Accumulating Things: Folk Art and Modern Design

in the Postwar American Projects of Alexander H. Girard

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THESIS

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SUMMARY

This study examines several architectural and design projects by Alexander H. Girard (1907-1993) that demonstrate that a multiplicity or diversity of modernisms was present in the United States in the postwar period. By examining specific projects within some of the various fields in which Girard worked—domestic interiors, museum exhibitions, showroom design, corporate identity, and a world's fair—a greater understanding of Girard as a multidisciplinary figure emerges. Trained as an architect, Girard was a designer who asserted that modern design could incorporate vernacular tendencies, namely the global folk art that he and his wife collected (and eventually donated to the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico). This study examines the intersection between the discourse of modern design and Girard's purposeful accumulation and incorporation of folk art within these modern settings in order to comment on a modernism that was more whimsical in spirit, but still quite serious in its ambitions. It is a case study of a significant designer and collector that contributes to our collective understanding of design and collecting by designers during the period 1945 to 1970. This project utilizes many diverse documents found in archives across the United States and Europe in order to recover the work of Girard as a modern designer who used folk art in various meaningful ways throughout his extensive career.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction

"I very slowly began accumulating things……..."[1]
-Alexander Girard, 1982

Broadly known during the mid-twentieth century for his inventive and wide-ranging projects, architect-designer Alexander Hayden Girard (1907-1993) infused whimsy, exuberant color, and folk art into his elaborate designs. In this dissertation, I examine several major projects conceived and executed by Girard from the peak of his professional career in the 1950s and 1960s when he designed dwellings, showrooms, exhibitions, and restaurants, and directed the Herman Miller textiles division. I seek to understand the postwar period through the lens of Girard's work, his passionate collecting of folk art, and his musings on various topics related to design. As opposed to the standard architectural narrative—that the modern movement pursued abstraction, industrial culture, and mass production[2]—his work demonstrates the diversity present in US postwar design culture and proposes a relationship between the handcrafted and modern architecture and design. Girard's vision of modernism was colored by his (and his wife's) fervent collecting of indigenous folk art from around the world, especially Latin America. The Girards' collection of over 100,000 objects, perhaps the world's largest collection of folk art from varied cultures, was donated to the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe in 1978. Girard believed that the "handcraft

[1] Alexander Girard, Interview by Charlotte Cerny. Transcription to Tape 810.5. Santa Fe, January 27, 1982. Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
[2] Sarah Goldhagen, "Introduction," in *Anxious Modernisms: Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture*, ed. by Sarah Goldhagen and Réjean Legault (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2000), 11.

civilization" was disappearing, thus his devotion to native textiles and multicultural artifacts was an extension of his belief that these remained legitimate forms of contemporary expression.[3] I will examine several of his major projects in relation to some of the main debates within architecture and design during the period, especially "good design;" historic preservation; humane modernism; and advertising and brand identity to show Girard's importance and indicate the ways in which his work contributes to a broader understanding of design in the United States.

As an architect-designer, Girard created a distinctive approach to postwar living that featured an intrepid use of color and a deliberate application of folk art objects into his architectural structures. As part of his design practice, Girard accumulated things beyond the essential amount needed for projects, and I posit that part of his importance lies in his "accumulative vision," an accretive gathering of objects decisively installed within settings. In the mid-twentieth century many acquired non-western, touristic bibelots that were handmade and displayed cultural sensitivity in order to make a statement about their cultural ambitions. In a period of great growth in the US industrial-military complex, Girard's interest in preindustrial past cultures was not unusual, but he was a leader in the field of collecting particular types of folk objects and displaying them in particular ways (Figure 1). What is innovative about Girard's designs that incorporate his folk art collection was his use of spare, rectilinear architectural settings in combination with the studiously arranged handcrafted things in juxtapositions that many found arresting, whimsical, and culturally surprising. Intentionally using objects of

[3] Alexander Girard, "Introduction," in *El Encanto de un Pueblo; The Magic of a People: Folk Art and Toys from the Collection of the Girard Foundation* (New York: Viking Press, 1968), np.

whimsy, which may be defined as things or arrangements that were humorous, outside the norm, seemingly unserious, but always delightful, Girard's artistic practice was rooted in his ability to harness these objects intended to delight. In this dissertation, folk art is understood as objects crafted by non-professional artists as expressions of patriotism, history, or nostalgia. For Girard, the folk art that he acquired from all over the world represented the untrained craftsman and a profound respect for materials and artistic process, all of which he learned while growing up in Italy, appreciating nativity scenes and respecting handcraftsmanship, which originated with his great-grandfather, a cabinetmaker and antiques merchant.[4] By the mid-1950s collecting folk art became "a real mania about making collections for people whenever possible," and his work contributed to an emergence of the handcrafted aesthetic during this period.[5] Girard used folk art in various ways—as an approach to disrupt the spare lines of modern design; as a symbol of travel and leisure; as emblematic of handcrafted work (a reminder of the Arts and Crafts tradition); as a playful and whimsical interjection; as a marker of modernity (not the past); and as a narrative expression to connect with previous generations through engaging in the visual and material delight of arranging spaces with craft.

As fellow designer and friend Charles Eames noted in 1956, "Alexander Girard is interested in the quality of everything."[6] Similarly in 1959, Will Burtin, émigré graphic designer and *Fortune Magazine* art director, called Girard's "impeccable taste and

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[4] Charlene Cerny, "Foreward," *The Spirit of Folk Art: The Girard Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art* (New York: Abrams, in association with the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, 1989), 8.
[5] Alexander Girard, Interview by Mickey Friedman. Transcript, November 9, 1974. Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[6] Charles Eames to Walter McQuade, 26 December 1956, scrapbook, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.

incredible astuteness in terms of space and color treatment….the strongest influence America has in the emotional enrichment of its interior style within the modern design movement."[7] While Burton's statement is an over-exaggeration, Girard's impact on American midcentury design has not been fully explored, and this dissertation explores this marginalized architect-designer as another way to understand design in the US from 1945 to 1970. In large part, therefore, this dissertation is a project of recovery. As a case study of a significant designer and collector, the dissertation will, I hope, add greatly to our understanding of both design and collecting by designers in this period.

B. Sources

The most important archive that I consulted was the Estate of Alexander Girard, which is held by the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany. The remaining archives are located in the United States; I explored the following ones extensively: Braniff Collection, History of Aviation Collection, University of Texas, Dallas, Texas; the Charles Eames and Ray Eames papers, 1850-1989 (bulk 1950-1988), Manuscript Division and The Work of Charles and Ray Eames, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington D. C.; The Edgar P. Richardson Records, 1930-1962, Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, Michigan; the Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan; The Institute of Texan Cultures Oral History Collection, 1967-2011, and the San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio; Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico; and the Miller House and Garden Collection [1953-2008], Indianapolis Museum of Art,

[7] "Attitudes on Design," Talk by Hugh De Pree, Territory Managers Meeting, December 1959, Folder 18, ACCN: 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

Indianapolis, Indiana. I also examined the following archives: Alfred Stieglitz / Georgia O'Keeffe archive, 1728-1986, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut; Edward and Ruth Adler Schnee Papers, Cranbrook Archives, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan; Eero Saarinen Collection (MS 593), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University; Institutional Archives, Museum of Modern Art, New York; Joe Baum Papers, 1934-1998, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library; Maynard L. Parker negatives, photographs, and other material, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California; John and Marilyn Nehuart Papers, 1916-2011, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA; Pan American World Airways Collection, HistoryMiami; Stanley Marcus Collection, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. In addition to these archives, I wove together Girard's narrative using many primary sources, as well as interviewing his son, Marshall Girard, and the designers Ruth Adler Schnee and Marilyn Neuhart.

C. Biography

Because this dissertation explores a segment of Girard's life, I provide a biographical sketch to situate his mid-career work. Born to an American mother, Lezlie Cutler, and an Italian father, Carlo Matteo Girard (who followed in the family practice of woodworking and trading antiques), on May 24, 1907 in New York City, Girard grew up in Florence, Italy amid medieval towers, religious customs, and local traditions. Girard attended the Architectural Association School of Architecture (AA) in London from 1924

through 1929.[8] After World War I, vernacular-inspired Arts and Crafts models were deemphasized in favor of Scandinavian architectural influences, although traditional study of the classical orders within the Beaux Arts system was still considered central. When Girard attended courses in the late 1920s[9], the AA engaged in debates about continental Modernism; Girard would have been aware of major European architectural landmarks, including Le Corbusier's *Pavilion de l'Esprit Nouveau* in Paris, 1925; the *Weissenhofsiedlung* in Stuttgart, 1927; and *Wendingen*'s coverage of Frank Lloyd Wright (Amsterdam, 1921-25). In addition to absorbing these monumental figures, Girard recalled being influenced by Hungarian architect Oskar Kaufmann's neo-rococo theatres in Germany; American-born British sculptor Jacob Epstein's architectural carvings; and "the bright, playful handcrafts that flourished then in Milan, Vienna and Paris."[10]

Back in Italy, Girard attended the Royal School of Architecture in Rome (1929-1931) and participated as a designer of the model rooms for the Florentine Artisans Guild for the 1929 *Exposición Internacional* in Barcelona.[11] After working for a few months in Florence and Stockholm (as a designer for Nordiska Kompaniet), Girard returned to the

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[8] Founded in 1847 by a group of young, dedicated architectural draftsmen, AA was intended to provide training through examination and to protect students from the mistreatment found within the previous British system of apprenticed pupils.

[9] Course records indicate that Girard was a relatively good student, as he consistently received high marks for his *esquisse* during the years.[9] In his second year, he received an Honorable Mention for a 3rd year scholarship, and in his third year, an Honorable Mention for a 3rd year prize, he garnered the Henry Florence Travelling Studentship for £50. *Architectural Association Journal* 42 (August 1926), 39; *Architectural Association Journal* 43 (August 1927), 82. I wish to thank Edward Bottoms, Archivist, Architectural Association, for his assistance in locating records about Girard. Email to author, May 20, 2011.

[10] Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., "Alexander Girard's Architecture," *Monthly Bulletin, Michigan Society of Architects* 27 (January 1953), 19.

[11] Kiera Coffee, with Todd Oldham, *Alexander Girard*, (Los Angeles, California: AMMO, 2011), np.

United States in 1932.[12] He married Susan W. J. Needham of Scarsdale, New York (they met while she was abroad in Italy several years earlier) on March 14, 1936, and moved into an apartment at 159 East 70th Street in Manhattan.[13] While in New York, Girard designed model rooms, retail shops, furnishings, and interiors, and, by marrying Susan, who came from a wealthy and prominent family, he gained a network of future business contacts.[14] Unfortunately, although Susan Girard was instrumental in her husband's design business, the full scope her of involvement has not yet been uncovered.

Seizing upon the burgeoning auto industry in Michigan, the Girards moved to the Detroit suburbs in 1937. Just as architect-designer George Nelson suggested in a 1934 issue of *Fortune* magazine, American industrial designers were making formerly "artless" industries, including refrigerators, radios, and laundry machines, into designed objects.[15] In addition to designing radios (that caught the attention of designer Charles Eames) for the Detrola Radio Company that were exhibited in the Walker Art Center's Everyday Art Gallery's first exhibition *Ideas for Better Living* (1946; in which he also displayed wooden toys that he handcrafted, Figure 2), Girard also planned offices and the cafeteria (using his own furniture designs) for the company's headquarters (1943).[16] At the Walker Art Center, alongside the modernist radios, he also displayed vibrantly painted hand-made wooden toys, suggesting an early commitment to the handcrafted

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[12] Advertisements from the newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* (Summer 1931) in Girard's hand indicate that he worked in Sweden for a short time. Newspapers scrapbooks, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.
[13] "Susan W. Needham Wed to Architect," *New York Times* (March 15, 1936), N7.
[14] Girard's contemporary and fellow textile designer Ruth Adler Schnee remarked that Girard "never had to work hard" because of Susan's connections and financial position. Author interview with Ruth Adler Schnee, April 18, 2012, Southfield, Michigan.
[15] "Both Fish and Fowl? Is the Depression-Weaned Vocation of Industrial Design," *Fortune* (February 1934).
[16] "Gallery for Home Makers," *New York Times* (February 10, 1946), 100.

object.[17] While in Detroit, Girard was active with various automotive contracts, such as the office interiors for Ford Motor Company (1946); architectural commissions, including the Richard W. Jackson house (1947); and furniture and textile designs (for Knoll). Impressed by Girard's design aesthetic, as exemplified by his Grosse Pointe home, architect Eero Saarinen employed him as a color consultant in 1951 for the General Motors Research Center.[18] Girard also began working on museum exhibitions, and he entered into a long partnership with the Herman Miller Furniture Company as Director of the Textiles Division (1952). Along with George Nelson and Charles and Ray Eames, Girard helped shape the vanguard of modern design at Herman Miller, one of the most important US furniture firms.

Girard and his family—Susan and their two children (Marshall and Sansi)—moved to Santa Fe in 1953 to begin the most productive chapter of his professional life. Girard continued working on museum exhibitions, such as *Textiles and Ornamental Arts of India* (1955) at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA); designing domestic and contract interiors, including many projects for the Millers of Columbus, Indiana; collaborating with the Eames Office on such projects as the film *Day of the Dead* (1956); and traveling the globe for various jobs, including the design of the restaurant La Fonda del Sol (1959). He worked for many high-profile clients. Hallmark Cards of Kansas City, Missouri, which sponsored a nativity exhibit in 1962, commissioned Girard to design a guest

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[17] "Ideas for Better Living," *Everyday Art Quarterly* 1 (Summer 1946), 6.
[18] Will Miller, "Eero and Irwin: Praiseworthy Competition with One's Ancestors,"*Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future*, ed. by Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen and Donald Albrecht (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, in association with The Finnish Cultural Institute in New York, The Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki and The National Building Museum, Washington D. C. with support of the Yale University School of Architecture, 2006), 60.

apartment at the top floor of the firm's headquarters.[19] John Deere contracted Eero Saarinen to construct the administrative center in Moline, Illinois (1963). Within the lobby of this corporate building, Girard was commissioned to create a three-dimensional mural, into which he incorporated nearly 2,000 objects.[20] Girard worked tirelessly on these and many other projects, garnering awards during his lifetime, including the Medal of Honor from the Architectural League of New York (1965) and the Honorary Royal Designer for Industry from the Royal Society of Arts in London (1965). He (along with Henry F. du Pont) was presented with the 1966 Elsie de Wolf Award (the group's highest honor) by the New York chapter of the American Institute of Interior Designers for his outstanding contribution to the field of design.[21] Girard was also awarded the American Institute of Architect's Allied Professions Medal in Denver at the 98th national convention of the AIA in 1966.[22]

After his exhibit at the 1968 Hemisfair in San Antonio, Girard's pace began to slow. His last project for Herman Miller was the "Environmental Enrichment" graphic panels of the early 1970s. Girard's contributions to the design field were considered in the exhibition, *The Design Process at Herman Miller: Nelson, Eames, Girard, Propst* at the Walker Art Center (1975) and ten years later in a solo exhibition *Alexander Girard Designs: Fabric and Furniture* at the University of Minnesota, Goldstein Design

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[19] Donald Janson, "Creches from 20 Nations Placed on View," *New York Times* (November 22, 1962), 42.
[20] Girard's goal was to communicate ideas visually and, in his own words, "to preserve fragments of this time—a collection of souvenirs—of John Deere, his successors, theirs works and achievements, the world in which they lived, the things that surrounded them—austere, practical, often poetic—sometimes beautiful." John Kouwenhoven, *Reflections of an Era* (Moline, IL: Deere & Co., 1964), 1.
[21] "Awards Will be Given at Designers' Dinner," *New York Times* (April 8, 1966), 34.
[22] Ada Louise Huxtable, "Capitol Project Stirs Architects," *New York Times* (June 28, 1966), 18.

Museum (1985). His last few projects included redesigning aspects of Irwin Miller's investment management company office (1975); designing an exhibition of African fabrics at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (1976); and opening the Girard Wing at the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe (1982). After a long and prolific career designing interiors, furniture, exhibitions, graphics, textiles, and other objects, Girard died in Santa Fe in 1993.

D. Historiography

No major study of Girard has been undertaken and this dissertation, in some ways, is an act of recovery. In 1998 author Leslie Piña wrote about Girard's work for Herman Miller in *Alexander Girard: Designs for Herman Miller*, which was published by Schiffer Press, a trade publication that was revised and expanded in 2002. Writer Kiera Coffee and designer Todd Oldham recently published a nearly 700-page monograph, *Alexander Girard*, examining Girard's entire career. The archival photographs are useful because they have been reproduced at a scale that is conducive for visual study, but the content is light, as sources are not cited and there is no analysis of Girard's designs.

The publication *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future* (2006) included designs by Girard as he and Saarinen had a lengthy working relationship. The short essay by curator Christopher Monkhouse (with Alexandra Lange) on the interior decoration of the Miller House is a good introduction to this interior, in terms of orientation and sources, but because it was a book devoted to Saarinen, it does not situate the interior in a larger context, nor does it question the use of folk art in an architectural setting of high modernism. Also, the Indianapolis Museum of Art recently published a short book,

Miller House and Garden (2011), which includes a short text introducing the project to a larger audience.

Exhibition catalogs about Girard's work abound, but they are filled with checklists and biographical information. Curator Preston Thayer and architectural journalist-critic Alexandra Lange wrote the exhibition catalog *Modern Design/Folk Art* (2010), which was on view at the University Art Galleries, New Mexico State. Thayer's introductory essay suggests Girard's place in the design field through "mixing folk motifs and modernist rationality."[23] He recounts the familiar rise of American folk art in the early 20th century, but does not bridge the legitimate divide between the Anglo-driven earlier collecting and Girard's multicultural interests. Lange's contribution, "Designing with Folk Art," examines Girard's Deere & Company headquarters design for the lobby mural. Lange has also published on Girard in her blog and other online sources, but her work has largely been introductory due to the limitations of the media.

Girard has also been discussed by Pat Kirkham, who examined the notion of "humane modernism" in the work of Charles and Ray Eames by questioning the role of Ray's decorative touches, including the folk art that was collected because of the couple's association with Alexander Girard and his wife, within her pioneering book, *Charles and Ray Eames: Designers of the Twentieth Century* (1998). Kirkham acknowledged the relationship between the Eameses and the Girards, but because her manuscript was dedicated to Charles and Ray Eames, little attention was spent on Girard and his influence on the Eameses. Building on this idea, Donald Albrecht, in a chapter on "The Hand that Helped the Machine" from the Museum of Arts and Design's exhibition

[23] Preston Thayer, "Modern Design/Folk Art," ex. cat. for University Art Galleries, New Mexico State, Las Cruces, New Mexico, 2010, 5.

catalog *Crafting Modernism* (2011), includes Girard as a designer who "mixed the modern, historical, exotic, and home-grown with élan" as part of a larger discussion on efforts during the period to humanize modern design.[24] Albrecht was also the curator of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum's exhibition *The Opulent Eye of Alexander Girard* (2001); unfortunately, a catalogue did not accompany the show.

There have also been publications exploring Girard's folk art collection. *El Encanto de un Pueblo; The Magic of a People: Folk Art and Toys from the Collection of the Girard Foundation* (1968) illustrates many examples of Girard's collection alongside a two-page introduction penned by the designer. After the Girard Wing opened at the Museum of International Folk Art, *Multiple Visions, A Common Bond: The Girard Foundation Collection* (1983) was published to commemorate the gift. Folklorist Henry Glassie wrote a substantial book, *The Spirit of Folk Art: the Girard Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art* (1989), about the collection.[25] The introduction, written by Stanley Marcus, claims that Girard was the first to incorporate folk art into interiors, and that he made folk art more accessible to a wide public through exhibitions, expositions, and various corporate commissions. *Folk Art from the Global Village: The Girard Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art* (1995) features an article by Jack Lenor Larsen called "A Celebration of the Senses," which provides a biographical overview of the designer's life; the remaining short articles by various scholars are divided by culture

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[24] Donald Albrecht, "The Hand That Helped the Machine," in *Crafting Modernism: Midcentury American Art and Design*, ed. by Jeannine Falino, (New York: Abrams, in association with the Museum of Arts and Design, 2011), 88.

[25] Glassie's lengthy essay addresses the thorny issue of defining folk art; he traces the two categorical divisions of folk art by examining the common ground between the approaches treating community (folk) and those heralding individual creativity (art) within the confines of Girard's global folk art collection.

(Japanese toys; Bengalese textiles; juvenile dramas (or toy theatres); a German crucifix in a bottle; African carved figures; and Mexican earthenware) and explore the folk art that Girard accumulated as cultural artifacts.

E. Summary of Chapters

This dissertation is organized in terms of themes, chronology, and media. Chapter one investigates the artistic practice of designing domestic interiors, using Girard's personal domestic interiors in suburban Detroit (1948) and Santa Fe (1953), as well as the Miller House (1955) in Columbus, Indiana (for his most important clients, Irwin and Xenia Miller), to explore his aesthetic sensibilities, particularly his interest in vernacular architecture and the design principles governing the use of his growing folk art collection. The second chapter focuses on his contribution to the Detroit Institute of Art's *For Modern Living* (1949) exhibition. Museum exhibitions about contemporary design surfaced during the postwar period; for Detroit's show Girard contextualized postwar design within a historical setting. Chapter three explores his showroom designs and the business of selling modern design and global folk art for Herman Miller through the San Francisco showroom (1958) and the Textiles and Objects Shop (1961), a New York showroom devoted to selling Girard's textiles alongside folk art that he sourced from around the globe. The fourth chapter focuses on Girard's varied contributions toward the corporate identity for Braniff Airlines (1964). For this complex project, he overhauled the design of facilities, equipment, and graphics—from airplanes and lobbies to service utensils and interoffice memos—to create an image of modernity and luxury during the jet age that was mixed with an unexpected dose of handcrafted, exotic folk art. The final chapter surveys Girard's pavilion for Hemisfair, the 1968 World's Fair held in San

Antonio, Texas. It details and analyzes Girard's contribution, *The Magic of a People*, which incorporated the Girards' folk art collection from the Latin American world, and argues that Girard, an avid storyteller, composed narrative scenes using his folk art in order to explore an underlying theme of humanism that he and others (including Charles and Ray Eames) had explored since the end of World War II.

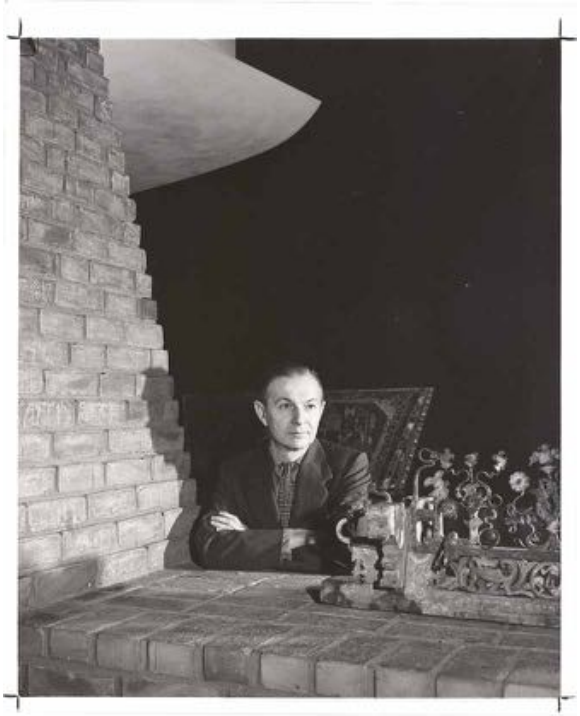

Figure 1
Alexander Girard Portrait, photographed by Andrew Plofchan, February 1953
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04814_01

Figure 2
Girard's handmade, vibrantly painted toys and Detrola radio, designed by Girard
"Ideas for Better Living," *Everyday Art Quarterly* (Summer 1946)

II. HOUSING FOLK ART:

ALEXANDER GIRARD'S DOMESTIC INTERIORS (1948-1958)

> "A trip through a Girard house is as full of surprises and delights as a walk through the great bazaars of Istanbul, or the stalls in London's Flea Market."[26]
> -*House and Home*, 1952

One of the most intimate expressions of a designer is the personal dwelling, and as an architect, Alexander Girard exhibited an early propensity for designing domestic interiors. Girard's first commission after his architectural education in London and Rome was a renovation of an attic in his parents' Florentine villa in 1929; years later he remembered this memorable job because it represented his first statement about modern architectural design.[27] Although Girard had an extensive and multifarious career as an architect-designer, domestic dwellings most explicitly expressed his contributions toward the postwar interior in the United States. After moving from New York to the Detroit suburbs in 1937, Girard lived and worked in Michigan for many years, until he and his family relocated to Santa Fe in 1953. This chapter explores Girard's homes in both Grosse Pointe, Michigan and Sante Fe, New Mexico, tracing how his aesthetic taste impacted his domestic environments, how he used vernacular architecture as a backdrop for decorating with folk art, and exploring Girard's approach to designing for contemporary living. The chapter also examines Girard's most important domestic commission for J. Irwin and Xenia Miller in Columbus, Indiana. Covered by *Architectural Record* and *House and Garden* during the period, this commission added to

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[26] "How Alexander Girard Designs a House," *House and Home* 2 (November 1952), 123.
[27] Lisa Hammel, "Memorable Rooms," *New York Times* (September 30, 1962), AS132.

Girard's reputation as a designer, not least through his association with Eero Saarinen, the architect of the Miller House.[28]

The postwar period in the US was marked by increased affluence and greater consumerism, which materialized in various manifestations of the "ideal" postwar home that were distinguished by incorporating new materials and technologies.[29] In 1953, Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. articulated traits for modern interior design of the "ideal" home, which included comfort, quality, lightness and harmony, all of which were utilized by Girard, whose interiors were "held in check by bold, strong structure."[30] Trained as an architect, Girard was keenly aware of the contemporary discourse, but, according to Kaufmann, his "tone is set by furnishings more than by architecture," meaning that it was the way that Girard populated the space using his principles of design that distinguished his interiors.[31] For Girard, modern design did not necessitate an erasure of the past, but instead maintained a symbiotic relationship with previous eras. Part of his interest in the past is evoked through his awareness of the materiality of objects. This nuanced viewpoint of postwar modern design incorporated a more colorful, textural, and handicraft-inspired modernism. In addition to engaging several key trends, Girard's

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[28] Girard had known Saarinen for many years. He was on Saarinen's team as the painter for the St. Louis Jefferson Memorial, and Saarinen employed Girard as the color consultant for the General Motors Research Center in 1951.

