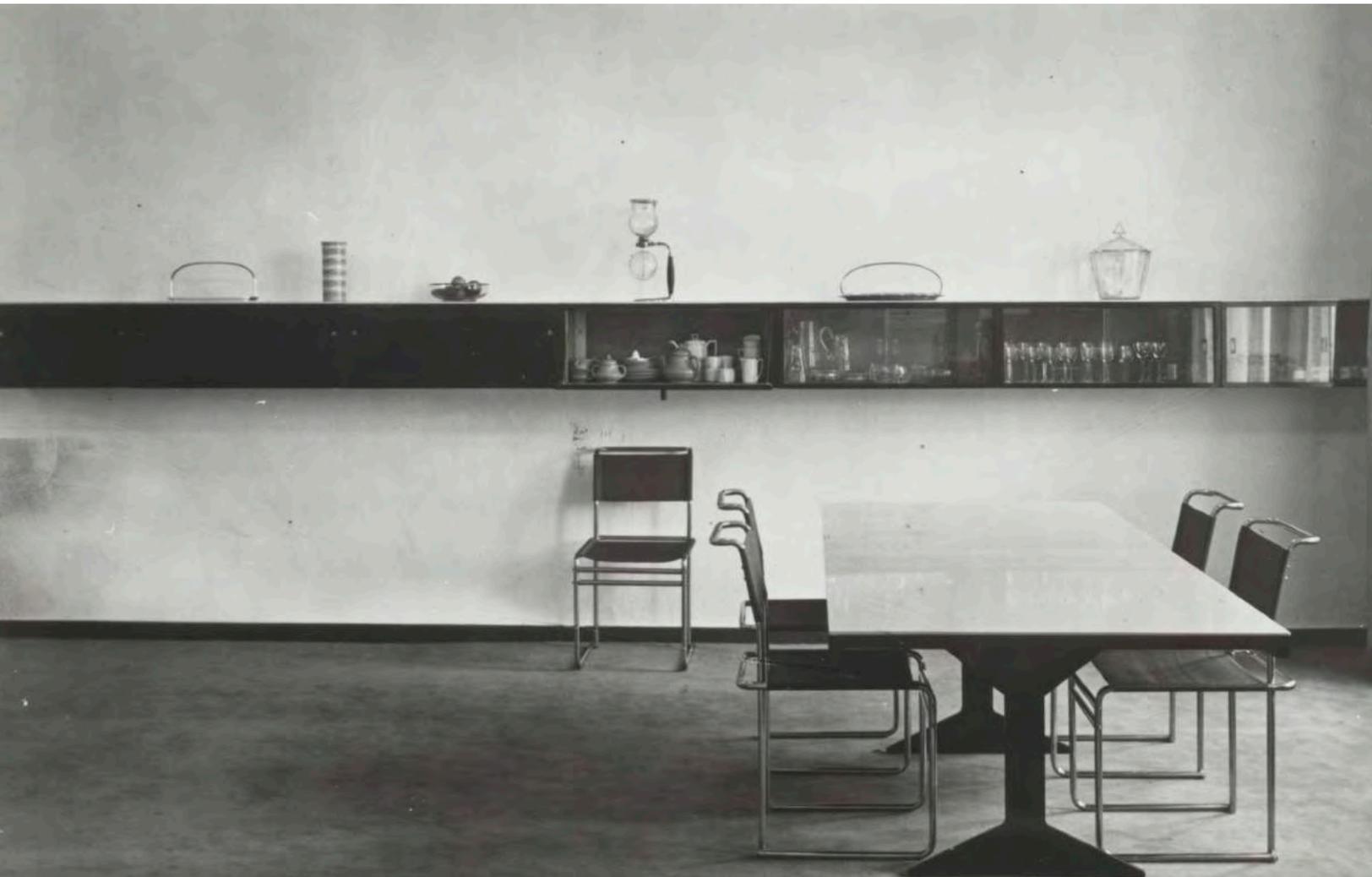
Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Museum, New York, NY

Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK

Notes

Representative of the tubular steel revolution in Europe, the *Side Chair B5* showcases Hungarian Marcel Breuer's delight in the freedom, efficiency and lightness of the material. Inspired by the metal wheels on his newly-purchased Adler bicycle, Breuer designed a family of tubular steel pieces--including an armchair, side tables, beds and benches, and, later on, a chaise longue. A refinement on a similar but more complex tubular steel chair Breuer designed for the interiors of the Dessau Bauhaus School, this chair was commissioned for the Berlin apartment of a member of the European avant-garde, the theater producer Erwin Piscator. This chair was a necessary addition to any modern home as, according to Breuer: "Metal furniture is part of a modern room. It is styleless, for it is expected not to express any particular styling beyond its purpose and the construction necessary theretofore."*

*Fehrman, Cherie and Dr. Kenneth R. Fehrman. *Interior Design Innovators 1910-1960*, San Francisco, CA: Fehrman Books, 2009.



Dining Room, Piscator Apartment, Berlin (1927)

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Marcel Breuer [Hungarian, 1902-1981]

Chair from Rhoads Hall, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA, 1938

Birch

33 x 18.25 x 19 inches

83.8 x 46.4 x 48.3 cm

Exhibitions

Partners in Design: Alfred H. Barr Jr. and Philip Johnson, Davis Museum at Wellesley College, Wellesley, September 28 - December 18, 2016.

Literature

Wilk, Christopher, *Marcel Breuer: Furniture and Interiors*, 148-151 discussion of the commission, fig. 155 illustrates these designs

Ngo, Dung, *Bent Ply: The Art of Plywood Furniture*, Illustrated p.39.

Collection

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA

Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge, MA

Notes

Following the rise of fascism, Breuer left Berlin and spent much of 1932 and 1933 traveling. It wasn't until 1937 that Breuer settled in the United States, where he became professor of architecture at Harvard. Less than a year later, Breuer was commissioned by Bryn Mawr College for the design of a set of dormitory furniture of the new Rhoads Residence Hall.

For Breuer, this commission marks a shift away from the hard edges of the International Style and a necessary incorporation of American aesthetics and represents the challenges of designing abroad. The designs were intended to be simple and stylish while also meant to withstand the rigors of many years of college dormitory use.

Sixty chairs were ordered for \$10.02 each. Indicative of his holistic aesthetic and disciplined approach, Breuer drafted careful specifications for the manufacturer of the desk chair, Saybolt, Cleland and Alexander: "Side parts out of birch plywood with solid birch turned rungs. The plywood edges show lamination. Please send sample of plywood. Finish same as desk."*

*Breuer, Marcel. "Specifications for New Furniture For New Dormitory." May 16, 1938.



Rhoads Hall dorm room with furniture, Bryn Mawr College (Circa 1950)



Serge Chermayeff [Russian born, British, 1900-1996]

Side Table

15 x 16 x 18 inches

38.1 x 40.6 x 45.7 cm

Notes

"The development of modern furniture has always been closely related to the evolution of modern architecture...The recognition that a house is essentially a problem of interrelated functions made it necessary to think of individual pieces of home equipment as components of a unit of effective living space rather than as individual esthetic and technical problems."

*-Serge Chermayeff**

Born in Grozny in 1900, Serge Chermayeff immigrated to England to be educated at Harrow School. After a brief time as a journalist and then a professional dancer, and with no formal training, he was appointed as Director of Modern Art in Decorating to the firm of Waring and Gillow.

By 1929 Chermayeff began to lean more heavily towards the tenets of Modern Movement. Chermayeff founded his own design practice in 1931 and designed interiors, most notably for the BBC. Between 1933-1936, he collaborated with the architect Erich Mendelsohn on several buildings, including the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill, Sussex. Built of steel, glass, and concrete, the pavilion was the first public building in Great Britain to be designed in the International Modern style. After Chermayeff emigrated to the United States in 1939, his interests were more centered upon debates surrounding urban and environmental design issues.

This side table highlights Chermayeff's trademark streamlined cubist, geometric motifs as well as his overall design philosophy based on physical and psychological comfort and visual harmony.

*Chermayeff, Serge. "Design for Use," from *Art in Progress*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1944.



**Charles Eames [American, 1907-1978]
and Eero Saarinen [Finnish American, 1910-1967]**

Table for the Organic Design Competition
Red Lion Furniture Company USA, 1940
Molded Honduran mahogany plywood and mahogany
34.75 x 39.5 x 17.25 inches
88.3 x 100.3 x 43.8 cm

Literature

Noyes, Elliot. *Organic Design*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1941. Illustrated p. 30.

Drexler, Arthur. *Charles Eames: Furniture from the Design Collection*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1987. Illustrated pgs. 4, 11.

Neuhart, Marilyn. *The Story of Eames Furniture: The Early Years, Book 1*, Berlin: Gestalten, 2015. pgs. 250-289 discuss the Organic Design Competition

Lutz, Brian. *Eero Saarinen: Furniture for Everyman*, Pointed Lead Press, 2012. Illustrated p. 86.

Notes

In 1940, the Museum of Modern Art in New York inaugurated the groundbreaking Organic Design competition to “discover good designers and engage them in the task of creating a better environment for today’s living.” The museum collaborated with several manufacturers and department stores to produce and distribute the winning designs.

Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen submitted collections to two categories – seating for a living room and other furniture for a living room – and won first prize for both. Their use of innovative technologies and new manufacturing processes set the works by Eames and Saarinen apart from their competitors. Their designs dramatically influenced modern movements in the field and directly influenced the future direction both designers would take in their careers.

This rare coffee table, made of molded plywood by the Red Lion Furniture Company, was among the case good designs featured in this influential exhibition and competition. Due to the difficulties of production, their furniture forms ended up being expensive to make (The coffee table was listed at a price of \$49.50 which was a considerable sum for the time.) and production was short lived. This coffee table is one of only a few examples ever made.



From left: Museum of Modern Art "Organic Design in Home Furnishings" catalogue entry (1940); Installation view of the exhibition "Organic Design in Home Furnishings" (1941)



Charles and Ray Eames by Herman Miller, Zeeland, Michigan

Eames Storage Unit (ESU) 400, 1953-54

Plastic-coated plywood, lacquered Masonite, and chrome-plated steel framing

58.5 x 47.5 x 16 inches

148.6 x 120.7 x 40.6 cm

Exhibitions

Good Design, Museum of Modern Art, New York (similar example)

California Design, 1930–1965: "Living in a Modern Way." Traveling exhibition:

Los Angeles, CA, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, October 1, 2011 - June 3, 2012

Tokyo, Japan, The National Art Center, Tokyo, March 20, 2013 - June 3, 2013

Auckland, New Zealand, Auckland Art Gallery, July 6, 2013 - September 29, 2013

South Brisbane, Australia, Queensland Art Gallery, November 2, 2013 - February 9, 2014

Salem, MA, Peabody Essex Museum, March 29, 2014 - July 6, 2014

Literature

Barron, Stephanie, S. Bernstein and I. S. Fort, *Made in California: Art, Image, and Identity, 1900-2000*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Berkeley: University of California Press, Berkeley, 2000.

Collections

Smithsonian Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, NY

Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

Notes

The Eames Storage Unit (ESU) exemplifies Charles and Ray Eames' effort to design and produce economical household furniture using industrial production techniques. This system of lightweight, modular storage cabinets and desks is constructed of plywood, lacquered Masonite, and chrome-plated steel framing.

The ESU has many of the same convenient features as the Eames-Saarinen Organic Design Case Goods created in 1941 for the Museum of Modern Art's "Organic Design in Home Furnishings" competition. The standardized parts of the ESU are entirely interchangeable; they can be stacked and can serve as room dividers; and they can be easily adapted to a variety of office uses or residential storage needs in living rooms, dining rooms, and bedrooms.

Herman Miller began marketing the Eames Storage Units in 1950, and the original production continued until 1955. This particular unit is unique in that it has examples of all 3 types of sliding doors offered by Herman-Miller; the black laminate version being extremely rare. The graphic quality of the muted color palette is accentuated by the 16 'X' metal support straps in the interior spaces.



