PRECEDING PAGE
418. Ron Arad (b. 1951)
***This Mortal Coil* bookcase**, 1993
Made by One Off Ltd (U.K.)
See plate 459.

BELOW
419. Wells Coates (1895–1958)
***AD-65* Radio**, 1932
Made by E. K. Cole Ltd (U.K.)
Bakelite, stainless steel, fabric
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

OPPOSITE
420. **Exhibition of furniture from the Utility project at the London Building Centre**, 1942
Imperial War Museum, London

Industrial design was born in the United Kingdom in the second half of the eighteenth century. The spinning jenny and the Jacquard loom, for example, revolutionized the ways in which textiles were designed and made. In addition, the economic expansion of those years enabled people who previously had relatively few possessions to own more goods. To meet their demands, manufacturers had to ensure that those goods were visually appealing.

Through the nineteenth century, the middle classes continued to expand, and their capacity to consume increased. However, by the second half of the nineteenth century, an energetic campaign for design reform, championed most famously by William Morris and the adherents of the Arts and Crafts movement, had emerged to address what some saw as the adverse effects of design's alliance with industry. In the early twentieth century, the Design and Industries Association (DIA) was formed on the model of the earlier Deutscher Werkbund.

In the middle years of the twentieth century, Great Britain took an ambivalent approach to modernist European design. When it represented itself at exhibitions, Britain frequently called on its indigenous traditions, invented or otherwise. However, a number of British designers did rise to the challenge of modernism in the interwar years, creating many exciting new forms that quickly became icons of the age. Some took up the Bauhaus baton, designing objects for the home that focused on function and displayed a minimal, geometric aesthetic. Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer both spent time in Britain during their exile from Nazi Germany and on their way to permanent residence in the U.S. While in London, Breuer worked with Jack Pritchard's company, Isokon, creating a collection of furniture in bent plywood. The aesthetically radical plastic radio cabinets designed by Serge Chermayeff and Wells Coates, for example, also drew on Bauhaus principles (plate 419).

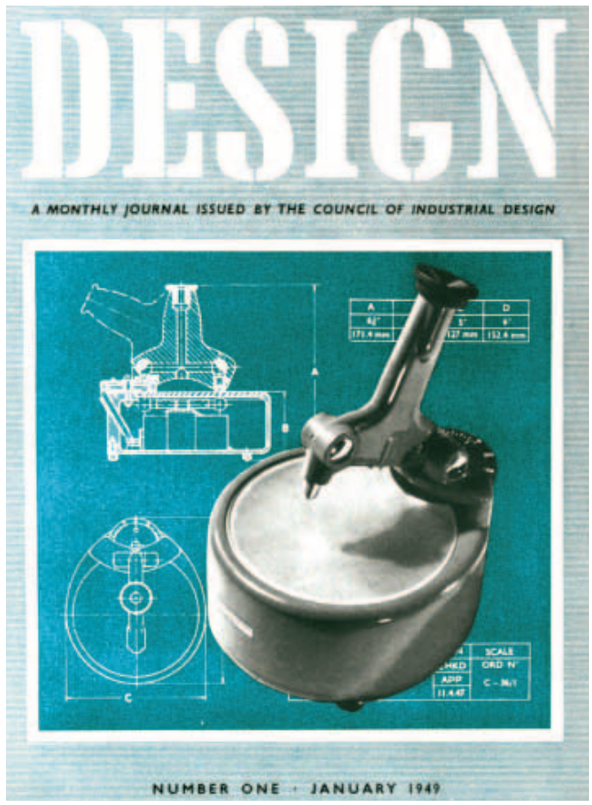
WARTIME DESIGN

During World War II, design transferred its focus from the commercial marketplace to the national war effort. Many British designers who had been trained in the interwar years were now called on to apply their talents to new challenges. Several architects and designers—among them the theater designer Oliver Messel, the graphic designer Richard Guyatt, the architects Basil Spence and Hugh Casson, and the industrial designers Robert Goodden, James Gardner, and Ashley Havinden—were asked to help create camouflage. The British Ministry of Information depended especially on the skills of graphic and advertising artists. Of the many who were involved in these activities, Austin Cooper, Tom Eckersley, Abram Games, James Gardner, Milner Gray, Ashley Havinden, F. H. K. Henrion, E. McKnight Kauffer, Tom Purvis, and Hans Schleger (known as Zero) stand out.

The Utility scheme was an important wartime project that brought a limited range of consumer goods—furniture, household items, and clothing in particular—to the people who needed them most. Utility products were designed to operate outside the fashion and style systems and to have a universal appeal (plate 420). The idea was first conceived by Hugh Dalton, the president of the Board of Trade, who brought in

BELOW
421. **Cover of the first issue of *Design*, the journal of the Council of Industrial Design**, January 1949
Design Council Archive, London

OPPOSITE
422. **Cover of the catalog to the exhibition *Britain Can Make It*, organized in London by the Council of Industrial Design**, 1946



the furniture designer Gordon Russell to help him develop it. The aim was to produce a limited set of simple, standardized items at a controlled price. Utility furniture consisted of basic wooden pieces that recalled traditional, vernacular designs, albeit with a modern twist.

The British excelled at military aircraft design, and their wartime successes included the *Spitfire* and the *Hurricane*. Steel and aluminum were needed for airplane production, and many existing civilian objects made from those materials were redeployed to that end. Countless stories could be told of wartime technologies and designs that were transformed into postwar consumer goods. For example, the object that now rules all of our lives—the computer—got a wartime technological boost at Bletchley Park, Britain's codebreaking establishment in Buckinghamshire. The *Colossus*, in operation from 1944, was a breakthrough in the development of the programmable, digital electronic computer.

DESIGN FOR PEACETIME

The years between 1939 and 1951 had seen a transformation of the modern world, and by the latter year the democratization of material culture that had been promised before the war was beginning to become a reality. While the war had prioritized the basic needs of human existence and technological innovation for military purposes, peacetime brought an inevitable swing back to a focus on individuals and their psychological needs. To meet these needs, new demands would constantly be made of the visual, material, and spatial culture of the postwar world.