[29] And particularly, by women, who were given new authority in the home as the undisputed leaders of postwar consumer society. For example, see Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003); Elaine Tylor May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. by Joanne Jay Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994); *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer*, ed. by Lynn Spigel and Denise Mann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

[30] My thanks to Penelope Dean for suggesting an examination of Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., *What is Modern Interior Design*? (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1953), 14.

[31] Kaufmann, *What is Modern Interior Design*?, 22.

largest contribution to the postwar interior included his participation in a revival of an interest in "pre-industrial" crafts during the midcentury through collecting folk art and using these hand-hewn objects as touchstones in his various projects, including domestic interiors.

A. Grosse Pointe, Michigan home (1948)

Moving from New York to the Detroit area in 1937 in the hope of improved professional opportunities, Girard worked through particular ideas about modern design and domesticity in his second Grosse Pointe home. A variety of idioms were available to architects during the late 1940s, including Frank Lloyd Wright's organic modernism, which incorporated distinctly American or indigenous references, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's austere and luxurious architecture; there were also many architects practicing in the Detroit-area, some of whom were building modern (like Minoru Yamasaki), but in the conservative suburb of Grosse Pointe, where the Girards settled, architecture was eclectic, ranging from Colonial Revival to various English revival styles.[32]

Savvy about the need for publicity, Girard's homes were published extensively by mass-market design magazines devoted to the home, such as *House Beautiful*, *Interiors*, and *House and Home,* and in architectural and design journals, including *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Review*, and *Domus*. Such magazines lauded Girard's ability to freely plan spaces, which played into a mythic American democratic ideal about independence. Girard believed that everyone should have the *freedom* to be able to choose and arrange furniture and decorative accessories as they see fit, and not as

[32] W. Hawkins Ferry, "The Mansions of Grosse Pointe," *Monthly Bulletin of the Michigan Society of Architects* (March 1956).

prescribed by established conventions.[33] *House Beautiful* editor Elizabeth Gordon defended this vision, and blamed the austere modernism championed by Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier that, in her estimation, had corrupted the nation's design. Gordon wrote:

> There is a well-established movement, in modern architecture, decorating, and furnishings, which is promoting the mystical idea that "less is more."…They are promoting unlivability, stripped-down emptiness, lack of storage space and therefore lack of possessions.[34]

Gordon wrote about an essential desire for beautiful, technologically up-to-date, and practical spaces, and hinted at a fundamental longing in people that propelled them toward collecting things.[35]

While searching for a new home, the Girards found a pair of dilapidated houses on the wooded side of Lake Shore Drive overlooking a pine grove in a remote part of Grosse Pointe Farms (a suburb of Detroit) in 1947.[36] Girard acquired the property, demolished one of the houses, and utilized the foundation to build a new structure that joined the space separating the two original buildings (Figure 3). He creatively combined a single-story cottage and a two-story dwelling into an original, highly individual home composed of twelve rooms (Figures 4-5). The vernacular board and batten pine exterior that he retained belies the experimental, atypical interior designed by Girard (Figure 6).

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[33] Robin Schuldenfrei has suggested that sometimes "outsiders" can hone in on American topics more accurately than natives, as they might have the benefit of critical distance.
[34] Elizabeth Gordon, "The Threat to the Next America," *House Beautiful* 95 (April 1953), 126.
[35] Gordon's viewpoint is complicated by her devotion to Frank Lloyd Wright, who was frequently not viewed as a modern architect during the period.
[36] "A Detroit Architect Builds One House Where Two Stood Before," *Architectural Forum* 90 (February 1949), 95.

Several prevailing elements of domestic architecture and design of the postwar house included an open plan, standardized storage units, built-in furniture, a free-standing fireplace, large glass windows, and space linking the indoors with outdoors. Girard also incorporated unique attributes within the interior. As *House and Home* noted,

> Girard is tremendously interested in details—the smaller the better—so that the fleeting glances recorded here (glances of a pile of logs, or of some paving stones) are no accidents in the design; they are points of interest along your way, small enough for the designer who knows better than most how to keep the observer interested and amused.[37]

Girard possessed a penchant for the collecting and display of what many thought of as "knick-knacks." The house was featured in numerous domestic and international publications,[38] and *Interiors* called it "collage architecture," namely a unified structure that contained various assembled and disparate parts. *House and Home* wrote, "confusion, knickknacks, free forms, junk or driftwood or toys—all can have consistency only if they are selected with consistently good and imaginative taste."[39] And, according to the *New York Times*, "most unexpected…is the profusion of highly ornamental accessories."[40] In other words, a major home design magazine and a leading US newspaper found the arrangement of objects in the interior to be unusual.

The photographs used to publicize the home were just as important as the text describing them. For *House and Home*, Girard's friend, the designer Charles Eames, was invited to photograph the Grosse Pointe home (Figure 7). Eames focused on Girard's tools for design—"brushes, pastes, inks, paints, wire, rope and toys"—his outdoor

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[37] "How Alexander Girard Designs a House," *House and Home* 2 (November 1952), 121.
[38] The magazines include *Domus* (May 1947); *Architectural Forum* (February 1949); *Interiors* (September 1949 and January 1953); *Studio Yearbook* (1950/51); *House and Home* (November 1952); and *House Beautiful* (February 1953).
[39] "How Alexander Girard Designs a House," 129.
[40] Mary Roche, "Architect's Own," *New York Times* (February 27, 1949), SM38.

collage, and his collection and particular displays of (what the magazine called) "exquisite junk" around the house, as characteristics that defined Girard's home.[41] Similar features were found in different configurations in the Eameses' apartment, and most especially, the house they designed and moved into in late December 1949. Girard's interior influenced the Eameses "functioning decoration," which incorporated carefully arranged groups of varied objects—those of "extra-cultural surprise"—within several interior spaces to produce an aesthetic of plenty with plush furnishings, handcrafted toys, and folk art objects.[42] Indeed, thereafter, the Girards and the Eameses mutually influenced the interiors they inhabited, the ways they inhabited them, and the objects within them.

Girard designed the large living room as a two-story connection between the two buildings (Figure 8). Within the multifunctional zones of the living room, he varied the height of the ceiling and floor to indicate special functions; for example, the living room is sunken three steps below the entrance hall. Girard's Grosse Pointe home maintains many of the precepts outlined in postwar housing guides, including Elizabeth Mock's *If You Want to Build a House* (MoMA, 1946). In it, Mock described the necessity for a fresh approach to postwar living that includes requisite space for living, provisions for sunlight, the idea of openness through use of glass, appropriate use of materials, and access to an outdoor garden or terrace, all of which are found in Girard's living room. Mock also noted the denigration of previous historical styles in postwar housing; Girard,

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[41] "How Alexander Girard Designs a House," 129.
[42] Pat Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames,* 164. Constructed in 1949 (although Eames and Saarinen formulated the idea in 1945), the Eames house was constructed of off-the-shelf steel components as a structural and rational glass-and-steel box contrasting its warmly decorated interior.

however, did not fully participate in Mock (and MoMA's) vision because he repurposed vernacular structures in his designs, thus demonstrating a willingness to incorporate the old into the new.

Mock's book on postwar living emphasized natural elements for the home, including sunlight, indoor plants, and organic materials, such as wood and brick. Girard's sculptural brick fireplace, although not technically in the center of the living room, was one of the focal points of the space. It also provided functionality as a partition by creating a natural corridor for circulation from the entrance (Figures 9-11). Girard's undated sketch for the living room depicts the fireplace as central, prominent, and the most developed idea for the room; it also reveals space planning for other interior components and ideas for furnishings (Figure 12). Another sketch for the living room reveals further attributes of postwar housing, modernized built-in furniture with an extended sofa and case pieces (Figure 13), suggesting that Girard was creating up-to-date but not innovative interiors when using such features.

Another zone of the living room presented yet another conventional postwar feature—the picture window (Figure 14).[43] Situated in a low-ceiling section of the living room, the long band of windows faced south in order to maximize winter sunlight. This overtly modern feature provided the greatest amount of light for sitting and reading in this area (Figure 15). Girard fashioned a space with bookshelves nearby, and, in a nod toward postwar reading habits, a large rack of magazines further delineated this section of the larger living room (Figure 16). The flexible space included a wide range of furniture types and pieces, some more overtly modern than others. A windsor rocking chair, for

[43] For more on this phenomenon, see Sandy Isenstadt, *The Modern American House: Spaciousness and Middle-Class Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

example, alluded to the colonial past and to an idyllic view of nineteenth-century life, whereas the furniture designed by Eames, Saarinen, and Girard was markedly modern; old and new were also joined together in the characteristic of "quality" (or, "the very nature and grain of a thing"), which was one of Kaufmann's traits for the ideal modern interior.[44] The reading space was also used as an extension of Girard's office (located nearby behind the partition) (Figure 17). Figure 18 shows Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. (Director of the Industrial Design Department at MoMA) and Ray Eames working in this adaptable space perhaps on the Detroit Institute of Art's *For Modern Living* exhibition, which opened on September 11, 1949 (see chapter 2). However, the house was not just used for work, as a playful Girard ensconced by the Eameses, Kaufmann, and Susan demonstrates that lighter moments were also shared in the house (Figure 19).

In terms of planning the postwar American home, many architects and designers advocated for indoor-outdoor rooms that were increasingly popular from the turn of the century. Aided by technological advances in glass, large windows—an attribute of modern architecture—facilitated a greater indoor-outdoor experience by offering dwellers views of the outside. For the average suburban resident, however, "where nature does not provide the view," they could shape their own outdoor spaces with plantings that supplemented the existing (often nonexistent) landscape.[45] An abundance of plants located throughout Girard's living room inserted color, texture, and a sense of proximity to nature outdoors (Figure 20). Many of them were located in front of one of the most

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[44] Kaufmann, *What is Modern Interior Design*?, 7. Figure 8 illustrates Edward Durell Stone's A. Conger Goodyear's bedroom (1939) with a Windsor chair and traditional bedspread.

[45] George Nelson and Henry Wright, *Tomorrow's House: How to Plan your Post-War Home Now* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), 153.

arresting elements of the interior—a set of garage doors that he retained from the original structure. The lightweight metal garage doors functioned as a sunshade when set open in the summer (Figures 21-22), but when the garage doors were closed during the winter, Girard designed wood panels to fit into the screen sections in order to transform the doors into an interior wall (Figure 23). The north wall of the living room thus disappeared in the summer and created an indoor/outdoor room with access to a garden (Figure 24).[46] Girard was keenly aware of the contemporary trend toward walls with large expanses of glass windows [and even used them in other commissions (Figure 25)], but for his home he opened up the space unconventionally with garage doors, a creative example of adaptive reuse of a remnant from the old structure.

Separated (but still visible) from the living room by stairs, the elevated dining room was a laboratory for mixing foreign and familiar, luxurious and humble objects. At one end of the room a service counter acted as a sideboard for storage and display (Figures 26-27), while a large plywood panel was used to obstruct a view into the kitchen. In the dining room Girard experimented with a Chinese paper kite as a lantern—a quirky, ephemeral counterpoint to the sculptural bark centerpiece on the table. In the Girard household, table arrangements varied for each occasion and were full of whimsy in their non-matched, culturally disparate compositions. One example of a table arrangement incorporated Russian ceramic dishes, Italian candlesticks, a Persian brass tray, and a French glass decanter alongside an Indian figure, which was engineered as a place card holder (Figure 28). Girard commented that table settings "express my own and my wife's predilection for the enjoyment of the many small things that come into our

[46] Screens were inserted into the openings to protect against insects.

daily lives—to emphasize some of the things useful, playful, or ceremonial that can create various pervading moods at meal times."[47] For the Girards, table settings were another manifestation of accumulating things and displaying them for enjoyment. He delighted in creating these compositions as a way to preserve aspects of past cultures and old technologies; to enjoy difference and mixing old and new in unconventional ways (for more on his table settings, see Chapter 3). Indeed, unlike most people, who use the same dishes everyday (except perhaps for holidays), the Girards—whose antique and contemporary tableware collection filled multiple cabinets—celebrated the meal as a ritual, thus they experimented by composing table arrangements, much like other compositional studies, in an artful, articulate, seemingly disparate manner.

A variety of materials, ranging from the traditional but mass-produced (brick) to the industrial mass-produced (plywood), were used in the Girard house, indicating that he was not against the machine-made. Variety was also evident in his decorating; various cabinets held things (Figure 29), as, for example, a storage cabinet in the dressing room that housed the Girards' fledgling collection of toys from various corners of the world (Figure 30). This cabinet served to efficiently organize the couple's growing collection of things and functioned as early experimental shelving that eventually developed into the storage wall.

For the outdoor dining porch, Girard collected pieces of textured wood and created an abstract collage-type arrangement as an artistic backdrop for dining; he freely wove a "fabric" of various textures and colors in pieces of differing sizes on which he arranged some of his *objets trouvés*. In a spirit of experimentation, he created the collage

[47] "New York Exhibition of Table Settings," *The Times of India* (December 17, 1956), 11.

over several months, adjusting the objects displayed over time, as demonstrated by two photographs published only a few months apart in *House and Home* and *House Beautiful* (Figures 31-32). He also continually experimented with his domestic environments as he acquired new objects. He treated the pieces of wood as canvases onto which objects were hung (later implementing this method in Santa Fe as well). According to his son, Marshall, Girard continually experimented by collecting scraps of wood to create wooden sculptures [as seen in the form before the fireplace that Girard carved (Figure 33)].[48] Girard enjoyed working with his hands, particularly exploring the materiality of wood. In fact, Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. considered Girard as much a craftsman as an architect-designer because of his interest in the materiality of things, noted that the "the intrinsic qualities of materials fascinate him….."[49]

1. Girard's Aesthetic Preferences

The table arrangements, storage wall, and outdoor collage are illustrative examples of Girard's "accumulative vision," and also elucidate his aesthetic preferences. In the US individuals were encouraged to utilize their personal taste within interiors during the postwar years; Elizabeth Gordon discerned a new trend in the October 1952 issue of *House Beautiful*: "Watch how people are exercising free taste, mixing good things regardless of the rules. They are bringing together things they like from all periods, all countries and all cultures."[50] Among the many modernities circulating within

[48] This information is from a conversation between the author and Marshall Girard, Santa Fe, February 27, 2012. Further, the wooden dolls that are still being made today developed from an experiment with a new band saw.
[49] Kaufmann, "Alexander Girard's Architecture," 19.
[50] As quoted in "Let's Include Everybody In," *House and Home* 3 (June 1953), 115.

architecture and design was Girard's interior design solution of "free play of their own taste," an uninhibited, whimsical, global perspective on design that was inclusive (rather than exclusive).[51] About Girard's home a *House Beautiful* writer noted, "better by far the cluttered, individual home of a free man than the clichéd product of the conventional-minded," because he cast aside regimented rules of "good taste" for an emancipated approach.[52] Writing for the *New York Times* in 1959, Aline Saarinen noticed that "another kind of art that is now beginning to be found in American homes represents a fairly new trend: small objects of various kinds."[53] She continued, "the inclusion of such objects in the home—especially as foils for modern interiors and modern mass-produced furniture—has long been a part of sophisticated, or what social commentator Mr. Lynes would call "highbrow" taste."[54] Critics during the period elucidated Girard's contribution as a great selector of carefully chosen objects to complement specific settings.

Tapping into the cultural preoccupation with taste, in 1954 critic Russell Lynes observed US cultural patterns at the mid-century in his biting and humorous *The Tastemakers*, which explored social class and taste at various levels of US society.[55] Updating the theories of economist-sociologist Thorsten Veblen, who wrote about conspicuous consumption of goods by the leisure class at the turn of the twentieth

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[51] Penny Sparke, "Taste and the Interior Designer," in *After Taste: Expanded Practice in Interior Design*, ed. by Kent Kleinman, Joanna Merwood-Salisbury, and Louis Weinthal (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012), 15-27; Joseph A. Barry, "The Girard Story shows how Homemaking can be an Art," *House Beautiful* 95 (February 1953), 71.
[52] Barry, "The Girard Story shows how Homemaking can be an Art," 70.
[53] Aline B. Saarinen, "Everybody's a Collector," *New York Times* (March 8, 1959), SMA16.
[54] Ibid.
[55] This followed on his satirical essay for *Harpers Magazine* (February 1949) called "Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow," in which claims to taste levels could no longer be based on one's socio-economic background. *Life* magazine then took this up in their own essay and taste level chart by Tom Funk in the April 1949 issue.

century, in *The Status Seekers* (1959) social critic Vance Packard suggested that merchandising and advertising to specific social classes contributed to the idea of goods as status symbols.[56] Packard recognized that "status seekers" used hand-wrought goods for decoration as status symbols for the home—a showcase for culture.[57] And whether we see Girard's designs as related to status seeking, they were closely related to a particular type of cultural capital, which was restricted to a relatively small but growing artistic elite. As sociologist Herbert Gans pointed out in his 1974 *Popular Culture and High Culture*, the idea of a taste culture reflected the class and education of the participating public, thus cultural products (such as Girard's interiors) marked taste and class differences.[58] Cultural capital is another way of looking at what people sought out by devising interiors that referenced cultural pluralism and disparate objects in the ways that interiors by Girard and the Eameses did. Such interiors demonstrated the owner's cultural capital.

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[56] Vance Packard, *The Status Seekers* (New York: D. McKay Co, 1959), 4-9.

[57] Elements of Veblen's theory could be applied to the elite classes that patronized folk art objects. The more useful something is, the less valued it is by the leisure class; folk art, once removed from its original context, becomes useless, a thing, thus valued by the elite. Further, according to Veblen, if something is expensive, then it is beautiful to the leisure class; certainly once folk art was taken up by modernists in the early 20th century in America—and sold through the conventional gallery system—it became more expensive to acquire (and therefore desirable).

[58] Gans argues that high culture purports to be individualistic, but, in his estimation, it is more homogenous that aspects of popular culture. Herbert J. Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste* (New York: Basic Books, 1999; revised ed, orig 1974), 32. More recently, taste has been viewed as a socio-economic construct; to use sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's terms, Girard's multi-ethnic folk-laden, vibrant spaces (as a cultural practice) are another form of distinction. His theory explains how the deployment of taste in everyday life helps to reproduce social class boundaries (or another example of elite taste). Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

The escalating rate of American travel in the mid-twentieth century promoted a taste for vernacular objects (particularly those from far-flung locales; see chapter 5). One of these exotic destinations that became popular was Mexico. Beginning in the early 20th century, the status of Mexican folk art was enhanced by US citizens (and Mexicans) who acquired handicrafts, such as embroideries, pottery, and lacquer trays; many believed that Mexicans "had a profound and innate sense of beauty that permeated all aspects of their daily lift, including the manufacture of objects for their own use or for sale in the marketplace."[59] Often tourists purchased folk art on vacations, and Girard argued that, rather than hide it away, "It should be out where other can see it. After all, it's a very personal expression of taste and you should be eager to show it off."[60] Girard's sentiment is an over-exaggeration, as many people displayed their touristic souvenirs during the 1950s; he was likely responding to orthodox modernists, who did not like them doing so.

Girard's adopted city of Santa Fe was also considered an exotic tourist destination in the early twentieth century.[61] Following the establishment of a small art colony that had formed in Taos, artists and writers arrived in New Mexico in the teens and twenties. Encouraged by tenets of the Arts and Crafts movement, they "drew inspiration from the study of primitive art and began to tout Pueblo ways as a wholesome preindustrial alternative" to the modern world.[62] The mood of appreciating "pre-industrial" pasts was

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[59] Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935* (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1995), 134.
[60] AR1990.30: Girard Foundation Collection, Multiple Visions (EGC-82), Publicity Girard Wing Book I, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe
[61] Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).
[62] Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe,* 141.

strong, and given Girard's interest in those and in materiality, Sante Fe and its adobe architecture, with its sculptural qualities, fascinated him.[63]

2. Omnivorously Accumulating Folk Art

Part of Girard's taste culture included his predilection for collecting and displaying global folk art. Although he collected folk art in Michigan, when he and his family moved to Santa Fe in 1953, his home became a manifestation of this devotion. Girard attributed his collecting of folk art to an early fascination with Nativity scenes during his childhood in Italy where craft traditions were extremely strong. He claimed to have acquired his first piece of folk art, a Mexican horse-shaped ceramic bank, while living in New York in the 1930s, and the Girards' enthusiasm for Mexican folk art increased on their honeymoon vacation there in 1939.[64] Indeed, their growing interest may have dictated their choice of place for their honeymoon. He stated,

> In the remote towns and hinterlands, the peasants were still making marvelous textiles, wooden and fabric dolls, and brightly painted clay figurines….I had never encountered such visual richness before. Everything seemed magical. It was dizzyfying. I didn't realize then that the objects were folk art. They were simply things I couldn't live without.[65]

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[63] A thread of "antimodernism" began earlier in the century as a cultural movement that desired to impinge upon the spread of consumerism and industrialism of late 19th century America; part of this battle was staged in the home. See T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

[64] Cerny, "Foreward," *The Spirit of Folk Art,* 8. Girard's folk art collecting impulse has also been attributed to his honeymoon trip to Mexico in 1939. Girard also wrote about receiving a seventeenth-century nativity scene from his grandfather as a 16 year old boy living in Italy. Alexander Girard, "Folk Art," *People to People* (Summer 1963).

[65] AR1990.30: Girard Foundation Collection, Multiple Visions (EGC-82), Publicity Girard Wing Book IV (quoting from Charles Lockwood, "For the Sake of Folk Art," *Connoisseur Magazine*), Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe.

Thereafter, he and Susan feverishly accumulated indigenous folk art from Latin America and around the world until they donated their collection of over 100,000 objects to the Museum of International Folk Art (Santa Fe) in 1978.[66] Girard believed that "handcraft" civilizations were disappearing, thus his devotion to native crafts was an act of historical preservation but also a reflection of his belief that these remained legitimate forms of contemporary expression.[67] He would demonstrate the ways in which folk art functioned in contemporary life through many projects over the course of his career.

Collecting folk art began in earnest in the United States after the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial, which invoked memories of an authentic "American" experience. Folk art from the collections of American "modern" artists, including Marsden Hartley and William Zorach, was first publicly exhibited in New York in 1924 at the Whitney Studio Club (later the Whitney Museum of American Art). These artists and collectors, such as Electra Havemeyer Webb, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, and gallerist Edith Halpert, who exhibited and sold folk art alongside modern art in her influential New York Downtown Gallery, purchased folk art (such as hooked rugs and weathervanes) in the early twentieth century. The connection between modern art and global folk art (or "primitive" art) was enhanced by MoMA's 1933 exhibition *American Sources of Modern Art*. In it Holger Cahill argued that one of the sources of modern art was indigenous art of native Americans from Mexico and Central and South America.[68]

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[66] Interestingly, a renewed interest in collecting dovetails with the accelerated travel of Americans during the course of the twentieth century.
[67] Alexander Girard, "Introduction," in *El Encanto de un Pueblo; The Magic of a People: Folk Art and Toys from the Collection of the Girard Foundation* (New York: Viking Press, 1968), np.
[68] See Holger Cahill, *American Sources of Modern Art*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1933).

Once anthropologists began to examine this material in the late nineteenth century, opinions shifted from considering these objects as "primitive" to viewing them as valuable for study and collecting.[69]

Girard believed that folk art was "the expression of naïve and unsophisticated people who have lived close to the earth and created wondrous fantasies out of the simplest materials."[70] Thus, consistent with many of his generation, Girard held a primitivist view of folk art as emanating from "unsophisticated" cultures in which untrained (or "primitive") artists created the objects he admired. [71] He was unconcerned with the ethnographic background of the works and happy to remove them from their cultural contexts. Indeed, Girard was more interested in using these works as objects to delight the inhabitants of modern interiors. He thought, "we should preserve evidence of the past, not as a pattern for sentimental imitation, but as nourishment of the creative spirit of the present."[72] In his opinion, modernity—increasingly emotionless and mechanized[73]—was destroying folk art, and Girard believed in the need to preserve traditional folk art because these objects had "intrinsic value."[74] The foundation for his collection was "really pretty simple: love the objects came first, and there was absolutely

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[69] Arguably, these artifacts are still studied from a perspective of primitivism today.
[70] Girard, *El Encanto de un Pueblo*, np.
[71] Current thinking has reevaluated this position, beginning with the seminal 1977 exhibition publication by Kenneth L. Ames, *Beyond Necessity: Art in the Folk Tradition*.
[72] Silvia Spitta, *Misplaced Objects: Migrating Collections and Recollections in Europe and the Americas* (Houston: University of Texas Press, 2009), 149.
[73] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, ed. by Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski (New York: Routledge, 2004).
[74] AR1990.30: Girard Foundation Collection, Multiple Visions (EGC-82), Publicity Girard Wing Book I (quoting from Ken Ulrich, "Alexander Girard: A Clutterbug with Class," *Albuquerque Magazine* (March 1978), Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe.

no other criterion for collecting."[75] It has been asserted that the marginalized artists who crafted folk arts lost their historical relevancy once they were introduced into a modern, Western society.[76] However, Girard, and the others collecting contemporary handicrafts, opened up the possibility for certain craftspeople to sell more objects. Further, Girard's devotion to handicrafts is rooted in the British Arts and Crafts Movement and its figurehead (and ardent socialist) William Morris's position on handicrafts; Morris sought to restore dignity in labor, and within the home, he advocated for an erasure of the division between fine art and craft. In "The Revival of Handicraft," Morris wrote that for art workmanship to possess any value it must include "some of the workman's individuality," a detail not lost on Girard.[77] Similar to Morris, Girard's interiors constructed space for folk art within modern settings and helped validate the crafts and individual expression in an era of greater standardization and uniformity within the goods produced.

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[75] Kate P. Kent, "The Girard Foundation Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art," *African Arts* 17 (November 1983), 64.

[76] Societies become marginalized due to a variety of reasons, including technological shifts, capitalism, among other forces that suppress traditional modes of thinking and doing. See James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1988). Clifford does not believe that native objects need to be properly contextualized to understand them, as some scholars have argued. Instead, he contends that ethnographic siting as aesthetic contextualization is problematic because they are two different categories, and should not be conflated. Of course, this conflation occurred most notably in MOMA's 1984 *Primitivism* exhibition. As one origin myth for modernism, artists (Picasso as the harbinger) collected, imitated, and were influenced by "primitive" works.

[77] Unlike Girard, Morris was a fervent socialist, and his radical political roots impacted his viewpoint that the act of making handicrafts was a political response to shoddy goods made available by the Industrial Revolution. William Morris, "The Revival of Handicraft," originally published in *Fortnightly Review* (November 1888). *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European and American Writings, 1750-1940*, ed. by Isabelle Frank (New Haven and London: The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts and Yale University Press, 2000), 169.