Eames Storage Unit in Herman Miller's Showroom (1951)



Frank Gehry [Canadian, b. 1929]

'Easy Edges' Rocking Chaise Lounge, 1973

Cardboard, masonite

25.5 x 40 x 22.25 inches

64.8 x 101.6 x 56.5 cm

Literature

Vege sack, Alexander Von, *Frank O. Gehry: Design & Architecture*, Tokyo: GA Design Center, 1993, p. 13.

Collection

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (Easy Edges side chair, Easy Edges contour rocker)

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco (Easy Edges lounge chair)

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA (Easy Edges side chair, Easy Edges Nesting Chair, Easy Edges Table)

Guggenheim Museum of Art, New York, NY (Easy Edges contour chair)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY (Easy Edges side chair)

Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany (Easy Edges Wiggle Stool)

Notes

"I found the material that people hated the most and used the most. So, I was going and try and see if I could play with it sculpturally."

*-Frank Gehry**

The name Frank Gehry is synonymous with the most pioneering and visually explosive buildings designed by any living architect. Rejecting the prevailing grid of modernism, Gehry has been an iconoclast, embracing humble materials and using them to unconventional ends. Through the sculptural manipulation of metal, cardboard, chain-link, plywood, he has re-proposed spatial dynamics and has engendered ways that buildings can transform the social fabric around them.

Born in 1929, and based in Los Angeles since 1947, Gehry graduated from the University of Southern California (USC) in 1954 and established his own architecture practice in 1962. His earliest work focused on low budget, socially responsible projects. He has credited his fascination with simple materials to his grandmother who brought him scraps from his grandfather's hardware store with which he built toy houses. Indeed, it was the renovation of his own house in Santa Monica in 1978 - where he wrapped the original building in corrugated steel- that launched his sinuous signature, and enduring vocabulary.

In 1969, years before Gehry achieved his now-iconic stature, he introduced "Easy Edges," a series of chairs using corrugated cardboard laminated in alternate directions onto Masonite frames that he manipulated into rolling shapes. This set of tables and chair are renown examples from that body of work. The intention was to produce simple, low cost chairs in every day materials, that would be accepted by the mass market. By 1973 however, his "Easy Edges" works were so critically lauded, that he pulled them off the market. He feared the intention to create a modest chair had become too high profile and that these furniture designs, would detract from his reputation as an architect.

To this day, Gehry's ideas spring from models he makes of cardboard, crinkled paper, and popsicle sticks.

*Jeffrey Brown catches up with Frank Gehry," PBS Newshour. September 11, 2015.



Bloomingdales showroom exhibit (1972)



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Frank Gehry [Canadian, b. 1929]

'Easy Edges' Nesting Tables, 1972

Cardboard, masonite

Set of 3 tables:

Small: 15.5 x 17.5 x 17 inches

39.4 x 44.5 x 43.2 cm

Medium: 17.75 x 20 x 17 inches

45.1 x 50.8 x 43.2 cm

Large: 20 x 24.75 x 17 inches

50.8 x 62.9 x 43.2 cm

Provenance

Alan Wanzenberg



Philip Johnson [American, 1906-2005] and Richard Kelly [American, 1910-1977], produced by Edison Price, Inc. USA

Floor Lamp, 1953

Brass, enameled aluminum, plastic

42 x 25 x 25 inches

106.7 x 63.5 x 63.5 cm

Exhibitions

The Structure of Light: Richard Kelley and the Illumination of Modern Architecture. Yale School of Architecture Gallery, New Haven: August 23 -October 2, 2010.

Literature

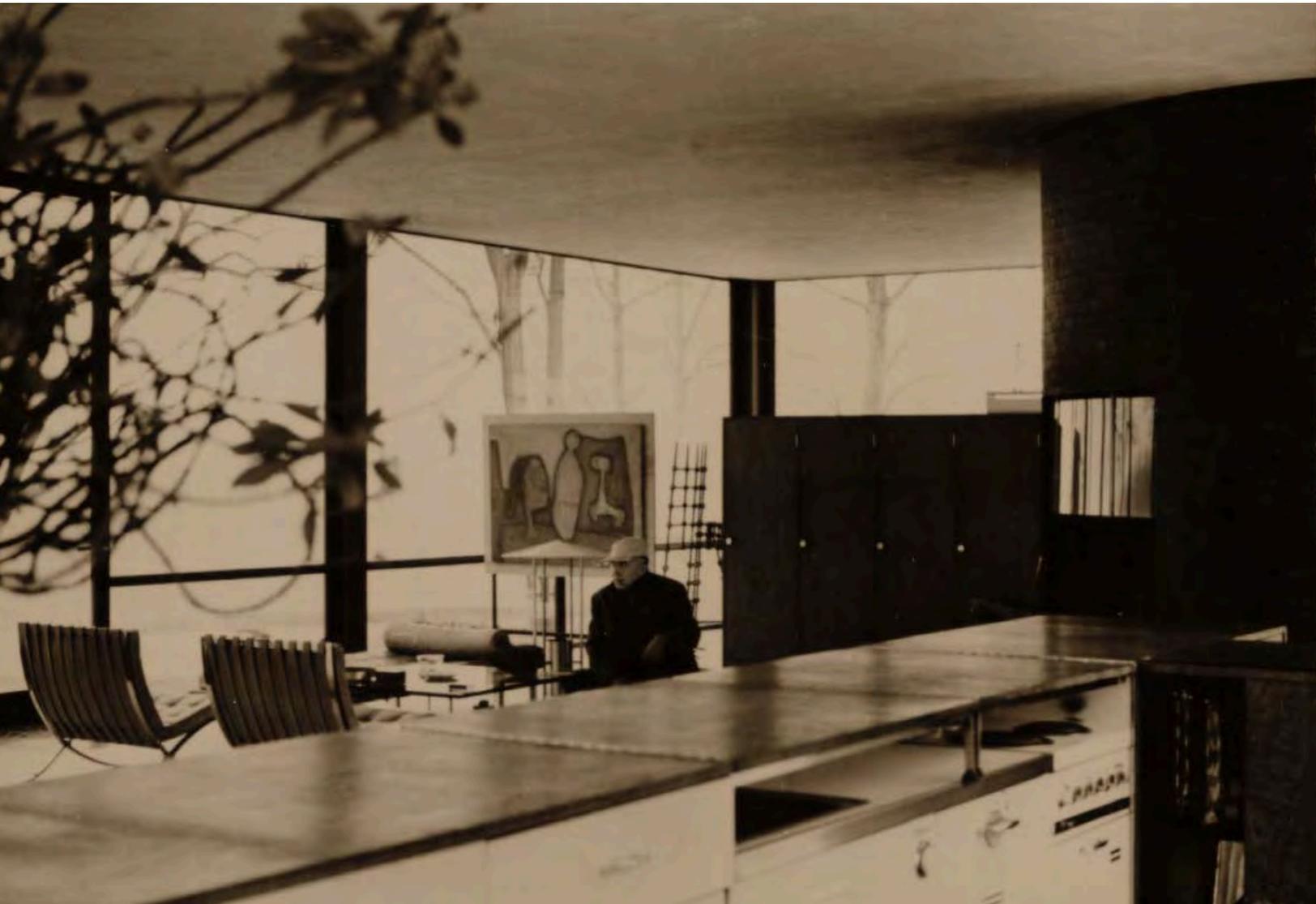
Eidelberg, Martin. *Design 1935-1965: What Modern Was*, New York: Harry Abrams, 2001. Illustrated p. 204 (similar example)

Collection

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

Notes

This floor lamp was designed by Richard Kelly for Philip Johnson's Glass House in New Canaan, Connecticut. Presented with the challenge of lighting a glass-walled space, Kelly developed a lamp to minimize glare and reflections. His solution was constructed from a bulb hidden in a canister lined with fins (an idea lifted from theatrical lighting), a shallow conical shade to diffuse the light that emanated from the base and one of the first dimmer cords to be found in a residential setting. The result was a lamp form truly derived from its intended function.



Marcel Breuer sitting in Philip Johnson's Glass House, New Canaan, CT (Circa 1960)

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Louis Kahn [American, 1901-1974]

Desk for the Morton and Lenore Weiss House, Norristown, PA, Designed 1949, produced 1950

Walnut veneer, birch and brass

27.75 x 78 x 36 inches

70.5 x 198 x 91.4 cm

Provenance

Morton (Bubby) and Lenore Weiss, East Norritown Township, Pennsylvania

Thence by descent to Private Collection, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Literature

George H. Marcus and William Whitaker, *The Houses of Louis Kahn*, pgs. 85-86, 124

Yutaka Saito, *Louis I. Kahn Houses 1940-1974*, p. 265

Notes

Louis Kahn, was described by Isamu Noguchi as a “philosopher amongst architects.”* Indeed Kahn imbued a sense of timeless poetry and transcendentalism to the character of his designs. The characteristics that best describe his most emblematic projects are raw exposure and honesty in the use of materials, innovative assembly and connections. Kahn, who was trained in the Beaux Arts tradition dominant in American academia in the 1930s, was deeply influenced by classical Greek and Roman aesthetics. His designs reflect his desire to abstract then recompose the principles of the classics for his own age.

Born in 1901, Kahn immigrated with his family from Estonia to the U.S. in 1906. He studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and was later an admired academician at the school while simultaneously working as a respected practitioner of social and urban planning. It was not until his fifties when he developed his own architectural style and was nearly sixty that his career- defining works took shape.

Built for Morton and Lenore Weiss, the Weiss house (1947 -1950) marks a departure from the concerns of his earlier work and social agenda in housing. Here Kahn's predilection to pair materials is in full display: wood and stone are juxtaposed to create contrasting façades, articulated spaces, and the playful casting of light and shadow.

Examples of Kahn's furniture are rare; this large desk from the Weiss house, was one of two tables built for the house. Although the prevailing tendency at the time was for architects to utilize more overtly cutting-edge materials, this desk is made of walnut veneer, birch and brass by the Alexander Woodwork Co. in Philadelphia. While employing the X-shape base found in antiquity, the desk's slender design and overall strict proportions reflect a more minimal, modern distillation of tradition and form.

*Noguchi, Isamu. A Sculptor's World. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1968.



Study of the Weiss house (1947 -1950) (Circa 1950)



Richard Kelly [American, 1910-1977] Manufactured by Kelly & Thompson, USA

Table Lamp, c. 1940

Aluminum, steel, oak base, paper shade, reflector bulb

17.75 x 14 x 14 inches

45 x 35.5 x 35.5 cm

Collection

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

Notes

Few designers have contributed more to the history of modern architectural lighting than Richard Kelly. Born in 1910 in Zanesville, Ohio, Kelly left the Midwest to attend Columbia University. After Kelly received his BA from Yale University School of Architecture in 1944, he began to actively practicing as what he called a “specialized architect” focusing on a distinct approach to modern lighting.

This table lamp, striking in its simplicity, encapsulates Kelly's timeless design sensibility and postwar modern ideology. This extremely rare, completely original version is only one of 2 known examples of this model. The other example is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art



William Lescaze [American, Swiss born, 1896-1969] produced by Garland Furniture Manufacturing Co, Chicago

Chair for the Brooklyn Museum Library, Brooklyn, NY, 1933

Chromium-plated tubular steel and vinyl

31.75 x 22.5 x 22.25 inches

80.6 x 57.2 x 56.5 cm

Provenance

Manufactured by Garland Furniture Manufacturing Co., Chicago

Literature

Lanmon, Lorraine. *William Lescaze: Architect*, Philadelphia: Art Alliance Press, 1987, p. 173.

"A New Shelter for Savings," *The Architectural Forum*, December 1932, p. 482 and 493 (for period photographs showing this chair model in situ in the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society building)

Christian Hubert and Lindsay Stamm Shapiro, *William Lescaze*, New York, 1982, p. 46 and 84 (respectively for period photographs showing this chair model in situ in the PSFS building and Brooklyn Museum)

Three Centuries of American Art, Philadelphia, 1976, pgs. 538-539 (for an illustration of this chair model in the museum's collection)

Collection

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY

Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

Minneapolis Museum of Art, Minneapolis, MN

Montreal Museum of Art, Montreal, Québec
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA
Wolfsonian—Florida International University, Miami, FL

Notes

The Brooklyn Museum originally ordered 44 arm chairs designed by Lescaze and produced by the Garland Furniture Manufacturing Company in 1933. The streamlined interior design of the Brooklyn Museum library marks Lescaze's transition away from the Art Deco "zigzag moderne" of the twenties and to the International Style aesthetic of the 1930s.