An official watchdog, the Council of Industrial Design, was set up to promote "good design." Born of a coalition government, it remained in place under the Labor government that soon came to power. The first director of the council, Gordon Russell, had been in charge of the Utility scheme. Russell lived in Broadway in the Cotswolds and had links with the legacy of the nineteenth-century Arts and Crafts movement. His appointment consolidated the importance of that movement, its values, and its approach to design in the postwar years. *Design* magazine, the mouthpiece of the council, was launched in 1949; it promoted a strategy of following the U.S. and Scandinavia in developing design into a true economic and cultural force (plate 421).

The first step was to create a taste for "good design" among consumers, and with it a strong home market that, in turn, could be transformed into an international market for well-designed British goods. The Design Centre was opened in 1956 in the Haymarket as one means of presenting good design to the British public.

Other developments of the 1940s included an effort by manufacturers themselves to employ professionally trained designers to create stunningly modern items—furniture, textiles, glass, ceramics, and metal goods, for the most part—for the progressive home. The Council of Industrial Design was an important interface in that context, putting designers in touch with manufacturers and setting up the Duke of Edinburgh awards scheme to recognize successful designs. A reorganization of art and design education also took place at that time, in order to supply a new generation of designers to work with industry. London's Central School of Art and Design was especially prominent in the early postwar years, while the Royal College of Art (RCA), initially established in 1837 and connected with the Victoria and Albert Museum, reorganized itself in the 1950s to address the needs of the day. A number of key British designers of those years—David Queensberry, David Mellor, Robert Welch, and Robert Goodden among them—were RCA graduates. A professionalization of design, especially interior design, also took place in

BELOW
423. Ernest Race (1913–1964)
***BA* side chair**, 1945
Made by Race Furniture Ltd (U.K.)
Aluminum, plywood, fabric
Museum of Modern Art, New York

RIGHT
424. Ernest Race (1913–1964)
***Springbok* chairs**, 1951
Made by Race Furniture Ltd (U.K.)
Steel, plastic
Private collection

OPPOSITE
425. Ernest Race (1913–1964)
***DA 1* armchair**, 1946
Made by Race Furniture Ltd (U.K.)
Steel, aluminum, foam, fabric
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

those years, making it increasingly hard for amateurs to achieve adequate results by themselves.

Among the first acts of the Council of Industrial Design was to sponsor the *Britain Can Make It* (BCMI) exhibition of 1946 (plate 422). In the wartime spirit of public education, the exhibition was intended to open the British public's eyes to the importance of standards in design. Conceived by Stafford Cripps, BCMI displayed mostly prewar goods, as industry had not yet had a chance convert back to peacetime production. There was a strong emphasis on the role of the designer in the postwar context, however, and the Design Research Unit (a consultancy cofounded by the influential critic Herbert Read) created a display—"What Industrial Design Means"—that charted the development of the design of an egg cup from the chicken through the final product. Many of the camouflage and Ministry of Information designers were involved, transferring their skills to peacetime to create didactic settings that engaged the public in a debate about the meaning of design. A design quiz was included so that visitors could register their views on the subject. One of the most controversial sections of the exhibition presented a series of furnished rooms intended for a range of different social and income groups. From a "Kitchen in a Cottage in a Modern Mining Village" to the "House of the Managing Director of an Engineering Works," these specimen rooms spanned the social spectrum, revealing a strong interest in the link between design and social class.

One of the stars of the BCMI exhibition was designer-entrepreneur Ernest Race's little *BA* chair, which had an aluminum frame and elegant tapering legs (plate 423). Race had been in the auxiliary fire service during the war, and afterward he had set up a furniture company. He was quick to realize the potential of redundant wartime materials and set about utilizing scrap aluminum and ex-RAF upholstery materials (plate 425). The *BA* side chair benefited from the Spitfires to Saucepans campaign that was promoted at BCMI. A handful of other postwar designs—including a spaceship by Wells Coates, an aluminum-bodied sewing machine by Henrion, a streamlined bicycle by B.G. Bowden, and an air-conditioned bed by F.C. Ashford—were also offered to whet the appetite of a nation hungry for new products. Race went on to create some of the iconic seating designs displayed at the 1951 Festival of Britain, in particular the *Antelope* and *Springbok* metal-rod chairs that were scattered across the South Bank (plate 424).

The Festival of Britain's two signature buildings—the Dome of Discovery and the Skylon—visually echoed the Perisphere and Trylon of the 1939 New York World's Fair and expressed a similar technological utopianism. With rationing nearly at an end, it was time once again to look forward to a prosperous future, made possible by technology. The festival proved hugely popular, and exhibits such as the Homes and Gardens and the Lion and Unicorn pavilions crossed a spectrum from the traditional to the ultramodern. The work undertaken by the Festival Pattern Group, who used the organic patterns seen under microscopes to decorate brightly colored textiles and ceramics, helped create a new aesthetic for the postwar era.

BELOW
426. **Advertisement in *Plate* magazine**, October 1955

OPPOSITE
427. **Cover of *Do It Yourself* magazine**, June 1959

THE CONTEMPORARY HOME

The two decades following the end of World War II saw a dramatic shift in the British public's engagement with modernity in the realm of everyday life, particularly in the home. The interwar years had seen a rather cautious response to new influences and a general reluctance to move beyond the comfort of "Tudorbethan" suburban homes and heavily upholstered three-piece suites. While the new middle-class and lower middle-class consumers of that time had found it hard to resist the nostalgic pull of Victorianism, the post-1945 years witnessed a greater willingness to embrace the new, and to express that forward-looking approach at home. This transition was greatly facilitated by new housing developments such as Harlow and Cumbernauld New Towns.

The ideal of the "modern" or, as it was referred to at this time, the "contemporary" home was widely disseminated through the mass media. To a considerable extent, it displaced the concept of the "traditional home" as an aspiration, especially for people who had not previously had the opportunity to be homeowners. Indeed, for a large sector of the population, inhabiting a home furnished in the contemporary style represented an important sign of the arrival of modernity in their lives.

