



DOMINIC BRADBURY

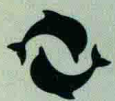
**MID-CENTURY
MODERN
COMPLETE**

Thames & Hudson

TB47
17

MID-CENTURY MODERN COMPLETE

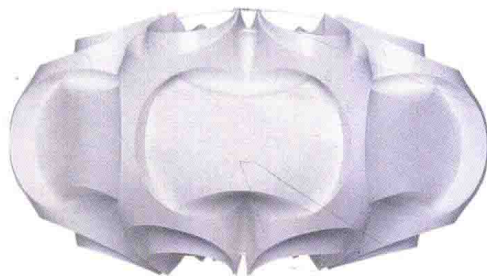
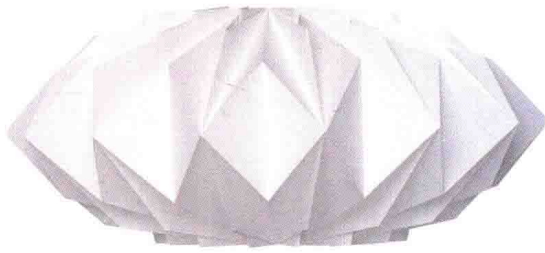
DOMINIC BRADBURY



Thames & Hudson

WITH OVER 1,000 ILLUSTRATIONS

MID-CENTURY MODERN COMPLETE

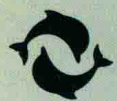




TB47
17

MID-CENTURY MODERN COMPLETE

DOMINIC BRADBURY



Thames & Hudson

WITH OVER 1,000 ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE 1 A selection of mid-century lighting fixtures by Le Klint.

PAGE 2 Forest pattern gift wrap, with graphic design by Charley Harper for Associated American Artists of New York, 1953.

OPPOSITE Side chairs designed by Harry Bertoia for Knoll, USA, 1952.

First published in the United Kingdom in 2014 by Thames & Hudson Ltd, 181A High Holborn, London WC1V 7QX

Mid-Century Modern Complete © 2014
Dominic Bradbury

Designed by Karolina Prymaka

'Mid-Century Product Design in Germany' translated from the German by Nicole Linhardt-Rich

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any other information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-500-51727-7

Printed and bound in China by Imago

To find out about all our publications, please visit www.thamesandhudson.com. There you can subscribe to our e-newsletter, browse or download our current catalogue, and buy any titles that are in print.

NOTE TO THE READER

Names that appear in CAPITAL LETTERS indicate cross-references to main entries in the book (pp. 26-501).

Names that appear with asterisks* indicate cross-references to entries in the A-Z section (pp. 504-534).

CONTENTS

Introduction 6

I. MEDIA AND MASTERS 12

FURNITURE 14

'Collecting Mid-Century Design' by Richard Wright 18

'Scandinavian Furniture: Mid-Century Phenomenon'
by Judith Gura 22

Eero Aarnio 26

Harry Bertoia 30

Joe Colombo 36

Robin Day 40

Charles & Ray Eames 44

Arne Jacobsen 52

Poul Kjærholm 58

Carlo Mollino 62

George Nakashima 66

George Nelson 72

Verner Panton 78

Pierre Paulin 84

Warren Platner 88

Gio Ponti 92

Jean Prouvé 98

Ernest Race 102

Jens Risom 104

Sergio Rodrigues 106

Eero Saarinen 108

Joaquim Tenreiro 112

Hans Wegner 114

Edward Wormley 120

LIGHTING 124

'Lighting Design in Italy' by Alberto Bassi 128

Achille & Pier Giacomo Castiglioni 132

Poul Henningsen 136

Le Klint 140

Vico Magistretti 146

Serge Mouille 150

Isamu Noguchi 154

Jean Royère 158

Gino Sarfatti 162

GLASS AND CERAMICS 166

'Glass Design: Post-1945 Transatlantic Aesthetics' by Joy McCall 170

'Mid-Century Ceramics' by Alun Graves 174

Hans Coper 178

Kaj Franck 182

Gustavsberg Pottery (Wilhelm Kåge, Stig Lindberg
& Berndt Friberg) 186

Vicke Lindstrand 194
Gertrud & Otto Natzler 198
Lucie Rie 202
Axel Salto 206
Timo Sarpaneva 210
Paolo Venini 214
Russel Wright 220

TEXTILES 224

'Utility to Contemporary: Textiles in the Mid-Century Home'
by Daniel Heath 228

'Artist-Designed Textiles: 1945-1970' by Sue Prichard 232

Florence Broadhurst 236
Lucienne Day 240
Josef Frank 246
Alexander Girard 250
David Hicks 256
Jack Lenor Larsen 262
Marimekko 266