Writing about design of the mid-century from the perspective of the 1980s, textile designer Jack Lenor Larsen explained, "When we longed for humanizing elements, Alexander Girard filled this void with *popular artes* of Latin America."[78] He also alluded to the large number of objects within such interiors, noting 'Clutter' was *in.*"[79] Of course, Girard was not alone in his endeavors; there were many architect-designers, such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Charlotte Perriand, who demonstrated an inclination toward the vernacular.[80] As Sarah Williams Goldhagen has noted, after World War II, some architects "studied the forms of 'primitive' cultures in an ostensible if not actual search for their social functions and meanings."[81] Despite much of the modernist approach, as Alice Friedman has pointed out, a new tone at one of the US's main bastions of modernism, the Museum of Modern Art, in which the "value of working with regional and vernacular forms, natural materials, handicraft, and a diverse range of surface treatments and other subtle ornamental strategies" emerged in the 1940s.[82]

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[78] Jack Lenor Larsen, "Textiles," in *Design Since 1945*, ed. by Kathryn B. Hiesinger and George B. Marcus (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1983), 177.
[79] Jack Lenor Larsen, "Textiles," in *Design Since 1945*, ed. by Kathryn B. Hiesinger and George B. Marcus (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1983), 177.
[80] According to Joan Ockman, Perriand had "an affinity for natural objects and artifacts of vernacular culture…and they occupied a privileged place in both her philosophy and practice of design." Joan Ockman, "Lessons from Objects: Perriand from the Pioneer Years to the 'Epoch of Realities,'" *Charlotte Perriand: An Art of Living*, ed. by Mary McLeod (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2006), 154. Additionally, Neil Levine discusses Wright's renewed interest in primitivism at Taliesin West in the postwar years. Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 290-1.
[81] Sarah Williams Goldhagen, "Introduction," *Anxious Modernisms: Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture*, ed. by Goldhagen and Réjean Legault (Montréal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2000), 19.
[82] This is important because MoMA was influential in the sphere of mid-century design. Alice Friedman, *American Glamour and the Evolution of Modern Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 48.

Girard's projects did not take into consideration the persons who made these objects or their locations by attempting to create taxonomic displays. He cast aside these anthropological and art historical concerns when collecting and fashioning spaces because he desired objects that were visually stimulating, well-made, and looked pleasing together. By omnivorously accumulating folk art, Girard possessed the materials to furnish and decorate his interiors. Luxury retailer (and fellow collector) Stanley Marcus claimed that Girard was the first person to incorporate folk art into interiors, and that he made folk art more accessible to a wide public through exhibitions and various corporate commissions.[83] While not the first person by any means, Girard may have been the professional designer to most publically proclaim folk art as fashionable for decorating postwar modern interiors. Girard defied a modern architecture that dictated that only essentials should be incorporated; instead of an uncluttered and pristine setting, Girard created an "environment of contrasts" in which native objects collected from around the world were positioned for contemplation and amusement.[84]

B. <u>At home in Santa Fe</u>

Alongside these folk art objects, Girard sought to integrate modern architecture with local culture and traditional materials through the adobe (sun-dried mud block) buildings found in Santa Fe. The Girards were not alone in their infatuation with Santa Fe; Mabel Luhan Dodge (in the late teens), Georgia O'Keeffe (in 1940), and other artists and writers moved to the southwest to gain a "clearer vision, artistically, politically and

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[83] Stanley Marcus, "Introduction," *The Spirit of Folk Art: the Girard Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art*, (New York: Abrams, in association with the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, 1989).
[84] "House of Many Colors," *Architectural Forum* 106 (February 1957), 132.

emotionally."[85] Girard manipulated parts of a 200-year-old, a 70-year-old, and a more recent adobe structure composed of white plaster walls and floors paved in a dark-reddish stone into a complex statement of modernism, which, for Girard, included elements of a Southwestern vernacular tradition (Figures 34-35). Exterior surfaces were plastered and painted in a pinkish raw umber to simulate natural adobe, demonstrating Girard's respect for materials. This predilection for native materials (or simulations of them) and the uneven, highly textured walls and stone floors also speak to Girard's interest in materiality, which dates back to at least the 1930s. In a 1938 article about his interior design for a Birmingham, Michigan project, the author noted Girard's attraction to the materiality of surfaces, including wood, leather, glass, metal, and plastic; their uses; and his artistic interest in creating mosaics, murals and sculptures (Figure 36).[86] Part of the concern for materiality included exploiting surfaces, but for Girard, instead of manufactured materials, natural ones, including the adobe of the Southwest (or the plaster and paint to simulate it), more accurately reflected his vernacular concerns. Girard also reclaimed the previous building's pillars and beams, as well as windows, which were few and small, further preserving the memory of the original structures. The *Architectural Review* (London) wrote that Girard's home was a recent attempt to integrate modern architecture with "strongly characterized local conditions," otherwise known as the vernacular.[87] Offering an explanation for the move to Santa Fe, Girard has said,

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[85] Spitta, *Misplaced Objects*, 144.
[86] W. Rendell Story, "Interior Decorators of Today: Alexander Girard," *The London Studio* 16 (July 1938), 54-57.
[87] "House at Santa Fe," *Architectural Review (London)* 118 (August 1955), 80.

> We chose the house at the outset because it afforded a lot of interior space which was adaptable to all the experimenting we like to do. Most of the ideas we try here later take shape in projects for clients.[88]

Beyond the entrance hall, the heart of the home—the living room—was a light and airy space with high ceilings and bright white walls (Figure 37). Without doors to separate the rooms, doorways were framing devices through which to view objects in adjoining rooms (Figure 38). Using the same tools as an exhibition designer, Girard as an interior designer considered sight lines and objects on axis through door openings. Further emphasizing his curatorial eye, he illustrated a penchant for displaying objects in a living room storage wall—a feature that became a Girard hallmark (Figure 39). Used by him in domestic and contract interiors, storage walls developed from the early twentieth-century into a flexible furniture-type (despite its expansive size and immobility). Specialized for location and function, Girard's storage walls improved upon the mass-produced version that George Nelson designed for and introduced at Herman Miller Furniture Company in 1946.[89] Nelson may have promoted the storage wall on a wide scale, but Girard suggested how to use it in a dynamic, fresh way. For Girard, the decorative function, or appearance of the storage wall, was critical, while the functional use (storage) was secondary, which was antithetical to Nelson's viewpoint. In the living room storage wall, Girard created an accessible way to view and interpret objects. Almost as if designing a museum display, groups of figures were arranged in a legible manner

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[88] "Fashions in Living: Where the Alexander Girards Live and Work," *Vogue* 139 (May 1, 1962), 181.

[89] The storage wall appeared in *Architectural Forum* (November 1944) and *Life Magazine* (January 22, 1945). It was also prominently featured in George Nelson and Henry Wright, *Tomorrow's House: A Complete Guide for the Home-Builder* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946).

within shelves that formed grids. Lit by industrially produced dimmers, the storage wall was also given softness and character through the placement of votive candles, which may recall Mexican and other Latin American shrines. Artful arrangements were orchestrated within the niches, including several ethnographically diverse dolls standing within a composed narrative tableau amidst leafy branches and a sun-like suspended object.

Alongside Nelson, Girard was recognized during the mid-century for his contributions to what he considered the fundamental furniture object of his era—the room divider or storage wall. In the pages of *House Beautiful*, in addition to illustrating the many storage apparatus in the Girard Sante Fe home, the journalist suggested the reasons for Girard's success; due to his architectural training, he was able to order these units in a strong geometric fashion, with an eye toward "strict organization."[90] In other words, on this occasion he was commended to the extent that his work accorded with the principles of modernist "rational" design. When in 1956 Alcoa, the aluminum industrial company, contracted Girard and others to fashion new images for aluminum through a design prototype and advertising program for the *Forecast Program*, Girard contributed an aluminum room divider (unfortunately never commercially produced) (Figure 40). For Girard, the storage wall functioned as a place to gather objects; to organize the display of a collection; and to arrange the *objets d'art* in an attractive way.[91] In their spare time, the

[90] "A Serious Collector of Playfulness and How He Lives," *House Beautiful* 105 (April 1963), 134-137.
[91] Rita Reif, "Bric-a-Brac Gets Setting in a Divider," *New York Times* (December 6, 1958), 27.

Girards liked to "raze and reconstruct the room divider," constantly adding variety for their own viewing and contemplation of objects.[92]

Girard acknowledged his interest in the idea of souvenirs, and the construction of memory through these objects, writing that "in most of us there is a tendency to try to halt time, to relive the past through the accumulation of souvenirs."[93] The meaning and interest in authenticity has changed, but, for Girard, I think that the authentic was experienced when the objects were procured on his varied touristic journeys; once the objects became manipulated in his design projects, they still carried meaning, but their original meaning was altered.[94] Simply put by Silvia Spitta, "when things move, things change."[95] For Girard, the rational grid-like system of the storage wall provided the systematic organization to contain his folk art, and could function to create a connection between identity, things, and memory.

At the same time as he felt the necessity to contain some objects within grid-like systems, other objects were displayed in the Girard's home in quite different ways. In the living room, adobe-sculpted furniture was enlivened and made more comfortable with native textiles (Figure 41). The living room had few movable objects as Girard focused on built-in furniture, including a masonry table (that also functioned as a backrest), and a fireplace seat (otherwise used as a reclining chaise that continued along the top of the fireplace) (Figure 42). Positioned before the dining room, another sitting area featured a

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[92] Ibid.
[93] Girard, *El Encanto de un Pueblo*, np. He does this most notably in the Girard Wing of the Museum of International Folk Art.
[94] Spitta is using the work of George Kubler, particularly *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (1962).
[95] Spitta, *Misplaced Objects*, 3.

low daybed and a lobed coffee table, which Girard adapted from a Moroccan brass tray.[96] This sofa bed was replaced only a few years later with a conversation pit, an experimental space of plastered cinder block that was lined with mattresses and pillows for comfort (Figure 43).

With its enveloping walls, the conversation pit created an intimate, separate space within a larger room—a kind of micro-interior—that was largely used for socializing or entertaining. A sunken living room was present in the Case Study House #9 (1950; for John Entenza), designed by Eero Saarinen and Charles Eames. The idiosyncratic architect Bruce Goff utilized sunken conversation pits in the Ford House (1948; Aurora, IL) and within his domestic architecture during the 1950s, and, according to a 1959 article in the *New York Times*, the conversation pit had won acceptance in American homes during the 1950s.[97] Citing historic precedents in Roman dining pits and Persian winter sitting rooms, journalist Cynthia Kellogg claimed that contemporary architects and designers (Girard's Santa Fe conversation pit was illustrated alongside examples by Benjamin Baldwin and Ward Bennett) developed these spaces as an "extension of two important trends: built-in furnishing and low seating."[98] As a site of experimentation, Girard continued to remodel (which he had also done in Grosse Pointe) and adapt his home as new modes of living arose; the living room transformation that incorporated the conversation pit created a more modern and dynamic arrangement of space.[99] It also highlights Girard's interest in

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[96] This object also moved from Michigan to Santa Fe.
[97] Cynthia Kellogg, "Now—Lower-Level Talks," *New York Times* (December 27, 1959), SM22.
[98] Cynthia Kellogg, "Now—Lower-Level Talks," *New York Times* (December 27, 1959), SM22.
[99] By 1963 Girard removed the pit. Rita Reif, "A Man's Home as his Lab," *New York Times* (October 20, 1963), 259.

the sculptural (or material) quality of walls that were pierced and decorated for visual effect, as evidenced by George Nelson's lamp within the wall and the small toy within the pit, which echoed a larger conceit found within in the home.

All the walls of the house were painted white, except for one wall in the dining room, where riotous color erupted (Figure 44). Using a predominantly warm color palette, Girard painted this wall in shades of red ranging from rose and mauve to crimson and magenta; alleviating these bold colors were punctuations of orange and pale blue. On this display wall Girard carefully placed objects against varied colored backgrounds and into deep sculptural niches, which resembles the treatment of the living room cutouts. A paste-up of slivers of colored paper illustrates Girard's design process; at this initial stage, Girard likely experimented with many colors and multiple shapes to construct a pleasing wall (Figure 45). The design for the wall, published in October 1954, demonstrates little variation from the working scheme (Figure 46).

Just beyond the living room, an uneven floor initiated Girard's concept for a leg-less dining table suspended from steel cables coated with nylon, which recalls Saarinen's desire for his mid-1950s pedestal chair and table to eliminate the cluttered "slum of legs."[100] Girard's sketch for the dining room remained true to the finished product (Figure 47). Encircling the slab of wood are four Eames chairs and on the wall is Girard's handcrafted nativity (transported from the entrance hall of the Grosse Pointe home). In a whimsical manner (and also reminiscent of the Kay Bojesen monkeys suspended in the Grosse Pointe living room—see Figure 20), Girard suspended a doll from the ceiling in between the steel cables (Figure 48). About his design methods, Japanese designer Isamu

[100] This was quoted in "Product Reports: Saarinen Places Furniture on a Pedestal," *Architectural Record* 122 (July 1957), 284.

Kenmochi noted, "Girard is a master at neutralizing the contemporary design trend toward the theoretical and mechanistic with human warmth and emotion."[101] This penchant toward humanizing may also be observed in the table arrangements and artful arrangements in this space (Figures 49-50). It was, according to Penny Sparke, the humanized modern interior that "became synonymous with good taste" in the 1950s.[102] Girard practiced this warm and human-centered approach within rational systems (on a small scale, with the room dividers, or on a large scale, with showroom design, for example) as well as within vernacular structures (like the native, adobe Santa Fe house).

Using industrially produced department-store showcase bulbs, flood lamps, and refrigerator bulbs, in combination with candlelight, Girard continued to mix the modern and the traditional. In 1960, Girard united these complementary objects in an affected display for *Look Magazine* surrounding the conversation pit (Figure 51). Always interested in the topic of lighting, Girard has noted,

> Man is a creature of light. He thrives in sunlight, enjoys firelight and fears darkness. In lighting, as in most of life today, we must learn to combine the unique efficiency of the modern with the rich heritage of the past.[103]

This sentiment demonstrates Girard's predilection toward both modern and traditional forms of lighting. Similarly, the storage wall, full of folk art objects, was lit by votive candles in conjunction with electric lighting equipped with dimmers; Girard countered the harsh modern effects of some of the cold fluorescent lights with candles that produced

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[101] Undated letter from Isamu Kenmochi, in response to Walter McQuade's *Architectural Forum* letter to Girard's intimate circle asking for their responses to his Santa Fe home for an article. Found in scrapbooks, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.
[102] Sparke, "Taste and the Interior Designer," 26.
[103] Girard excelled at lighting design, as exhibited by his plan for the T & O Shop. "Alexander Girard and his Wonderful World of Light," *Look* 24 (August 2, 1960), 47.

warm glowing effects. In a final captivating display of Girard's creativity, outdoor lighting was fashioned through brown paper bags filled with sand to hold a candle, a device borrowed from a New Mexican tradition (Figure 52). About this visual and cultural quotation, Girard has said, "We Americans [meaning people in the US] know a lot about using light for work, but we still have a lot to learn from people all over the world when it comes to using light for relaxation and fun."[104] In addition to collecting folk art objects, he was also "collecting" ideas and traditions from native peoples and applying them to modern life.

Other mid-century designers also expressed ideas of identity, nostalgia, and humanism through objects, including Girard's close friends, Charles and Ray Eames; the three of them were instrumental in changing American perceptions about how to group and display objects, especially within the home.[105] Girard was part of an influential group of designers whose ideas and vision was available to a popular audience through his wide coverage in the press; his projects were well covered in home decorating magazines, architecture and design journals, and newspapers. For example, in the pages of *House and Garden*, editors featured several Girard folk art vignettes alongside his commission for the New York restaurant La Fonda del Sol (1959). Employing this stirring material, the magazine illustrated an adaptation of folk art niches for the home—a display wall that a homeowner could build and decorate themselves (thus participating in the postwar DIY trend) (Figure 53).[106] And, according to Herbert Gans, these homemaking magazines provided "not only a legitimation of her [the homeowner's] own striving toward

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[104] Ibid., 49.
[105] Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames*, 143-199.
[106] "Specialties of the House: Daring Colors, Piquant Food," *House and Garden* 119 (January 1961): 94-99.

individual self-expression but an array of solutions from various taste cultures from which she can begin to develop her own."[107] It was through such magazines that Girard's taste for cluttered storage walls also penetrated the cultural milieu. In the case of the de-contextualized objects, such as African stools, Chinese masks, and Japanese pottery, used for visual effect within the Eames case study house, the influence was direct—through friendship. (Figure 54). Girard was a major influence upon the Eameses, in terms of their collecting crafts from India, Mexico, and New Mexico.[108] Despite these efforts, in a great deal of elite design discourse of the period, non-functional decoration was marginalized as whimsical and unnecessary.

Although geographical distance and professional obligations meant that there was less time for the couples to meet together, the relationship between the Girards and the Eameses was a long-lasting, loyal, and fruitful friendship. Beyond several professional partnerships, Girard asked Charles Eames to photograph many of his projects. The couples also occasionally vacationed together; for example, they took a trip to Arizona in June of 1950 and visited the cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde, Montezuma's Castle, and Canyon de Chelly, as well as the Hubbels' Trading Post to view some Native American objects.[109] Further, Eames documented the Girard children playing over the years, as they continued to visit Santa Fe (although less frequently later in life) until as late as 1982. Indicative of the spirit of the midcentury, Ray Eames noted, "we were sharing all the time."[110]

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[107] Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture*, 73.
[108] Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames*, 183.
[109] Charles Eames and Ray Eames papers, 1850-1989 (bulk 1950-1988), Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington D.C.
[110] Ibid.

> We have helped each other on jobs and relaxed afterwards. When either of us needed help we would call the other—both working towards making it as good as possible within the deadline—the first Good Design Exhibition of Museum of Modern Art and Chicago Merchandise Mart, "For Modern Living" Detroit Art Institute [*sic*], Herman Miller showrooms and fabric program, MoMA "Textiles and Ornamental Arts of India," Mexico on "Day of the Dead" "Nativity," La Fonda del Sol, "Magic of a People," Nehru memorial exhibition—days and weeks of hard work and the greatest pleasure.[111]

It is clear that the Eameses and Girard had a symbiotic relationship that thrived for many years.

Another example of experimentation was the kitchen of the Santa Fe home, which was reconfigured a few years after the move into a u-shaped adobe within an adobe (Figure 55). This was a prototype for the bar at La Fonda del Sol. The kitchen featured colorful pierced walls and painted with recurring symbols that Girard used in many designs, including the arrow (prominently utilized at the T & O Shop), the heart, and the snake motif (Figures 56-57). Interestingly, a spiral at La Cienga Petroglyphs captured in a photograph by Charles Eames during a trip with the Girards in August 1954 may have inspired some of Girard's design (Figure 58). Further, the original design for the cube (the structure that enveloped the kitchen) was similar in spirit to the colorful wall of the dining room (Figure 59); although Girard did not execute the colorful exterior, the cube was pierced and its interior remained vibrant (Figure 60).

As part of his "accumulative vision," Girard delighted in materiality and the experience of surfaces (Figure 61); tactility was important, as evidenced by the handling of raw adobe surfaces and the sheer variety of textures—wood, earth, steel, and textile. Girard's houses were not doctrinaire, as he changed them frequently over the years, and were visually stimulating through the integration of color and texture. Girard's domestic

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[111] Ibid.

environments of the 1950s and 1960s were created within the framework of American postwar modernism, but they expanded beyond its ideological and consumer-driven boundaries. Girard practiced a more humanistic modernism that accounted for (what some critics in the 1930s called Girard's) "irrational frivolity" and idiosyncratic impulses, which for Girard's domestic interiors included a visual and tactile interest in materiality and the display of cross-cultural folk art objects that composed his "accumulative vision."[112] In a rapidly changing world enabled by technological advances, Girard promulgated a desire to cling to and celebrate the perceived values of folk culture and the vernacular, and collected objects from the "handcraft" civilizations for himself and for his commissions, including the Miller house in Columbus, Indiana.

C. Miller House, Columbus, Indiana

For his greatest patron Girard collaborated with Eero Saarinen (among others) on one of the most definitive statements of mid-century modernism in the Midwest—the J. Irwin and Xenia Miller House in Columbus, Indiana (Figure 62). The Millers were wealthy, discerning clients who were somewhat unconventional for the period—they desired a modern home in a town of "Victorian" homes for a large family that entertained regularly. Girard's interior design, in consultation with Xenia Miller, characterized the owners as cultured, forward-thinking individuals who were willing to trust Girard's vision.

[112] From a May 4, 1936 article in *Retailing*, as quoted by Sharon Lee Ryder, "A Life in the Process of Design," *Progressive Architecture* 57 (December 1976), 60.

The Millers had previously worked with both Saarinen and Girard. The correspondence in the Indianapolis Museum of Art archives between Girard and the Millers (along with their employees) reveals a highly collaborative relationship; they judiciously discussed and selected objects for the decoration of their home. It also uncovers Girard's meticulous nature in tracking projects through a rigorous system of communication. Due to the complex nature of the commission, every last detail was coded with a specific letter-number system so that Girard and the Millers could more efficiently communicate about the same topic. With thousands of details at stake, Girard could not afford to confuse any aspect of this home.

The official blueprints for the Miller House listed Eero Saarinen of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan and Alexander H. Girard of Santa Fe, New Mexico as architects for the project (Figure 63). A licensed architect, Girard did assist with some architectural details, but his greatest contribution to the project was as interior designer. Initially, the architect and interior designer worked together to shape the interior space (working with the needs of the client to create viable spaces for living); then Girard selected, ordered, and installed the finishing and decorative materials, furnishings, and ornamental accessories.

After working for many months on the design of the home, in a letter of early March 1954 to Girard, Saarinen informed him that the Millers liked the general scheme of the house, but they had several comments from a recent three-hour meeting. Some of these included Xenia's aversion to the stairs down into the living room (conversation pit), the use of air-conditioning throughout the house (they preferred it relegated to the

bedroom), and the desire for an open plan kitchen.[113] Additionally, the Millers were not enthusiastic about Saarinen's suggestion for pre-cast concrete floors throughout the home.

Soon thereafter, Irwin and Xenia Miller traveled to Santa Fe to meet with Girard on March 26-28, 1954 to discuss specific details related to the interior planning of the home.[114] During their meetings at the Girards' home, the Millers provided many precise instructions regarding the plan. In the kitchen, the Millers preferred a more open plan, as well as space for cookbooks and an adequate china closet. In order to conserve space, they proposed a 3-car garage (in lieu of the 4-car proposed). For the guest bedroom, they desired a wider room to accommodate a desk; in the boys' bedroom, they suggested arranging the beds as bunks to conserve space; and in the children's playroom, the Millers added two convertible sofa beds, a recessed television, and a play table (the progression of this space may be observed in Girard's plans (see Figures 64-66.)] They required more space for drawers and shelves to contain their books and other personal effects in the master suite, and questioned where they would take breakfast in the morning, preferring to dine with the morning sun (on the west terrace). They felt that the entrance was much too large at 400 sq. ft; after discussions, a 15 x 15 entrance at 225 sq. ft. was deemed more suitable. They discussed the need to rearrange the living room to provide greater privacy and to have the opportunity to study and work with nearby books

[113] Eero Saarinen to Alexander Girard, 10 March 1954, Folder 1/2, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[114] "Determination of Details Discussed at Meeting…," 2 April 1954, Folder 32/379, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

and records.[115] For the main sitting area, the Millers interrogated Girard about the highly contentious "conversation pit," and whether it would be "sufficiently warm and intimate when inhabited by only four or six people?"[116] Was the sitting area adequately open to the outdoors? Might the conversation pit feel like a basement? Further, they were particularly apprehensive about the idea of stepping down into a living space. The Millers eventually acquiesced and approved the steps to the lower living area, with the caveat that from it the trees in the distance be visible. They also wanted the windows of the master bedroom and screens of the porch dropped to the floor level. Finally, they raised a concern about the lack of skylights in the plan. Through these varied responses we can understand the Millers apprehensions regarding the interior planning of their home and Girard's role as a negotiator.

For the planning, design, and execution of the interior furnishings, Girard proposed charging the Millers $12 per hour for the drawings, plans, layouts, details, and schedules, with his assistant's work performed at cost, plus 100% overhead. His research, selection (of furnishings and fittings), presentation, consultation, accounting and other office overhead would be included in the cost of interior furnishings purchased by the Millers. Girard explained to the Millers that decoration work was normally marked up anywhere from 50-100%, but he proposed to do "this work on a basis of 40% mark-up on wholesale cost."[117] Other expenses, including traveling, creating models, and acquiring

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[115] The Millers' response was that complete privacy was extremely difficult to attain, so the plan was approved, with the proviso that it may be possible to add a curtain.
[116] "Determination of Details Discussed at Meeting…," 2 April 1954, Folder 32/379, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[117] "Irwin Miller House / Interiors / Proposed Working Basas [sic] and Procedure, undated (probably mid-1954), Folder 32/380, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

samples, would be charged at cost. Girard assured his clients that although he had never worked on these terms before, he believed it to be a better method for many reasons: it created a more professional basis by removing the retail aspect of the enterprise, in which "no information is withheld from the client;" there was tremendous freedom of operation; considerable financial reductions for the Millers; and fewer financing problems for the interior designer.[118]

Owing to the multiyear commission, the Millers developed a unique relationship with the Girards. Irwin Miller's letter to Girard conveys that they had a pleasant visit and that they "were also fascinated by our first view of the Southwest."[119] Further, Irwin wrote, "Please tell Susan that Xenia already tried both of the recipes she sent and has found them to work out according to plan," suggesting that the two women found some common ground for conversation, and perhaps setting the stage for a professional relationship to develop into a warm, personal one.