This wider, slightly heavier, more institutional model refers directly to Lescaze's iconic armchair designed for the defining project of his career, the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society (the country's first International-style skyscraper) built in 1932.



Wilbour Library, Brooklyn Museum (1938)



Samuel Marx [American, 1885-1964] for Quigley

Armchair, c. 1944

Burlwood veneer, leather, nickel

31.25 x 23 x 22.25 inches

79.4 x 58.4 x 56.5 cm

Literature

O'Brien, Liz. *Ultramodern-Samuel Marx: Architect, Designer, Art Collector*. NY: Pointed Leaf Press, 2007. Illustrated p. 119 & p.126.

Collection

Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL (lacquer model)

Notes

With a Beaux-Arts background and Modernist bend, Samuel Marx helped make Chicago a major hub for American architecture in the first half of the century. Marx was born in Natchez, Mississippi and graduated from MIT's Department of Architecture in 1907. Marx sailed for Europe two weeks after graduating and spent eighteen months traveling and studying at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

After returning to the US and settling in Chicago, Marx became a sought-after designer for high-end commercial projects, such as The Pump Room in the Conrad Hilton Hotel, Chicago, IL, and the Pierre Grille in New York- as well as extensive interior design for the Pierre Hotel in New York. *House Beautiful* magazine stated in an article in 1948 that Marx's rooms "have so satisfying a feeling of oneness that it's frequently hard to say where the architecture ends and the furniture begins."

Despite his reputation as being an interior designer first and foremost, Marx's architectural projects include the New Orleans Museum of Art, the May Company department store in Los Angeles, and numerous private residences on the West Coast that were heavily influenced by his friend Mies van der Rohe.

Designed at the peak of his career, this chair embodies Marx's sensitivity to both modern and traditional expressions. Marx manages to maintain unity through geometry and harmonious proportions, while combining straight-lines with the circular silhouettes. Marx eschewed cold steel and glass in favor of a richer range of natural and man-made materials. Furniture used in Marx's interiors were almost always specially designed. In an era that glorified mass production, Marx stayed true to Arts and Crafts ideals, specifying custom details for every project. This chair was manufactured (as was almost all of Marx's furniture) by William Quigley Co., one of Chicago's most talented fabricators.

This armchair, Marx's version of a regency chair, was designed for Marx's own home at 1325 North Astor Street. Marx moved with his wife Florence to the apartment in Chicago's Near North Side in 1937. Marx went straight to work designing the couple's floor-through residence in the direct, modern style that came to define his later work. As his own best client, he developed a model of high-end modern living that blended architecture, design, and an art collection, which included works by Matisse, Modigliani, Braque, Picasso, into a rich yet user-friendly environment.

Marx repeated variations of this chair with the cantilevered back other of notable interiors; one version made of black plastic upholstery and blonde veneer legs he designed for Mary and Leigh Block is in the permanent collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.





Richard Meier [American, b. 1934] for Knoll

Rocking Chaise Lounge, 1980

Maple, leather upholstery

26 x 75 x 28 inches

66 x 190.5 x 71.1 cm

Impressed signature underneath 'Richard Meier'

Literature

Meier, Richard, *Richard Meier: Architect*, pgs 235, 237

Capella, Juli & Quim Larrea, *Designed by Architects in the 1980s*, New York: Rizzoli, 1988, p. 106. (similar example)

Emery, Mark, *Furniture by Architects: International Masterpieces of Twentieth-Century Design and Where to Buy Them*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1983, pgs. 206-07. (similar example)

Domus (Milan), no. 636, February 1983, p. 64. (similar example)

Notes

Architecture according to Richard Meier should not mimic, but rather provide a counterpoint to the surroundings yet still maintain a relationship. A prominent member of the New York Five (a group of architects whose work represented a return to the formalism of early modern rationalist architecture), Meier espoused the International Style.

In the late 1970s, architect Richard Meier designed a chair for a small reading room at the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Guggenheim Museum. Meier brought the chair to Knoll and the company

soon began producing an entire suite of furniture. The chaise lounge in particular drew praise for its undulating versatile structure and elegant finish. Instead of using natural oak, the wood of choice at the time, Meier selected hard maple in a characteristic black and white finish.

This chaise, with its grid-like base and symmetrical form, is reminiscent of the furniture from the Wiener Werkstätte. Meier, who remarked about being “bowed over” by his first visit to Vienna in the early 1970s, was clearly influenced by the anti-Neoclassical and cubist aesthetics of Josef Hoffmann.

This chaise softens and humanizes the strict geometry that characterized Meier’s architecture. With its predominating clean Modernist lines, the chaise is itself a curved composition of lines in space and a succinct reduction of Meier’s vision.



Knoll Showroom (Circa 1980)



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe [German-American, 1886-1969]

Side Chair MR 10, 1927

Chromed tubular steel and leather

31.5 x 18.5 x 27.5 inches

80 x 47 x 69.9 cm

Executed by Berliner Metallgewerbe Jos. Müller, Berlin

Exhibitions

L'ésprit du bauhaus, Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Paris, France: October 19, 2016 - February 26, 2017

Literature

Berliner Metallgewerbe Jos. Müller, Sales Catalog, Berlin, 1928

Glaeser, Ludwig, *The Museum of Modern Art: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe*, New York, 1977, pp. 20-21

Notes

From 1926 until 1932 Mies van der Rohe was vice president of the Deutsche Werkbund, an association of designers and architects whose principal aim was the development of well-designed, mass-producible architecture and household objects by way of an alliance of art and industry. In 1927 the Werkbund presented the influential exhibition "Die Wohnung" (The Dwelling), which included the Weissenhof Siedlung (Weissenhof Housing Estate), an experimental group of model apartment buildings built in a suburb of Stuttgart. Under Mies van der Rohe's direction, a number of important architects, including Mart Stam and Marcel Breuer, collaborated on the project, designing furniture for the apartments. This graceful, elegant, and beautifully proportioned "MR" chair, developed from a 1924 design for a cantilevered chair by Mart Stam, was introduced by Mies van der Rohe at the 1927 Stuttgart exhibition and has remained in production ever since.



"Die Wohnung unserer Zeit" (The Dwelling of our Time), German Building Exhibition (1927)

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Charlotte Perriand [French, 1903-1999] for Atelier Jean Prouvé

'Mexique' bookcase from the Maison du Mexique, Cité Universitaire de Paris, 1952

Pine, mahogany, enameled steel, aluminum

63.5 x 71.75 x 12.25 inches

161 x 182.5 x 31 cm

Provenance

François Laffanour / Galerie Downtown

Exhibitions

Charlotte Perriand L'aventure Japonaise, catalogue d'exposition, Musée d'Art moderne de Saint-Etienne, February 23 - May 26, 2013, p. 141

Literature

Barsac, Jacques, *Charlotte Perriand: Complete Works 1940-1955*, Paris, 2005, front cover and pp. 368-379 for a discussion of this bookcase and interiors at the Maison du Mexique. Charlotte and Peter Fiell, eds.

Galleries Jousse Seguin and Enrico Navarra, *Jean Prouvé*, Paris, 1998, pp. 152-153.

Mary McLeod, ed., *Charlotte Perriand: An Art of Living*, New York, 2003, p. 231

Peter Sulzer, *Jean Prouvé: Oeuvre Complète/Complete Works, Volume 3: 1944-1954*, Basel, 2005, p. 260, cat. no. 1240.2

Charlotte Perriand L'aventure Japonaise, catalogue d'exposition, Musée d'Art moderne de Saint-Etienne, p. 141.

Collection

Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge, MA

Notes

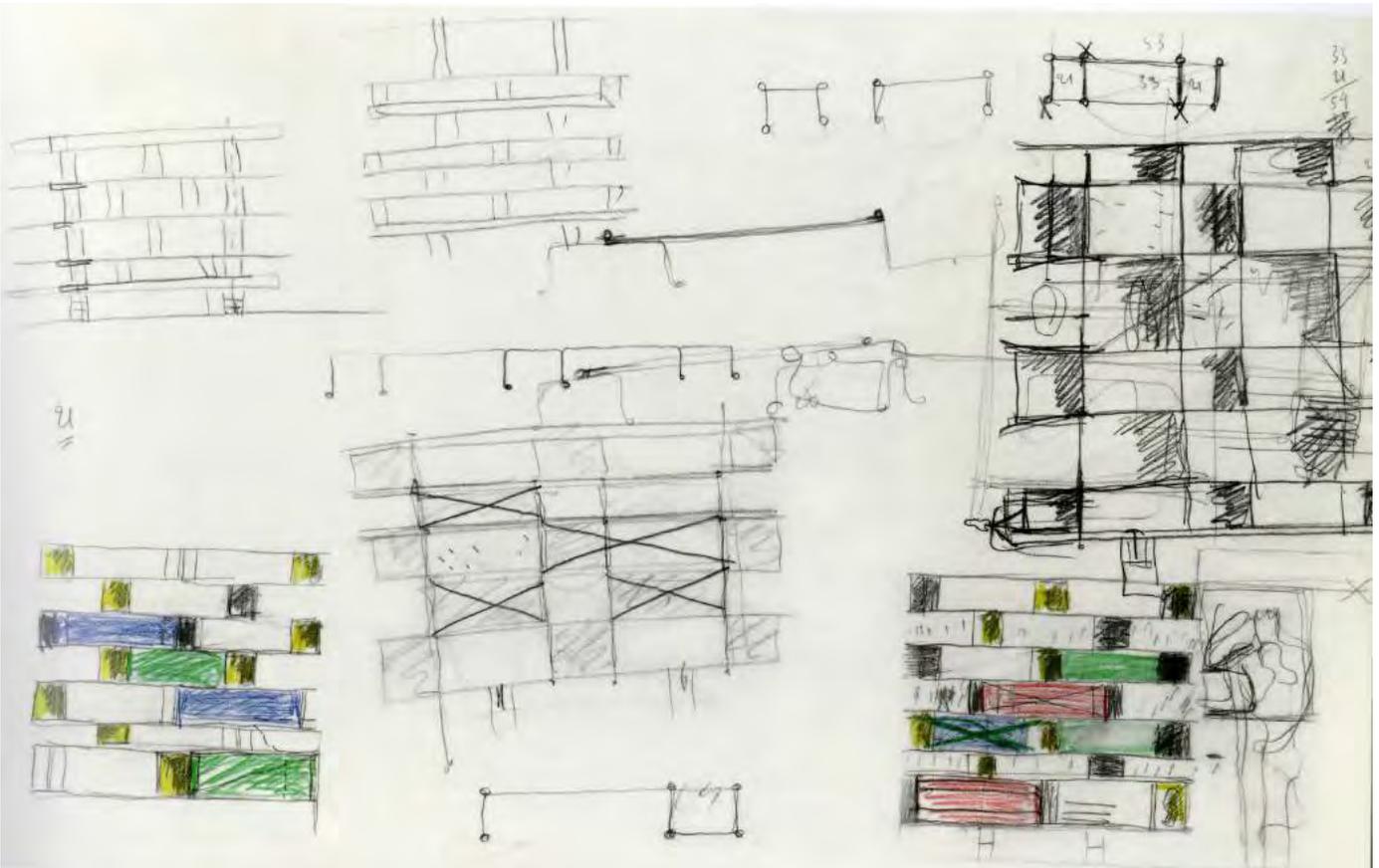
“Are we going to have mass or void? This seemingly ridiculous question is in fact an important one. For some, the void represents emptiness and destitution; for others it is the key to thought and motion,” Charlotte Perriand remarked on her iconic achievement. With its artful interplay of form and space, the *Mexique* achieves both.

Perriand, the parent of postwar modernism in France, designed student housings at the Cité Universitaire de Paris in 1953. With the aim of producing the standardized sheet metal elements on a mass scale, Perriand designed the *Mexique* which was produced by her frequent collaborator, Atelier Jean Prouvé.