PRODUCT AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGN 270

'From Computers to Corporate Identity: Cold War-Era Design'
by Jana Scholze 274

'Mid-Century Product Design in Germany'
by Klaus Klemp 278

Corradino d'Ascanio 284
Kenneth Grange 286
Alec Issigonis 290
Jacob Jensen 294
Raymond Loewy 298
David Mellor 302
Marcello Nizzoli 306
Dieter Rams 308
Richard Sapper & Marco Zanuso 312
Ettore Sottsass 314

GRAPHICS AND POSTERS 318

'Mid-Century Confluences: Type, Design and Technology'
by Steven Heller 322

'The Travel Poster in the Mid-Century' by Sophie Churcher 328

Saul Bass 332
Max Bill & Otl Aicher 336
Wim Crouwel 340
Alan Fletcher 342
Adrian Frutiger 346
Abram Games 350
Charley Harper 354
Jock Kinneir & Margaret Calvert 360
Herbert Matter 362
Max Miedinger 366
Paul Rand 368

II. HOUSES AND INTERIORS 374

'Collecting the Mid-Century House' by Matt Gibberd 380

'On Restoring Modernism: The Purist and The Pragmatist'
by Michael Boyd 384

Alvar Aalto: Maison Louis Carré, France 388
Lina Bo Bardi: Glass House, Brazil 394
Antonio Bonet: La Ricarda, Spain 400
Marcel Breuer: Stillman House II, USA 406
Charles Deaton: Sculptured House, USA 410
Craig Ellwood: Palevsky House, USA 416
Andrew Geller: Frank House, USA 422
Jakob Halldor Gunnløgsson: Gunnløgsson House, Denmark 428
Charles Gwathmey: Gwathmey House & Studio, USA 434
Philip Johnson: Glass House, USA 440
John Lautner: Elrod House, USA 446
Paulo Mendes da Rocha: Millán House, Brazil 452
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: Farnsworth House, USA 458
Richard Neutra: Kaufmann Desert House, USA 464
Oscar Niemeyer: Strick House, USA 470
Bruce Rickard: Marshall House, Australia 476
Harry Seidler: Rose Seidler House, Australia 482
Alison & Peter Smithson: Upper Lawn Pavilion, UK 488
Basil Spence: Spence House, UK 492
Arthur Witthoefft: Witthoefft House, USA 496

III. A-Z OF DESIGNERS AND MAKERS 502

Contributors' Biographies 535
Notes 536
Select Bibliography 537
Picture Credits 539
Acknowledgments 539
Index 540



INTRODUCTION

The mid-century period was an age of dreams and optimism. In the post-war years, after all the chaos and crisis of a global conflict, the world began to rebuild and rethink itself. It was an era of hope, when many asserted their claims to freedom and gave voice to their ambitions, looking for new beginnings and possibilities. The 1950s and '60s were all about 'making it new', about laying claim to the future. For designers and architects, especially, it was an extraordinary time to be at work, and the opportunities for creativity and originality were widespread and welcome.

The twin fuels of rapid growth, particularly in the West, were the vast reconstruction effort underway in Europe - underwritten by the American Marshall Plan - and the vast spending power of the American people. These gave rise to an unprecedented consumer age; a sustained era of golden growth that spurred demand for a whole new spectrum of goods, products and services, which the world of design was happy to provide. In many respects, the patterns and expectations of American and Western consumers in the mid-century period laid down the template for modern living itself and formed a foundation for our own lifestyles in the 21st century.

In Europe, countries such as Britain, France, Germany and Russia had paid a terrible price during the war years in every respect. The post-war years saw the unravelling of the European colonial support network, as dependent countries sought their independence, and large swathes of many European cities - from Coventry to Caen to Cologne - had suffered appalling damage, not to mention the human cost. It would take many years for these countries to emerge from austerity, and in Britain the rationing of some foods and materials continued right up until 1954. But after the horrors and upheaval of the war years, the sense of relief in 1945 cannot be underestimated.

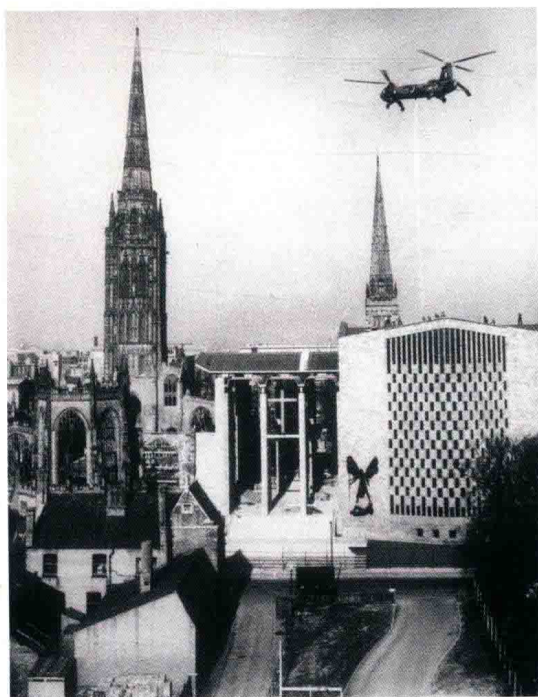
Reconstruction, in itself, offered a chance for a fresh start and a significant spur to European economies, as well as to their designers and architects. The efficient wartime production lines of Europe and America could now be adapted to make cars and bicycles, tractors and trains, toasters and kettles. The gradual rebuilding of London, Berlin and other towns and cities was an enormous undertaking and brought work and employment to thousands. Coventry Cathedral - famously devastated in a 1940 firestorm and rebuilt from 1956 to 1962 - became a post-war symbol of regeneration within a design by architect BASIL SPENCE that preserved the ruins of the original building while creating a bold, new structure that rose out of the ashes.