The American version of the contemporary home was disseminated in Britain through numerous popular television programs, including *I Love Lucy*. The contemporary style also featured in the sets developed for several British TV series. But most of all, it filled the pages of popular women's magazines on both sides of the Atlantic (plate 426). Mary Grieve, the editor of *Woman* magazine, understood the close link between consumption and women's entrance into modern life, and geared her magazine to exploit that association. For new consumers, buying their first house (often in suburbia) and equipping it with contemporary furniture, kitchen gadgets, and a large refrigerator (in one of a range of novel colors with exotic names) represented their primary material means of proclaiming their membership in the affluent postwar world.

The Do-It-Yourself movement was also imported to Britain from the U.S. in those years, offering people the opportunity to modernize their own homes economically. The consumer-oriented magazine *Do-It-Yourself* succeeded the much more technically focused *Practical Mechanics* of the prewar era, and its front covers showed couples working together to build cupboards, strip walls, and improve the backyard (plate 427). The myth of "togetherness" was widely disseminated, helping to confirm the importance of the close-knit nuclear family in the postwar era. On another level, it served to consolidate the isolation of the family unit and the loss of a traditional sense of community as, increasingly, identity and social status were formed through consumption and participation in the fashion cycle.

It was clearly felt that consumption, rather than production, was the key to Britain's future, and that consumption needed to operate within a context of educated taste, which at that time meant a preference for

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- BUILDING FIREPLACES & FLUES
- INSTALLING A WATER CLOSET
- USING PEGBOARD IN THE HOME

BELOW
428. Carl Jacobs (b. 1925)
***Jason* chair**, c. 1950
Made by Kandya Ltd (U.K.)
Beech, beech plywood
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT
429. David Harman-Powell (b. 1931)
Stackable cups, c. 1968
Made by Ekco Plastics Ltd (U.K.)
Plastic
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT
430. Ronald E. Brookes
Plates, c. 1960
Made by Brookes & Adams Ltd (U.K.)
Melamine
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM
431. Kenneth Grange (b. 1929)
***Chef* mixer**, 1966
Made by Kenwood (U.K.)
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

the modern. Research on the emergence of the concept of the "teenager" in these years has also demonstrated that the consumption of certain essential items provided entry to a range of youthful male subcultures—in particular, those of the teddy boys and, later, the mods and rockers.

ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT

In his 1958 book *Culture and Society*, the critic Raymond Williams wrote of the dangers inherent in emulating the American experience. Along with Richard Hoggart (cofounder with Williams of "cultural studies"), Williams feared that society's wholesale embrace of the mass media, including the products of the mass-production industries, would mean a loss of traditional culture and an erosion of standards. He believed that advertising in particular played a leading role in this pernicious transformation.

Immediately after the war, many British designers were hugely optimistic about the potential of plastics to create a brave new world. But others, including Williams and Hoggart, were more cautious, insisting that designers should have an intimate knowledge of these new materials' physical properties and capabilities. Moreover, following an initial enthusiasm for plastics when they entered the commercial marketplace after the war, consumers quickly became disenchanted with them, and doubts began to emerge about plastics' relationship to "good design." As the number of plastic products grew, and quantity inevitably took over from quality, they began to earn a reputation for being "cheap and nasty." That is, their very popularity began to backfire on them.

In Britain, this strong sense of disenchantment was aggravated by the association of plastics with American popular culture. Members of the Council of Industrial Design were among those who became increasingly concerned about the incursion of American commercial values on British soil, and in 1952 Alec Davis, the editor of the council's mouthpiece, *Design* magazine, declared that "American mass-production methods are hardly appropriate to the makers of, say, Staffordshire bone china, Yorkshire woollen cloth, Walsall leather goods, or London-tailored men's wear." In class-conscious Britain, memories of quality handmade goods still ran deep, and many people were suspicious of the brash new merchandise, including Hollywood films and pulp novels, that was being imported from across the Atlantic. In the years before an acceptance of mass culture emerged, these imports were seen as a threat to traditional British values. The Council of Industrial Design's chief information officer Paul Reilly (later to rise to the post of director) was especially anxious about the mass production of plastic products. "The temptation," he wrote, "to adorn a moulding, to imitate carving or to impress a stylistic cliché, such as the 3 parallel lines is certainly hard to resist when one considers the extreme reproduction of plastics."

Views such as these encouraged certain British designers, including Ronald E. Brookes, Gaby Schreiber,

and David Harman-Powell, to rise to the challenge of applying the arts-and-crafts principles of "truth to materials" and "form follows function" to plastic products. The results of their efforts included some elegant pieces that have stood the test of time, among them Brookes's Fiestaware pieces for Brookes & Adams (plate 430), Schreiber's stylish objects for Runcolite, and Harman-Powell's stackable cups for Ekco Plastics (plate 429).

Through the 1950s, the mass media—film, television, magazines, advertising, and mass-produced goods and images themselves—was instrumental in communicating a number of lifestyle models that could be appropriated through consumption. While those models had different impacts in different places, many of them encouraged aspirations that had implications for patterns of consumption and, significantly, for design. A new generation of furniture designers, among them Ernest Race and Robin Day, extended the modernist program by incorporating new materials—including extruded aluminum, bent and molded plywood, and steel rods—into their designs (plate 428). Drawing on both American and Scandinavian examples (the work of Charles and Ray Eames and Arne Jacobsen, among others), Race and Day—the former working with his own manufacturing company and the latter with Hille Ltd.—both produced a number of innovative pieces that stood out in their era.