Apart from its storage function, the room divider was designed to structure the room, a chief architectural element separating the bed from the bathroom and animating the space. Placed in the middle of the room, it could be used on either side for specific storage needs: on the room side, books and papers; on the bathroom side, toiletry items. And sliding panels, which run along the front faces of the shelves, allow users to hide and store their possessions.

Perriand referred to the *Mexique* as the “box,” then, successively “free-form box,” “niche,” “block-side panel,” and finally “side panel.” Given how narrow the rooms were, Perriand created openings and indentations within the furniture “to let the eyes glide by.” The *Mexique* did not extend up to the ceiling, thus the integrity of the entire volume was visually preserved.

Seventy-seven examples of the bookcase were produced in a variety of color combinations. This is the only example that was produced with all the doors in Soudeé green.



Perriand's sketches of the 'Mexique' (Circa 1952)



Warren Platner [American, b. 1919]

Prototype Chair, 1965
Welded steel wire, acrylic, pine
31.75 x 24 x 26 inches
80.6 x 61 x 66 cm

Provenance

Private Collection USA
Estate of Warren Platner

Exhibitions

Van stoelen bezeten, Gorcums Museum, Netherlands, November 22, 2014 - April 12, 2015.

Notes

"I thought why separate support from the object. Just make it all one thing. Starts at the floor and comes up and envelops me, supports me... What I wanted to achieve was a chair that, number one, was complementary to the person sitting in it, or to the person in the space between the wall and the chair — what the chair did for the person in respect to the scale of the person and the space."

-Warren Platner*

Warren Platner, a pivotal figure of 1960s modernism on the East Coast, worked for the architectural practices of I.M. Pei, Raymond Loewry, and Eero Saarinen before opening up his own office in Connecticut in 1965. This chair, simultaneously serving as structure and ornament, was one of the first designs at his solo practice and was a prototype for the series of wire furniture later produced by Knoll. Artful manipulation of metal was a lifelong fascination of Platner's—as a boy, he liked to build birdhouses and sculptures made of wire. First produced in 1966, the Knoll's Platner Collection captured the decorative, gentler shapes that were beginning to infiltrate the modern vocabulary.

*Miller, Judith. *Furniture*, New York: DK Publishing, 2005.

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Gio Ponti [Italian, 1891-1979]

Coffee Table, c. 1955

Enameled steel, brass, glass

15 x 35.5 x 35.5 inches

38.1 x 90.2 x 90.2 cm

Notes

"Reconstructing the original purity of the form/function relationship does not derive from functionality: it derives from a real world need of ours to restore a harmonious relationship between form and function in an essentiality that excludes any memory of other formal origins."
-Gio Ponti

Pivotal mid-century Italian designer and architect to the European elite, Gio Ponti studied architecture at Politecnico and after serving in World War I, he launched both his own architectural studio and the influential design magazine *Domus*.

This table demonstrates Ponti's reinvention of 'luxury,' as well as the breadth of his design vision. Embracing the technological innovation of the period, Ponti incorporated modern industrial references in the metal legs and geometric latticework. The quirky, but refined color combination highlights his attention to the visual field and evolving design ideology. In addition, the open glass-top instilled a relative weightlessness into the design—creating a dynamic sculptural statement.

Ponti continued to explore the lattice motif in his interiors and exteriors from the 1930s to the 1960s. Variations of this table were included in numerous significant residential commissions, such as the Cantoni Family residence in Montova (1935), Casa La Porte (1935), Casa Borletti (1936) in Milan and Villa Planchart (1955) in Caracas, Venezuela.



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Gerrit Thomas Rietveld [Dutch, 1888-1964]

Beugel Armchair, 1927

Silver lacquered steel tubes and black lacquered laminated wood

35.75 x 23.75 x 34.25 inches

91 x 60 x 87 cm

Provenance

Gabriël Smit, Utrecht and thence by descent

Literature

Brown, Theodore. *The Work of G. Rietveld, Architect*, Utrecht, 1958, p. 85.

Baroni, Daniele. *The Furniture of Gerrit Thomas Rietveld*, New York, 1978, pgs. 114-115.

Vöge, Peter. *The Complete Rietveld Furniture*, Rotterdam 1993, p. 74, No. 92

Collection

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Notes

Gerard van de Groenekan made the first examples of this model. It seems that he had no access to bigger sizes of plywood sheets than 50 inches long, so he made the seat in two pieces. Poet, writer and reporter Gabriël Smit (1910-1981) worked as a journalist and art critic for Dutch newspapers such as Gooi- en Eemlander, Utrechts Dagblad, De Linie and De Volkskrant. Smit must have played a role of importance in the Utrecht artist's community as surrealist painter J.H. Moesman painted his portrait in 1931. Smit probably met Rietveld at De Gemeenschap, a Utrecht society of writers, architects and artists. It was no wonder that at the time of his marriage in 1930, Gabriël Smit furnished his interior with furniture designed by Gerrit Rietveld. After his death in 1981, most pieces remained in his family.



Gerrit Thomas Rietveld [Dutch, 1888-1964]

Zig-Zag Chair, 1932

Stained pinewood

35.75 x 23.75 x 18.75 inches

91 x 60 x 47.5 cm

Provenance

Annie and Carel Bendien (Friends of the architect)

Literature

Baroni, Daniele. *The Furniture of Gerrit Thomas Rietveld*, New York 1978, No. 25, pgs. 136-137.

Brown, Theodore M. *The Work of G. Rietveld, Architect*, Utrecht 1958, pgs. 102-104.

Küper, M. *Rietveld Furniture, From the collection of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam*, 1981, p. 24, ill. 72-77

Rietveld. *The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum Utrecht 1992, p.145-147.

Vöge, Peter. *The Complete Rietveld Furniture*, Rotterdam, 1993, p. 82.

Collection

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

RISD Museum, Providence, RI

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA

Notes

Composed of four flat wood boards articulated end to end to form a Z-shape, Rietveld's chair rejects conventional chair features: two arms, four legs, and a padded seat. Each board joins the

next at mathematically precise angles with a bare minimum of supports and nuts and bolts. The piece asserts its inherently linear design and appears to be as much a sculpture as a utilitarian object. Rietveld's interest in abstract design was rooted in his earlier participation in the avant-garde movement De Stijl, which espoused abstraction as the representation of pure spirit and universal appeal.

Next to the Red and Blue chair, the Zig Zag chair is Rietveld's most well-known and radical furniture design. The idea of making a chair out of a single surface had preoccupied Rietveld since 1927. He wanted to create a functional form that would not displace space, but instead would be perceived as a continuum of space. At the beginning, he tried to produce the chair from one single piece. To this aim, he experimented with various materials. Finally, with great constructive effort, he found a solution using four apparently freestanding surfaces with hidden bolted wooden panels. Due to its construction details, our piece can be viewed as one of the earliest examples of this design, since, during the history of this chair's production, Rietveld continued to add further stabilizing elements, like screws mounted through additional holes in the seat in and back and used more precious wood with less dovetail joints.



Rietveld Schröder House (Circa 1962)



Gerrit Thomas Rietveld [Dutch, 1888-1964]

Armchair Model No. R54, Designed 1942, Produced 1942-1946

Bent Beechwood, plastic covered springs, brass

35.75 x 23.75 x 18.75 inches

91 x 60 x 47.5 cm

Literature

Küper, Marijke and Ida van Zijl, *Gerrit Th. Rietveld 1888-1964, The Complete Works*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 1992, p. 211, cat. no. 337 for the design drawing, p. 222, cat. no. 369 for the entry on the original suite

Vöge, Peter, *The Complete Rietveld Furniture*, Rotterdam, 1993, p. 131, cat. no. 261

Delfini, Luca Dosi, *The Furniture Collection, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam: 1850-2000: from Thonet to Marcel Wanders*, Amsterdam, 2004, p. 321, cat. no. 512

Collection

Centraal Museum, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Notes

This rare armchair from the 1940s forms a link between Gerrit Thomas Rietveld's prewar and postwar works. The white-stained short sides of the stretcher are an echo of Rietveld's youthful flirtation with De Stijl while the model is closely related to the metal "Beugelstoel" from 1927. The slender frame of bentwood shows the influence of Scandinavian and American design which would become the leading trend in Europe in the postwar years. Because of the metal shortage during and directly after the war, wooden furniture became a popular alternative. This design by Rietveld however did not become a commercial success; only four armchairs and a settee of this model are known. This complete set was purchased in 1946 at Metz & Co in Amsterdam by Professor Diepenhorst, together with furniture pieces by Alvar Aalto. The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam acquired one armchair and the settee in 1986; Centraal Museum, Utrecht acquired another armchair at the same time. The remaining two armchairs (the present lots) have remained in the collection of the Diepenhorst family to this date.

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Rudolph Schindler [Austrian, 1887-1953] produced by Warren McArthur Corporation

Armchair Designed for Sardi's Restaurant, Hollywood, CA, 1932-1933

Aluminum and vinyl

34 x 25 x 24 inches

86.4 x 63.5 x 61 cm

Provenance

Lewis Ehrenberg, Los Angeles, CA

Thence by descent

Literature

Berns, Marla C, *The Furniture of R.M. Schindler*. Santa Barbara: University Art Museum, University of California. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997. p. 118.

Kaplan, Wendy, *Living in a Modern Way: California Design 1930-1965*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011. p. 71.

Notes

In the early 1930s, Schindler was contracted to renovate the Los Angeles restaurant, the favorite of celebrities such as Charlie Chaplin, Marlene Dietrich and Joan Crawford and the sister to the iconic New York's establishment. The Sardi's commission is a primary example of Schindler's design concept for commercial properties, which comprise less than a dozen realized projects throughout his career. While Schindler considered metal furniture unsuitable for the home, and like Wright choosing wood as a material for residential projects, he embraced metal in his business and retail commissions.

This streamlined chair is Schindler's interpretation of the machine aesthetic and borrows from the industrial vocabulary set forth by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Marcel Breuer. Here, Schindler mediates the horizontal with the curvilinear, a motif which he echoes throughout the Sardi's interior with semi-circular booths and round tables.

Designed to be durable and made of simple, non-luxurious fabric, this chair was elevated by what Schindler called the “real meaning of the metal chair: its transparency,” and the metal’s sophisticated sleekness and contemporary style made the design stylish enough for the glamorous clientele.

Sardi’s was demolished by a kitchen fire in 1936, destroying much of the furniture and leaving behind few surviving examples.



Sardi's Restaurant Interior (Circa 1932)



Rudolph Schindler [Austrian, 1887-1953]

Unit chair and ottoman designed for Van Patten residence, Los Angeles, CA, 1936

Wood, fabric and pigmented varnish

Chair: 27 x 35.5 x 34.5 inches
68.6 x 90.2 x 87.6 cm

Ottoman: 15 x 21 x 21 inches
38.1 x 53.3 x 53.3 cm

Provenance

Miss Van Patten, Los Angeles, CA
Private Collection, Los Angeles, CA

Literature

Berns, Marla C. *The Furniture of R.M. Schindler*. Santa Barbara: University Art Museum, University of California. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997. pgs. 57, 124.