The revitalization of the German and Japanese economies in the post-war period was, in particular, an extraordinary success story. Having learnt the lessons of a humiliating German surrender and its ultimate consequences back in 1918, and wanting to boost Germany and Japan as stable bulwarks against the might of the USSR as the Cold War got underway, the Allies - especially the Americans - were eager to rebuild the two countries as effectively as they could. Aid and support programmes helped jump-start the design and manufacturing industries in both countries, to the point that German car manufacturing soon became hugely successful, while the Japanese economy was growing at just over 10% a year by the 1960s and by the early 1970s was the third largest economy in the world.

It was in America, however, that the consumer revolution really gathered pace in the post-war years. America had also paid a heavy price during the war years, but - for the most part - the war had not been fought on American soil. Its manufacturing base was not just intact but finely tuned after its wartime footing of maximum capacity. The US design and manufacturing industry was ready to take advantage of all kinds of innovations developed or perfected during the war years, from plywood through to jet engines.

Most importantly, the American consumer had never had it so good. They had money in their pockets, even after the war years, and those pockets began to bulge in the boom times of the 1950s and '60s, when America was busily exporting its products and expertise

BELOW Coventry Cathedral under reconstruction, to a design by Basil Spence, 1962.



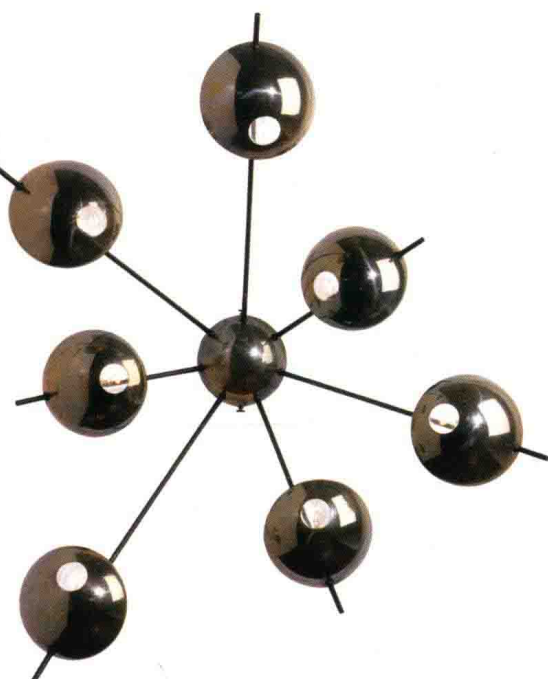
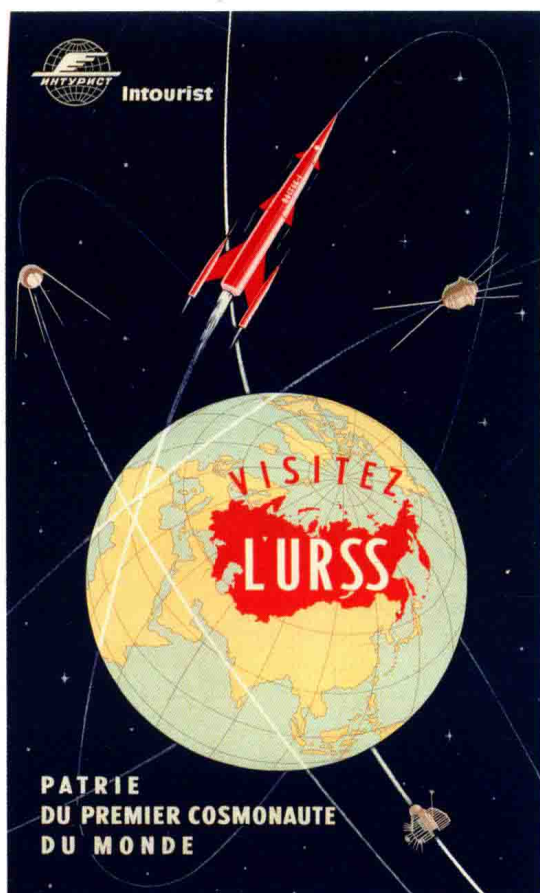


ABOVE Screenprint from an advertisement of 1955, showing a Pan American Airways pilot greeting a mother and her three children as they board an international flight.

around the globe. With the Americans, more than any of the other Allies, it really was a case of 'to the victor the spoils', as the American public unleashed an almost insatiable demand for everything from dinnerware to international travel.