Day, who had been educated at the Royal College of Art before the war, worked with Clive Latimer on a

BELOW
432. Robin Day (1915–2010), with an engraving by Geoffrey Clarke (b. 1924)
Wall storage system, c. 1951
Made by Hille Ltd. (U.K.)
Steel, ebony, mahogany, plastic
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

OPPOSITE
433. Lucienne Day (1917–2010)
***Calyx* fabric**, 1951
Made by Heal's (U.K.)
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

steel-mounted buffet that won a prize in a competition organized by the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1948. The publicity surrounding the prize brought Day to the notice of the British furniture manufacturer Hille Ltd., with which he established a long relationship. Working closely with Ray Hille, and subsequently with her daughter Rosamund, Day created a number of classic modern designs for the firm, notably a polypropylene stacking chair (1963) that quickly became ubiquitous and confirmed his status as one of Britain's leading designers (plate 436).

Both Robin Day and his wife, the eminent textile designer Lucienne Day, came to the notice of the design press, and the public, through their work for the Festival of Britain. While Robin designed the bent-plywood seating for the Royal Festival Hall (plate 434), Lucienne created her most famous textile, *Calyx*, whose brightly colored abstract pattern owed much to the work of the painter Joan Miró (plate 433). The couple also worked on a strikingly modern interior exhibited at the Triennale di Milano in 1954. While Lucienne went on to create countless textiles for clients including the Heal's store and, in the 1970s, began making large silk tapestries, Robin became well known as the designer of numerous lines of furniture (plate 432), as well as television sets and radios for the British firm Pye (plate 435), aircraft interiors for BOAC, and carpet designs for Woodward Grosvenor. Working independently for the most part (although sharing a studio for many years), together the Days became a fashionable designer-couple whose lifestyle was admired and widely emulated.

ABOVE
434. Robin Day (1915–2010)
***700* chair for the Royal Festival Hall**, 1956
Made by Hille Ltd. (U.K.)
Lacquered metal tubing, laminated wood
Galerie de Casson, Paris

RIGHT
435. Robin Day (1915–2010)
Television set, 1957
Made by Pye Ltd (U.K.)
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

OPPOSITE
436. Robin Day (1915–2010)
***Polyprop* stackable chairs**, 1963
Made by Hille Ltd. (U.K.)
Polypropylene, steel, fabric
Victoria and Albert Museum, London


HOT

OPPOSITE
437. John Maltby (1910–1980)
Poster for Habitat products, 1965
Royal Institute of British Architects, London

BELOW
438. **Cover of the Habitat catalog**, 1974

LIFESTYLE RETAILING

By the early 1960s, it was clear that a mass market for lifestyle retailing and journalism had emerged, and the furniture and textile designer Terence Conran was quick to exploit this trend, opening his first Habitat store on London's Fulham Road in 1964 (plate 438). Although a number of other progressive retailers—including Dunn's of Bromley, Heal's, and Liberty's—had already branded themselves as "design-led" in the 1950s, they had retained an exclusive appeal and had not played a direct part in the expansion of consumption. Habitat targeted a social group just below the customers of those elite stores, and a younger, more fashion-conscious audience. As well as offering a range of new objects imported from overseas (Vico Magistretti's bright red *Carimate* chair being a special favorite), the key message Conran communicated to his customers was that, as interior decorators already knew well, it was possible to mix old and new furniture with new ones. Rather than empower his customers to do that for themselves, however, he offered them a ready-made set of choices. In effect, they were asked to trust his taste and purchase whole interiors from his shop. That might mean combining a Magistretti item with a reproduction Thonet chair or Chesterfield sofa, both of which could also be purchased at Habitat. Only a designer could be trusted to make such courageous decisions! Habitat thrived on this model, subsequently opening a number of other stores around the country (plate 437).

ABOVE
439. **Double-decker bus, *AEC Regent III* model (the predecessor of the *Routemaster*)**, 1952

OPPOSITE, TOP
440. **Advertisement for the Austin *Mini Cooper***, 1969

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM
441. **Sir Alexander Issigonis (1906–1988), designer of the Morris *Minor* and the Austin *Mini***, 1965

TRANSPORT DESIGN

Alec Issigonis's Morris *Minor* was a British automotive icon of the 1950s, but his *Mini* made an even bigger impact in the 1960s (plate 441). He began working on it for the British Motor Corporation (formed by the merger of Morris with Austin) in 1956. The stimulus to create the *Mini* came from the fuel shortages caused by the Suez crisis and the competition from microcars. Issigonis's challenge was to create a very small car for four people, plus luggage, that would use as little fuel as possible. The solution lay in placing the engine in a transverse position and the wheels at the extreme four corners, to allow the maximum amount of interior space. The exterior was a direct result of these decisions, and Issigonis produced a timeless design with little additional ornament or styling. The streamlined curves of the *Minor* had disappeared, giving way to what was essentially a box on wheels. The *Mini* quickly became the car of choice for pop stars, fashion models, and designers and was celebrated as one of Swinging London's cult objects (plate 440).

While Britain acquired a strong reputation for car design in the postwar decades, with models like the Jaguar *E Type* (plates 442, 443) and the *Range Rover* becoming known internationally, other areas of British transport design also flourished in that period,

BELOW
442. ***E Type Roadster***, 1961
Made by Jaguar

BOTTOM
443. **Publicity postcard for the Jaguar *XK-E***, c. 1960

OPPOSITE
444. ***Concorde 102* supersonic airplane**, 1973
Made by Aérospatiale (France) and British Aerospace (U.K.)

counting such successes as the classic *Routemaster* bus (plate 439) and culminating in the *Concorde* supersonic airplane (plate 444), conceived in collaboration with French engineers. The *Concorde*'s first flight in 1969 was the result of nearly twenty years of development that had led to new advances in aerodynamics, materials, and structures. Like the design of the *Spitfire* before it, the *Concorde*'s strikingly elegant and futuristic nose and wing forms were the result of functional and performance-based criteria. The materials used in its construction—including titanium, stainless steel, and a variety of plastics—were selected after rigorous testing.