Scheine, Judith. *R M Schindler*. London: Phaison, 2001. Illustrated p.160 and p.94 for a drawing

Collection

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California

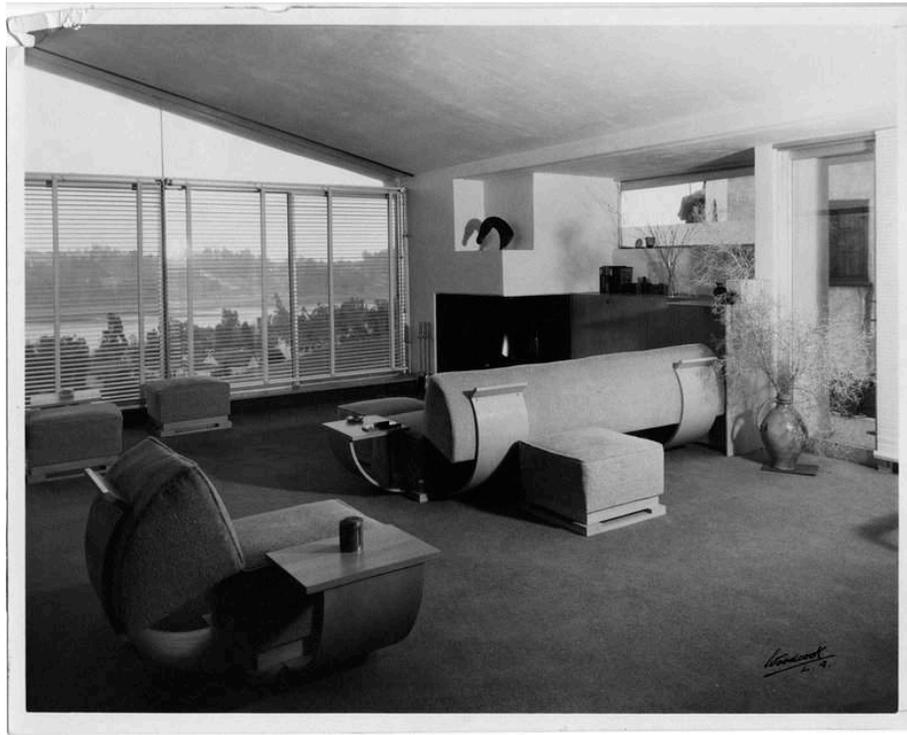
Notes

According to Rudolph Schindler, it should be “impossible to tell where the house ends and furniture begins.”* Considering furniture a kind of micro-architecture, Schindler brought his vocabulary of building design into the scaled-down world of furniture making.

Schindler designed the Van Patten Unit chair and ottoman as prototypes for what he hoped would become a complete series of modular furniture that could be created with the efficiency of the production line while meeting the needs and standards of individuals. The Van Patten house,

designed for three women living together who shared common areas, was one of the first projects to include his novel Unit designs. Schindler tried persuading several Los Angeles manufacturers to put his components into production, but he was unsuccessful. It was not until the Charles and Ray Eames- designed ESU storage unit came to market in 1950, that an interchangeable, modular unit furniture scheme would be mass-produced.

*Gebhard, David and Patricia Gebhard. *The Furniture of R.M. Schindler*. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California, Santa Barbara Press, 1997.



Van Patten Residence Living Area (Circa 1936)



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Rudolph Schindler [Austrian, 1887-1953]

UCLA Dining Room Chair, Designed for Dr. Leo and Zara Bigelman, Los Angeles, CA, 1944-1945

Wood and leather

32 x 18 x 24 inches

81.3 x 45.7 x 61 cm

Provenance

Dr. Leo and Zara Bigelman

Gustave Tassel

Literature

Berns, Marla C, *The Furniture of R.M. Schindler*. Santa Barbara: University Art Museum, University of California. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997. drawing of the chair on p. 125.

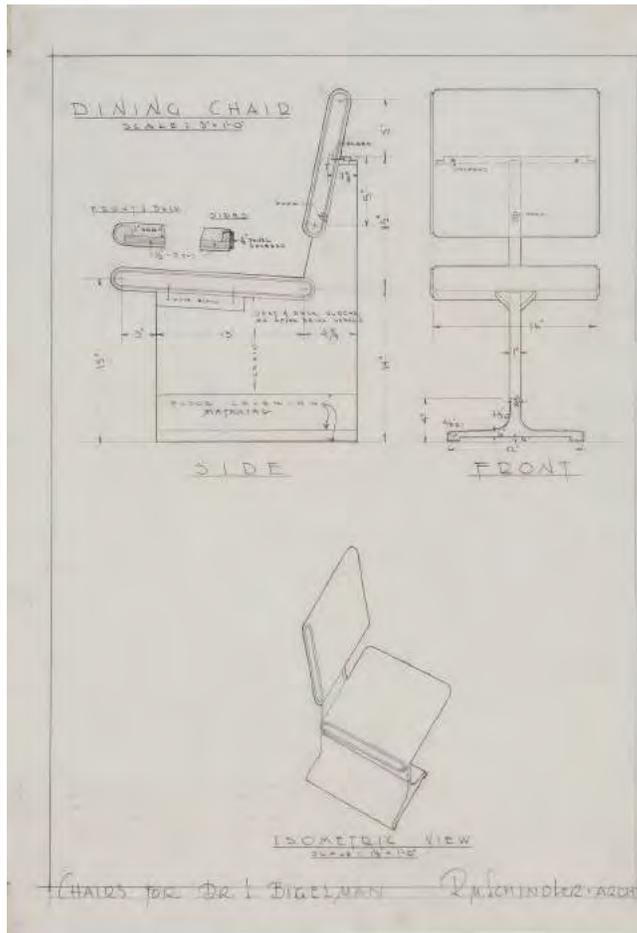
Notes

"It seems that our nervous intensity in action requires in turn a more relaxed rest position. Even sitting at our work we are apt to seek the horizontal by putting our feet on the desk. This tendency, together with our changing attitude toward the floor lowers and spreads our furniture. The stationary furniture, especially, stops leaning against the wall and tries to merge with the floor. The imaginary horizon in the room has dropped from door to elbow height."

-Rudolph Schindler

In 1944, Dr. Leo and Zara Bigelman commissioned Schindler to remodel and redesign their Los Angeles home. For the project that included a suite of six dining chairs, Schindler turned to a slimmer, visually lighter design with a base that is connected to the ground by a slim anchor. Schindler used variations of this chair in at least two of his pivotal projects during the 1930s: the Van Patten residence (1936) and the Walker House (1935-1936). Yet, these chairs were vastly different in their regards to their manufacturing. During the Great Depression, Schindler produced his designs at a very low cost using contractors instead of craftsmen and employing inexpensive materials such as plywood and metal. In contrast, this suite of six dining chairs, made of higher-quality Russian Ash and rich leather were fabricated by a woodworker Manuel Sandoval, exhibit a level of craftsmanship that is rare of in Schindler's oeuvre. Sandoval was one of the earliest members of Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin Fellowship, his school of apprentices, and was referred to as a 'master-craftsman' by Wright.

This chair symbolizes a transition for Schindler's aesthetic as during the last eight years of his life, from 1945 to 1953, he went on to produce a body of work quite different from the rectilinear and geometric motifs that dominate his earlier designs. As seen in the base of this chair, Schindler's later furniture favored acute angles and spatial complexity. Yet Schindler's preference for low to the ground furniture and smallness of scale, originally inspired by low seats found in Middle Eastern homes, remains a constant.



Schindler's sketch for the Dr. Leo and Zara Bigelman (Circa 1944)



Rudolph Schindler [Austrian, 1887-1953]

Partners desk

Gingold Residence, 514 N Alta, Los Angeles, CA, c. 1945

Sanded pine plywood

28 x 59.5 x 38.5 inches

71.1 x 151.1 x 97.8 cm

Unique

Provenance

Commissioned for Gingold Residence

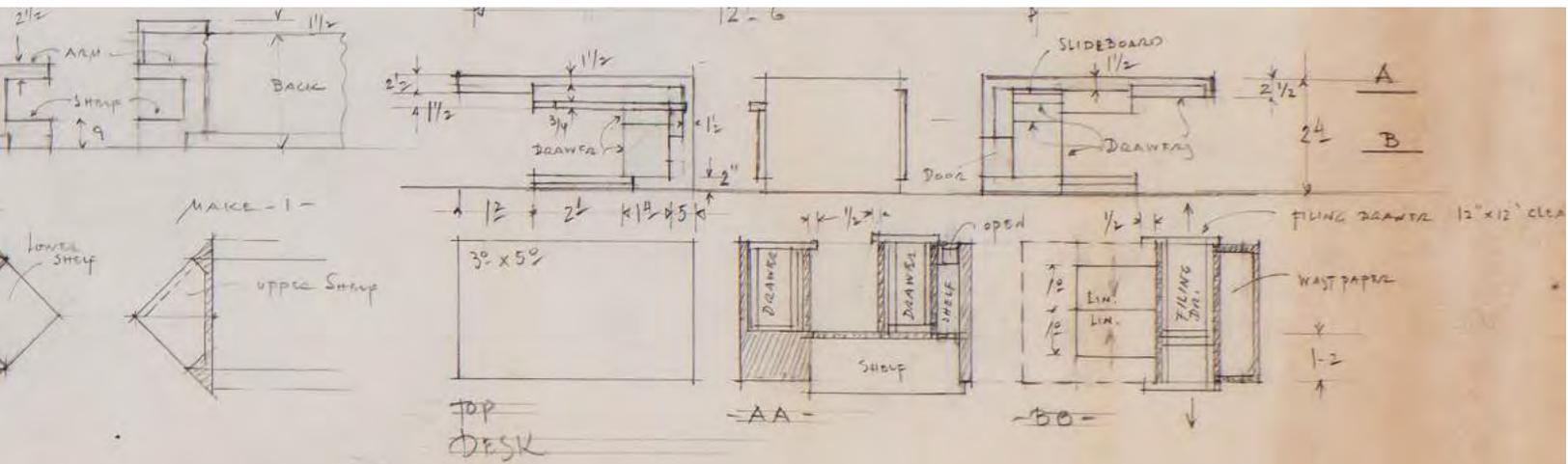
Notes

Born in Vienna, Schindler attended Wagnerschule to study with Otto Wagner and Adolf Loos, who taught him to let go of historical styles and adopt modern methods for his architectural forms. After working with Frank Lloyd Wright on the Imperial Hotel commission in Japan, Schindler began assisting Wright in Los Angeles in 1920. Schindler told friends that he came to America for two things, "Frank Lloyd Wright and ground-gripper shoes.*" Wright would prove to be Schindler's lifelong mentor.

Later, on his own, Schindler was commissioned by Dr. Basia Gingold, a Los Angeles doctor and German immigrant, to design the interiors of her first apartment, medical office and a house that she purchased in 1940. Their collaboration lasted 15 years.

This desk with its crisp, geometric composition, is informed by Wright's planar vocabulary, and embodies Schindler's aesthetic of cantilevered volumes, and functionalist, stripped down simplicity. With designs such as the Partners Desk, Schindler presented a new austere aesthetic that became synonymous with Southern California's progressive culture.

*Glazer, Mitch. "Neutra and Schindler." *Vanity Fair*, April 1999.



LIVING ROOM • SCALE 1/2" = 1'-0" • R.M. SCHINDLER • ARCH. 1943

Schindler's interior elevation of the Gingold Residence including the Partner's Desk (1948)



Ettore Sottsass [Italian, 1917-2007]

Cabinet no. 8, 1994

Yellow-lacquered Maple wood with waterstain grain, natural Burlled Elm

74.75 x 82.625 x 19.75 inches

189.9 x 209.9 x 50.2 cm

Edition of 6

Exhibitions

Ettore Sottsass: Works Big and Small, Johanna Grawunder, *Many Small Works*. Galerie Mourmans, Knokke-Zoute, Belgium. June, 1995.

Literature

Shuppan, Toto. trans. by Nobuko Akita and Naomi Miwa. *Sottsass 151 Drawings*, Gallery MA: Japan, 1997. Illustrated p. 47.

Ettore Sottsass, Big and Small Works, Johanna Grawunder, *Many Small Works*. Knokke-Zoute: Galerie Mourmans, 1995. p. 6.

Notes

“Ettore’s pieces of furniture are exercises in architecture and language—and in fact they grant very little to current taste, indeed they want to refound and discuss the issues of current taste—like those of Rietveld or Le Corbusier or Terragni or Mies...It is interesting to consider that Ettore’s furniture has never been sold at the time it was designed. Many pieces never got past the model stage, just like those of Rietveld, Le Corbusier, Terragni and Mies, who in their lifetimes didn’t sell the furniture they designed because they didn’t design it for sale, but to put

Li, 2013, p. 47
 Ettore Sottsass

One of the most significant counter-forces to modernism in the history of design, Ettore Sottsass intellectually and aesthetically challenged conventional forms and proportions throughout his 60-plus year career. That career produced a provocative body of work, including architecture, furniture, industrial design, glass, ceramics, painting, photography and a wealth of writings.

A central concern of much of Sottsass' work is the social, cultural and technical implications of architecture and design on the way people live and interact. New materials and technologies were of particular interest to him. Color and form are of equal importance in Sottsass' work and he embraced them with a similarly radical approach. This cabinet bares this out with its quirky coloration and the unexpected massing of its elements.