The American consumer offered the catalyst for a massive expansion in the world of design. This not only took the form of houses, interiors, textiles and home products but also 'big ticket' items like refrigerators and automobiles. Designers and manufacturers eagerly answered the call of the consumer to 'make it new'. The car industry famously developed the notion of the 'annual upgrade' – adding new styling and trims to what was often, essentially, the very same car so as to encourage another trade-in purchase.

A whole new sector of design really came into its own in the 1950s, working alongside some key partners. This was graphic design, which began producing the logos, branding and advertising posters for a fast-growing corporate culture. The first Burger King opened in 1954, and McDonald's a year later. They – and their counterparts in fields such as the hotel sector or airline industry – needed instantly recognizable logos and a strong corporate identity. The graphics departments worked with the advertising gurus and the marketing men ... and women. The whole world of marketing took off, along with consumer culture, the throw-away society, big business and global corporations. Issues of image, identity



TOP A colour litho poster advertising travel to the USSR, Russian School, c. 1955.

ABOVE A wall light in brass and enamelled metal by Stilno, Italy, c. 1950.

and styling had never been so crucial. A corporate logo was not just a badge on the front of a car, a piece of clothing or the outside of a hotel building. It was a symbol, and full of symbolic meaning. And, above all, it needed to be modern.

The very idea of modernity was transformed in the mid-century period. Notions of the contemporary and visions of the future helped shape design throughout the 1950s and '60s. It is true, of course, that modernism had established itself back in the 1920s and '30s when pioneers such as Le Corbusier*, Auguste Perret, Rudolph Schindler, Frank Lloyd Wright* and others laid the foundation stones of the modern movement.

The war years introduced the world – dramatically and frighteningly – to atomic energy and jet engines, as well as other innovations such as radar. By the 1940s, then, we had entered the atomic age. By the early 1950s, the first commercial jet airliner – the De Havilland Comet – had been introduced and the F-100, the first supersonic fighter jet, made its appearance in 1953, the same year that Edmund Hillary conquered Everest. The first commercial computers, nuclear-powered submarines and pocket transistor radios were all introduced in the early 1950s, along with polio vaccines and the four-minute mile, courtesy of Roger Bannister.

If that wasn't enough to take in, during 1957 the USA and the USSR test-fired their first intercontinental ballistic missiles, and the space race began in earnest as the Russians launched Sputnik 1. Four years later Yuri Gagarin was the first man in space, on board Vostok 1, and in 1969 Apollo 11 made the first landing on the moon – an achievement that still seems almost magical from today's perspective.

It was an age of ages – the atomic age, the space age, the jet age, the computer age, with the first commercially produced computers introduced in 1951 and IBM pioneering the first computer data storage discs in 1956, while the microchip followed a year later. There were nuclear power stations, hovercraft, electric watches, transatlantic television pictures, miniskirts, the Pill, James Bond films and the inaugural Super Bowl. The pace of change was dazzling, even by today's standards.

For designers, fast-developing technologies and manufacturing methods meant adapting quickly and making the most of new opportunities to create a whole new generation of products. Designers such as CHARLES & RAY EAMES and ARNE JACOBSEN made the most of fresh materials such as plywood in their furniture, while VERNER PANTON, Olivier Mourgue* and PIERRE PAULIN explored plastics. DIETER RAMS at Braun* was one of the leading product designers to respond to the electronic age, designing calculators, hi-fi systems and radios that were sleek, compact, functional and logical. Philips* in the Netherlands and Sony* in Japan also pioneered products and appliances that were more alluring than ever but also portable. By the end of the 1950s Sony had even launched a portable television. The future had arrived.

Many of these new technological developments were mirrored by another key trend of the mid-century period – the move towards internationalism, or, as Marshall McLuhan put it, the rise of the 'global village'. The spread of television, film, music and information technology to a global level helped spur the invention and design of a new fleet of products to help bring all of this content into our homes and offices. At the same time, multinational companies – from Hilton to Honda, from Pan Am to Piaggio – were spreading their wings around the planet.


In 1959, Boeing introduced the first 707 airliner and transatlantic flight times were cut down to eight hours, and by 1960 passengers were clocking up a collective 74 billion air miles. Car, scooter and motorbike ownership also shot up, vastly increasing personal mobility. By 1970 transatlantic fibre-optic cables opened the way for direct dial calls across the ocean. People and ideas, then, were travelling faster than ever, and products – from furniture to freezers – were being shipped overseas like never before. It was easier

BELOW A Westinghouse advertisement, with logo designed by Paul Rand in 1960.