OPPOSITE
445. Terence Conran (b. 1931)
Salad set, 1955
Made by W. R. Midwinter Ltd (U.K.)
Glazed earthenware
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

BELOW
446. Robert Heritage (b. 1927)
Sideboard, 1958
Made by Archie Shine Ltd (U.K.)
Rosewood, marble
Private collection

POP DESIGN AND THE RETURN OF MODERNISM

Pop design set in motion a wholesale rejection of the interwar modernism that had insisted an object's outer form should reflect its means of production. Pop objects aimed, instead, to have an expressive relationship with the fashion-conscious society that produced and consumed them. They were intended to have short life cycles, based on the idea that was better throw away an object once it had outlived its ability to express the moment than to keep it. Pop design represented an acceptance on the part of both designers and consumers that design should be led by the needs of the marketplace rather than those of manufacturing. Real disposability—possible, for example, with paper clothing—was one way forward, although it was accompanied by other objects that could not actually be thrown away but resisted permanence through the ability to change their forms and appearance. Although disposability was clearly a problem for plastic products, many of the newer plastics were inherently soft and flexible, and ideally suited to a culture of accelerated change. Such was the chameleon-like nature of plastics that they could don the mantle of good design at one moment and reject it at another. Indeed, without plastics the Pop design movement could not have produced some of its most lasting icons. Alongside the loud music, colorful clothes, and other "fun" lifestyle accessories that characterized youth culture in 1960s Britain, a number of plastic products played a role in overturning what had seemed like the universal values of "good design."

The 1960s saw the English architectural group Archigram introduce flow and movement into their idealized urban visions; they believed the chair was on its way out and pneumatic seating that formed to the body would take its place. The English architectural critic Reyner Banham proposed a plastic bubble as a new housing solution. A number of inflatable plastic chairs emerged, including the *Pumpadinc* armchair designed by Arthur Quarmby and a version covered in fake fur, created by the album cover artist Roger Dean and produced by Hille. Not only was inflatable furniture here one minute and gone the next, but it also suggested a whole new way of living that eroded the distinction between indoors and out.

This new vision for furniture was linked to the general shift in design thinking anticipated by the graphic designer Michael Wolff, who had written in the *Journal of the Society of Industrial Artists* in 1965 that "it will be a great day when furniture and cutlery design, to name but two, swing like the Supremes." By the end of the decade, a new, increasingly youth-focused lifestyle and the prioritization, in the context of mass consumption, of image over object had led in two distinct directions: a flexible form of seating that abandoned the long-standing dependence on chairs in favor of "seating systems," and a new emphasis on surface pattern that encouraged (especially young) people to take back control from designers by adding their own images of flags, targets, and brightly colored stripes to the surfaces of their furniture, both old and new.

The 1950s and early '60s saw the appearance of a considerable amount of elegant neomodernist furniture created by Terence Conran, Alan Turville, Robert Heritage, John and Sylvia Reid, and other British designers and manufactured by firms such as Hille Ltd., Ercol, G-Plan, HK Furniture, Race Ltd., and Archie Shine (plate 446). It was also in the 1950s that a handful of adventurous manufacturers, such as G-Plan, broke away from the norm, offering sets of contemporary-looking furniture to young couples setting up house for the first

BELOW
447. Max Clendinning (b. 1924)
Cupboard with stand, 1965
Made by Liberty (U.K.)
Painted plywood
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

OPPOSITE, TOP
448. Max Clendinning (b. 1924)
***Maxima* armchairs**, 1965
Made by Race Furniture Ltd. (U.K.)
Lacquered plywood, fabric upholstery
Private collection

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM
449. Bernard Holdaway (1934–2009)
***Tom-tom* side table**, c. 1967
Made by Hull Traders Ltd (U.K.)
Cardboard
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

time. These companies took their lead from Scandinavian furniture makers, emulating their commitment to wood (teak and rosewood in particular), to light, elegant forms, and to a minimal use of upholstery. By the end of the 1950s and the early '60s, British firms were also looking to Italy for inspiration. With its debt to tradition, combined with its strikingly tapered wooden legs and modern elegance, Gio Ponti's *Superleggera* chair, manufactured by Cassina in 1957, was one of the most influential pieces to be exhibited at the Triennale di Milano and covered in the burgeoning international design press. Its features were quickly replicated in some of Britain's most successful modern furniture of the period.

By the early 1960s, there were a number of signs that, on one level at least, the British public was finally becoming aware of modern design. And by the middle of that decade, the Pop revolution had infiltrated the everyday environment, bringing with it a new awareness of color and innovative materials. One piece of Italian furniture in particular played an important role in that transformation: Vico Magistretti's *Carimate* chair, designed in 1959 for the restaurant of the Carimate Golf Club in Lombardy and distributed by Cassina three years later. Its rush seat and red-lacquered wood frame embellished many fashionable London restaurants and came to epitomize the new Pop environment. As already noted, it also caught the eye of the young English designer Terence Conran—soon to be one of the most important retailers of modern design in Britain—who produced his own version of it. Magistretti himself, who worked as an adviser to Cassina for over thirty years, until his death in 2006, developed strong ties with London from the early 1960s. He kept a flat in Onslow Square in Kensington and was a visiting professor at the Royal College of Art for more than a decade.

Britain's modern-furniture renaissance of the 1960s was also strongly influenced by a number of other pieces manufactured by Cassina. The Italian company's products were frequently featured in the British design press and were sold to a discerning clientele through the new furniture retailers that appeared in London and elsewhere, among them Aram Designs, Geoffrey Drayton, Oscar Woollens, and Interspace, which was opened in 1968 by the Danes Nanna Ditzel and Kurt Heide. The June 1965 edition of *House and Garden* magazine reported that Italian design was attractive to many young lodgers in Chelsea and Bloomsbury and selected Gianfranco Frattini's *Poltrona Chair 877*, manufactured by Cassina, as one example of that country's achievements in modern design. In February 1968, Tobia Scarpa's knock-down armchair for Cassina was depicted in *Interior Design* magazine, which proclaimed that "this year the Italians have produced the most lively, most controversial, as well as the most likely starters of the prestige race," and praised Italian design for its "delight in new materials and an approach to colour that British designers and manufacturers would do well to examine." In December 1970, the same journal featured a swiveling office chair made of PVC that Mario Bellini designed for Cassina.