Reflecting upon their meeting in Santa Fe with Girard, the Millers were "most pleased with the progress which has been made on our house, and will be anxious to hear the results of your and Eero's deliberations….we are most anxious that all decisions necessary to permit the beginning of working drawings be made well before the end of June."[120] In early July 1954 Girard suggested a buying trip to New York, during which he would prearrange many items and visits in advance of the Millers' arrival. He also urged

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[118] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 6 July 1954, Folder 32/380, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[119] Irwin Miller to Alexander Girard, 20 April 1954, Folder 32/379, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[120] Ibid.

the Millers to begin making decisions soon. Girard attached great importance to the rugs, writing:

> Our first concern should be exploring rugs. These as I mentioned to you in Columbus, should be determined as early as possible, so that all other building materials may be carefully related to them.[121]

This statement reveals some of Girard's working methods—that he laid the interior groundwork literally with textiles—and perhaps also suggests that as a textile designer, he was more comfortable beginning a complex interior project by focusing on carpets. By early August 1954, final changes to the plan were made, but Girard still had many unresolved questions regarding the storage wall, including the location of various media (television, speakers, records, and magazines).[122]

In late August 1954, Girard notified the Millers that the Museum of Modern Art had asked him to prepare an Indian textiles exhibition, which required travel in early October to India for several weeks to assemble the objects. Although this complicated the timeline of the Miller job, the ever-efficient and practical Girard suggested that he "find some things there for your house."[123] That Girard conceptualized the Miller House at the same time he mounted the exhibition *Textiles and Ornamental Arts of India* (April 1955)

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[121] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 6 July 1954, Folder 32/380, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

[122] Much attention was spent on the storage wall, about which Susan Girard conveyed to Irwin Miller that Girard was going to determine the final details in person. She also noted that she was writing a letter to Eero and Aline Saarinen to discuss the Miller's concerns about the storage wall, including the need for phonographic equipment to be mounted, as the Saarinen office had the drawings at the moment. Susan Girard to Irwin Miller, 5 November 1954, Folder 1/2, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

[123] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 24 August 1954, Folder 1/2, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

is a testament to the organization of his enterprise.[124] Always contemplating publicity, and with an eye toward good designer-client relations, Girard included two items owned by the Millers in the exhibition.[125]

In September 1954 Girard sent the Millers a plan and index of furnishings (Figure 67). The detailed plan included area numbers and furnishings identified by letters. Initial suggestions included sourcing antique rugs; fabrics from Thaibok Fabrics (for Thai silks), Laverne Originals, Knoll, and Herman Miller; and furniture by Harvey Probber, Herman Miller, Knoll, and Laverne Originals. Girard repeated his intention to begin with textiles:

> As I mentioned to you earlier, my chief concern is to have a good foundation on which to start building your interior furnishings schemes. The best way of achieving this is to try and make decisions on rugs, so I think we probably should concentrate our attention in that direction.[126]

Girard began purchasing furnishings and objects for the Millers in 1955. There are many letters between Girard and the Millers (and their staff) over the years detailing decoration and furnishings. Girard sourced objects for the Millers' home from many dealers in various cities. For example, while in Chicago, Girard searched for glass and Mottahedeh china.[127] In late April 1955, Girard informed the Millers that he was planning a trip to Los Angeles around May 19, and because "Xenia mentioned she was interested in

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[124] At this point, Girard (at the very least) employed a secretary, Joy Fincke. Wanda Truitt to Joy Fincke, 9 June 1955, Folder 1/2, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

[125] Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Miller are listed as lenders to the exhibition in the acknowledgements written by Monroe Wheeler, Director of the Exhibition. *Textiles and Ornaments of India: A Selection of Designs,* ed. by Monroe Wheeler (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1956), 6.

[126] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 9 September 1954, Folder 1/2, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

[127] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 21 April 1955, Folder 1/2, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art; Wanda Truitt to Joy Fincke, 9 June 1955, Folder 1/2, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

obtaining some lacquer bowls, I thought this would be a good opportunity to get some for you," along with other Asian works.[128]

The financial side of the arrangement was also addressed in correspondence. Letters to the Millers with precise bills were mailed regularly; in one early letter, Girard also asked for additional funds to enable him to "cover estimated expenses as they come due, on the incomplete items as listed, totaling $26,823.91."[129] Invoices for reimbursable expenses and fees, including telephone calls, telegrams, models, airfare, living expenses, and hotel expenses were also remitted to the Millers on a regular basis. These invoices also detailed Girard's purchases from antique dealers for the project; they reveal that, similar to Girard's accretive method for murals and exhibition displays, he visually and materially acquired objects and textiles slowly to build up spaces.

Girard's accretive method may be understood through his textile acquisitions for the Millers. Although unaware of the future commission, Girard purchased a Thai silk from Thaibok Silk in 1952 and three years later, used it for a winter pit pillow.[130] During his 1954 trip to New Delhi, Girard acquired three woven Kashmir textiles, two of which were used for pillow covers (these are the two items that went on exhibit at MoMA's *Ornamental Arts of India* show in June 1955). They were also exceedingly expensive objects purchased in India; Girard charged the Millers $614.60 for the three Kashmir textiles (two utilized as pillows, and the third was used as a hanging panel in the living

[128] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 29 April 1955, Folder 1/2, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[129] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 21 July 1955, Folder 1/2, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[130] Invoice, Item no. 24, 20 April 1955, Folder 33/384, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

room).[131] Some purchases were less costly (although still expensive), including a group of fabrics for pillow (for example, Indonesian Ikat prints) from the Far Eastern Fabrics Company to be used for winter pit pillows for $119 (Figure 68-69).[132] Other interesting fabrics for pillows were procured from the Pan American Shop in New York, including a saddle bag from Peru to be used as winter pit pillows and from Guatemala, huipil (handwoven traditional garments worn by indigenous Mexicans and Central Americans) to be used as summer pit pillows.[133] He balanced these vernacular, non-Western textiles with contemporary handwoven fabrics by Jack Lenor Larsen and Scalamandre silk fabric for winter pit pillows, adding diversity in texture, color and cultural identity.[134]

A lengthy letter was mailed to Girard on August 10, 1955 from the Millers' vacation home in Windermere, Ontario, where they had recently entertained some notable figures, including Hans Knoll (whose enthusiastic response upon seeing the Girard-designed living room was "God!").[135] Responding to several questions that Girard had posed, about the drapery and upholstery, the Millers felt that Girard "should select the firm to do the work, as we cannot be sure of the ability of any Columbus or Indianapolis firm to do first class work and make good on mistakes." This concern for

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[131] According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis (http://www.minneapolisfed.org), the 2012 value for this invoice is nearly $3600. Invoice, Item no. 33, 21 April 1955, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[132] Invoice, Item no. 35, 21 June 1955, Folder 33/384, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[133] Invoice, Item no. 38, 21 June 1955, Folder 33/384, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[134] Invoice, Item no. 47, 29 June 1955 and Invoice, Item no. 48, 29 June 1955, Folder 33/384, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[135] Girard created the interior design for the Millers' vacation home in Muskoka, Ontario, Canada. Irwin Miller to Alexander Girard, 10 August 1955, Folder 33/382, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

quality demonstrates their desire to create an unparalleled home outside of a major architectural center, and their understanding of the complexity of working with expensive textiles.[136] The Millers agreed to purchase Herman Miller beds for the children's rooms, but required something "more substantial" for the guestroom because "many older guests might take dim views of Herman Miller's fragile appearing bed."[137] With regard to the "Eames chair schedule" (there were so many Herman Miller Eames chairs ordered that this element required its own document), they only commented on exceptions, which included their desire to use two Knoll armchairs (Eero Saarinen's womb chair, 1948) somewhere in the living room and a concern about whether the dining room chairs have a burlap backing (because this would presumably not enhance the interior). Miller also noted that they never agreed on a solution for the kitchen curtain (a problematic area over the years), writing, "Xenia now objects to strong orange color of proposed drape and of covering for chairs. She wants you to submit new idea for drapery and new idea for chair covering. She says find something PINK."[138] Thus, the Millers did not blindly accept Girard's plans, but rather thought judiciously about each aspect of the interior. The remainder of the letter commented on specific elements (such as approval for an African low stool) and they requested Girard's recommendations for benches and coverings, master wing double bed, rug for girls' bath, and the day beds. The Millers also had specific opinions, including proposing an Eames RAR rocker for the maid's room and Xenia's suggestion for a rug with a tighter weave (rather than a Moroccan rug) for the dressing rooms because the other "will shed lots of lint all over her party dresses when

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[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.

she is dressing to go out." Finally, Miller sarcastically prodded Girard about the piano bench, stating,

> Why not buy the one that comes with the piano (probably) and cover it with selected naugahyde? We both know you won't like this idea, but feel it will sufficiently enrage you that you will counter with something better.[139]

Girard streamlined the purchasing process (on many occasions) in which the Millers corresponded directly with dealers regarding objects selected by Girard. On August 15, 1955, Donald Treganowan of Ernest Treganowan, Inc., a rug importer, wrote to Wanda Truitt (Mr. Miller's secretary) that he had received the ocean bill of lading from J. Haim & Company of London, England for the Bessarabian rug.[140] On another occasion, Irwin Miller wrote to Thelma Ziemer, of the East and West Shop in New York City, letting her know that they were returning several objects, but keeping three Chinese gouache paintings of a procession and two Indian gouache paintings of entertainers; the bill for these objects was still handled by Girard.

In September of 1955, Girard apprised Miller of the Eames chair schedule. Not only was there a tremendous variety and quantity in the chairs ordered, but there were also several custom revisions, such as white plastic shell tops, baked white enamel cage bases, and various upholstery options; Girard marshaled this complex order from conception to delivery. For every chair ordered, Girard delineated the seat height, whether the chairs should include arms, the color of the shell, wire cage, and bases, as

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[139] Ibid.

[140] According to the Haim & Company bill, the rug was an early 19th century Persian rug that measured 16'0 x 6'4" and retailed for $250. Donald Treganowan to Wanda Truitt, 15 August 1955, Folder 1/1, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

well as the type of upholstery.[141] The quantity of chairs is astounding. Girard ordered fifteen DSR-1 side chairs, fourteen covered in white Italian plastic coated fabric (provided by Girard) for the dining room and one covered in cowhide for the master work space; eight DKR-1 side chairs, covered in Italian plastic coated fabric for kitchen dining; one LSR-1 side chair covered in orange-red Herman Miller naugahyde (no. 205) for the boys' room; one PKC-1 swivel side chair covered in Italian plastic coated fabric for the kitchen desk; six PSC-1 swivel side chairs, three covered in white Italian plastic coated fabric for the three girl's desks, one covered in orange-red naugahyde for the boy's room desk, one covered in ultramarine blue naugahyde for the linen and cleaning room, and one in cowhide for the guest room desk; seven LAR-1 armchairs, one covered in pigskin or cowhide for the television area, five covered in white Italian plastic coated fabric for the girls' room and the playroom, and one covered in cowhide for the guest room; nine DAR-1 armchairs, four covered in cowhide for the bridge table in the television area, two covered in ostrich or cowhide for the main living room, two covered in white Italian plastic coated fabric for the playroom, and one covered in red-orange naugahyde for the boys' room; four PAC-1 swivel armchairs, one covered in ultramarine naugahyde, two covered in woven strip cowhide for the master workroom desk, and one covered in white Italian plastic covered fabric for the playroom desk; and one RAR rocker armchair, covered in cowhide for the maid's room, for a total of 52 Eames-designed Herman Miller-manufactured chairs for the Miller House. And this was only one aspect of the furnishing plan!

[141] Alexander Girard to J. Johnson, Herman Miller, Venice, 1 September 1955, Folder 33/382, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

The two invoices (April 30, 1956 and June 29, 1956), which together total $5772.71 spent on Herman Miller furnishings (or nearly $50,000 in 2012), reveal that although most of the furnishings remained the same (from the initial plan to implementation), a few changes were made by the following year when the invoices were submitted.[142] For example, instead of fourteen DSR-1 chairs for the dining room, four DSR-1 and ten DAR-1 chairs were ordered. The other changes to the Miller's order concerned the PSC-1 chairs: two additional chairs were added to the order (for the master work room and the maid's room). This meant that instead of 52 Eames-designed Herman Miller chairs, the Millers actually ordered 54. Other pertinent information gleaned from invoices includes the cancellation of the cowhide and leather seat covers for a number of Herman Miller chairs, which were abandoned because Girard deemed the leather unacceptable.[143]

September of 1955 was an important month in terms of the organization of the Herman Miller furniture delivery, but also for curtains and upholstery. On September 29, 1955, Girard submitted a curtain-making schedule.[144] Although the length of all curtains was consistent (8 feet 6 inches), the document detailed a space number, fabric item number, approximate curtain width, yards provided, and a fabric description for each item. Most curtains selected were Girard-designed, Herman Miller-manufactured fabrics, but there was space for vernacular textiles, including Indian silks, East Indian printed

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[142] Invoice, Item no. 68, 30 April 1956 and 29 June 1956, Folder 33/384, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[143] Invoice, Item no. 69a, 28 August 1956, Folder 33/384, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[144] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 29 September 1955, Folder 33/382, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

cottons, and Mexican cottons. Girard also outlined the schedules for upholstery and pillows on October 5, 1955.

In a memo written to Irwin Miller, Girard explicated the items that he still needed to select and those that the Millers were to inspect upon their next visit to New York.[145] Girard reminded the Millers that when they examined the available samples in New York showrooms, they needed to "bear in mind that a variety of special changes could be made in color, finish, top textures, etc. It is the form that is of first concern." Further, the memo divulges highly revealing notes that the Millers scribbled, such as "still thinks the Eames sofa ugly behind and too high" (Figure 70). The memo also exposes the equally meticulous nature of the Millers, whose staff has stamped "Received November 18, 1955" on the memorandum.

Girard completed his comprehensive plan for the rugs in five months. He sent his clients a complete three-page list of rugs, which carefully outlined the item number, space number (location of the rug), size, and type (description of the rug) (Figure 71), alongside a visual plan for the rugs (Figure 72).[146] They agreed to a wide range of rug types, including Aubusson, Moroccan, Bessarabian, Alpujarra, and Haitian.

The Millers reserved the weekend of December 2, 1955 for a shopping trip to New York.[147] In the same letter, they apprised Girard of their decision to keep a William Blake engraving from Knoedler and Company in New York and to have the newly

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[145] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 14 November 1955, Folder 1/1, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[146] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 22 November 1955, Folder 1/1, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[147] Ibid.

acquired East Indian and Chinese pictures framed by Girard.[148] He arranged a special Saturday visit to Herman Miller and Knoll (since both showrooms were usually closed on weekends).[149] Girard selected objects in advance of the Millers' trip to make the day more efficient, indicating that they should examine George Nelson-designed furniture, including a guest room desk, a kitchen table and side tables.[150] Although Girard occasionally accompanied the Millers on their shopping trips, more often he would set up the appointment, select objects, and then await their response. Following this model, Irwin Miller wrote to Girard after their early-December visit to New York with specific comments. One of the most contentious areas was the ongoing debate about the Eames sofa in the living room. They objected to its appearance when viewed from the conversation pit; according to the Millers, "all the trigger work behind this sofa is not particularly attractive" and "the sofa is too high."[151] They conceded that the sofa could work against a wall, but not as a freestanding object in the center of a room. They also viewed Girard's choice for the kitchen drapery at Herman Miller, but "Xenia would like you to try again to achieve colors which are, possibly, a little more crisp and suitable for

[148] The Millers, who were delighted by Girard's thoughtfulness, received Christmas wrappings from him.
[149] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 28 November 1955, Folder 1/1, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[150] The Herman Miller model numbers include: desks for the guest room (nos. 5494 and 5496), tables for the kitchen (nos. 5560 or 5590), and tables (nos. 5152, 5153, 5452, 5451, 5452, or 5512). Alexander Girard to Eugene Eppinger, 28 November 1955, Folder 1/1, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[151] Irwin Miller to Alexander Girard, 7 December 1955, Folder 1/1, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

a food preparation area," reinforcing that the Millers (and Xenia in particular) were exacting clients.[152]

Both sides were equally persistent, but it was the Millers who eventually conceded, writing about the sofa, "We give up. Let it come upholstered and painted as planned, with Girard wholly responsible for consequences."[153] Unfortunately, we do not know whether they acquiesced because Girard was a persuasive negotiator; because the Millers fundamentally trusted his design vision; or, perhaps, they were simply tired of arguing. Girard felt strongly about including this sofa in the plan for three distinct reasons:

1. It would be better than anything else on the Bessarabian rug, not blotting out the rug where it sits.
2. It is a maximum contrast to, and thereby not an offshoot of, or competing with, the very non-floating pit sofa; and

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[152] Other decisions made and relayed in this letter include the children's beds (Herman Miller no. 5548), although Xenia suggests incorporating rollers for easier mobility; guest room desk (George Nelson-designed Herman Miller rosewood table desk no. 5494); the kitchen table is still unresolved because they liked the look of the white enamel pedestal base table more so than the x-leg table, but perhaps the latter may be more stable (they would also prefer a solid, rather than an extendable top); they liked all the side tables, except for nos. 5152 and 5153; they liked the new bases for the Eames plastic stackable chair and wondered whether they needed some for the house; they questioned whether there would be a hanging lamp over the kitchen table; and they spoke with Florence Knoll at Knoll, Inc., who told them of a new bed coming out after the first of the year, thus the Millers questioned whether they should wait to compare this to the Herman Miller variety. Irwin Miller to Alexander Girard, 7 December 1955, Folder 1/1, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

[153] Irwin Miller to Alexander Girard, 5 January 1956, Folder 1/6, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art. . This was in response to Girard's December 11, 1955 letter in which he noted that the sofa had been ordered, but "all the "trigger work" consisting of frame, normally black, and legs normally chrome plated, has been ordered to a light off-white for frame, and a darker beige shade for legs." Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 11 December 1955, Folder 1/6, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

3. I really believe that the back height is not going to be a problem in the large space in which it is to be placed, and contrarily, with apologies, I feel the sofa is not necessarily better looking when backed up against a wall.[154]

This contentious exchange over the Eames sofa demonstrates that even a strong-willed client can make concessions to the designer.

Replacing the earlier edition, a revised furnishing index was submitted to the Millers on January 19, 1956 (Figures 73-74).[155] Building materials for the living room included Alabama white marble for the walls, Aurisina marble and padouk (African wood) stairs for the conversation pit, and a storage wall composed of white micarta (industrial laminate) vertical partitions, rosewood doors, Aurisina marble base, and white porcelain pulls. Other luxurious and some versatile materials were specified for the powder room, master bedroom, master bath, childrens' rooms, and kitchen.

Girard laid out the main tenets of each space in a systematic arrangement, organizing the house into public area, kitchen wing, master wing, and children's wing. For each relevant space, he delineated the agreed-upon textiles and furnishings choice (Figures 75-76). In the public area he created a design for an Aubusson rug for the carport (item no. 24) (Figure 77). The den included printed Indian silk curtain fabric and lightweight cream-and-white Girard-designed Herman Miller "double triangles" fabric, with handwoven glass curtains by Jack Lenor Larsen. Four Eames armchairs (DAR-1, item no. 68) were placed alongside a George Nelson-designed folding white micarta and rosewood card table. In the main living room, pillows and fabrics were chosen for the pit area, as well as the highly debated Eames sofa (Figures 78-81). The storage wall was

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[154] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 11 December 1955, Folder 1/6, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[155] Revised Furnishing Index, 19 January 1956, Folder 33/381, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

lined with various Japanese papers, and assorted fabrics (East Indian, Peruvian, etc.) lined the benches and other upholstered surfaces (Figures 82-83). For the dining area, Girard designed an Aubusson rug, upon which fourteen Eames-designed dining chairs were placed—four DSR-1 and ten DAR-1 chairs.

For the next unit, the kitchen wing, Girard planned to use Japanese wallpaper and Chinese gold tea paper for the powder room. Eight Eames-designed dining chairs (DKR-1) were ordered for the kitchen. In the master wing, Girard intended to use a Herman Miller curtain fabric of his own design ("Cutout;" HM #638), as well as a brocade-design of his own (HM #188) for the bedspread (Figure 84). Girard selected several fabrics (including Mexican, Jack Lenor Larsen-designed, Italian silks, and Burmese) for pillow fabrics. For an armchair, Girard chose a worsted striped Herman Miller fabric of his own design. Japanese silver wallpaper was to be used in the bedroom. For the study, Girard selected a George Nelson-designed rosewood miniature cabinet, Girard-designed "Cutout" curtain fabric, and Girard-designed textured linen glass curtain fabric (HM #680). For the master bath, Girard chose a Mexican orange and magenta cotton curtain fabric and the same Girard-designed textured linen glass fabric curtain. The children's wing featured Girard-designed "Multiform" on fortisan (a lightweight fabric), Girard-designed check beige patterned fabric for two daybeds, and Mexican cotton fabric for pillows, in addition to Eames desk chairs, low chairs, and several armchairs (Figures 85-86). For the guest wing, Girard would use his own-designed white linen, embroidered silver silk fabric for curtains (HM#170) for the bed-sitting area, and his own-designed "hexagons" on fortisan as curtain fabrics for the maid's bed-sitting area.

Custom curtains required tremendous patience (with regard to time and planning) on the part of the client and the designer. In January 1956 Girard sent the Millers a final sample (after four trials) of the hand-woven glass curtain for the den, living room, and dining area; he felt that it related well with the other curtains in the public areas of the house, and urgently requested approval, as fabric production would take considerable time.[156] The other major curtain decision (for the kitchen) was wrapped up by April of 1956.[157] About the kitchen (which was referred to as B-3), Xenia later wrote to Girard that she was "wild about B-3. Now we are cooking in the electric oven after all the samples which you have submitted to us in the last two years, you should appreciate this decision."[158] The Millers also ordered some of Girard's newly designed ceramic plates (created for the 1956 Georg Jensen exhibition of Girard table settings) for the house (Figure 87).

Over the years, Girard sent many objects, particularly such folk art as kachinas and pueblo figures, to the Millers for display in their home.[159] In May of 1956, Girard notified the Millers that he had recently received photographs of a "very interesting collection of southwestern santos, originating from the famous Monroe-Kleijkamp

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[156] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 30 January 1956, Folder 1/6, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

[157] The kitchen curtain quandary was also nearing resolution, as Ernest LoNano estimated the cost of making the curtains, glass curtains, and lining (for $8,269). Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 30 April 1956, Folder 1/3, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

[158] Irwin Miller to Alexander Girard, 13 April 1956, Folder 1/6, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

[159] For example, On August 4, 1955, Girard alerted Wanta Truitt that he planned to ship three boxes to her attention: one with Katchinas; one with San Juan Pueblo figures; and one with some personal things for Mrs. Miller. Alexander Girard to Wanda Truitt, 4 August 1955, Folder 1/1, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

collection," which were available through the Pacific Shop in San Francisco.[160] This collection, assembled by Jan Kleijkamp and Ellis Monroe, had been on view at several museums on the west coast.[161] Girard suggested objects for the Millers, who heeded his advice on one, but also, guided by their personal artistic sensibilities, selected one piece not on Girard's list.[162] These decorating interludes were important because they signaled forward progress (despite construction delays on the house), and the objects eventually populated the decorative framework established by Girard.

By July 1956, the Millers had received final shipment of (twenty-five) chairs from Herman Miller.[163] Concurrently, the Millers expressed concern about achieving the right balance of diversity and harmony within their home, thus Girard relayed that he was aware that "acquiring too much of one kind of thing is very pertinent."[164] He continued, "Of course, my intention has been to achieve the maximum variety, thereby obtaining the added values of contrast and counterpoint." Part of this agenda was achieved through the

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[160] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 23 May 1956, Folder 1/6, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

[161] The exhibition traveled to the DeYoung Memorial Museum, San Francisco; Pasadena Art Institute; Portland Art Museum; Santa Barbara Museum of Art; and the Seattle Art Museum. Willard Houghland, *Santos: A Primitive American Art* (exh. cat.), (New York: printed by Lynton R. Kissler, 1946).

[162] The Millers selected numbers 37 and 42 from the *American Primitive Art* booklet. Irwin Miller to Alexander Girard, 12 June 1956, Folder 1/6, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

[163] Before this, Girard alerted the Millers that he was disappointed in the Italian plastic chair samples because they look "cheap." To remedy the situation, he ordered removable chair pads in beige leather as an alternative. Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 30 April 1956, Folder 1/3, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art. The shipment was discussed in: Joy Fincke to Wanda Truitt, 9 July 1956, Folder 1/5, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

[164] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 13 August 1956, Folder 1/5, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

addition of folk art objects, such as a Nativity scene, which Girard believed would add immeasurably to the Miller's interior.[165]

Much correspondence was also devoted to planning Girard's trips to Indianapolis (to have design meetings) and to New York (to go shopping). In a September 12, 1956 letter to Irwin Miller, Girard wrote that he was arriving in Indianapolis on October 20, and leaving for New York on October 21.[166] During his time in New York, Girard would "be working on your problems….in particular the upholsterer-curtain maker, on which I already have leads."[167] By early October 1956, Girard notified the Millers that Ernest LoNano (of New York) was ready to show the Millers some curtain samples.[168]

Girard also continued to discover new objects for the Millers during 1956. For example, he sourced some appealing things at Sheeba Taylor in New York City. Further, Girard traveled to Mexico in mid-October 1956 and hoped "to find some interesting things for you."[169] Occasionally, the Millers presented Girard with their own suggestions. When considering acquiring a William Hogarth engraving, they solicited Girard's opinion on framing and the placement within the house, because it was not part of his original scheme.[170]

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[165] Later, in August of 1961, Girard sent a letter to Xenia Miller letting her know that he was working on a nativity exhibition, and that he wished to include some of the nativities that he had found for the Millers. Alexander Girard to Xenia Miller, 30 August 1961, Folder 2/14, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[166] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 12 September 1956, Folder 1/1, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 6 October 1956, Folder 1/4, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Irwin Miller to Alexander Girard, 1 November 1956, Folder 1/4, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

In a confidential conversation, Girard made Cynthia Kellogg, the *New York Times* home editor, aware of the Miller house. After he received permission from the Millers, Kellogg contacted the Millers about publishing pictures of their home in July 1957.[171] This is another demonstration of Girard's propensity for publicity, a keen self-awareness about the power of the press to advertise one's work and build momentum for future projects. The Millers were amenable to allowing pictures and text about the house, provided that "no mention is made of owner, location, or cost."[172] They also desired only one set of photographs be taken at a mutually convenient time, thus Girard and Saarinen had to agree on the photographer, and into which publications the photographs would be placed.