In 1972 while preparing a group of work for the seminal "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Sottsass wrote "the aim of the project was not to achieve a product, but to state and provoke ideas. I wasn't in the least concerned with making furniture, or an elegant, 'cute,' sweet, or amusing environment, and still less was I concerned with designing within this psychic and cultural status quo."**

*Ettore Sottsass A Critical Biography. London: Thames and Hudson, 1993.

**"Italy: The New Domestic Landscape," Museum of Modern Art, Press Release: December 24, 1971.



Kenzō Tange [Japanese, 1913-2005]

Chair, c. 1957

Thermoformed plywood, aluminum and fabric

30.25 x 20.5 x 22.5 inches

77 x 52 x 57 cm

Manufactured by Tendo Mokko, Japan

Provenance

Sumi Kaikan (Sumi Memorial Hall), Ichinomiya City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan

Exhibitions

Plywood: Material of the Modern World, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK, July 17 - November 12, 2017.

Collections

Victoria & Albert Museum, London, England

Notes

Kenzo Tange is well known for his body of work that synthesized Japanese cultural traditions with modernism. In all of his projects, there is a recurrent theme that Tange verbalized in his acceptance speech for the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1987: "Architecture must have something that appeals to the human heart, but even then, basic forms, spaces and appearances must be logical. Creative work is expressed in our time as a union of technology and humanity. The role of tradition is that of a catalyst, which furthers a chemical reaction, but is no longer detectable in the end result. Tradition can, to be sure, participate in a creation, but it can no longer be creative itself."

Tange designed this chair for the Sumi Memorial Hall, Ichinomiya City, Japan. The building was designed in 1955 and completed in 1957 and was one of a number of Tange's buildings for which furniture was specifically designed. It was built as headquarters of the Tsuyakin Kogyo

Company – a local textiles manufacturer. It was intended to be used as both a head office for the company, and as a meeting place for textile manufacturers from across Japan.

This chair was designed for the Hall's auditorium and manufactured by the Japanese company Tendo Mokko. The stackable plywood design allowed the chairs to be moved around or stored, depending on how the space was being used. A molded plywood armchair was also designed for the building's offices, and a plywood stool to be used in the cafeteria.



Ali Tayar [Turkish, 1959-2016]

Chandelier for POP Burger, New York, NY, 2011

Brushed aluminum

48 x 24 x 20 inches

121.9 x 61 x 50.8 cm

Provenance

POP Burger 58th St, New York, NY

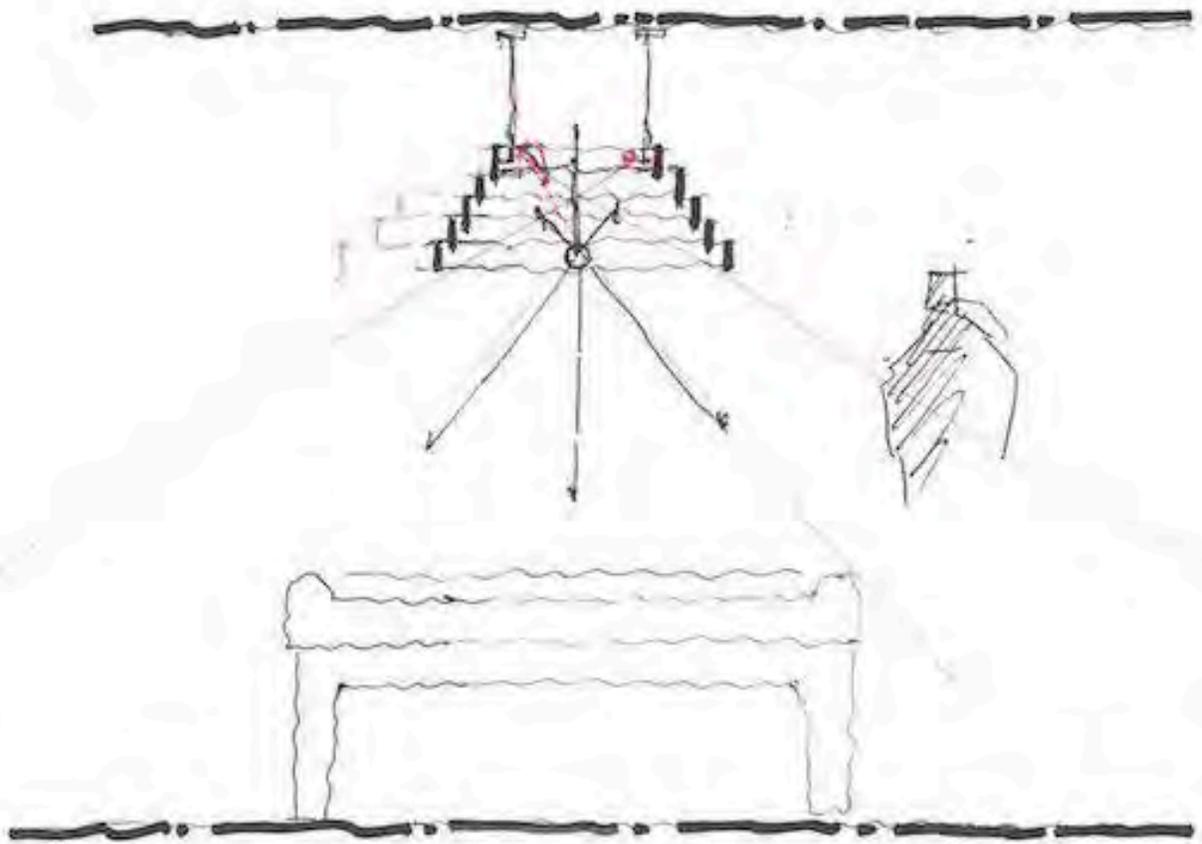
Notes

For Ali Tayar, design starts with a structural concept. Whether working on small-scale furniture pieces or large-scale interiors, he aimed to produce solutions that are balanced with optimal engineering and aesthetics. Backed by his training as an architectural engineer in Stuttgart and then as an architect at MIT, Tayar's signature style manifests itself in poetic forms made from industrial materials – a dynamic juxtaposition of principles that flowed through everything from his residential projects, restaurant interiors, furniture and objects. Tayar found working with furniture and design provided him an opportunity to play with--and then solved-various small-scale structural principles.

Tayar designed several interiors for the POP Burger restaurant chain in New York that widely lauded; New York Magazine remarking on the opening of his Meatpacking District: "Ali Tayar's collaboration is tailor-made for the meatpacking district's hungry masses yearning for slick surroundings and thick shakes."

For POP Burger's 58th street location, Tayar was influenced by the "social idealism and trust in technological innovation, mass production and prefabrication." Tayar continues, "I juxtaposed rough and refined materials, like oak planks in combination with anodized-aluminum panels." This industrial light fixture that was designed to be installed above a pool table on the third floor of that location is an exemplary example of Tayar's unique mix of architecture, engineering, and artistry.





SECTION @ POOL LIGHTING

N/S

Lighting Fixture Cuts for Pop Burger (2011)



Frank Lloyd Wright [American, 1867-1959]

Interior light fixture

from the Darwin D. Martin House, Buffalo, NY, c. 1905

Painted bronze and glass

5.5 x 8 x 21 inches

14 x 20.3 x 53.3 cm

Notes

Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House complex--five interconnected buildings and their extensive complement of furnishings, fixtures and art glass--was designed and executed as a *gesamtkunstwerk*--a total, integrated work of art. Considered one of Wright's greatest Prairie designs, Martin reportedly granted Wright an unlimited budget.

The Darwin Martin house stands as one of the largest and most significant commissions of Wright's Chicago years. Like the Susan Lawrence Dana house, it serves as a bold expression of Wright's powerful vision for a new American architecture. In his correspondence with Martin, Wright referred to the scheme as a "domestic symphony." The sense of unity is revealed in every aspect of the design; the rectilinearity of the units that form the house's T-shaped plan is reinforced by the geometry of its leaded-glass windows and custom-made furnishings. Clusters of piers in the expansive first story rooms allow for continuous bands of windows at the house's perimeter. The piers marry distinct utilitarian and aesthetic elements by serving as structural supports, room dividers, and furniture pieces that encase radiators, light fixtures, bookcases, and shelving.

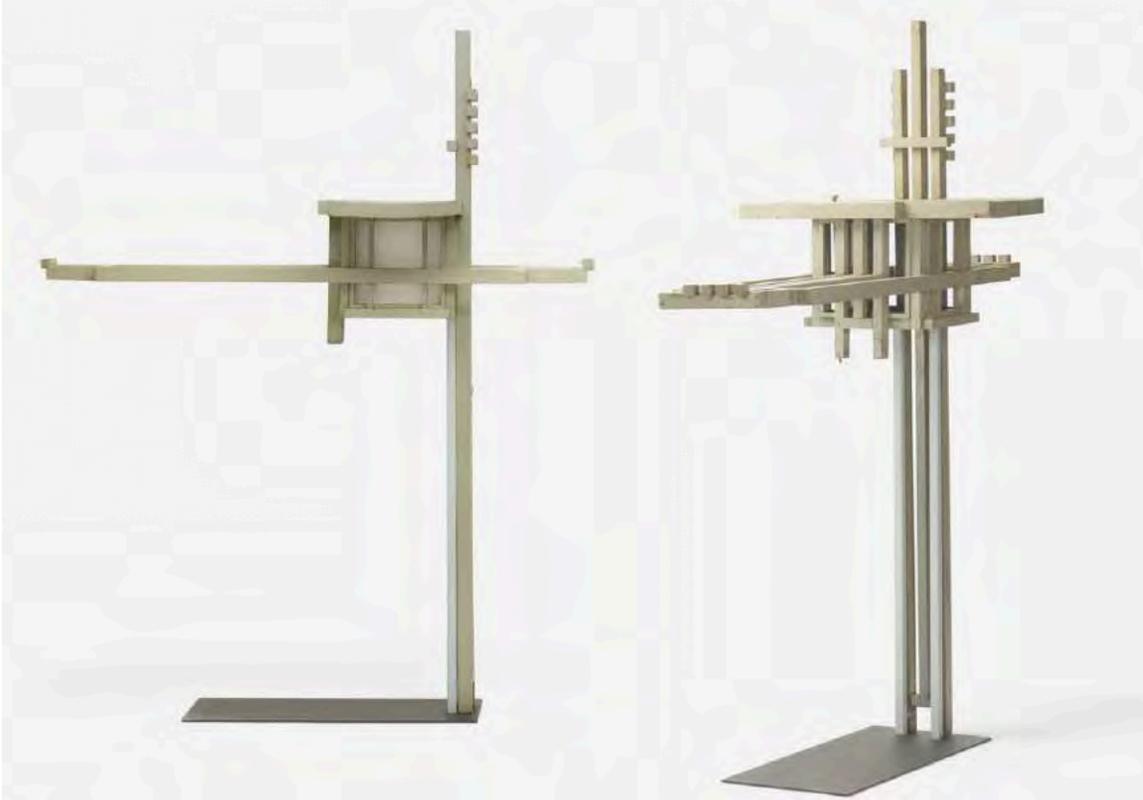
Archival images courtesy of The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York)

In his correspondence with Martin, Wright referred to the scheme as a "domestic symphony." To complete his cohesive vision of the project, Wright even designed the dress that Darwin's daughter, Isabelle, wore at her wedding that took place in the home.



Isabelle Martin on her wedding day in the dress reportedly designed by her by Wright (Circa 1906)

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Frank Lloyd Wright [American, 1867-1959]

*Pair of exterior light fixtures
from the Francis W. Little House, Wayzata, MN, 1912*
Lacquered wood, glass
2 fixtures, each: 59.5 x 60 x 28 inches
151.1 x 152.4 x 71.1 cm

Provenance

Francis W. Little House, Wayzata, MN

Literature

Pfeiffer, Bruce & Yukio Futagawa. *Frank Lloyd Wright Monograph 1907-1913*. Edita: Japan, 1988, pgs. 204-217.

Notes

The Francis Little House in Wayzata, Minnesota, was Wright's second commission for his client Francis Little, a successful lawyer and businessman. Wright began the plans in 1908, but the project was not executed for another 5 years. In 1909, Wright left for Europe on what he called a 'spiritual adventure,' and upon his return in 1911, inspired by the art and architecture he'd witnessed in Berlin and Vienna, he resumed the commission.