A new generation of British designers—including Max Clendinning, Jon Bannenberg, Peter Murdoch, William Plunkett, Bernard Holdaway, Nicholas Frewing, and the team of Jean Schofield and John Wright—embraced the novel concepts of the "knock-down," "inflatable," and "throwaway" (plate 447). They produced such lasting classics as Clendenning's *Maxima* range for Race—a set of chairs in lacquered plywood, sold flat for home assembly (plate 448)—and his side chair for Liberty's, which had a painted plywood frame; Murdoch's so-called "paper" chair, which was actually made from a of robust cardboard strengthened with resin (a spotted version appeared in 1963, and one bearing a more complex pattern five years later; plates 450, 451); and Holdaway's *Tom-tom* range for Hull Traders (plate 449).

LEFT
450. Peter Murdoch (b. 1940)
***Spotty* chair**, 1963
Made by International Paper (U.K.)
Cardboard coated with polyethylene
Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris

BELOW
451. Peter Murdoch (b. 1940)
***Thing* chair**, 1968
Made by Perspective Designs Ltd (U.K.)
Cardboard coated with polyethylene
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

OPPOSITE
452. Geoffrey Baxter (1922–1995)
Vases, c. 1965
Made by Whitefriars (U.K.)
Molded glass
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

BELOW
453. David Mellor (1930–2009)
***Thrift* flatware**, 1965
Made by Oneida (U.K.)
Stainless steel

BOTTOM
454. Gerald Benney (1930–2008)
***Saddleback* teapot**, 1960
Silver, wood
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

OPPOSITE, TOP
455. David Queensberry (b. 1929)
Cup and saucer, 1960–62
Made by W. R. Midwinter Ltd (U.K.)
Glazed earthenware
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM
456. Tom Arnold (d. 2002) and Enid Seeney (1931–2011)
***Homemaker* table service**, 1957
Made by Ridgway Potteries (U.K.)
Glazed earthenware
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The decorative arts of the 1960s also succumbed to the pull of modernity, although for the most part they stopped short of going completely Pop. Rather, a neo-modern decorative arts movement emerged. In the field of metalwork, some of the most successful pieces of the mid-1950s onward were designed by the small group of distinguished RCA graduates mentioned earlier: David Mellor, who designed the elegant *Thrift* cutlery for the Ministry of Public Building in 1965 (plate 453); Robert Welch, who created a highly sculptural three-legged candelabra called *Campden* for J and J Wiggin Ltd. in 1957, the Scandinavian-looking *Alveston* tea set for Old Hall Tableware Ltd. in 1962, and a simple and graceful cutlery set for the same company three years later; and the silversmith Gerald Benney, who was responsible for many elegant and highly regarded designs (plate 454), including the pitchers for the tables of the RCA's senior common room. Another RCA alumnus (and professor of ceramics and glass there from 1959), David Queensberry, worked for W. R. Midwinter Ltd. (plate 455) and Webb Corbett Glass, among others, and received the Design Council's Duke of Edinburgh Award for Elegant Design in 1964.

The ceramic designs of those years included the enduringly popular *Homemaker* tea service conceived by Enid Seeney (who created the pattern) and Tom Arnold (who designed the form) for Ridgway Potteries in 1957 (plate 456). Jessie Tait's pieces for Midwinter, among them the *Cuban Fantasy* of 1957, also received much praise and were hugely influential. Glass design responded to the spirit of the age as well: for instance, Geoffrey Baxter's *Unica* and *Brick* vases (1965 and 1966, respectively) abandoned the delicacy of the 1950s for the solid forms and bright colors of British Pop, a shift that pushed glass to its technical limits (plate 452).

BELOW
457. **Ron Arad in his London studio**, 1991

OPPOSITE
458. Ron Arad (b. 1951)
***Big Soft Easy* armchair**, 1991
Made by Moroso (Italy)
Steel, expanded polyurethane foam, fabric
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

NOSTALGIA AND HERITAGE

Through the 1950s and '60s, the modern design movement had created a new image of elite domestic living that, in turn, influenced mass taste. However, by the early 1970s, this movement had all but vanished from view, as a result of the downturn in the economy and the decline of British manufacturing. Suddenly British society began to feel less at home with modernity than it had in the more optimistic climate of the preceding decades. A Victorian revival—all stripped pine and Laura Ashley fabrics—engulfed the popular British home, while, for the social elite, the country house replaced the sophisticated townhouse as a domestic idyll. In essence, the modern style, created by a generation of highly skilled designers and interior decorators, was replaced by an escape to the past and to the country. In the process, the subtle balance between tradition and modernity that had manifested itself in a number of different ways in postwar British homes was irreparably disturbed. Many ceramic, glass, and metal objects were also produced by hand in those years, as part of the burgeoning British craft movement. The primitive aesthetic cultivated by the potters Ruth Duckworth, Lucie Rie, and Hans Coper, for example, provided a perfect counterpoint to the slick look of industrially manufactured pieces.

DESIGN CULTURE

With the newfound affluence of the 1980s, the designer came to the fore once again in Britain, and names such as Ron Arad, Tom Dixon, Nigel Coates, Daniel Weil, Eva Jiřičná, and Ben Kelly filled the pages of popular new design publications like *Blueprint* magazine (plate 457). This was, in fact, the decade of the designer as celebrity, and terms like "hair designer" began to replace more familiar ones, like "hairdresser."