In early 1958, Girard was still consulting on the acquisition of objects for the Millers, including outdoor furniture and outdoor sculpture.[173] Girard's report from early February detailed unfinished items that needed to be discussed. It was also in February that all parties agreed on Ezra Stoller as the photographer of the Millers' home. In order to prepare (stage) the house for Stoller's visit, Girard agreed to arrive on Monday, March 31, 1958 in advance of Stoller's arrival on Tuesday, April 1, 1958.[174] After a conversation with Stoller, who would need two days to photograph for *Architectural Forum* and an additional day for speculative photographs (for other publications), Girard also alerted Miller that he would like to harness this opportunity to have Stoller

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[171] Cynthia Kellogg to Irwin Miller, 31 July 1957, Folder 1/7, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[172] Irwin Miller to Alexander Girard, 9 August 1957, Folder 1/7, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[173] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 7 February 1958, Folder 2/11, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[174] Irwin Miller to Alexander Girard, 18 February 1958, Folder 2/11, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

photograph supplementary images for personal use, particularly the storage wall.[175] However, according to Miller, photographs of the storage wall were not important from an insurance point of view, but mainly for "historical value," thus he was reticent to include this element in the photo shoot.[176] Not satisfied, Girard suggested documenting the house in photographs because beyond "the historical value, it might be of real value and interest to your children;" Miller eventually agreed.[177]

The correspondence also reveals the Millers' reluctance to publish their luxurious home. Although they did not maintain a low profile within the community in Columbus, they did not wish to appear ostentatious. Thus, Miller sent a concerned letter to Saarinen (and Girard) pleading that he get in touch with *Holiday* (a mid-century travel magazine) because Girard overheard Stoller mentioning also selling the photographs to this magazine. Additionally, Miller reconfirmed the three conditions under which *Architectural Forum* may publish the photographs, adding that Saarinen "had better secure their agreement in writing and a submission of all copy prior to printing."[178] Girard explained the editorial limitations to Stoller—no mention of the Millers by name; the location of the house; or the cost of the project.[179]

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[175] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 19 February 1958, Folder 2/11, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[176] Irwin Miller to Alexander Girard, 28 February 1958, Folder 2/11, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[177] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 3 March 1958, Folder 2/11, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[178] Irwin Miller to Eero Saarinen, 15 April 1958, Folder 2/11, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[179] Alexander Girard to Ezra Stoller, 5 May 1958, Folder 2/10, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

During the magazine preparation period, Girard continued to work on interior projects related to the Miller house.[180] By the end of 1958, Girard, Saarinen, and Kevin Roche (an associate in Saarinen's architectural practice) had supplied information to *House and Garden* for another article.[181] The Millers made a few editorial corrections and were generally pleased with the publication and the magazine's acknowledgment of the Millers' privacy.[182]

Although much of the house's decorative program was complete, Girard continued to provide counsel to the Millers during the 1960s. He ordered a Saarinen armchair and side chair from Knoll and an armchair and side chair (designed by the Eameses for La Fonda del Sol) from Herman Miller for the dining room.[183] Miller continued to respect Girard's talent as a designer with an impeccable eye for color because he brought the Columbus Main Street "face lift" project to his attention.[184] They also continued to exchange ideas; for example, in March of 1961, Miller promised to send Girard a copy of *Symbolism in Liturgical Art* (1959), which points to Miller's

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[180] For example, he repaired a glass tree with birds; framed a Grandma Moses painting; cleaned and lacquered a silver frame; and worked on fabricating a base for the Roman mosaic. He also arranged to send several items (two Aubusson rugs and bath rugs) to Ernest Treganowan for cleaning, as well as damaged playroom glass curtains, Eames cushions, kitchen curtains, and the master bedroom bedspread for cleaning to Ernest LoNano. Alexander Girard to George W. Newlin, 30 June 1958, Folder 2/10, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[181] *House and Garden* to Irwin Miller, 5 December 1958, Folder 2/10, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[182] Irwin Miller to Will Mehlhorn, 11 December 1958, 11 December 1958, Folder 2/10, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[183] Christine Isham to Wanda Henderson, 2 March 1961, Folder 2/14, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[184] They met in mid-1961 to discuss the potential of beautifying Washington Street's stores and businesses.

interest in religion.[185] Earlier that month, Girard sent the Millers a copy of André Malraux's *Metamorphosis of the Gods* (1957), a book that he had been reading that outlined a contemporary outlook to thinking about art.

He continued to acquire objects on behalf of the Millers during the 1960s. In a March 1962 letter to Miller, Girard informed him that he and Susan would be traveling to Europe beginning April 3 for a couple of weeks, visiting Portugal, Morocco, Greece, Turkey, Sicily, Italy, Switzerland, Paris, London and Warsaw.[186] From this trip Girard sent Miller a small Polish nativity for Xenia's Christmas gift. Xenia also received various textiles and garments, including Thai silks, Indian silks, and saris, for personal use.[187] Closer to home, he set aside a Pre-Columbian Colima figure with Mrs. Frances Pratt, a New York supplier to uptown dealers and museums, and suggested that Miller see some of his Moroccan textiles at the T & O shop in New York (see chapter 3).[188] Occasionally, Girard purchased items speculatively; he sent Mexican green pottery candleholders to Xenia because he thought that she "would like these for table decoration."[189] Girard knew her taste well because she ordered four additional ones from the dealer.[190]

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[185] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 27 March 1961, Folder 2/14, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[186] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 21 March 1962, Folder 2/13, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[187] Alexander Girard to Xenia Miller, 8 June 1963, Folder 6/52, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[188] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 3 December 1962, Folder 2/13, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[189] Alexander Girard to Xenia Miller, 25 April 1963, Folder 6/52, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[190] Alexander Girard to Xenia Miller, 25 April 1963, Folder 6/52, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

During the early 1960s, Girard also designed specialized items for the Millers, including a rug for the TV area in March 1962 (Figures 88-89). Using this example we can learn more about Girard's design methods, which included drafting designs, creating reference files for inspiration, and crafting models. The rug contains 89 different symbols, including letters representing various members of the family and abstracted depictions of things meaningful to them, such as a plan of the house, a cross, golf clubs, Indiana, and an American flag (Figure 90). Girard even wrote himself into the narrative by including his "Sansusie" symbol, which stands for Susan and Sandro (his nickname) Girard.[191] Composed of 166 spaces, most of the 89 symbols on the rug were repeated, but they faced different directions. Illustrating Girard's design method, after a drawing of the larger rug was approved, he drew the various symbols to scale, and then composed a maquette of the rug, in which each colorful, hexagonal element was replete with its symbol, to be able to view the completed design (Figure 91).

In September of 1963, the Millers asked Wanda (Truitt) Henderson to assemble invoices for an inventory of the objects, artworks, and rugs.[192] These invoices suggest the diversity of objects acquired by Girard, from 1955 through 1962. Most of the objects were acquired from antiques shops in New York, with a few from Chicago, Los Angeles, and Santa Fe dealers. Additionally, a number of works were sourced directly by Girard, including ceramics made by his brother, Tunsi (working in Florence), and works from

[191] The invoices submitted included a sample rug ($477.78) and the final rug ($7,009.49). Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 31 December 1962, Folder 27/303, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[192] Irwin Miller to Wanda Henderson, 5 September 1963, Folder 33/383, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

Mexico, Poland, and India—all places to which Girard traveled while working on the multi-year Miller project.

Although the house was conceived and executed largely during the mid-1950s, the Millers continued to engage Girard for various tasks during the late 1960s, as well as for larger projects during 1973.[193] Fortunately, much of the correspondence has been retained, but it is insubstantial in certain years, and the other half of a conversation is frequently not recorded. This is largely due to the lack of correspondence saved by the Girard office. In fact, in a letter to Miller, Girard wrote that he was "presently cleaning old files and would like to destroy a lot of old IM Items records. Please let me know whether there is any of this information you would like me to send you…I will wait to hear from you before destroying anything."[194] The Millers, reticent to throw anything away, implored Girard to send all his files to Columbus. Perhaps as a response to preserve these records, Xenia wanted to "compile a numerical index from our records which would contain the following descriptions: IM item number; date ordered; name of item; for location; ordered (purchased) from; brief description; cost" to be placed in a

[193] Girard reconnoitered the Millers' home again as they engaged him to embark upon more projects for the interior in 1973. Xenia met with Girard in June of 1973 to discuss her project list: remodeling of the kitchen/breakfast room (to include carpet design, storage unit, and a new table); new glass for living room fireplace; acoustical tile outside walk-in fridge; 12 new Saarinen-designed Knoll chairs for which Girard would design slip covers; Maid's room/guest room (Kevin Roche to design sliding door); new carpet for three bedrooms and three baths; second set of kitchen runners from Treganowan; recovering of patio chair; "llanrwst" metal letters; and the East wall project. Memo of meeting between Xenia Miller and Alexander Girard, 25 June 1973, Folder 5/46, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

[194] Alexander Girard to Irwin Miller, 7 April 1969, Folder 5/63, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

binder for reference.[195] Culled from Girard's invoices, this information was transcribed into note cards, which painstakingly detail all of Girard's acquisitions for future study.[196]

The Miller House correspondence details how a complex home coalesced over time. Without a client to dictate taste, Girard's Grosse Pointe and Santa Fe homes were highly personal experiments in postwar living. Although there are similarities between the projects, the Miller House is a controlled example of luxurious living—a house bearing sophisticated modern design that is lightly punctuated by Girard's expressive objects and color. About color, Girard has said,

> I prefer colour to clarify form and not camouflage it. Vivid contrasts against neutral backgrounds have many values; a neutral colored sofa is a foil for bright clothes, and if the sparkle of colour is limited to small accents it can be easily (and economically) changed.[197]

The neutral background of the Miller House—the pale walls and floors and contemporary furnishings—was the perfect foil for Girard's vibrant textiles and interesting *objets d'art*.[198] While the Miller house illustrates a negotiated interior among the Millers, Girard, and to a degree Saarinen, Girard's Grosse Pointe and Santa Fe homes reveal that his interiors were disruptive, disparate, filled with objects, but always highly organized.

The "exquisite junk"—a term used by the *House and Home* journalist writing about Girard's home in 1952—that populated Girard's domestic interiors demonstrates accumulation through building layers, which suggests the designer's creative process. Writing about the shelving unit that he designed for Alcoa, he commented that people

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[195] Alexander Girard to Xenia Miller, 17 June 1969, Folder 5/63, Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[196] These note cards may be examined, as they are part of the Miller House and Garden Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.
[197] "Well Decorated—A Notebook of Ideas," *Vogue* 116 (October 15, 1950), 91.
[198] Packard also suggested that color preferences were found along class lines. Packard, *The Status Seekers,* 63.

lived in "containers within containers."[199] But, there is hope for people living in a house that was "a container of divisible spaces"—Girard's new way of arranging the home forced people to be more discriminating in their selection of objects and more vigilant in displaying them.[200] Girard argued,

> What folly to gather objects because the sight of them pleases us, because the contemplation of them enriches us, or because they stimulate recollection of good times and places—and then to conceal them. [201]

Fundamentally, display in a storage wall was an essential component to his strategy for living in the postwar era. Girard's accumulative vision—an accretive gathering of things—emerges from his collecting of folk art, which he continued to acquire throughout his design projects; the same principles that governed his collecting were translated to his domestic interiors, by which the actual objects he collected literally populated these spheres, in addition to the ideas derived from these objects, namely color, texture, and pattern, which were important in his treatment of surface and materiality. As Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. noted, "clearly, Girard's modern cannot be accused of coldness," and is, in fact, a reminder of the humane modernism some recognized as prevalent in mid-century American design.[202]

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[199] Alexander Girard, "The Containers We Live In," *Design Forecast* 2 (1960), 51.
[200] Alexander Girard, "The Containers We Live In," *Design Forecast* 2 (1960), 51.
[201] Alexander Girard, "The Containers We Live In," *Design Forecast* 2 (1960), 51.
[202] Kaufmann, Jr., "Alexander Girard's Architecture," 19-37.

Figure 3
222 Lothrop Road (before building), Oct. 28, 1947
Photographed by Paul Gach, Grosse Pointe, Michigan
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04750_02

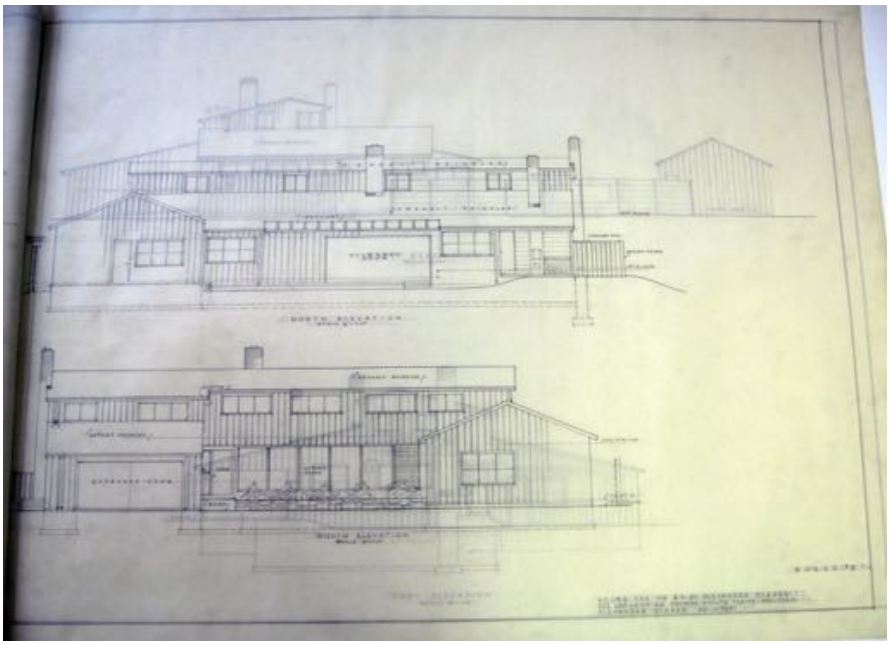

Figure 4
Elevation Design, 222 Lothrop Road, Grosse Pointe, Michigan
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 17162

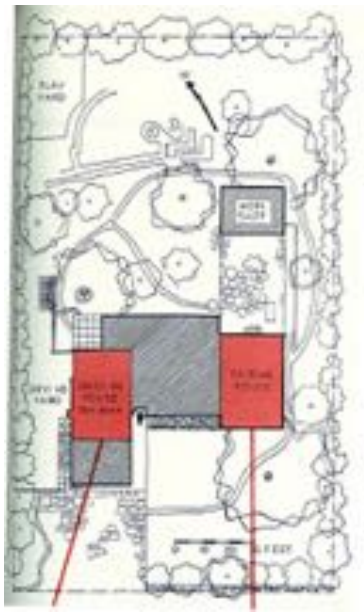

Figure 5
Landscape plan of Grosse Pointe house
"A Detroit Architect Builds One House…," *Architectural Forum* (February 1949)

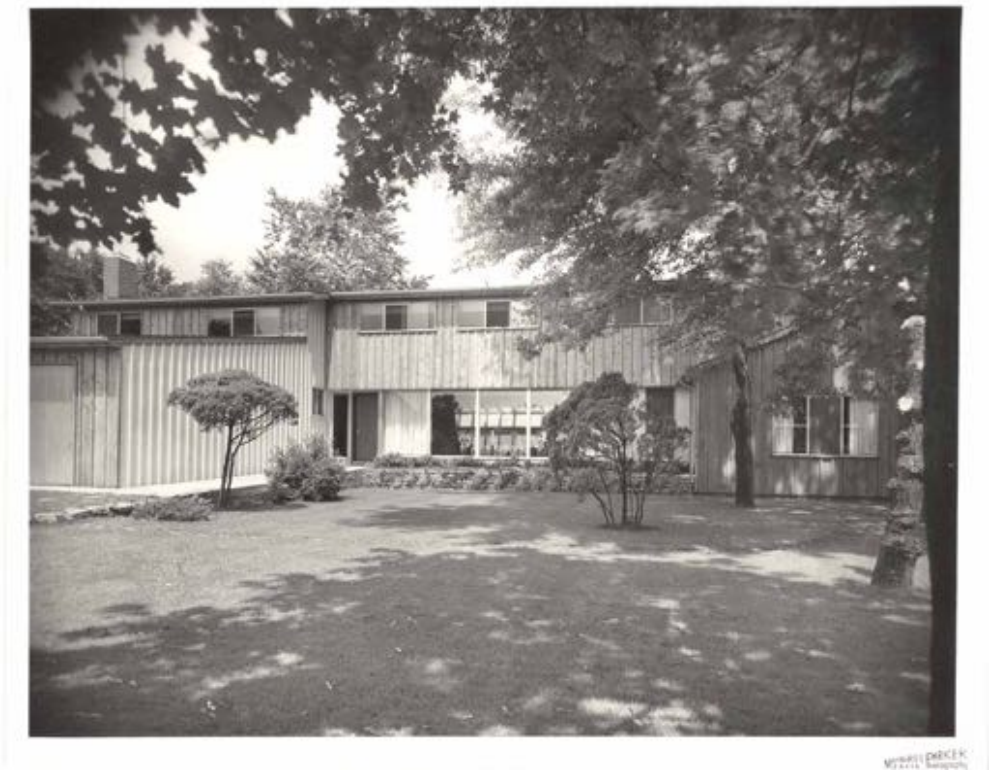

Figure 6
Exterior of Grosse Pointe house; Photographed by Maynard L. Parker, April 1952
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04786_22

Figure 7
Two-page spread, *House and Home,* photographs by Charles Eames
"How Alexander Girard Designs a House," *House and Home* (November 1952)

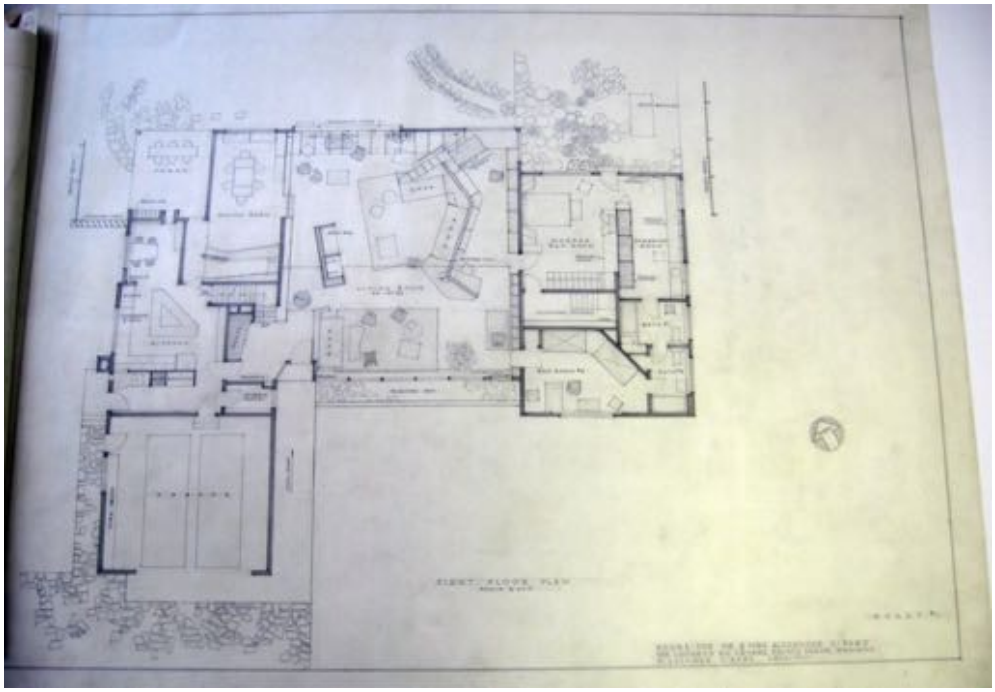

Figure 8
Plan of Grosse Pointe home
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 17162

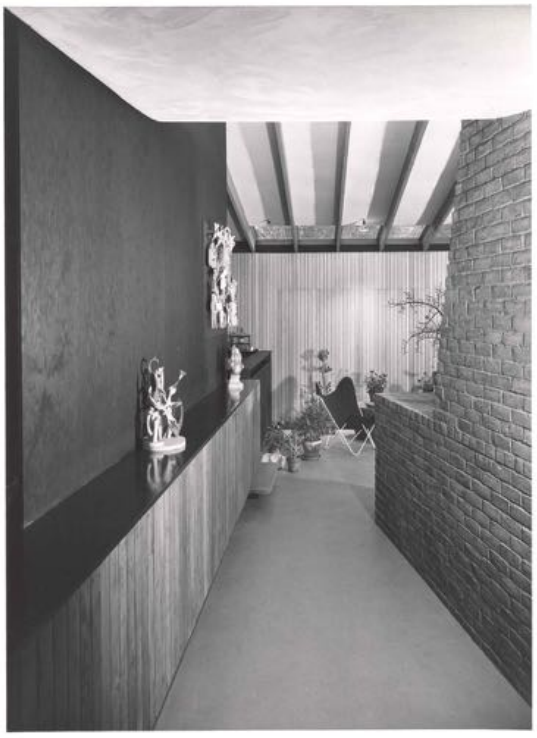

Figure 9
Hallway from Entrance; Photographed by Elmer Astleford, November 1948
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04758_01

Figure 10
Living Room, Grosse Pointe house; Photographed by Elmer Astleford, Nov. 1948
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04758_20

Figure 11
Living Room; Photographed by Edison Company, February 16, 1949
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04764_01

Figure 12
Alexander Girard, Sketch of Fireplace with Potential Furniture
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 17162

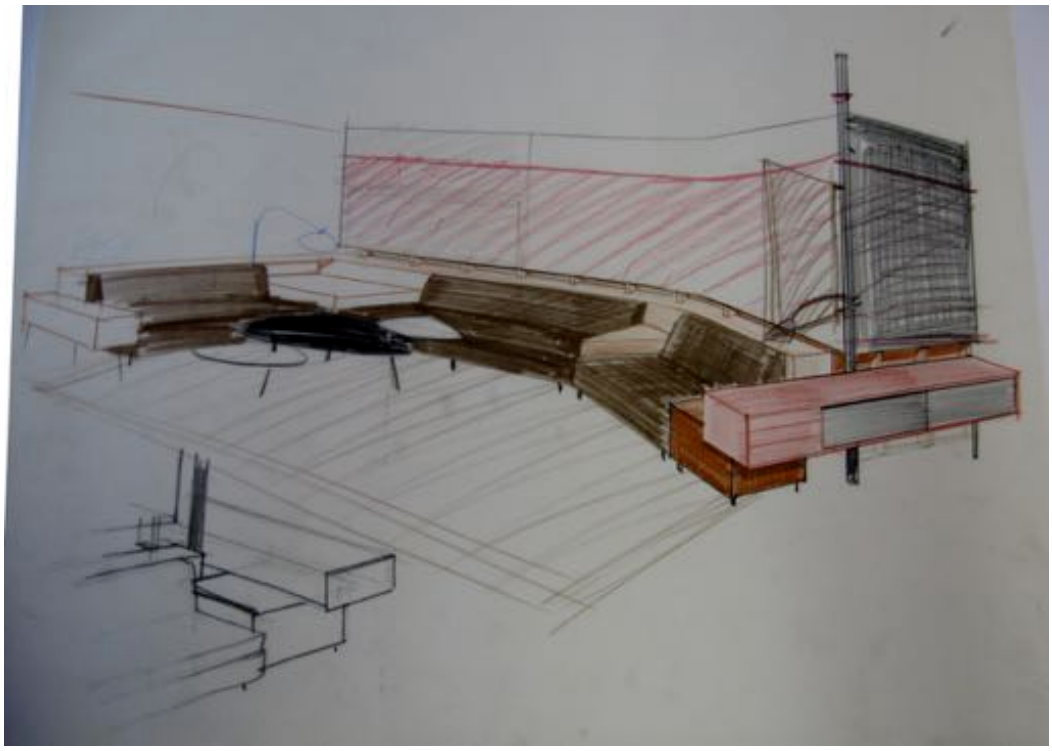

Figure 13
Alexander Girard, Sketch of Seating in Living Room
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 17162

Figure 14
Living Room with Wall of Windows
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04509_0019

Figure 15
Picture window of living room, Photographed by Maynard L. Parker, April 1952
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04786_16

Figure 16
Corner of Living Room; Photographed by Elmer Astleford, November 1948
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04758_22

Figure 17
Office Area; Photographed by Elmer Astleford, November 1948
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04758_19

Figure 18
Edgar Kaufmann Jr. and Ray Eames working in Girard home, 1948/1949
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04509_0018

Figure 19
Charles Eames, unknown woman, Edgar Kaufmann Jr, Ray Eames, Susan Girard and Alexander Girard (in center)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04509_0037

Figure 20
Plants in living room with Kay Bojesen monkey (designed in 1951)
Photographed by Charles Eames, June 1952
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04789_05

Figure 21
Garage Door Windows and Ceiling; Photographed by Charles Eames, June 1952
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04789_02

Figure 22
Garage door opened in living room, Photographed by Manning Brother, April 1949
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04768_04

Figure 23
Garage door closed, view from dining room (above)
"The Girard Story shows how Homemaking can be an Art,"
House Beautiful (February 1953)

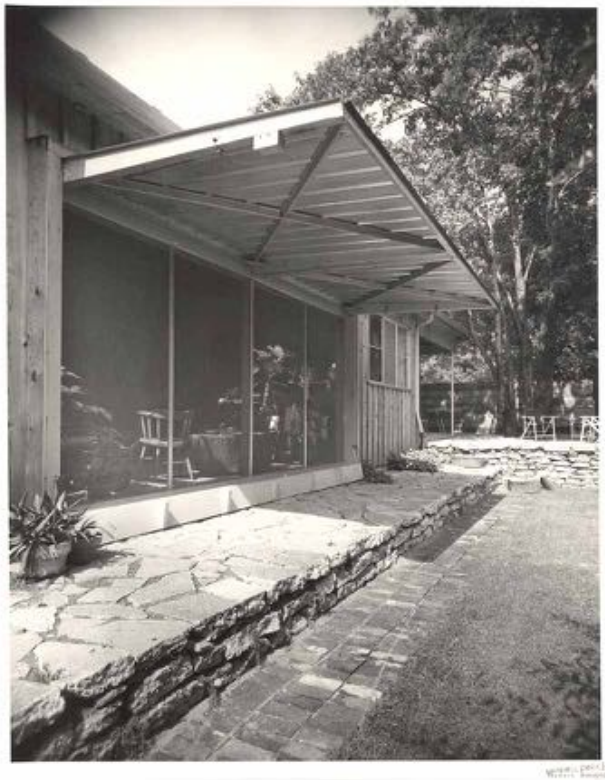

Figure 24
Exterior with Garage Doors Open; Photographed by Maynard L. Parker, April 1952
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04786_15

Figure 25
Likely Georage Rieveschel commission (1951); Curtain wall with board/batten
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 17162

Figure 26
Dining room of Grosse Pointe house
"The Girard Story shows how Homemaking can be an Art,"
House Beautiful (February 1953)

Figure 27
Dining Room with Sideboard; Photographed by Elmer Astleford, November 1948
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04758_12