BOTTOM Children watching television, Huntington, Long Island, USA, 1961.

NEW SHAPE EYE SAVING BULB NOW DESIGNED TO LAST 1/3 LONGER!*

*Based on published data of average life for Standard Inside Frost bulbs.



Famous Westinghouse white bulb is now better than ever!

The best light for seeing ever developed is now longer lasting, too. New Shape bulbs—with exclusive Life-Line™ filament—assure you 1/3 longer life than standard bulbs (based on published data of average life). And patented New Shape, with millions of finer particles coating each bulb, gives an even, glare-free light that's easy on the eyes. No "hot spots," no harsh shadows. 40, 60, 75, 100 watt—2 for only 62¢. 150 watt—39¢. 3-Way—69¢. You can be sure... if it's Westinghouse.

Westinghouse Lamp Division, Westinghouse Electric Corporation, Bloomfield, N.J.



than ever to transmit ideas, designs and products from one place to another, opening up an even greater world of opportunity for designers, who began to become brand names in themselves.

RAYMOND LOEWY, EERO SAARINEN, DAVID HICKS and Arne Jacobsen became figureheads of design, jumping on board the new breed of jumbo jets and taking their work overseas. Others, such as RUSSEL WRIGHT, JOE COLOMBO, ROBIN & LUCIENNE DAY and Charles & Ray Eames actively used the media and marketing tools to present an image of themselves to the world, becoming well-known faces in design magazines and newspapers.

Out there in the global village, ideas spread like viruses. We are now used to the notion of an idea or an image going 'viral', but the new media, technology and products of the mid-century period made the concept a reality for the first time. Around the world, people fought for their rights and freedoms, helped by national and international movements with multiple contacts and connections.

Independence movements in European colonial territories exploded into activity and newly independent states were often used as proxies by the sparring Cold War superpowers. But this was also a busy time for civil rights activists, feminists and idealists of all kinds. Everywhere, people were seeing their chance and seizing their moment and were able to spread their message more effectively than ever. Multiple conflicts rose and raged around the world, but none could be as destructive as the world war that had ended in 1945. This was still an age of optimism and liberation.

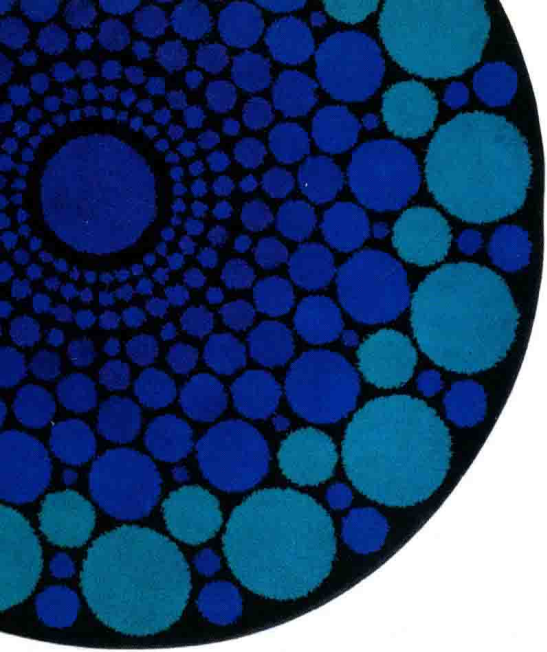
Liberation expressed itself in many different ways, of course. There was political liberation, but also social and sexual liberation. New cultural movements echoed social change, from rock 'n' roll to flower power to Pop Art. This was also the age of festivals and expos that celebrated modernity in their different ways, from the Festival of Britain* in 1951 to Woodstock in 1969. In some ways, at least, the world had never had it so good.

Along with cultural revolution came design revolution. America had received a particular gift in the form of some of the greatest and most inventive minds of a generation, who had fled to the States in the run-up to World War II or emigrated some years before. They included many scientists and academics, but also a whole host of architects and designers, such as Walter Gropius*, MARCEL BREUER, LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE, JENS RISOM and RICHARD NEUTRA. All had been born and largely educated in Europe, but were now working and teaching in America. Eliel Saarinen* co-founded the Cranbrook Academy of Art*, which became a leading centre for modern design. Breuer and Gropius taught at Harvard University, as well as practising architecture and design.

These pioneering thinkers and creative personalities also collaborated - in many instances - with progressive furniture companies like Knoll* and Herman Miller*. Such companies also encouraged innovation and research with new materials. Jens Risom used army stock webbing for his first line of chairs for Knoll, while HARRY BERTOIA's experiments with latticed steel rod furniture - also with Knoll - were highly successful.

America, in the 1950s, seemed like the country of the future and the concept of the American Dream still held great sway. Architects such as JOHN LAUTNER, CRAIG ELLWOOD and PHILIP JOHNSON helped develop a new kind of home that was fluid and free, with open-plan living spaces and a constant sense of connection to the great outdoors. These were dream homes that were to prove highly influential and were captured in evocative images by the likes of Julius Shulman*, which made them seem all the more glamorous and seductive. The furniture, too, was modern and fresh. It was as though the world we lived in was being reinvented.