Arad, one of Britain's most prominent and inventive designers, had come from Israel to study at London's prestigious Architectural Association in the mid-1970s. In 1983, he opened a shop called One Off in Covent Garden, where he sold his own designs (plate 459). His best-known creations of that era include the

BELOW
459. Ron Arad (b. 1951)
***This Mortal Coil* bookcase**, 1993
Made by One Off Ltd (U.K.)
Mild steel
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

OPPOSITE
460. Ron Arad (b. 1951)
***Bookworm* bookshelf**, 1993
Made by Kartell (Italy)
PVC plastic
Victoria and Albert Museum, London


de Koonin
ALTROVE

BELOW
461. Ron Arad (b. 1951)
***Pappardelle* chair**, 1992
Made by One Off Ltd (U.K.)
Stainless steel
Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, on loan to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris

OPPOSITE
462. Ron Arad (b. 1951)
***Ge-Off Sphere* lamp**, 2000
Made by Ron Arad Associates (U.K.)
Stainless steel, mild steel, plastics, stereolithographed polyamide
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Rover chair, consisting of a leather seat from a Rover car mounted on a tubular steel frame, and a concrete record player. The distressed look of the shop and its products constructed from ready-made parts were described as "postapocalyptic" and linked with the punk movement. The rough edges of Arad's early one-off designs were soon replaced, however, by the much more sophisticated and sculptural forms of the pieces he created for a wide variety of international manufacturers (plate 462). Notable among these were his *Big Soft Easy* chair of 1991 for Moroso (plate 458), his *Bookworm* shelf of 1993 for Kartell (plate 460), and his *Tom Vac* dining-room chair of 1997. His designs experiment with materials and expressive forms. The latter are best exemplified by his *Pappardelle* chair of 1992, which resembles a waterfall made of stainless steel (plate 461). Arad has also earned a reputation in architecture with his 2008 design for the Bauhaus Museum in Tel Aviv, and has recently ventured into new areas such as eyewear.

Tom Dixon also established himself in Britain and went on to become an international name (plate 464). Like Arad, he was self-taught in design and came from abroad, in his case Tunisia, although he moved to England at the age of four. His breakthrough came when he learned to weld, which led to his first notably successful design, the *S Chair* of 1991, manufactured by Cappellini (plate 463). Combining a metal frame with a one-piece wicker seat and back, it possessed a sculptural quality that became the hallmark of Dixon's work. In 1997, he became head of design for the Habitat stores, a role he would also take on at the Finnish firm Artek.

One of the most successful design-related branding exercises of the late twentieth century was undertaken by James Dyson. Among postwar British designers, Dyson stands out as an engineer and inventor who embraced design in order to create products that were both technologically and aesthetically distinctive. Before entering engineering, Dyson had studied furniture and interior design at the Royal College

OPPOSITE
463. Tom Dixon (b. 1959)
S Chair, 1991
Distributed by Cappellini (Italy)
Steel, rush
Museum of Modern Art,
New York

BELOW
464. Tom Dixon (b. 1959)
***Jack* lamp**, 1994
Distributed by Eurolounge Ltd
(U.K.)
Polyethylene

OPPOSITE
465. James Dyson (b. 1947)
***G-Force* vacuum cleaner**, 1986
Made by Dyson Ltd (U.K.)
ABS plastic, polycarbonate, electrical components
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

BELOW
466. James Dyson (b. 1947)
***Air Multiplier* fan**, 2009
Made by Dyson Ltd (U.K.)
ABS plastic, metal, electrical components
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

of Art. He conceived of his first product, a boat called the *Sea Truck*, in 1970, while he was still a student. He went on to design the *Ballbarrow*, a wheelbarrow with a ball rather than a wheel. His key invention, however, was the bagless vacuum cleaner. Known first as the *G-Force* and later as the *Cyclone*, it went through numerous prototypes and took several years to get to market (plate 465). Unable to convince British manufacturers to adopt his vision, he launched his vacuum with a Japanese company before eventually deciding to manufacture it himself. In June 1993, he opened his own research center and factory in Wiltshire. Two years later, he employed the ball concept from his wheelbarrow in a vacuum cleaner. Dyson understood the need to make his vacuum cleaner look friendly, so he introduced new colors—pink when it was being made in Japan, and later a whole spectrum of other bright hues, from purple to yellow. Building on the success of what became a wide range of vacuums (which were referred to as "Dysons," displacing the hitherto ubiquitous "Hoover"), he went on to launch a novel washing machine (2000), a hand dryer called the *Airblade* (2006), and, most recently, a fan without external blades, known as the *Air Multiplier* (plate 466).

BELOW
467. Jasper Morrison (b. 1959)
***Hal* chairs**, 2010–11
Made by Vitra (Switzerland)
Polypropylene, wood, metal, various coverings

OPPOSITE
468. Jasper Morrison (b. 1959)
***Low Pad* chair**, 1999
Made by Cappellini (Italy)
Stainless steel, polyurethane foam, brushed steel, fabric
Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris

THE NEW CENTURY

In yet another pendulum swing, the 1990s and early 2000s saw a shift away from the dominance of the individual designer and a renewed interest in design teams and cooperative design; in the implications of design for the environment, society, and well-being; and in the "intangible" areas of design, such as service, software, and interface design. By the early 1990s, designers such as Jasper Morrison had already begun to develop a more self-effacing approach to their work, and a new minimalism emerged in the area of interiors, with design groups like Barber Osgerby, founded in 1997, leading the way. Along with Arad and Dixon, Morrison has become one of Britain's best-known designers. Unlike them, however, he has rejected the often extravagant art-based approach to furniture and product design in favor of a much more low-key and style-free one. Another product of the Royal College of Art (1985), Morrison also studied in Berlin. He founded his own design studio in London in 1986 and set off on a career that was to define a new movement in British design, sometimes called the New Simplicity. Morrison introduced a neo-functionalist approach characterized by simple, modest forms applied to a wide spectrum of objects, from furniture (plates 467, 468) to a streetcar for the city of Hanover (plate 477) to a bus shelter (for the Vitra campus in Weil am Rhein). He worked and exhibited alongside the revered Japanese designer Naoto Fukasawa, with whom he also collaborated on objects for the Japanese retail chain Muji. Recent designs by Morrison include a family of outdoor furniture for the Spanish company Kettal, an alarm clock for the Swiss brand Punkt, timepieces for

OPPOSITE, TOP
469. Marc Newson (b. 1963)
***Dish Doctor* dish rack**, 1998
Made by Magis (Italy)
Injection-molded polypropylene
Centre National des Arts Plastiques/Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM
470. Jerszy Seymour (b. 1968)
***Pipe Dreams* watering can**, 2000
made by Magis (Italy)
Blow-molded polyethylene
Centre National des Arts Plastiques/Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris

LEFT
471. Ross Lovegrove (b. 1958)
***Eye* digital camera**, 1990
Made by Olympus (Japan)

BELOW
472. Sam Hecht (b. 1969)
***Two Timer* clock**, 2009
Made by Established & Sons (U.K.)