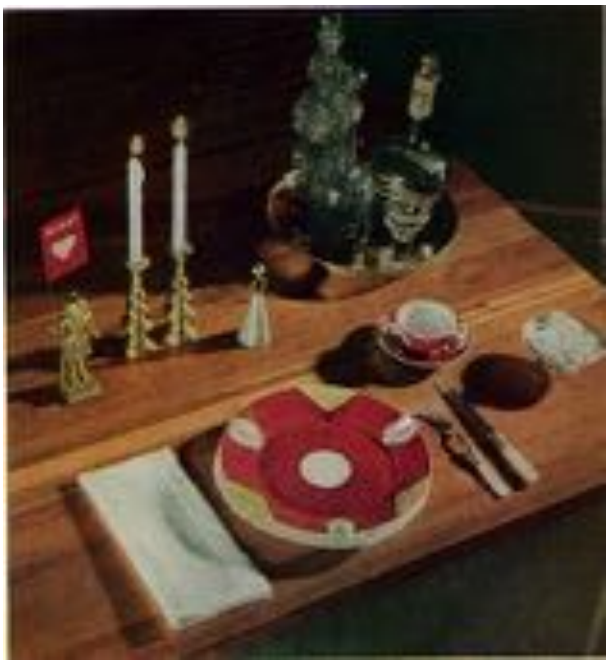

Figure 28
Example of a table arrangement in Girard dining room
"The Girard Story shows how Homemaking can be an Art,"
House Beautiful (February 1953)

Figure 29
Corner of Girard Bedroom; Photographed by Elmer Astleford, November 1948
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04758_15

Figure 30
Storage Wall of Girard Dressing Room; Photographed by Elmer Astleford, Nov. 1948
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04758_05

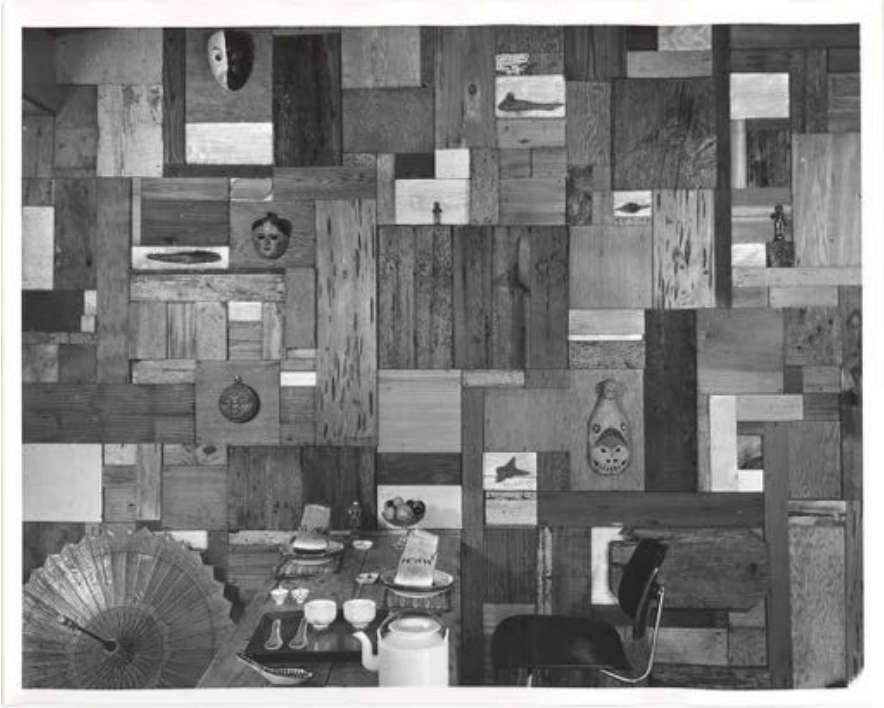

Figure 31
Outdoor dining porch; Photographed by Charles Eames, June 1952
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04789_06

Figure 32
Outdoor dining porch of Grosse Pointe house
"The Girard Story shows how Homemaking can be an Art,"
House Beautiful (February 1953)

Figure 33
Sculptural Fireplace with Folk Art surrounding
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04509_0024

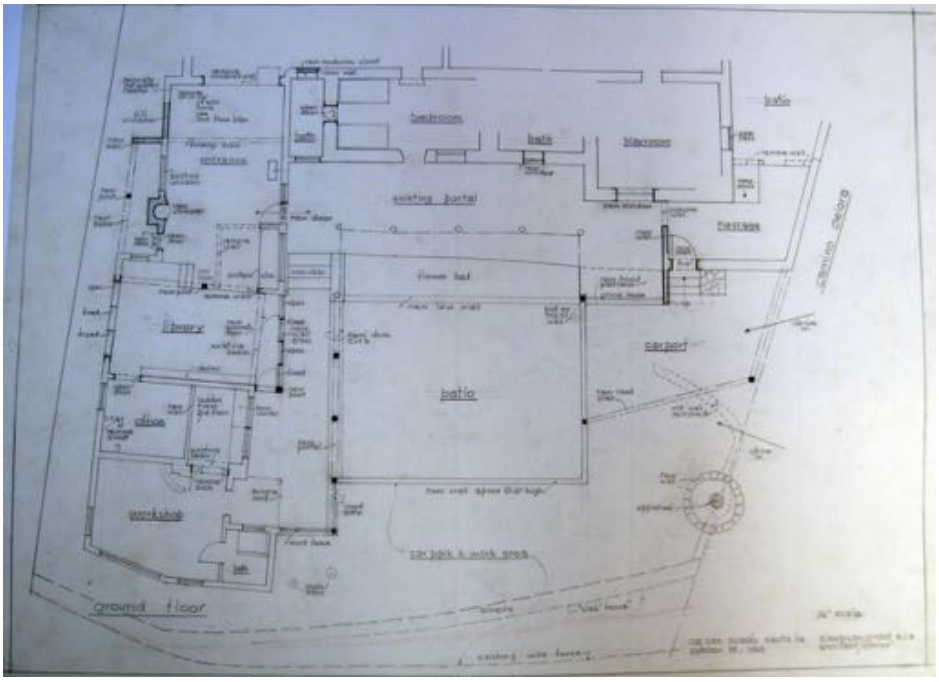

Figure 34
Plan for 1125 San Acacio, Santa Fe: October 28, 1953
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-4901

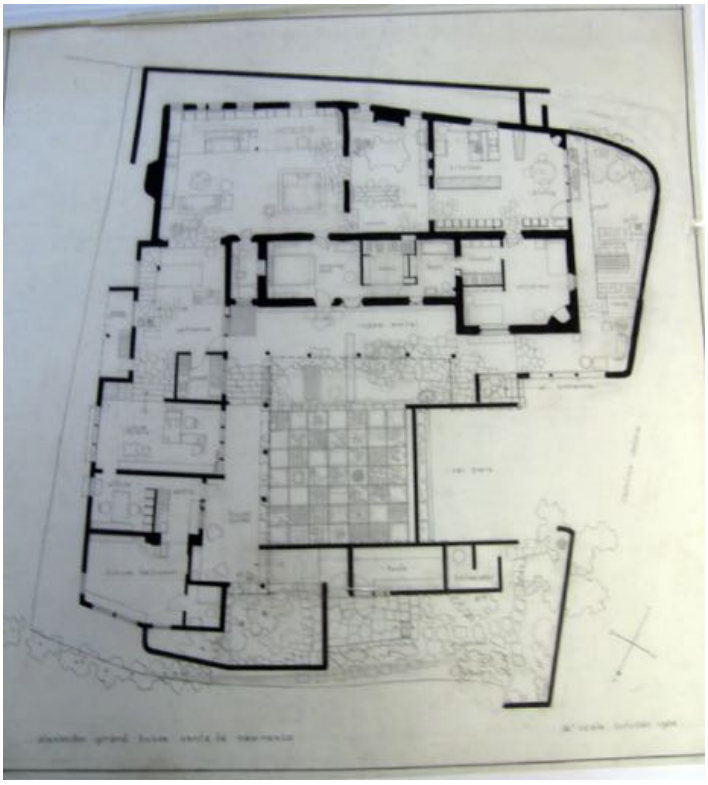

Figure 35
Floor plan, Santa Fe (October 1956)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-4901

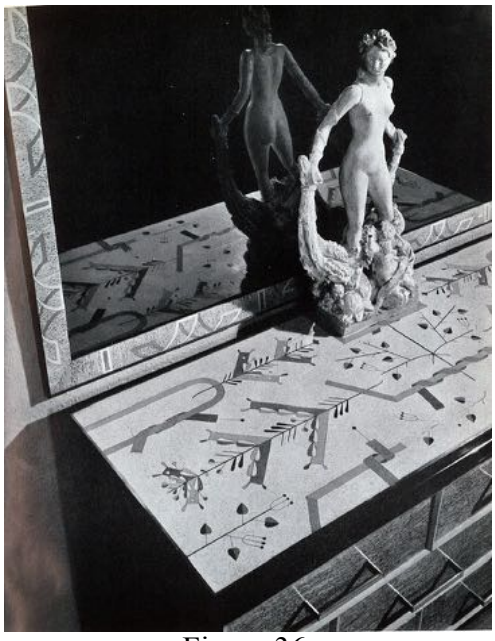

Figure 36
Girard created the sculpture and the mosaic inlay for this early commission
"Interior Decorators of Today: Alexander Girard," *London Studio* (July 1938)

Figure 37
Living room with view of entrance hall
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-4639

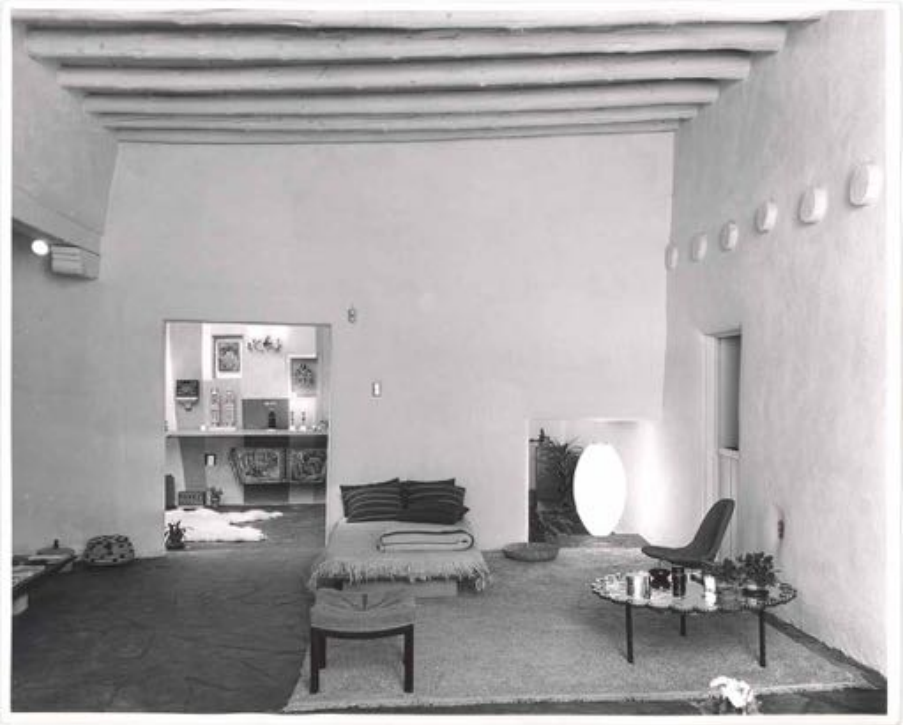

Figure 38
Early living room arrangement
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04826_30

Figure 39
Guest reclining before storage wall
"Alexander Girard and his Wonderful World of Light," *Look Magazine* (August 2, 1960)

Figure 40
Girard-designed storage wall for Alcoa
Advertisement from *Saturday Evening Post,* July 27, 1957

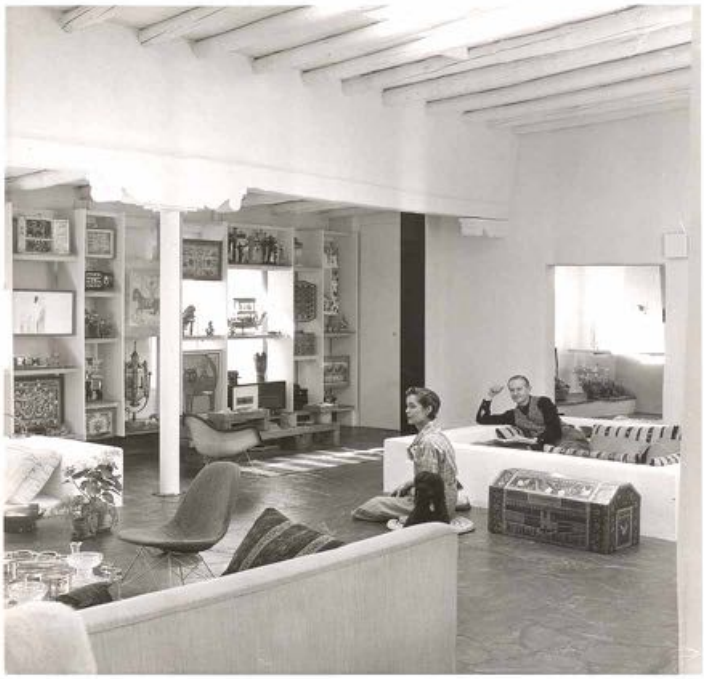

Figure 41
Living Room, March 1957, Photographed by J. Lepard
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04838_01

Figure 42
Living Room
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-06439_0065

Figure 43
Conversation Pit in living room
"House of Many Colors," *Architectural Forum* (February 1957)

Figure 44
View through doorway into dining room
"Girard a Santa Fé," *Domus* (January 1955)

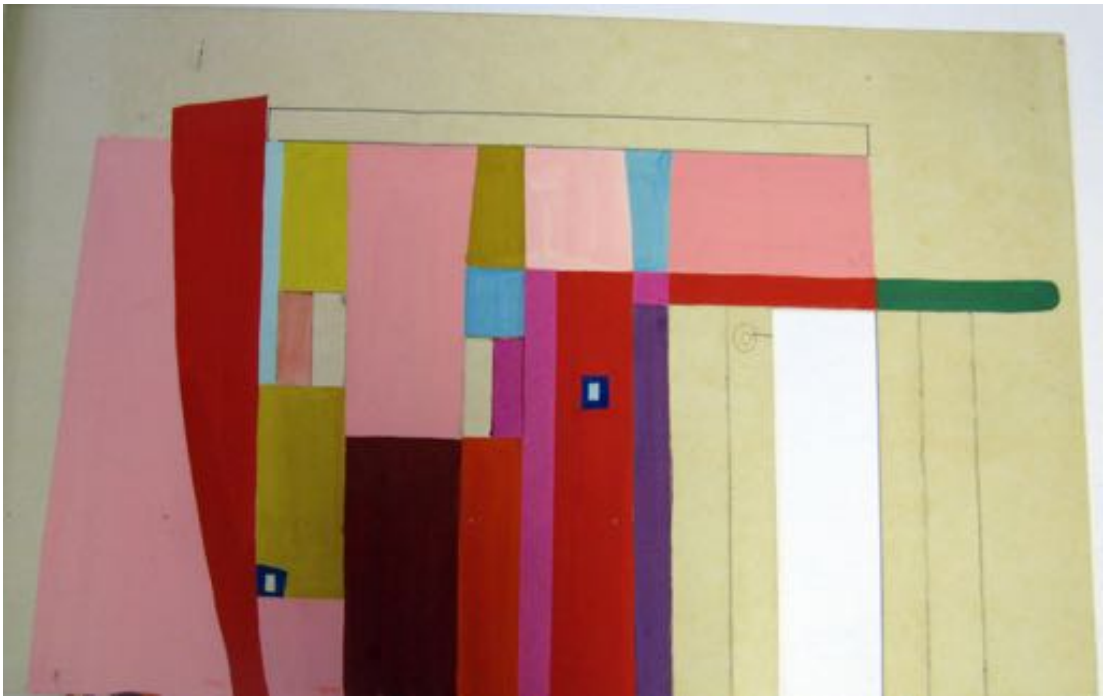

Figure 45
Alexander Girard, Design for wall decoration
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-4902

Figure 46
Design for wall
"Alexander Girard: His Santa Fe Home in Two Native Adobe Shells,"
Interiors (October 1954)

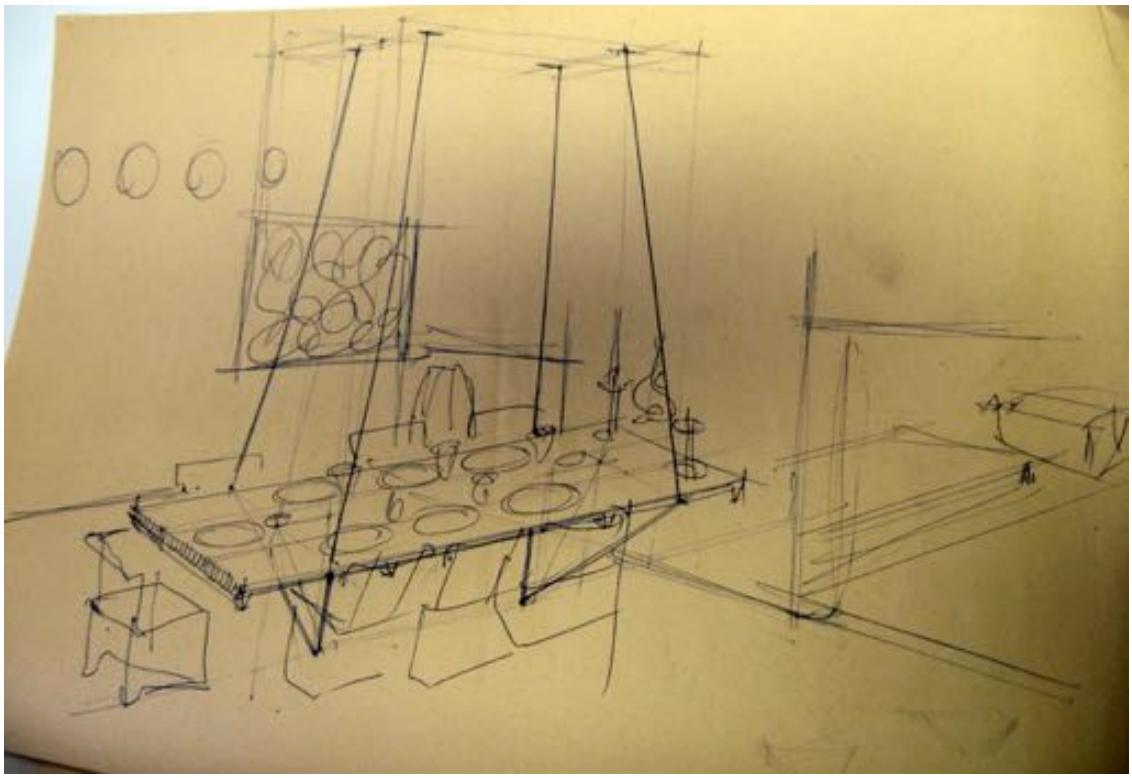

Figure 47
Alexander Girard, Sketch for Hanging Table
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4902

Figure 48
Photographed by Charles Eames, August 1954
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04826_04

Figure 49
Corner of Dining Table; Photographed by Charles Eames, August 1954
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04826_06

Figure 50
Artful arrangement on dining table
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-06439_0045

Figure 51
Girard lighting candles in the conversation pit
"Alexander Girard and his Wonderful World of Light," *Look Magazine* (August 2, 1960)

Figure 52
Girard's outdoor lighting
"Alexander Girard and his Wonderful World of Light," *Look Magazine* (August 2, 1960)

Figure 53
Storage wall decorated in the manner of Girard
"Specialties of the House: Daring Colors, Piquant Food,"
House and Garden (January 1961)

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Figure 54
Eameses sitting in their living room

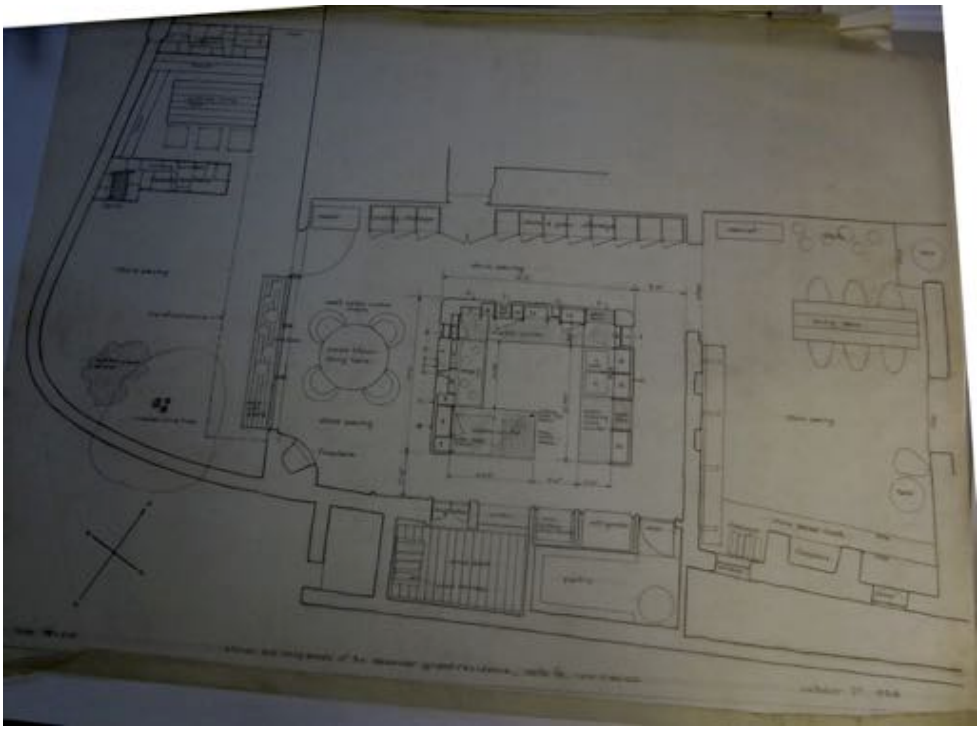

Figure 55
Kitchen and Dining Areas: October 27, 1958
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4901

Figure 56
New Kitchen Area
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04841_0009

Figure 57
Alternative view of new kitchen area
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04840_06

Figure 58
La Cienga Petroglyphs, photographed by Charles Eames (August 1954)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04830_08

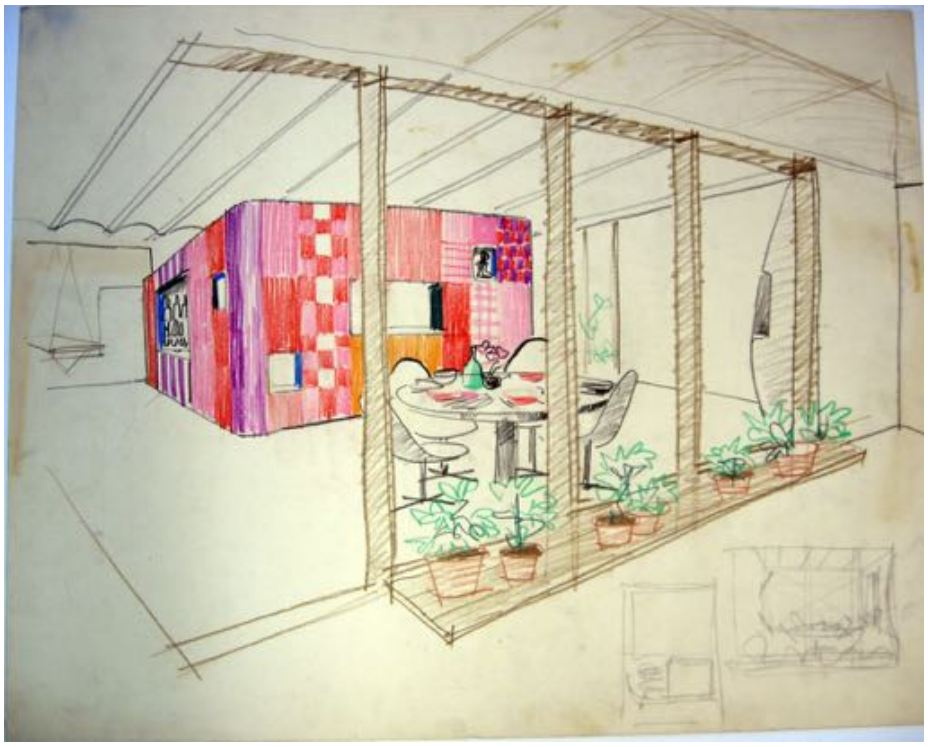

Figure 59
Drawing of new kitchen and seating area
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4923

Figure 60
Within the adobe cube—the kitchen
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04841_0021

Figure 61
Objects in Girard's home, Photographed by Charles Eames
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-06439_0035

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Figure 62
Exterior of house, photographed by Ezra Stoller, 1958
Esto#5011304772

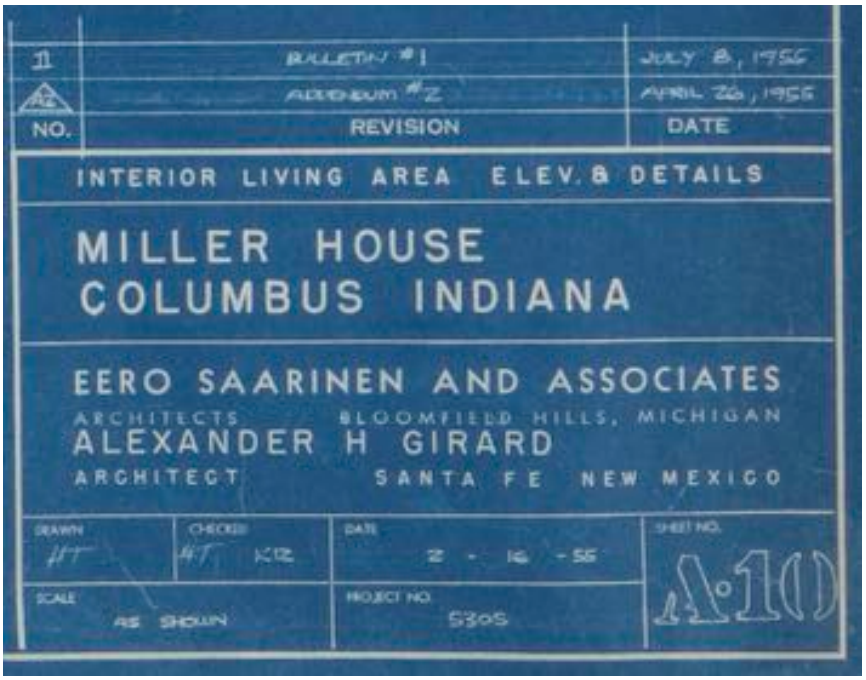

Figure 63
Detail from Miller House blueprint A-10, 1955, FF 42, M003,
IMA Archives, Indianapolis Museum of Art