While America was a natural centre point in the design world in the 1950s and '60s, there was - of course - plenty going on in other parts of the world. Regional modernist architects and designers were also establishing international reputations, including OSCAR



ABOVE Roulette wool carpet designed by Verner Panton and produced by Unika Vaev, Denmark, c. 1965.

RIGHT PKO chair in lacquered plywood, designed by Poul Kjærholm for Fritz Hansen, 1952.



NIEMEYER in Brazil, Luis Barragán* in Mexico and HARRY SEIDLER in Australia. The French and Italian design scenes remained strong, and product and industrial design in Germany and Japan were developing fast.

Scandinavia was also a focal point for what some might call 'soft modernism'. Here the emphasis was on craftsmanship, detailing and organic materials, whether in architecture and interiors by ALVAR AALTO or Arne Jacobsen, or exquisitely designed and made furniture by HANS WEGNER or Børge Mogensen*. The craft tradition still held out in places, even if the spotlight was gradually shifting to new materials – especially plastics – and methods of mass production.



LEFT Wishbone armchair, designed by Hans Wegner in lacquered wood and rope for Carl Hansen, 1950.



ABOVE Tongue chair by Pierre Paulin, stretch jersey over tubular steel, produced by Artifort, 1967.

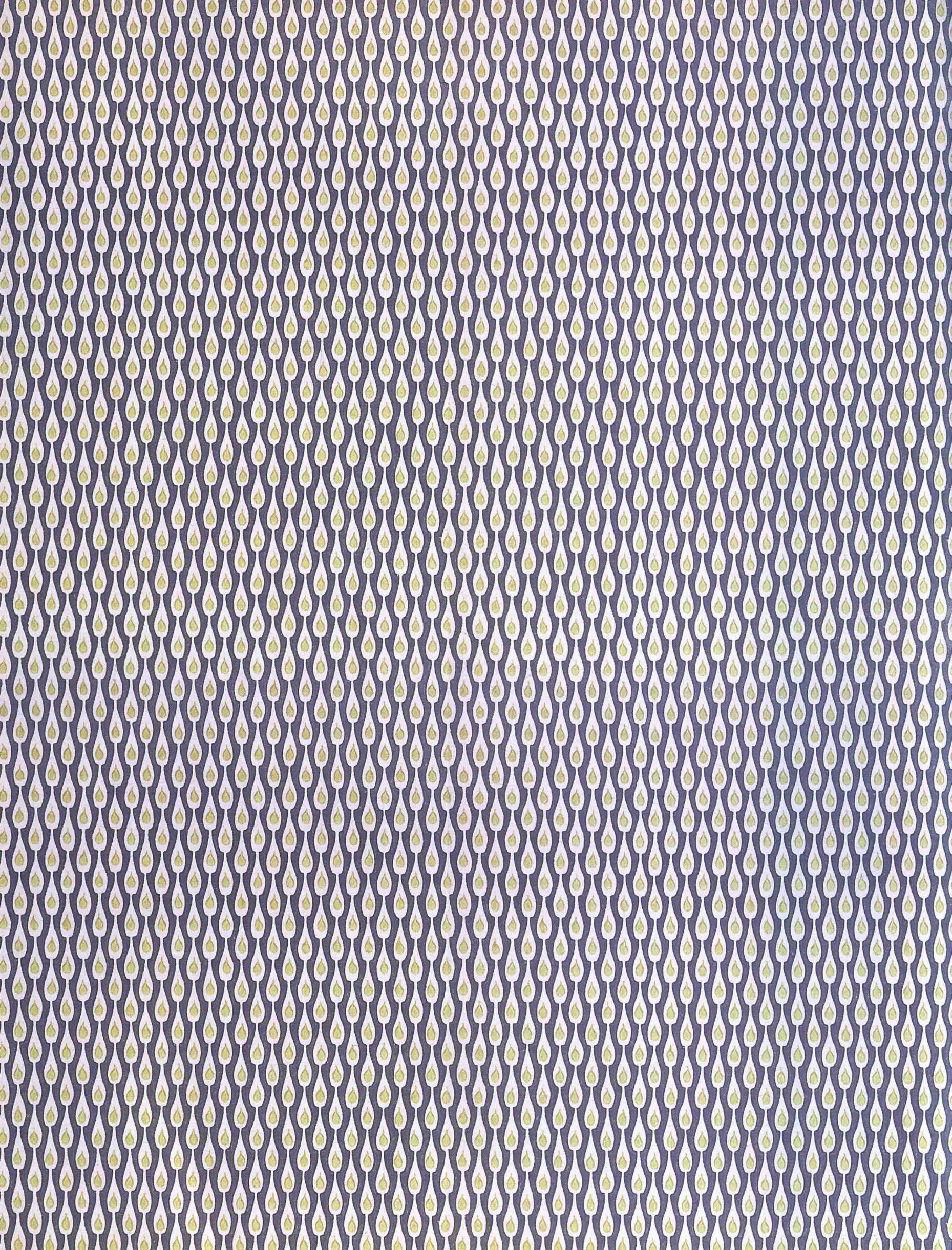
BELOW A poolside party in January 1970 at the Kaufmann Desert House in Palm Springs, California, designed by Richard Neutra. The group includes industrial designer Raymond Loewy, standing second from left.