LEFT
473. Paul Cocksedge (b. 1978)
Neon lights, 2003
Made by Paul Cocksedge Studio (U.K.)
Hand-molded glass and suspension wires

BELOW
474. Marc Newson (b. 1963)
***Atmos 566* clock**, 2010
Made by Jaeger-LeCoultre (Switzerland)

OPPOSITE
475. Marc Newson (b. 1963)
Pod of Drawers, designed 1987, made 1999
Aluminum, wood, fiberglass
Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris

the Swiss watchmaker Rado, footwear for the Spanish firm Camper, and a number of furniture items for the Swiss manufacturer Vitra.

Other British designers who flourished in the 1990s and early 2000s include Marc Newson (plates 469, 474, 475) and the RCA graduate Sam Hecht, who was head of design at IDEO in the mid-1990s and then worked in Japan for three years (plate 472). Later he was retained by Muji and was responsible for many of their products, including the *Second Phone* (2004). Hecht founded the design studio Industrial Facility with his partner Kim Colin in 2002, and they have collaborated with a number of international manufacturers, including Muji, Yamaha, and Magis. More recently, he became design adviser to Herman Miller. Several more RCA alumni, including Sebastian Bergne, Paul Cocksedge (plate 473), Doshi Levien, and Ross Lovegrove (plate 471), also began to make an international impact in these years.

This new wave of British design was encouraged by a group of influential tastemakers, such as Sheridan Coakley, who set up the furniture store SCP in 1985 and played an important role in the successes of Jasper Morrison, Matthew Hilton, and Terence Woodgate, among others. Two decades later, in 2005, the retailer Established & Sons began working with a stable of designers, promoting them both at home and abroad. The arrival of the annual London Design Week and the London Design Festival also contributed to the view that the British capital was at the center of innovative design.

In the early years of the twenty-first century, the impact of British design on the world of high tech was underscored by the work of two London natives in California: Jonathan Ive at Apple Inc. and Bill Moggridge at the design firm IDEO. Britain also continues to lead the way at the experimental, gallery-oriented end of the design spectrum, with Tony Dunne and Fiona Raby's contribution to the field of interaction design, and the presence of the avant-garde Spanish design team El Ultimo Grito in London.

OPPOSITE, TOP
476. Thomas Heatherwick (b. 1970)
New *Routemaster* bus, 2012
Made by Wrightbus (U.K.)

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM
477. Jasper Morrison (b. 1959)
Hanover streetcar, 1997
Made by Linke Hoffman Busch (Germany)

BELOW
478. Kenneth Grange (b. 1929)
***Anglepoise Type 1228* lamps**, 2004
Made by Anglepoise (U.K.)
Aluminum, stainless steel, polycarbonate

KENNETH GRANGE REVISITED

A decade into the twenty-first century, Britain began to look back at its design history. In 2011, London's Design Museum devoted its exhibition space to the work of the most eminent British product designer of the postwar era, Kenneth Grange. The show marked a moment of reflection on Britain's contribution to the world of design over the previous half-century, as well as the search for native designer-heroes to position alongside the United States' Charles and Ray Eames, Italy's Ettore Sottsass, Germany's Dieter Rams, and France's Philippe Starck. Moreover, it consolidated the role of the Design Museum—itself a result of the design culture of the 1980s, and of the generosity of Terence Conran.

Grange had come to the world of industrial design through architecture. His earliest professional experience was working for Bronek Katz, a modernist architect of Polish origin, in the area of exhibition design. He worked in the office of a second architect, Gordon Bowyer, between 1948 and 1951, and then in that of a third, Jack Howe, where he stayed on as a drafting assistant until 1958, when he set up his own office as an industrial designer, building on freelance work he had undertaken for Kodak.

In that same year, the Council of Industrial Design introduced Grange to the appliance manufacturer Kenwood. Grange's redesign of the Kenwood *Chef* was launched at the Ideal Home Exhibition of 1960 (plate 431). With its ability to perform multiple tasks, including chopping, mincing, mixing, and kneading, this device was an immediate success with housewives. Grange's ongoing collaboration with Kenwood generated more than one hundred products, including not only the various models of the *Chef*, the handheld *Chefette*, and more recent food processors like the *Cuisine* and *Gourmet* but also kettles, irons, a slow cooker, a water filter, a fruit juicer, and a highly sculptural electric knife (1967).

Notable among Grange's other designs are a small gas cooker developed for Osaka Gas in the late 1970s, and a set of microwave containers created for Thorpac in the mid-1980s. These containers stand out for their simple, curved forms and the choice of a high-quality material—in this instance, Udel polysulfone. Grange was also called on to revitalize one of the original icons of British design, George Carwardine's *Anglepoise* lamp (1932), for a design-conscious market (plate 478).

The 2012 Olympic Games in London gave the city an opportunity to showcase the maturity of its creative industries. The design contributions of Barber Osgerby (the Olympic torch), Thomas Heatherwick (the Olympic cauldron), and Zaha Hadid (the swimming stadium) were broadcast around the world. Heatherwick was also responsible for the redesign of the *Routemaster* bus, one of the icons of postwar British design (plate 476). Meanwhile, the Victoria and Albert Museum hosted an exhibition of British design from 1948 to 2012, reinforcing the fact that the nation had established a firm place for itself in the global history of postwar design.

By the early twenty-first century, British design since World War II could clearly be seen as a series of significant shifts in emphasis, led for the most part by farsighted designers, inventors, manufacturers, and retailers, and taking place in a context of growing affluence followed by economic decline. It had alternately hung on to the past and embraced the future, like the fast-changing society whose identity it helped to define.