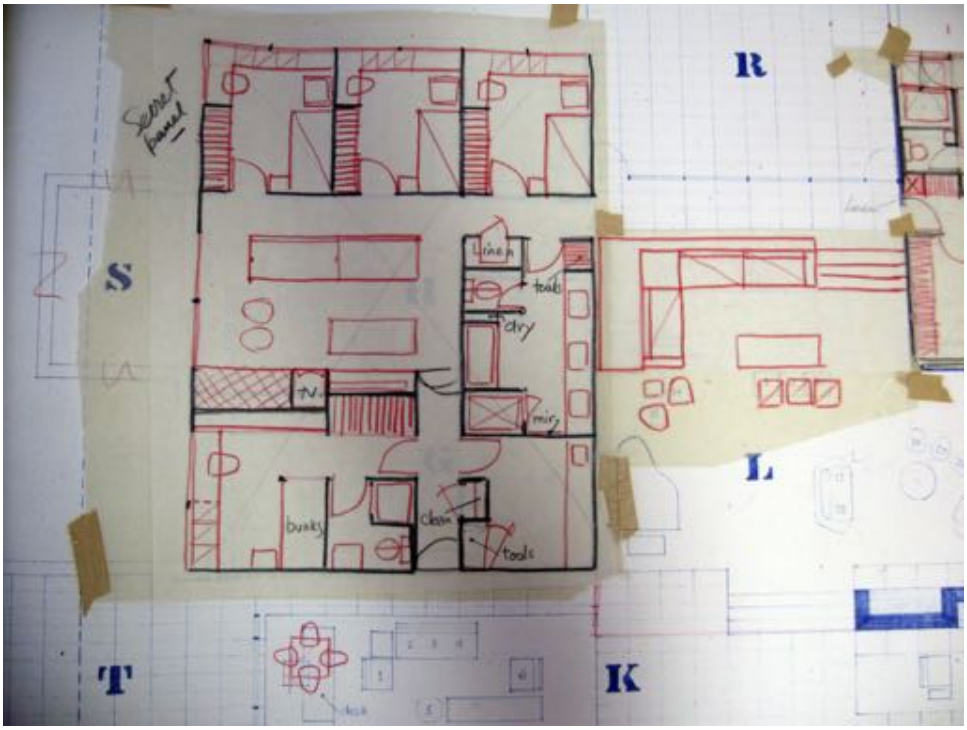

Figure 64
Undated, markups superimposed on plan
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00926

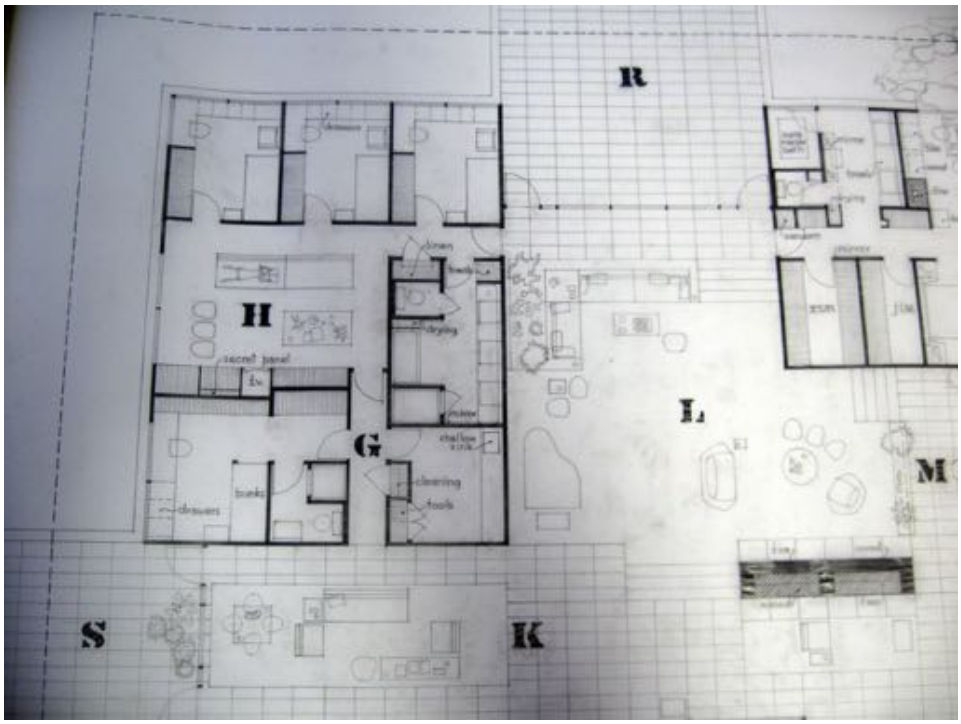

Figure 65
Detail, Saarinen and Girard, Architects: Plan, March 30, 1954
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00926

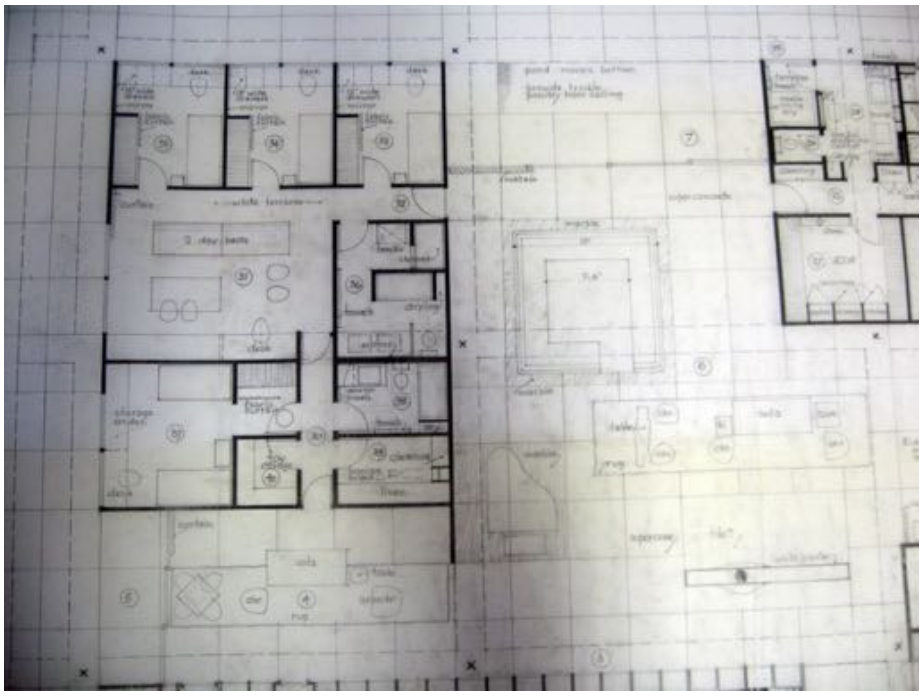

Figure 66
Detail, Girard Plan, July 2, 1954
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00926

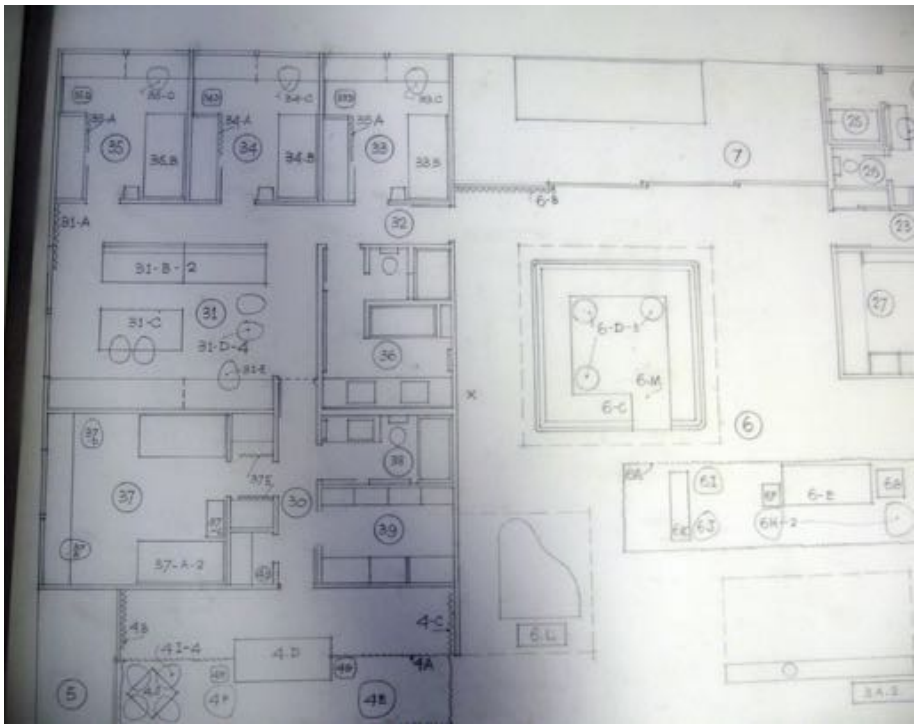

Figure 67
Detail from “Rugs, Curtains, Furniture, Etc.” September 1, 1954
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00926

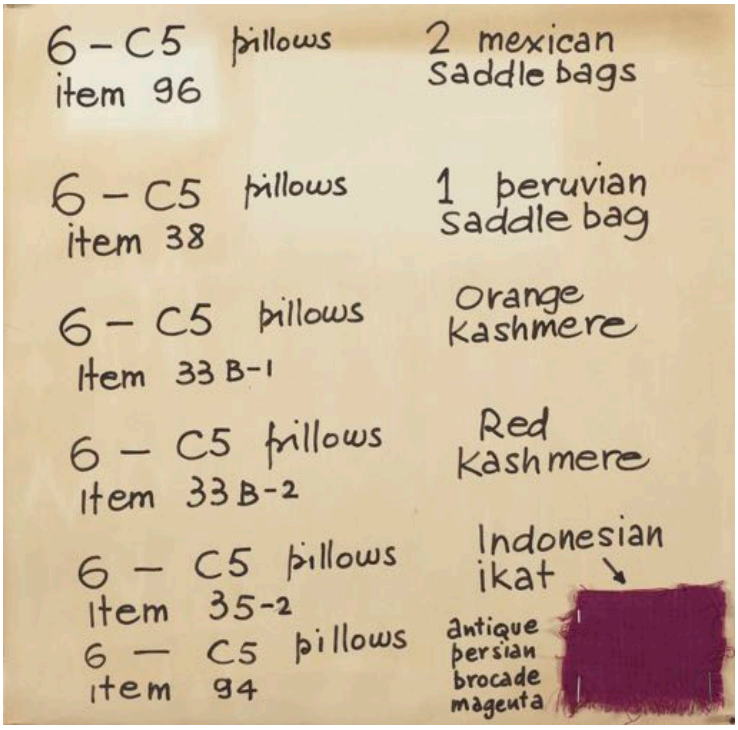

Figure 68
Pit pillows textile key, Box 94, Folder 99, M003
IMA Archives, Indianapolis Museum of Art

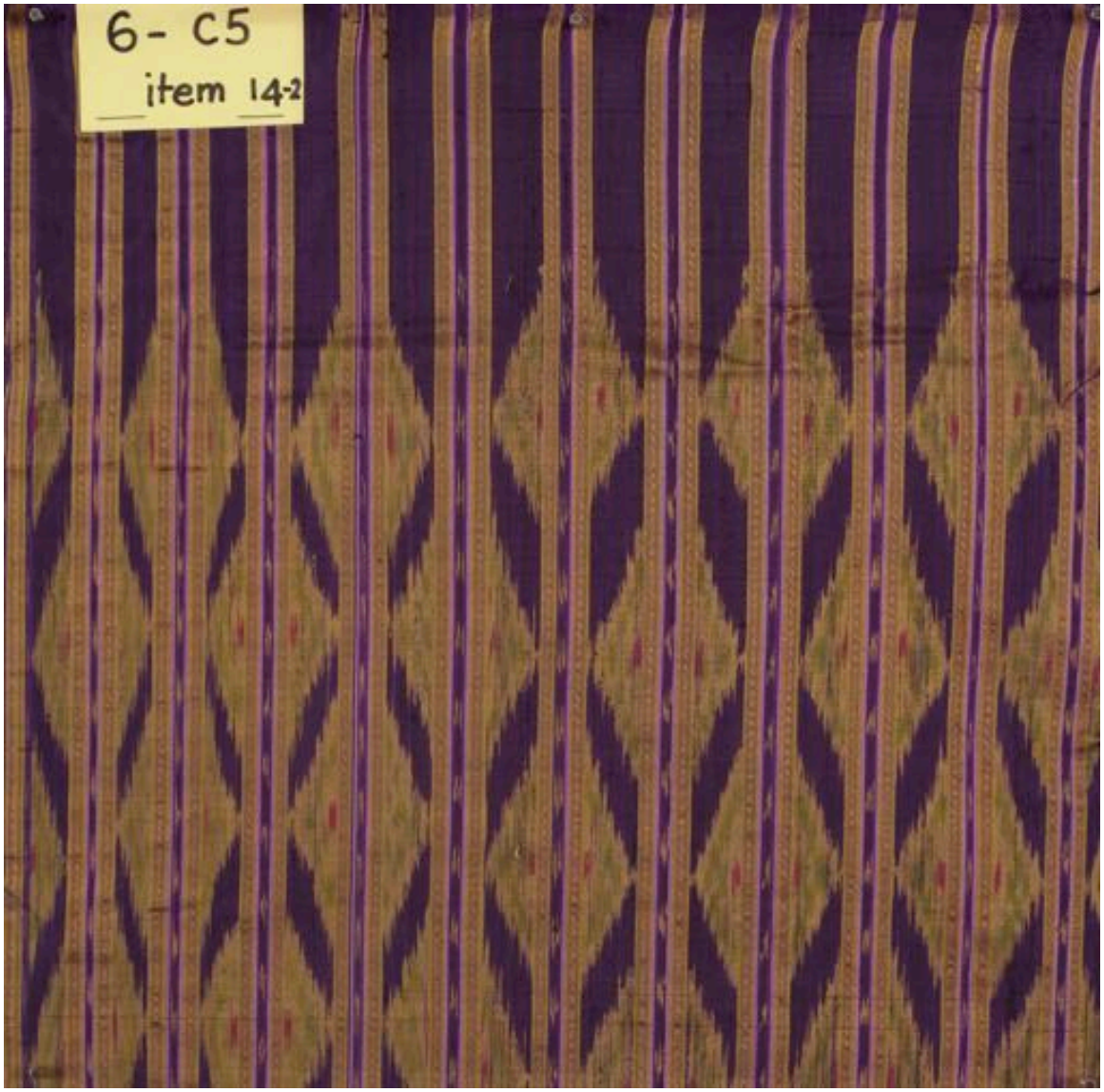

Figure 69
Siamese silk ikat textile sample, Box 94, Folder 99, M003
IMA Archives Indianapolis Museum of ArtJ.

ALEXANDER GIRARD • P. O. BOX 707 • SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO • TELEPHONE 3-6789

November 14, 1955

RECEIVED NOV 18 1955

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Irwin Miller

SUBJECT: Items which still need to be selected and which require your inspection upon your next visit to New York

At the Herman Miller Showroom, 305 East 63rd, (9 A.M. to 5 P.M.), attention Mr. Gene Eppinger:

Desk for Guest Room

(Our Item No. 112, and Space No. 43-F)

See Herman Miller-George Nelson designed desks, No. 5494 Rosewood Table Desk, 24" x 42" x 28½" high, or No. 5496 Roll Top Desk, 24" x 42" x 34" high overall.

I believe either model would be very good in space available. Check your furniture plan to better visualize sizes; (no pictures available).

Table for Kitchen

(Our Item No. 132, and Space No. 12-A)

See Herman Miller-George Nelson designed tables, No. 5560 X-leg white Micarta plastic top, polished chrome plated legs, or No. 5590 Pedestal white enamel base table, with top similar to No. 5560.

Note: Either table can be made in any size desired, either in one-piece top or with extension top. If desired, increased rigidity may be obtained by increasing sizes of supporting angles under tops.

I prefer No. 5560 X-leg, as it can be had in polished chrome. (All the chairs in kitchen have polished chrome bases).

If you advise preference for solid or extension top, I will work out the details and sizes. (See pictures enclosed).

Figure 70
Memo from Alexander Girard to J. Irwin Miller, 14 November 1955, Box 1, Folder 1, M003, IMA Archives, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

ALEXANDER GIRARD • P. O. BOX 707 • SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO • TELEPHONE 3-6759

November 22, 1955

IRWIN MILLER

e.p.s.a. = as per sample approved

Rug List

Item #	Space #	Size	Type
24	2-A	8'3" x 16'3"	Aubusson, handwoven Special Girard design quality, A.H.S.
72	2-B	1-3/4" thick	Cocoa Mat Recess size 4'9-3/4" x 9'4"
2	4-A	7'7" x 24'6"	Bessarabian
1	6-A	10'10" x 18'3"	Bessarabian
22	6-M	8'6" x 8'6"	Royal Deventer Dark red e.p.s.a.
23	8-A	16'4" x 16'4" 8" diameter hole in center.	Aubusson, handwoven Special Girard design Quality, A.H.S.

Figure 71
Page one of Miller House Rug List, 22 November 1955,
Box 1, Folder 1, M003, IMA Archives, Indianapolis Museum of Art

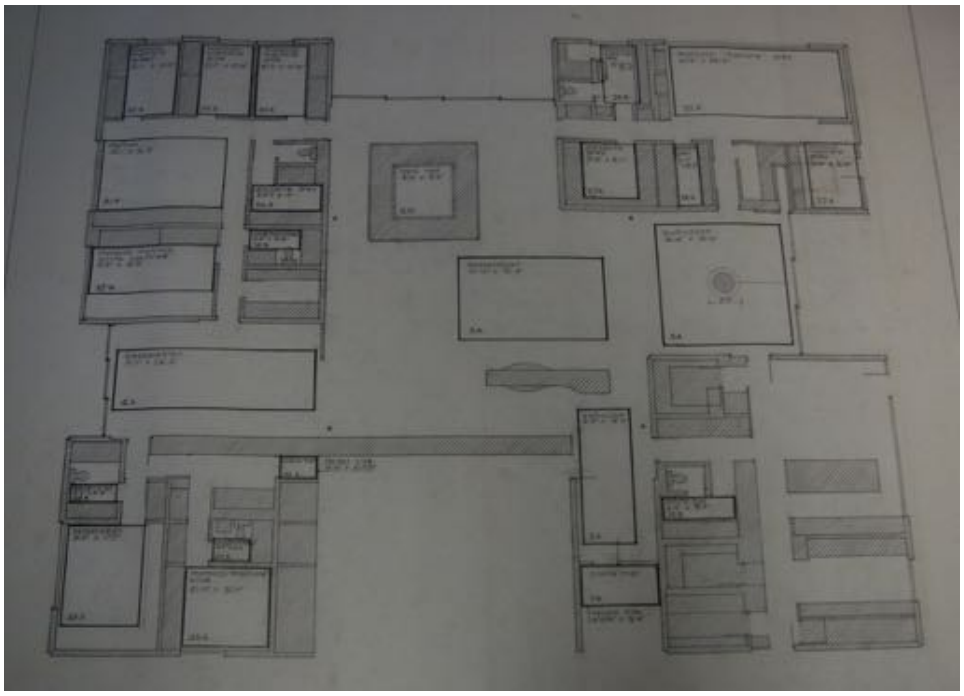

Figure 72
Rug Plan, November 19, 1955
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00926

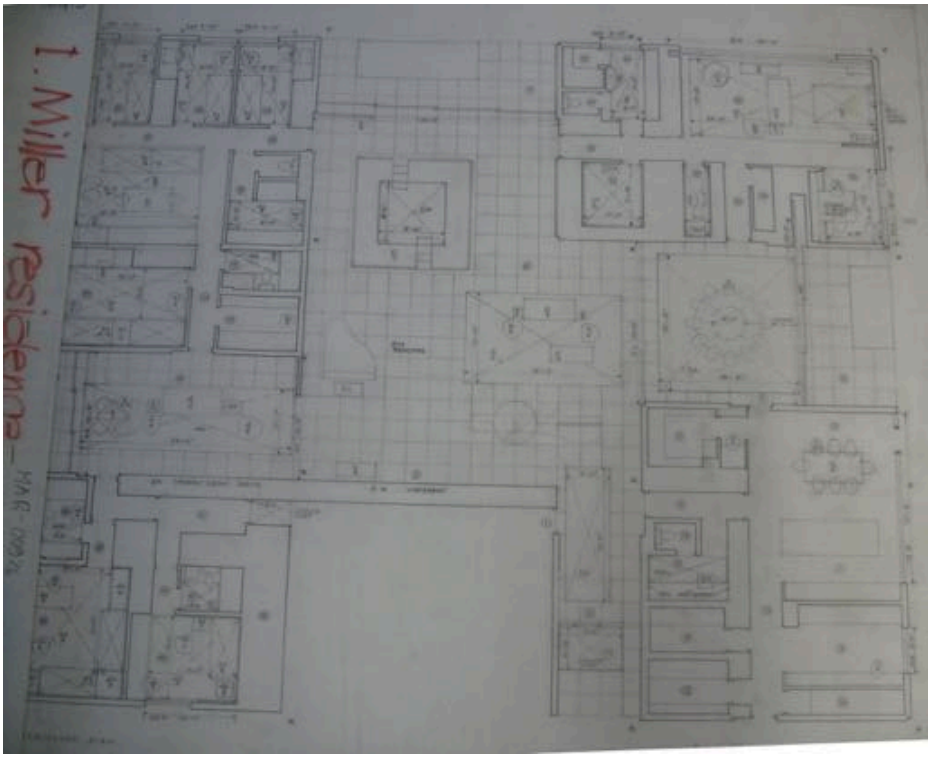

Figure 73
Furnishings Plan (March 5, 1955): revised January 15, 1956
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00926

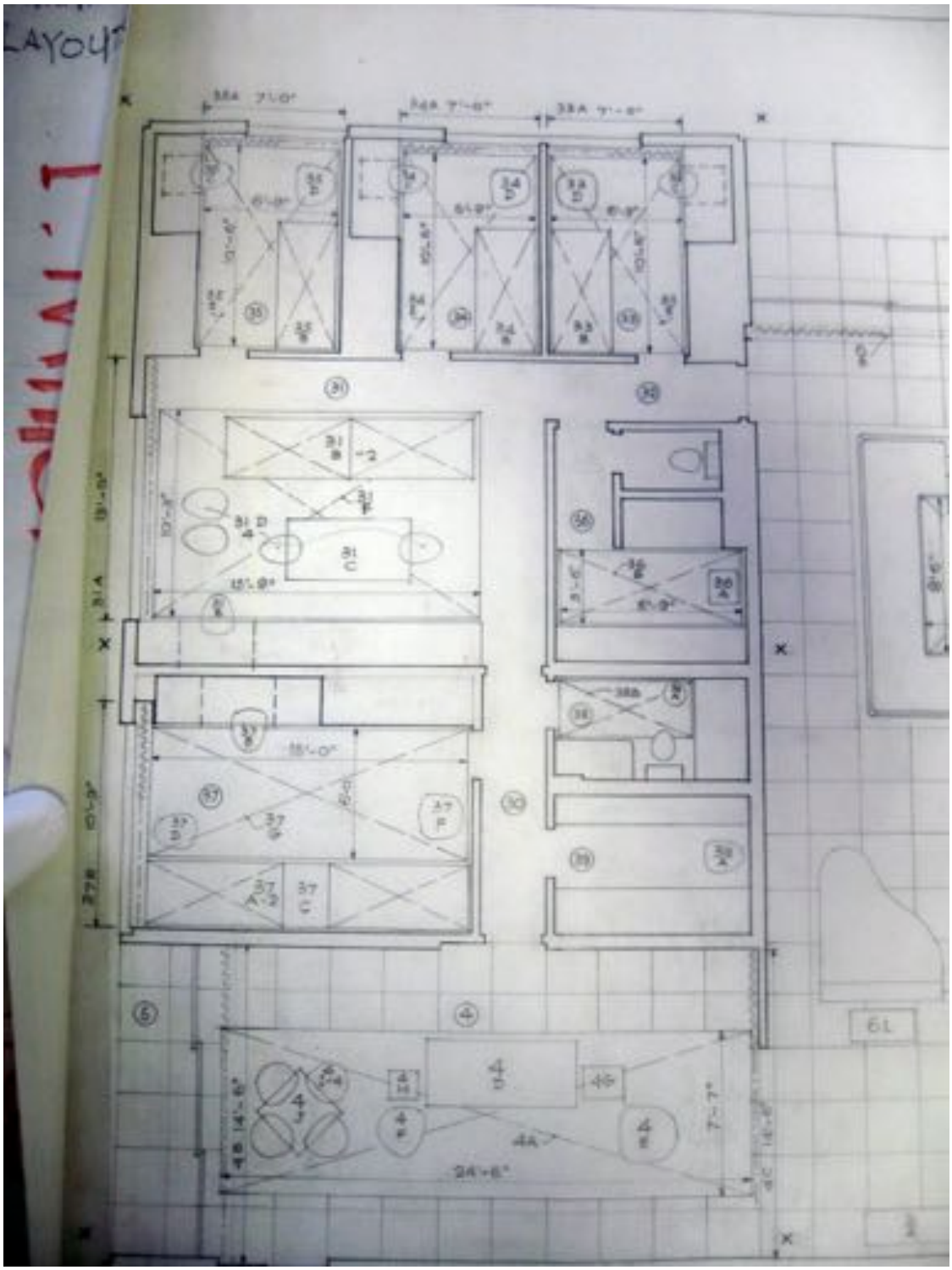

Figure 74
Detail from January 15, 1956 plan
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00926

Figure 75
Miller House floor plan with textile samples, ca. 1954, FF 45, M003,
IMA Archives, Indianapolis Museum of Art

Figure 76
Detail of Miller House floor plan with textile samples, ca. 1954, FF 45, M003,
IMA Archives, Indianapolis Museum of Art

IMAGE REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT PURPOSES

Figure 77
Carport, photographed by Ezra Stoller, 1958
Esto #10311588852

IMAGE REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT PURPOSES

Figure 78
View into living room from dining room, photographed by Ezra Stoller, 1958
Esto #10311588855

IMAGE REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT PURPOSES

Figure 79
View across living room, photographed by Ezra Stoller, 1958
Esto #5011304769

IMAGE REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT PURPOSES

Figure 80
View into conversation pit, photographed by Ezra Stoller, 1958
Esto #10311588900

IMAGE REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT PURPOSES

Figure 81
View from conversation pit toward storage wall, photographed by Ezra Stoller, 1958
Esto #5011307521