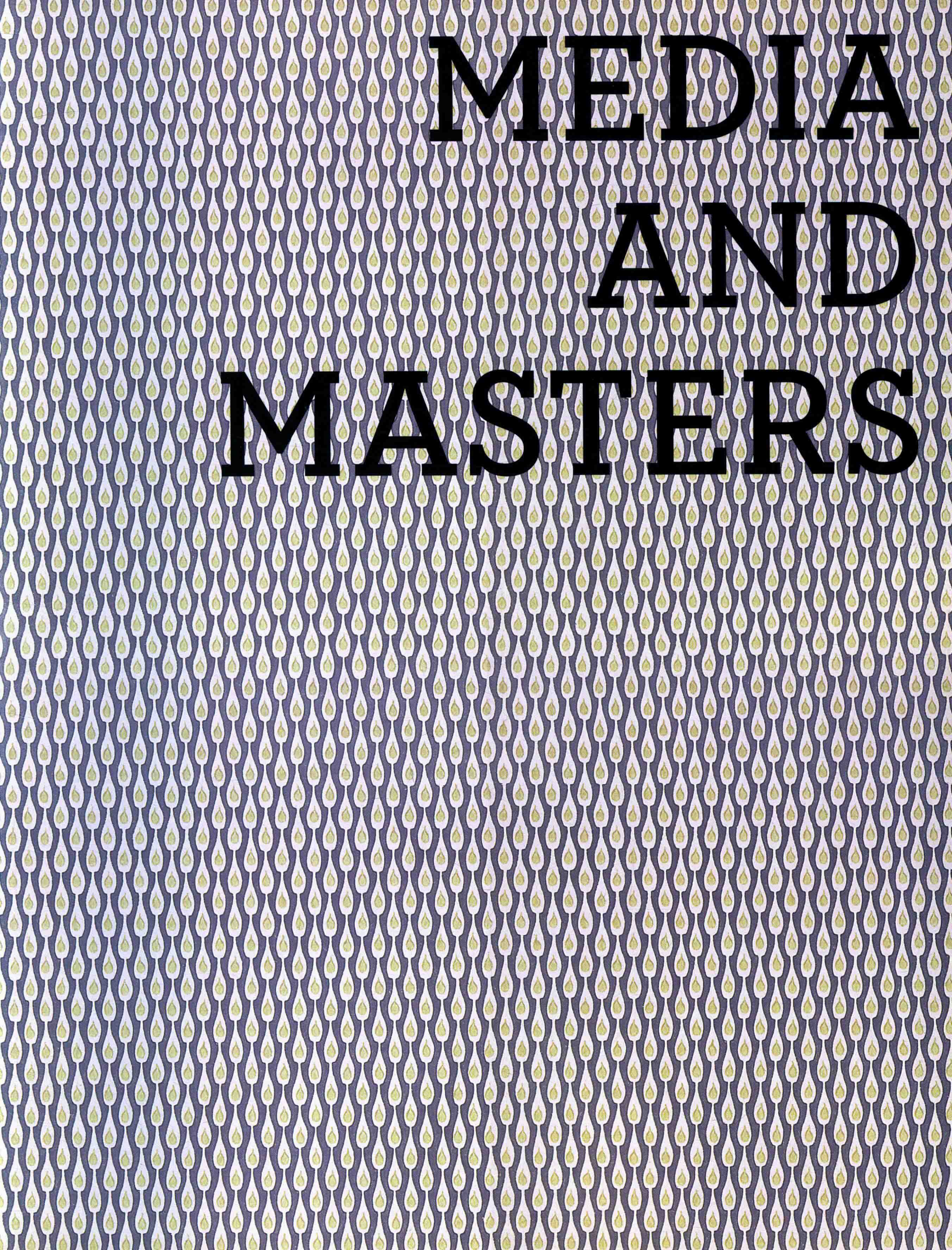
By the 1960s, space age futurism had infused the design world. Shapes were rounded, streamlined and sensual, while the colours were bold and even garish. Furnishings by EERO AARNIO, Pierre Paulin, Verner Panton and Luigi Colani* had the look of abstract Pop Art sculptures. Houses by CHARLES DEATON, John Lautner and others also had something of a space-ship, sci-fi look, and Deaton's Sculptured House in Colorado featured in Woody Allen's futuristic comedy, *Sleeper*, in 1973. Patterns were vibrant and warm, with MARIMEKKO's in particular helping to define the period.