The Francis Little House, a signature project of Wright's, is marked by horizontality and strict parallel and perpendicular lines, all referenced in these exterior light fixtures. Originally installed in brick piers alongside the steps to the main entrance, these five of the original six cantilevered fixtures speak to Wright's distilled linear vocabulary and reductivism. The light's sharply angled form is a harbinger of the principles manifested in the forthcoming De Stijl movement. The Dutch architect and teacher H.P. Berlage, who purportedly visited the Francis Little project, was

particularly moved by Wright's originality and remarked that he was "a spirit freed from all tradition." Wright repeated the design of these lanterns with a smaller version for the Avery Coonley Playhouse in Riverside, Illinois completed later that year.



Francis Little House exterior (Circa 1915)



Frank Lloyd Wright [American, 1867-1959]

*Pair of exterior light fixture
from the Francis W. Little House, Wayzata, MN, 1912*

Lacquered wood, glass

2 fixtures, each: 75 x 60 x 28 inches

190.5 x 152.4 x 71.1 cm

Provenance

Francis W. Little House, Wayzata, MN

Literature

Pfeiffer, Bruce & Yukio Futagawa. *Frank Lloyd Wright Monograph 1907-1913*. Edita: Japan, 1988, pgs. 204-217.



Frank Lloyd Wright [American, 1867-1959]

Exterior light fixture

from the Francis W. Little House, Wayzata, MN, 1912

Lacquered wood, glass

37.5 x 60 x 28 inches

95.25 x 152.4 x 71.1 cm

Provenance

Francis W. Little House, Wayzata, MN

Literature

Pfeiffer, Bruce & Yukio Futagawa. *Frank Lloyd Wright Monograph 1907-1913*. Edita: Japan, 1988, pgs. 204-217.



Frank Lloyd Wright [American, 1867-1959]

Chair from the Avery Coonley Playhouse, Riverside, Illinois, c. 1912

Walnut, leather

34 x 16 x 17.5 inches

86.4 x 40.6 x 44.5 cm

Literature

Heinz, Thomas. *Frank Lloyd Wright: Interiors and Furniture*, New York: Academy Press, 1994. Illustrated p. 150.

Hanks, David. *Frank Lloyd Wright: Preserving an Architectural Heritage*, Decorative Designs from the Domino's Pizza Collection, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1989. Illustrated pgs. 80-81, 136.

Notes

In 1906, Mrs. Coonley formed the Cottage School in Riverside, Illinois, a private independent kindergarten school for her daughter and other neighborhood children. Mrs. Coonley commissioned Wright to design the Playhouse in 1912 in order to accommodate growing number of students attending the school.

Wright designed these seminal panel-back chairs to fill the assembly area of the school. The holes at the top of the backrest allowed for ropes, which held the padding in place. For Wright, the flat back was a defining, ornamental feature. Wright continued to employ variations on the theme of vertical backrests throughout his career as the extended height offered a 'second space' or dimension within a room.

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Avery Coonley Playhouse Interior (Circa 1912)



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Frank Lloyd Wright [American, 1867-1959]

'Peacock' chair, designed for the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, 1921

Oak, vinyl, brass

38.25 x 19 x 15.5 inches

97.2 x 48.3 x 39.4 cm

Literature

Duncan, Alistar, *Louis C. Tiffany The Garden Museum Collection*, p. 644.

Fiell, Charlotte and Peter, *1000 chairs*, Cologne, 1997, p. 142.

Hanks, David, *Frank Lloyd Wright: Preserving an Architectural Heritage, Decorative Designs from the Domino's Pizza Collection*, pgs. 90-91, 138.

Hanks, David, *The Decorative Designs of Frank Lloyd Wright*, New York, 1979, p. 133.
100 Masterpieces from the Vitra Design Museum Collection, exh. cat., Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, 1996, pgs. 184-85.

James, Cary, *The Imperial Hotel: Frank Lloyd Wright and the Architecture of Unity, Vermont, 1968*, pgs. 35, 42, 43.

Pfeiffer, Bruce; Futagawa, Yukio, *Frank Lloyd Wright Monograph: 1951-1959*, pgs. 14-15 discusses the commission

Pfeiffer, Bruce, *Frank Lloyd Wright: The Complete Works, 1917-1942, vol. 2*, Cologne, 2010, pp. 33, 35.

Collection

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

Cooper-Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, New York, NY
The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA
Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany
Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI

Notes

In 1916 the Japanese government commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to design the new Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. A confluence of design influences and trades, the hotel is considered one of Wright's most pivotal and defining projects as it marked the departure from the Prairie school style and a new phase of Wright's career. A standout design of the commission, the Peacock chair was omnipresent—featured throughout the rooms and in the parlor, the theater, restaurant and long promenade. A symbol of the property and a triumph of Frank Lloyd Wright's design abroad, the stylized motifs and bold angular composition speaks to the hotel's interior scheme.

The hexagonally shaped back of the chair mimics the ornament of the cornice and ceiling and derives from forms found in Japanese art and design. Wright wrote in his autobiography, that 'Japanese fine-art traditions are among the noblest and purest in this world... The West has much to learn from the East—and Japan was the gateway to that great East of which I had been dreaming since I had seen my first Japanese prints, and read my first Laotze.* Perhaps ironically, the chair form itself was a foreign notion in Japan at this time, and its presence demonstrates the country's efforts to westernize. In this way, the chair dually reflects both the architect's and the host country's fascination with each other.

*Brownell, Brown and Frank Lloyd Wright, *Architecture and Modern Life*, New York; London: Harper and Brothers, 1937.

Archival images courtesy of The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York) / Photography by Raku Endo





Frank Lloyd Wright [American, 1867-1959]

Dining Table from John C. Pew House, Shorewood Hills, WI, c. 1938

Tidewater red cypress
29.5 x 72 x 27 inches
74.9 x 182.9 x 68.6 cm

Literature

Frank Lloyd Wright, The Natural House, New York, Bramhall House, 1954, p. 131 for a floor plan illustrating placement of the dining table

Pfeiffer, Bruce Brooks. *Frank Lloyd Wright: The Complete Works, 1917-1942, vol. 2*, New York, 2010. Illustrated p. 343

Notes

"A sense of the organic is indispensable to an architect."
-Frank Lloyd Wright*

For Frank Lloyd Wright, "organic architecture" represented the cohesion of a building and the surrounding environment, and also the harmony of the building's exterior and interior--each part of the design relating to the whole. The John C. Pew House is a pivotal reflection of Wright's principles of "organic architecture." as Wright designed the residence to thoughtfully integrate the wooded landscape of the site throughout the structure and domestic spaces of the home.

The Pew House is part of a series of cantilevered and elevated buildings Frank Lloyd Wright designed in the late 1930s and 1940s. Built for Madison businessman, John C. Pew, the property was a long, narrow lot above Lake Mendota; Wright once remarked that the commission was "probably the only house in Madison, Wisconsin, that recognizes beautiful Lake Mendota, my boyhood lake."**

Due to the narrowness and steep pitch of the site, the Pew House necessitated two levels: a

living room, dining area and workspace in the entrance level, with three bedrooms and a bath above. This sturdy utilitarian table indicates the multi-use possibilities of the entrance level of the home. This dining table is also an expression of Wright's desire for organic consistency as the choice of cypress complements the lapped cypress used in the home's central living areas and the exterior's cypress sideboards--all which are meant to complement the views of the trees flanking the home.

Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Natural House*. New York: Horizon Press, 1954.

Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture," *Architectural Record* 23, no. 3, 1908.



John Pew House, Dining Room (1936)



Frank Lloyd Wright [American, 1867-1959]

Lounge chair from the Clarence Sondern House, Kansas City, MO, c. 1938

Cypress plywood, upholstery

28 x 22 x 23 inches

71.1 x 55.9 x 58.4 cm

Exhibitions

Frank Lloyd Wright: Preserving an Architectural Heritage, Decorative Designs from the Domino's Pizza Collection. Traveling Exhibition:

December 1989 - February 1990, Seattle Art Museum

March - June 1990, The Chicago Historical Society

July - September 1990, The Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo NY

October 1990 - January 1998, The Denver Art Museum

February - April 1991, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia

May - June 1991, Dallas Museum of Art.

Literature

Pfeiffer & Futugawa, *Frank Lloyd Wright Monograph, 1937-1941*, Illustrated pgs. 180-183

Hanks, *Frank Lloyd Wright: Preserving an Architectural Heritage, Decorative Designs from the Domino's Pizza Collection*, pgs. 106-107, 143 illustrate both examples with one depicted in a period photo

Notes

"The Usonian house, then, aims to be a natural performance, one that is integral to site; integral to environment; integral to the life of the inhabitants. A house integral with the nature of materials —wherein glass is used as glass, stone as stone, wood as wood—and all the elements of environment go into and throughout the house."

*-Frank Lloyd Wright**

The Clarence Sondern House is a classic representation of Wright's 'Usonian' designs, which

became the focus of his creative energy from the onset of the Great Depression. The term 'Usonian' was first used in 1865 by writer James Duff Law as a more precise way to describe the United States rather than the word "American." Wright appropriated the term, misidentifying its origin as Samuel Butler's utopian novel, Erewhon. Nonetheless, the Usonian ideology for Wright marked a utopian rejection of the International Style of the 1930s and a movement toward organic design that incorporated natural materials and integrated elements, that Wright considered better suited for comfortable, modern living.

The Clarence Sondern house, a 900 square foot space with a limited budget, required creative cost strategies. For example, in the interest of economy only one type of wood, cypress—a less expensive alternative to oak—was used throughout the house's interior and exterior.

This lounge chair embodies the subtle tweaks and refinements Wright made to Prairie-style furniture to adapt the pieces to his modest Usonian designs. In this chair the edges are unadorned to allow for easier onsite fabrication by contractors already engaged to do a building's millwork rather than use more expensive cabinetmakers. The intersecting geometric planes echo the modular components of the Sondern House and the solid construction symbolizes years of intended everyday use.

*Wright, Frank Lloyd. The Natural House, New York: Horizon, 1954.



Clarence Sondern House, Living Room & Bedroom (circa 1938)



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Frank Lloyd Wright [American, 1867-1959]

Pair of Side Tables from Sturges Residence, Los Angeles, CA, 1939

Douglas Fir and Douglas Fir Plywood with a red stain

2 tables, each: 15.5 x 25.5 x 23 inches

39.4 x 64.8 x 58.4 cm

Provenance

George D. Sturges, Los Angeles;
Thence by descent

Notes

Designed and built in 1939, the George Sturges House is the Usonian home in Southern California.

All the signature Wright details were in plain sight within the home, from repeating rectilinear patterns in brick to deceptively simple wooden panels and recessed lighting that adds airiness to the home's low ceilings (and George Sturges was 6'3", testament to Wright's consistent refusal to alter his original designs for creature comfort). The home as well as these side tables are both democratic and simple in its size and materials and yet grand in their overall design and aesthetic.