The world of mid-century design both mirrored the rapid changes in 1950s and '60s society and helped in making them possible, as it worked to give shape and identity to a new kind of lifestyle and a new wave of consumer products. For many, the interiors, architecture and furniture of the period still feel fresh, modern and inspirational. Owning a Hans Wegner or Eames chair remains a symbol of enlightened patronage from someone who appreciates modern design. Countless pieces of furniture from the period have attained iconic status and become 20th-century classics, with the originals much in demand for collectors and many now back in production. Mid-century glass and ceramics also enjoy a powerful reputation.

More than anything, the spirit of mid-century design can be characterized as pioneering. It was a time in which so much of the way we live now – and the products we use – was really shaped, from inside/outside living to open plans, modular furniture, plastic products and gadget miniaturization. It is hard to imagine Apple's iPods and other products without the innovative work of Dieter Rams and Sony. It is hard to imagine contemporary architecture without the lessons of Mies van der Rohe and his contemporaries. The world of today, you might say, was born in the 1950s and '60s.







MEDIA AND MASTERS

FURNITURE



THE REALITY OF THE CLOSE BOND BETWEEN FURNITURE DESIGN AND ART IS SUGGESTED BY THE NUMBER OF DESIGNERS WHO WORKED ACROSS THE TWO SPHERES

Among the key characteristics of mid-century modern furniture, one of the most fascinating is the close synergy to be found between the worlds of art and design. It is a relationship with a long history, yet during

the post-war period furniture design became increasingly sculptural in quality, infused with a sense of artistic ambition and drawing inspiration from the art world. Later, in the 1960s, during an era of abstraction, furniture also became more abstract in nature and more surreal, while borrowing many of the vibrant, playful colours seen in the Pop Art movement.

The reality of the close bond between furniture design and art is suggested by the number of designers who worked across the two spheres. American designer Paul McCobb* trained as a fine artist, while Erwine and Estelle Laverne* were both painters. Wharton Esherick* was a sculptor, craftsman and furniture maker, and ISAMU NOGUCHI (see under 'Lighting') was a highly respected sculptor, as well as a furniture and lighting designer, who studied sculpture and worked for a time as an assistant to Constantin Brancusi. JOAQUIM TENREIRO, in Brazil, was also a much-lauded sculptor and painter as well as a designer. In addition, there was HARRY BERTOIA, who invented one of the great classics of 20th-century design, the Diamond chair, the success of which helped fund his move towards concentrating directly on sculpture and art, often in ambitious, experimental and abstract forms.


By the 1950s, the character of mid-century furniture in general was increasingly sinuous and fluid, with tapered legs, smooth finishes and crafted forms. CARLO MOLLINO, GIO PONTI and others explored organic, sensual shapes and biomorphic creations. Chairs, armchairs and loungers became more ergonomic than ever and more inviting, but also exhibited the curves, craftsmanship and artistry of a gallery exhibit.

For some, including Esherick, their work was closely related to craft as well as art. A number of key mid-century designers came out of a craft and cabinet-making tradition, and spliced this with a deep understanding of contemporary aesthetics, as well as inspiration - in some cases - from other craft traditions, particularly in Japan and China.

In Denmark, HANS WEGNER emerged from a well-established cabinet-making culture and secured a global reputation with timber furniture that was not only beautifully designed but also expertly crafted and detailed. Wegner and POUL KJÆRHOLM were key figures in the evolution of soft modernism, with a Scandinavian sensibility. In America, Japanese-American designer GEORGE NAKASHIMA appropriated a dual craft heritage from East and West, and created some of the most original and highly organic furniture of the period, mostly made in his own workshops. Nakashima always preferred to call himself a 'woodworker' rather than a designer.

Along with art and craft, the other great influence on mid-century furniture design was architecture. Many of the most respected furniture designers of the 1950s and '60s were either also working as architects or had studied architecture, including ALVAR AALTO (see under 'Houses and Interiors'), ARNE JACOBSEN, EERO SAARINEN, CHARLES EAMES, Carlo Mollino, Gio Ponti and others.

For some, such as Aalto, Jacobsen, Ponti and Mollino, many of their furniture designs actually evolved out of specific architectural and interiors projects, where the remit extended into a total design concept, down to the seating and even the door handles. But all of these architect-designers brought a particular sensibility to their furniture - not only an understanding of how it might work within an architectural and spatial context, but also a special appreciation of materials, engineering and form. Furniture was one facet of a broader fascination with design in its widest sense, which perhaps helps to explain why so many of these architect-designed pieces have a natural synergy with modernist living spaces.



LEFT Model 5569 Coconut chairs, designed by George Nelson for Knoll, 1955, with steel and aluminium frames and upholstered seats.