Frank Lloyd Wright [American, 1867-1959]

Set of 3 Usonian Hexagonal Stools

Palmer House, Ann Arbor, MI, 1950

Leather and oak

3 stools, each:

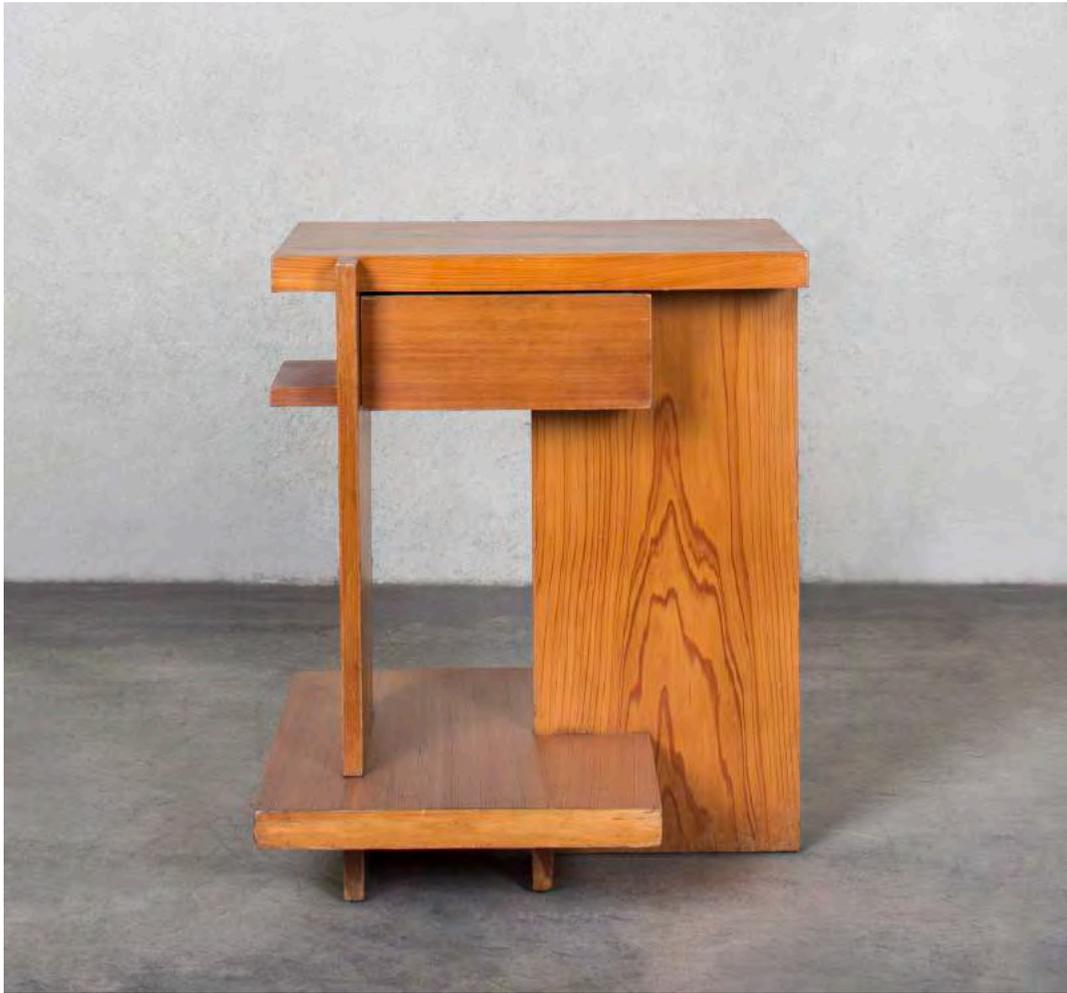
13 x 18 inches

33 x 45.7 cm

Notes

William and Mary Palmer commissioned Wright to design their Ann Arbor home in 1950. The 2,000 square-foot home with its collection of Wright-designed furniture, is one of Wright's finest later homes. The strong organic aspects of the house are manifested in its hillside orientation, exquisite red cypress and brickwork, and the treed views from every room.

Using the equilateral triangle as a recurring design element, there was barely a right angle in the plans for the Palmer House. These stools mirror this plan and design and are in harmony with the house's other designs--the hexagonal beds and exterior polygonal cutouts in the exterior.



Frank Lloyd Wright [American, 1867-1959]

End table with one drawer for

The Misses Charlcy and Gabrielle Austin's "Broad Margin", Greenwood, SC, c. 1951

Tidewater Cypress

26 x 24 x 22 inches

66 x 61 x 55.9 cm

Notes

The name 'Broad Margin', a term from Thoreau's *Walden* in which he states 'I want a broad margin in my life'. Thus the name chosen by Frank Lloyd Wright for a home he designed for the Misses Charlcy and Gabrielle Austin Greenville, South Carolina. Mr. Wright felt that these two ladies (sisters and both librarians) were broadening margins of their lives by giving up their Victorian upbringing and surroundings by moving into one of his completely integrated designs.

The end table conceived as planes intersecting at right angles, with thick, rectangular top with fitted drawer beneath.

The house and furniture plans of 'Broad Margin' were selected by Mr. Wright as part of an international exhibit of his work called '60 YEARS OF LIVING ARCHITECTURE.' The 1953 exhibit was a retrospective held in New York at the future site of the Guggenheim Museum.



Frank Lloyd Wright [American, 1867-1959]

Coffee table from Price Tower, Bartlesville, OK, 1956

Mahogany, aluminum, copper

16 x 39 x 39 inches

40.6 x 99.1 x 99.1 cm

Provenance

H.C. Price Family

Literature

Heinz, *Frank Lloyd Wright: Interiors and Furniture*, p. 212

Alofsin, *Prairie Skyscraper: Frank Lloyd Wright's Price Tower*, p. 91, 154

Collection

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, New York, NY

Notes

"Naturally somewhat strange at first sight, but the kind of beauty we see in the liner, the plane and the motor is here. Added to that in the interior you will find a graceful sense of harmony in the whole, an imaginative touch in all detail that makes the parts sign in unison with the form of the whole. Beautiful? Let time say."

*-Frank Lloyd Wright**

The Price Tower, a multi-use building with offices and apartments was commissioned by Harold C. Price to be the headquarters for his oil pipeline and chemical firm. Completed in 1956, only three years before Wright's death, the Price Tower is the architect's only fully realized skyscraper.

Designed for the building's residences, this coffee table's intersecting planes and floating right angles represent architectural principles Wright developed spanning the last five decades of his

career.

Wright, Frank Lloyd. *The Story of the Tower: The Tree That Escaped The Crowded Forest*. New York: Horizon, 1956.



Price Tower Residence Interior (Circa 1957)

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Robert A.M. Stern [American, b. 1939] for Swid Powell

Pair of Candlesticks, c. 1980

Silver plated brass

Pair, each: 12 x 2.25 x 2.25 inches

30.5 x 5.7 x 5.7 cm

Each engraved on bottom: Swid Powell MADE IN ITALY Silver plated with signature

Collection

Dallas Art Museum, Dallas, TX

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT (original drawings and candlesticks)

Notes

"They are intended to be what they are, which is of a scale and a use very different from my architecture. The cut-out squares on my silver collection for Swid Powell do give it a scale, in the same way windows and doors lend a scale to something. I say to myself, 'I want to use it, I want it to feel right, and I want it to work.'

*-Richard Meier**

In the 1980s, the New York City-based tableware company Swid Powell produced some of the most distinctive silver and china in collaboration with international architects and designers. Swid Powell was established in 1982 by Nan Swid and Addie Powell, who had both worked at the modernist furniture company Knoll. Their idea was to translate the aesthetics of postmodern design from the skyscraper to the dining table, and they brought into their preliminary discussions nine prominent architects including: Richard Meier, Robert Venturi, Ettore Sottsass, and Philip Johnson.

The diversity of references, historical and populist, all found in Postmodernism is exemplified in the work of this collection. For example, when asked about his collaboration with Swid Powell, Richard Meier responded, "Do I approach the projects with the same mind set as I do my architectural problems? In a word, yes." Meier's detailing drew on the geometric designs of Viennese designers such as Josef Hoffmann and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Similarly, for Robert Venturi the correlation between his architecture and these pieces is in the use of the figurative motif within a modern composition. And A.M. Stern's designs echo the same expression of postmodern interest within historical context and affection for the past apparent in his buildings. Thus, all of the architects' commissions seem to embrace the same approach: to create scaled down architecture to domestic objects,

Tapart, Annette. *Swid Powell: Objects by Architects*. New York: Rizzoli, 1990.



Robert Venturi [American, b. 1925] with Denise Scott Brown [American, b. 1931] for Swid Powell

Pair of Candlesticks, 1985-1986

Silver plated brass

Pair, each: 8.75 x 6.5 x 6.5 inches

22.2 x 16.5 x 16.5 cm

Each engraved on bottom of sconce: Swid Powell Silver Plated MADE IN ITALY with R. Venturi signature



Richard Meier (American, b.1934] for Swid Powell

Pair of Skyscraper Candlesticks, c. 1980

Silver plated brass

Pair, each: 9.25 x 3.5 x 3.5 inches

23.5 x 8.9 x 8.9 cm

Each engraved on bottom: Swid Powell © RM Made in Italy Silver Plated



Richard Meier [American, b.1934] for Swid Powell

Pair of Bud Vases, c. 1980

Silver plated brass and glass

Pair, each: 7.25 x 2.25 x 2.25 inches

18.4 x 5.7 x 5.7 cm

Each engraved on bottom: Swid Powell © RM Made in Italy Silver Plated

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Richard Meier (American, b.1934] for Nan Swid

Pair of Candlesticks, c. 1980

Silver plated brass

Pair, each: 10 x 3.75 x 4.75 inches

25.4 x 9.5 x 12.1 cm

Each stamped on bottom felt: NAN SWID DESIGN © RM

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For over forty years I have been excited by modern architecture; pursuing and promoting great examples of furniture designed by architects has been the focus of my career. When Marc Benda asked me to curate an exhibition for his annual guest curator series at the Friedman Benda gallery, I naturally chose this topic. "Inside the Walls: Architects Design" recognizes and celebrates the fact that architects are often at the forefront of "newness" in the design world, pushing the existing boundaries by employing new forms, new materials, and new techniques—expanding the vocabulary of furniture design.

My professional involvement with designs by architects began with my first job in NYC in 1976, a 3-year apprenticeship at Lillian Nassau where I was exposed to the work of the European masters Hector Guimard, Josef Hoffmann, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and Antoni Gaudí. When I opened my own small gallery on Broadway and 11th Street in 1981, I made a conscious decision to specialize in architect-designed furniture, especially production pieces by Herman Miller, Knoll and Artek. A profile image of an iconic Pierre Jeanneret 'scissor' chair for Knoll was the cover of my official opening announcement/invitation. Fascinated by the beauty and simplicity and warmth of Alvar Aalto's furniture, I organized a small exhibit of his work in that 10' by 40' space in 1982.

When my partners and I launched Fifty/50 in May of 1983, we opened the gallery with a comprehensive collection of works by Charles and Ray Eames, and followed up the next year with an exhibition of rare custom furniture, lighting, and window designs by Frank Lloyd Wright. In those formative years when I traveled to buy inventory, nothing excited me more than discovering furniture by Rudolph Schindler or Richard Neutra at Larry Whiteley Gallery in Los Angeles or Eiel Saarinen pieces in Helsinki!

My favorite furnishings at home are those designed by architects: a side table by Frank Lloyd Wright from Fallingwater, an early 'ESU' 4-tier cabinet by Charles and Ray Eames for Herman Miller, a rare square maple dining table from 1980 by Ettore Sottsass for Knoll, and a birch library table from 1949 by Alvar Aalto originally made for the Fondren Library at Rice University. They never fail to thrill me, they have a special visual power.

Many of the works in the exhibition are unique custom designs for specific commissions, both residential and commercial projects. Unhampered by the constraints of designing for manufacturing and mass-market appeal (or even for comfort), architects are at liberty to imagine something unique, perfectly suited for the function and for the space. A good architect/client collaboration often produces groundbreaking results; in a ground-to-roof project the architect has the chance to control not only the exterior, but also the furnishings used within the walls.

Frank Lloyd Wright liked to use the term "organic architecture" to describe this dynamic, though in his case I suspect this was his euphemism for "absolute/total control." This exhibition showcases several rare Usonian period (1938-1955) examples of Wright's furniture from my personal collection and have never been offered for sale. Other personal favorites are examples of custom furniture designed by Rudolph Schindler, who was, early in his career, an apprentice to Frank Lloyd Wright.

We are also including in the exhibition furniture that architects designed as limited editions (such as a Sottsass cabinet from 1994) and equally interesting, pieces specifically designed for mass production, such as Frank Gehry's 'Easy Edges' cardboard series, and a rocking chaise by Richard Meier for Knoll with a post-modern nod to Hoffmann and Mackintosh, and 2 true "prototypes", chairs by Warren Platner (1965) and Gerrit Rietveld (1942).

Thanks to Marc and the team at Friedman Benda for giving me this opportunity to use this venue and format to continue doing what I like (and do) best: discover, research, educate, and share my enthusiasm for exceptional furniture of the 20th century."

-Mark McDonald