IMAGE REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT PURPOSES

Figure 82
Vew of Storage Wall, photographed by Ezra Stoller, 1958
Esto #10311588858

IMAGE REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT PURPOSES

Figure 83
Detail of storage wall, photographed by Ezra Stoller, 1958
Esto #10311588859

IMAGE REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT PURPOSES

Figure 84
View of collage wall in master bedroom, photographed by Ezra Stoller, 1958
Esto #5011307554

IMAGE REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT PURPOSES

Figure 85
View of girl's bedroom, photographed by Ezra Stoller, 1958
Esto #10311588954

IMAGE REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT PURPOSES

Figure 86
Children's playroom, photographed by Ezra Stoller, 1958
Esto #5011306362

IMAGE REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT PURPOSES

Figure 87
Dining room table, photographed by Ezra Stoller, 1958
Esto #5011304786

Figure 88
Alexander H. Girard, Rug, 1963, wool
Indianapolis Museum of Art, Gift of Margaret, Catherine, Elizabeth and Will Miller

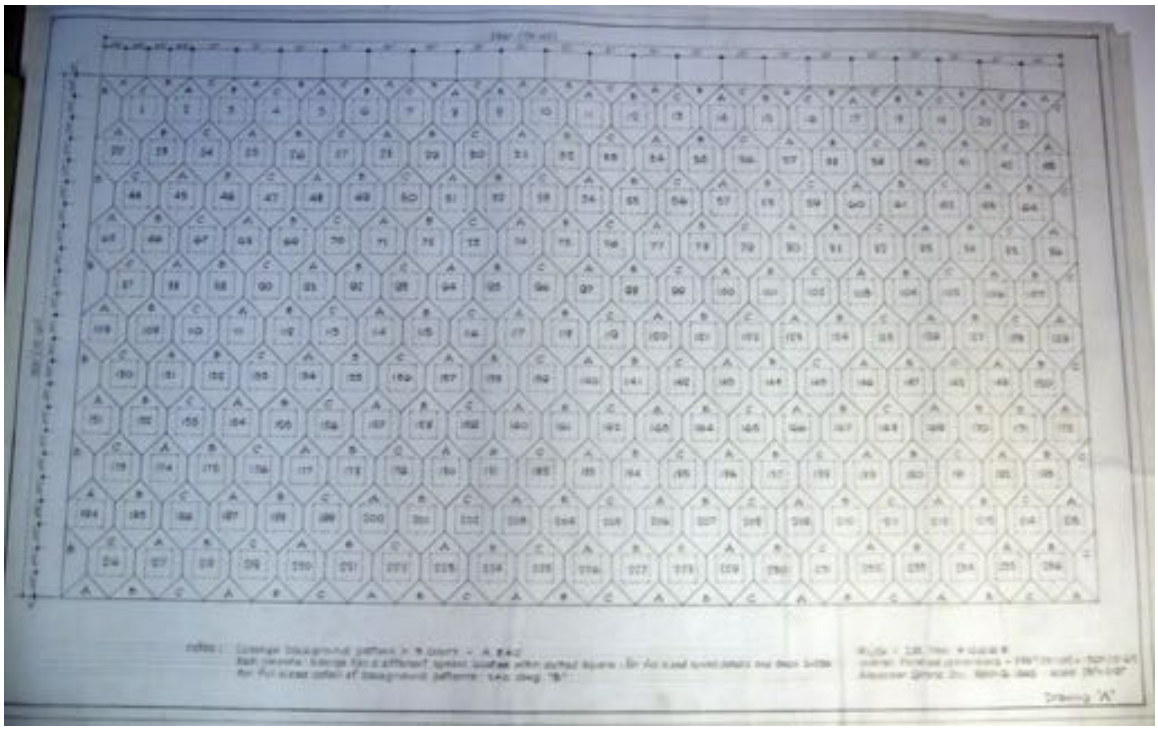

Figure 89
Rug (item no. 666B); Drawing A; March 6, 1962
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00916, 4-102

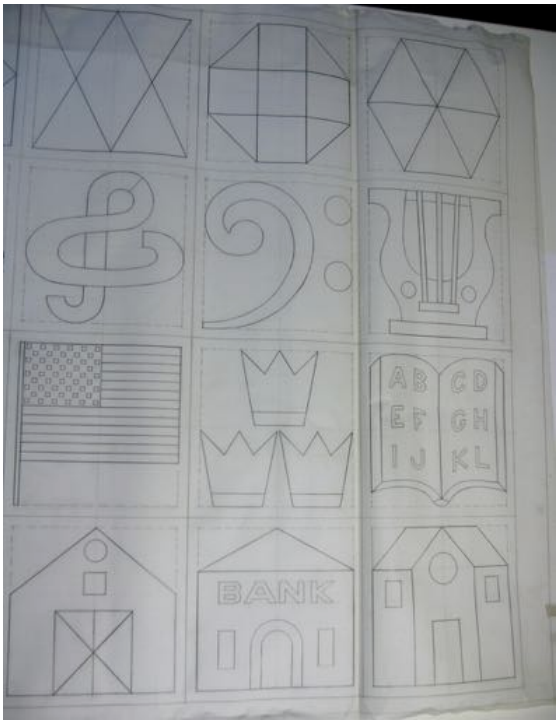

Figure 90
Details for rug
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00916, 4-102

Figure 91
Maquette for rug
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard

III. CULTURE AND COMMERCE IN THE POSTWAR MUSEUM: THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ART'S *AN EXHIBITION FOR MODERN LIVING* (1949)

> Wherever we go and whatever we do, *design* is always with us—making itself felt in our lives. Physically, good design can go far to increase the efficiency of our actions. Spiritually it can add much to our enjoyment of things around us.[203]
>
> –Alexander Girard, 1949

Alexander Girard opened the catalog for the Detroit Institute of Art's *For Modern Living* exhibition with this statement about "good" design, which he believed fundamental to the full enjoyment of daily life and improved the efficiency of modern day living. Located in the nation's automotive center, the Detroit Institute of Art participated in the growing trend of museum intervention in and links with the world of commerce through designed objects. During the 1910s many museums across the country produced "art in industry" exhibitions, including those pioneered by John Cotton Dana, who directed the Newark Museum and initiated museum exhibitions involving industrially produced goods, igniting a flame that lasted through the postwar period.[204] Detroit's exhibition would not have been possible without the support of J. L. Hudson's, the city's local department store. Partly through innovative store displays, beginning in the 1920s, museums were affected by the rising agency of department stores, which led to commercial sponsorships of exhibitions. Both museums and department stores

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[203] Alexander Girard, "Forward," *An Exhibition for Modern Living, September eleventh to November twentieth, Nineteen Forty-nine*, ed. by A. H. Girard and W. D. Laurie, Jr, intro. by E. P. Richardson (Detroit: Institute of Arts, 1949), 5.

[204] Ezra Shales, *Made in Newark: Cultivating Industrial Arts and Civic Identity in the Progressive Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rivergate Books, 2010) and Nicolas Maffei, "John Cotton Dana and the Politics of Exhibiting Industrial Art in the US, 1909-1929," *Journal of Design History* 13 (2000), 301-317.

selectively displayed objects (merchandise) that affected visitors (consumers) through large displays of commodities. Historian Neil Harris has remarked that a museum's success, particularly in influencing public taste, "depended on their effectiveness in reaching a large lay audience, capturing its attention, increasing its knowledge, and shaping its sense of possibility."[205] In the postwar era, the museum was more effective in influencing the public as a site where culture and commerce united in an effort to promote modern design by shaping ideas of everyday living for the average American.

Girard helped shape the postwar dialogue about contemporary design trends as exhibition director of *An Exhibition For Modern Living* at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) in 1949. He believed that "this exhibition has its origin in the need of all of us to understand more about design—especially in terms of our own time."[206] Museums (and department stores) had been instructive about current trends in design for several decades, but the Detroit exhibition was part of a postwar discourse designed to assist new homeowners with procuring appropriate furnishings. Although there was an aesthetic standard at work, the exhibition was based on the ideal that modern design could solve the problems of daily life. The exhibition was further predicated on the idea that contemporary furniture had its origins in nineteenth-century vernacular design in the US. After encountering a section on the background of modern design, the museum visitor viewed a mural by Saul Steinberg that visually explored the contradictions of modern life. The largest section of the exhibition—the hall of objects—was devoted to over 2,000

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[205] Historian Neil Harris discusses the museum alongside world's fairs and department stores in the context of influencing public taste in Neil Harris, "Museums, Merchandising and Popular Taste: The Struggle for Influence," *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 57.
[206] Girard, "Forward," *An Exhibition for Modern Living,* 5.

objects for the modern home deemed useful and decorative selected by Girard and his team. Finally, the visitor observed ideal interiors and one outdoor setting as model rooms designed by some of the best-known practitioners of what later came to be known as Mid-Century Modern design. The exhibition hoped to influence postwar consumption patterns and taste in the home. Although the majority of the exhibition (Figure 92) was devoted to contemporary design, this show is significant conceptually because the DIA, through Girard's leadership, situated a historical view of the vernacular in relation to a particular type of modernism. It speaks to Girard's aesthetic motivations and is related to the resurgence of handicrafts in the midcentury. Using Girard's contributions to the exhibition as a lens, this chapter will map the formation and development of Detroit's *For Modern Living* exhibition, positioning it within the larger postwar discourse about museums and domestic design.

A. <u>The Art of Display</u>

Girard demonstrated a predilection for creating organized displays out of disparate material, as exemplified by the many exhibitions, showrooms, and interiors that he designed over the course of his career. In the mid-century, the art of display gained ground as an important profession consumed with increasing sales through a particular style of advertising.[207] In fact, during the late 1940s *Interiors* magazine devoted many

[207] Many scholars, following established critiques of capitalism, believe that consumers can be viewed as victims of advertising and fall prey to retailers' persuasions. See Stewart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976); T. J. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

articles to this burgeoning field because the editors believed that "display is an art that the architect or interior designer should grasp firmly."[208] The display designer worked with design fundamentals, including volume, planes, and color; it was also helpful for the display designer to understand materials, production methods, and merchandising, thus architects were well suited to this type of work. Of course, display was not a new phenomenon, and the goals of the practice—to fashion an attractive presentation and to sell merchandise—remained consistent over time. However, the mechanisms for creating such displays advanced, becoming more scientific during the period.

There were numerous components, such as lighting, necessary to achieve a successful display. Many designers preferred to devise their own furniture and light fixtures (including Girard for the T & O Shop; Chapter 3). In addition to lighting, some critics believed that understanding sculpture was an important skill for display because of the three-dimensional qualities of both pursuits. Girard practiced sculpture with vigor, exhibiting a penchant for wooden forms, as demonstrated in a July 1945 article that illustrated his abstract sculpture in the California progressive magazine *Arts and Architecture* (Figure 93). Girard translated his skills from sculpture to many other creative endeavors, including the showroom he designed in 1946 for the No-Sag Spring Company in the Chicago Furniture Mart (Figure 94). Interested in fashioning a convincing home environment, Girard composed a living room and the illusion of a terrace to demonstrate the desirable quality of No-Sag Spring furniture rather than the technology behind the lack of sagging. After encountering products that consumers were able to test on the sales floor, the final space in the showroom was devoted to a display

[208] "The Art of Display," *Interiors* 105 (April 1946), 89.

explaining the mechanics of the springs (before Girard's involvement, this was the sole focus of display; following contemporary precedents, Girard transposed the spaces to make the consumer aware of how they could use the goods *before* explaining the technology of "no-sag"). Also present in the showroom entrance and emblazoned on the trucks delivering goods, Girard retooled the No-Sag logo by incorporating a "g" that embraced the appearance of a coiled spring (Figure 95). Girard harnessed the skills that he learned from designing domestic interiors and showroom displays and parlayed them into critical museum exhibition design.

B. Detroit Institute of Arts: For Modern Living (1949)

An Exhibition For Modern Living opened on September 11, 1949 and closed several weeks later on November 20, 1949. The exhibition was co-sponsored by the Detroit retailer J. L. Hudson Company (under the direction of James B. Webber, Jr., Director of Merchandise and nephew of the founder, with Reuben Ryding as his representative), and, according to *Architectural Forum*, was the first major show endorsed by a department store since Macy's 1928 *International Exposition of Art in Industry*; following Macy's sponsorship, segments of the American population embraced modern design as press coverage of department store and museum exhibitions contributed to public awareness (and slowly growing acceptance) of Art Moderne and European-influenced modern design.[209] Director Edgar P. Richardson chaired the executive committee that was charged with planning the organization of the DIA

[209] For more on this see, Marilyn Friedman, *Selling Good Design: Promoting the Early Modern Interior* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2003).

exhibition.[210] Girard was appointed as Director for the Management and Execution of the Exhibition and General Chairman of the planning committee as well.[211] By late July 1948 Richardson apprised Ryding of the exhibition steering committee, which consisted of architects Eero Saarinen and Minoru Yamasaki, LeRoy C. Kiefer (chief designer of General Motors' product and exhibit design studios), William D. Laurie, Jr. (vice-president of Maxon Inc., a Detroit advertising agency) and Alexander Girard, who would be responsible for "putting their ideas together and putting them down on paper and working out all of the design, color scheme, and general setting of the exhibition."[212] As general director of the exhibition, this was a tremendous opportunity for Girard; he had completed a few projects in Florence, New York, and Detroit and was on Eero Saarinen's winning team of designers for the Jefferson Memorial in St. Louis, but the DIA exhibition would introduce his work to a greater national audience.

Girard and the DIA began their relationship a few years earlier when he designed a desk and display cases in 1947 for an exhibition of Hal H. Smith's collection of prints, mounted by John S. Newberry (the DIA's curator of graphic art and a trustee of the Founders Society, which contributed to the museum financially and with acquisitions)

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[210] The Executive Committee—Richardson (as Chairman), Girard (as Director), Kiefer, Laurie, Saarinen, and Yamasaki—also engaged a committee of advisors, which included Serge Chermayeff, D. J. DePree, Rene D'Haranoncourt, Charles Eames, Harley Earl, John Entenza, Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., Lincoln Kirstein, Florence Knoll, John A. Kouwenhoven, George Nelson, Hilda Reiss, Dr. Andrew Ritchie, Bernard Rudofsky, Gordon Russell, S. Gordon Saunders, Saul Steinberg, and Marianne Strengell.
[211] "D.I.A. Exhibit '49 Outline of Organization," 30 September 1948, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[212] E. P. Richardson to Ruben Ryding, 28 July 1948, Folder 67/08, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

(Figure 96).[213] As general chairman Girard planned the exhibition with a tentative budget of $41,500;[214] he was also in charge of various committees including the publicity and public relations committee (chaired by William D. Laurie, Jr.); special exhibits division (chaired by Eero Saarinen); special techniques and equipment division (chaired by Leroy E. Kiefer); construction, materials, procurement division (chaired by Minoru Yamasaki); space design (chaired by Girard); and the catalogue division (chaired by William A. Bostick).[215]

As museum director from 1945-1962, Richardson, who began his career at the DIA as secretary of education, had a sincere interest in educating the public through the apparatus of the museum.[216] After being approached by Webber (of the J. L. Hudson Company) about mounting an exhibition "about modern design for modern living," Richardson wrote to Ryding about precedents for such an exhibition.[217] Museums across the United States had begun to make claims about the role of modern design in everyday

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[213] Sculpture by Girard was also included in a comprehensive survey on the ancient origins of modern sculpture organized by Dr. W. R. Valentiner at the Detroit Institute of Arts from January 22 through March 3, 1946. Clipping "Origins of Modern Sculpture," *Pictures on Exhibit*, February 1946, found in newspapers scrapbooks, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.

[214] This included construction ($13,500); publicity ($8000); miscellaneous ($2000); artwork and murals ($2500); director for six months ($8000); and expenses ($7500). Alexander Girard to E. P. Richardson, 10 November 1948, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

[215] Throughout his career Girard understood the value of publicity. He later suggested to Richardson that the exhibition catalog (and any other exhibition-related printed material) should be integrated into the "Publicity and Public Relations Division" so that a "complete unity of purpose can be achieved." Alexander Girard to E. P. Richardson, 4 October 1948, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

[216] Richardson was an important scholar in the field of American art; he and Detroit businessman Lawrence Fleischman founded the Archives of American Art in 1954.

[217] E. P. Richardson to Ruben Ryding, 9 July 1948, Folder 67/08, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

life. Richardson believed that previous exhibitions of this type had emphasized either design or living. The former was espoused by MoMA in the *Useful Objects* exhibitions (1938-1947) and the traveling show, *Good Design is Your Business* (1947), staged by the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo; the latter was underscored at the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design's *Furniture of Today* (1948), at which visitors could handle furniture and decorative accessories within room settings, and at the Walker Art Center "where the attempt has been to suggest a home or a series of freely connected rooms with things shown in them" (referring to *Idea House II*).[218] Richardson noted that the third option, which had not been executed in museums since the 1920s, would incorporate architect-designer commissioned rooms; this is where the DIA could contribute to the larger landscape of museum exhibitions educating the public about modern design (or "good design") by harnessing the expertise of tastemakers.

The United States had transformed successfully from a wartime to a peacetime economy and it was a particularly fecund moment for Detroit, as automobile manufacturing and industrial production was booming. Outside of the city, the Cranbrook Academy of Art was one of the country's premier design education center and further afield, Grand Rapids was America's first furniture city, a center for industrially produced furnishings. At the beginning of Richardson's tenure at the DIA, the museum mounted *Built in USA: Exhibition of American Architecture Since 1932* (October 6-November 4, 1945), and two years later *Industrial Design* (March 9-April 2, 1947), demonstrating his acceptance of architecture and design as appropriate for an art museum. Interestingly, before arriving at the DIA Richardson designed displays for Gimbel's department store,

[218] Ibid.

so he had firsthand knowledge of the connections between culture and commerce. Writing about the appropriateness of such an exhibition in Detroit for the introduction to the catalog, he claimed:

> This is a great industrial city. But it does not manufacture automobiles only. More and more in the past decade it has become a city that deals with every phase of modern technology. It is today one of the great reservoirs of the technological skills of the twentieth century.[219]

This statement provided clues to Richardson's understanding of modern design and its relationship to technology. Like many of his generation, he believed that the machine destroyed handcrafts in the nineteenth century, leading to decades of debased design, until this moment, during which designers had begun to harness the capabilities of technology to create beautiful, useful, and well-designed works.

C. Exhibitions of industrial design or "everyday art"

As noted above, there was historical precedent for Detroit's exhibition in earlier displays of industrial art. John Cotton Dana imagined a progressive role for the Newark Museum as a "museum of service," thus he pioneered the effort to bring "everyday art" to his community through exhibitions.[220] His vision of a civic culture joined libraries and museums with industry and commerce, and the Newark Museum invited industry (alongside social workers and educators) to instruct the public on crafts and culture. Dana

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[219] E. P. Richardson, "Introduction," *An Exhibition For Modern Living, September 11 to November 20, 1949*, ed. by A. H. Girard and W. D. Laurie, Jr., (Detroit: Institute of Arts, 1949).

[220] This was Dana's term for his alternative American museum. Two recent books examine Dana and the Newark Museum: Carol G. Duncan, *A Matter of Class: John Cotton Dana, Progressive Reform, and the Newark Museum* (Pittsburgh: Periscope Publishing, 2010); and Ezra Shales, *Made in Newark: Cultivating Industrial Arts and Civic Identity in the Progressive Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rivergate Books, 2010).

was aware of industrial design in Europe, particularly the work of the *Deutscher Werkbund*, which manufacturers, designers, design reformers, educators, and curators formed in 1907 to promote good design and quality workmanship to disseminate knowledge about goods produced and to boast the German national economy and German competitiveness abroad.[221] Following Newark, the Metropolitan Museum of Art also held a series of industrial design exhibitions, beginning with *The Architect and the Industrial Arts* in 1917, which included designs by architects Eliel Saarinen and Joseph Urban intended for industrial manufacture.

Founded in 1929, the Museum of Modern Art made an early statement about the beauty of industrial design with *Machine Art* (1934). Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (the museum's first director) and Philip Johnson espoused principles of beauty and form through mechanical works, or machine art; they believed these objects characterized good timeless design, that is, design that was not styled (or streamlined).[222] Fundamentally, the museum demonstrated its steadfast dedication to industry through a celebration of the machine and the speed, dynamism and reproducibility that it represented. This occurred under the directorship of Holger Cahill, who, before becoming the director of exhibitions at MoMA in 1932, worked with Dana on the art-in-industry initiatives at the Newark Museum. Cahill believed that instead of depending on Europe, American designers and artists should examine US "engineers and manufacturers (who) are making real

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[221] The traveling exhibition "German Applied Arts," which featured products of the Deutscher Werkbund, toured the United States during the 1912-13. *Shaping the Modern: American Decorative Arts at the Art Institute of Chicago, 1917-65* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2001), 11.

[222] For more on the *Machine Art* exhibition, see Kristina Wilson, *The Modern Eye: Stieglitz, MoMA, and the Art of the Exhibition, 1925-1934* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) and Jennifer Marshall, *Machine Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

contributions to modern design."[223] In addition to advocating for the Bauhaus (a German art, design and architecture school, 1919-33), through this exhibition MoMA also supported US industry, advancing the idea that the local vernacular could provide artists and designers the link to an "American" (machine) aesthetic.

In an effort to create visitor-friendly exhibitions, industrially designed goods were displayed within domestic settings, such as model houses or model rooms. *Idea House* (1941) and *Idea House II* (1947) were two popular exhibitions mounted by the Walker Art Center. For each the Walker Art Center built a fully functioning modern exhibition house as a staging area for "home design advice," recalling the precedent established by world's fair model homes as spaces to view current technological, domestic, and architectural developments in housing (and related home furnishings).[224] The curator selected the objects on display, giving the works chosen the imprimatur of the museum. Interestingly, the Walker included very little information on designers of the work, while price lists and manufacturer's addresses were available.[225] Detroit's *For Modern Living*

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[223] Holger Cahill, "America is Making Real Progress in Art," *Forbes* (April 1, 1929), 22, as quoted in Nicolas Maffei, "John Cotton Dana and the Politics of Exhibiting Industrial Art in the US, 1909-1929." *Journal of Design History* 13 (2000), 313.

[224] Alexandra Griffith Winton has noted that this experiment predates the Case Study houses and MoMA's *House in the Museum Garden* (1949); MoMA commissioned Marcel Breuer to build a single-family home in the sculpture garden that presented an option for a bedroom-community commuter who worked in the urban center. Alexandra Griffith Winton, "'A Man's House is his Art': The Walker Art Center *Idea House* Project and the Marketing of Domestic Design 1941-1947," *Journal of Design History* 17 (2004), 377-396.

[225] Further obfuscating the boundaries between museum and retailer, director D. S. Defenbacher proposed a "consumer's art gallery" at the Walker Art Center, which ultimately became the Everyday Art Gallery. The development of the Everyday Art Program is outlined in "Where to See Everyday Art," *Everyday Art Quarterly* 13 (Winter 1949-50), 1-11.

fits into this paradigm, as it displayed seven complete model rooms and a large patio alongside other exhibition spaces.

D. Planning the exhibition

Richardson proposed that the DIA's show was not simply about objects, but that it was "an exhibition of an idea—of how best modern intelligence can serve modern life by solving problems of setting up our daily lives."[226] The exhibition theme was to explore a new concept of beauty—an aesthetic ideal—and its motivating problem:

> Following the social and industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, a small group of artists, architects and designers gifted with a clear vision and concerned with prevailing decadence of the arts of their time, initiated a serious effort to create a new way of life.[227]

Following Richardson's position, in an early letter from July 27, 1948, Laurie apprised Girard of his intention for the exhibition to stimulate the general public toward a finer appreciation and a broader understanding of the subject matter, communicating an aesthetic and instructive approach. Interestingly, he desired "no commercial tie-ins whatsoever; no instructions on who makes what; where to get this or that; etc. Keep the whole project on the level of the dignity and impartiality of the Museum itself."[228] Laurie must have been concerned about the potentially blurred boundary between the museum and the department store; installing objects without critical information (designer, maker, retailer) removed them from the commercial realm, and sanctioned them as art objects.

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[226] E. P. Richardson notes, Folder 67/10, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[227] Alexander Girard to E. P. Richardson, 10 November 1948, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[228] William D. Laurie, Jr. to Alexander Girard, 27 July 1948, Folder 67/08, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

Laurie's comments also imply an awareness of MoMA's holiday displays of inexpensive *Useful Objects* exhibition (from 1938-1947) and the Walker Art Gallery's *Idea House I* and *II* (1941 and 1947), both of which included price lists.

During the planning phase Girard proposed a number of museum professionals and design experts to participate in the exhibition, including Marianne Strengell (Director of Weaving at the Cranbrook Academy of Art), who could consult on fabrics for the exhibition, Andrew Ritchie (Director of the Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo), who could provide useful information on objects and furniture, and Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. (advisor to the Director of Architecture and Design, Museum of Modern Art). By September 23, 1948, Kaufmann accepted Girard's invitation, which made MoMA's files available to Girard for research and reference.[229] The extensive advisory committee included these authorities alongside President of Chicago's Institute of Design, Serge Chermayoff; President of the Herman Miller Furniture Company, D. J. DePree; Director of Curatorial Departments at the Museum of Modern Art, Rene D'Harnoncourt; architect and designer Charles Eames; Vice-President of General Motors Corporation, Harley Earl; Editor of *Arts and Architecture,* John Entenza; art critic Lincoln Kirstein; designer Florence Knoll; contributing editor of *Harper's Magazine* and Associate Professor at Barnard College, John A. Kouwenhoven; architect and designer George Nelson; curator at the Walker Art Center, Hilda Reiss; architect Bernard Rudofsky; Director of the Council of Industrial Design in London, Gordon Russell; General Manager of the Cycle Weld Division of

[229] Alexander Girard memorandum no. 1, 30 September 1948, Folder 67/08, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

Chrysler, S. Gordon Saunders; and illustrator Saul Steinberg.[230] Girard had specific suggestions for specialists to lead subdivisions of the Exhibition Objects Division and asked Richardson to officially invite them to participate.[231] To organize and direct woven fabrics, Girard selected Strengell; to research and assemble historical material, he invited W. Hawkins Ferry (architectural historian and art collector); to research and assemble modern paintings and sculpture, he selected John S. Newberry (DIA curator and local collector of 20th century art); and, as a valuable advisor, Girard trusted Kaufmann.[232] This exhibition, like many others during the post-war period, utilized a tremendous number of human and financial resources, suggesting that these enormous undertakings were highly valued by museums and industry.

After discussions held during July 1948, the home emerged as the central focus and an area of authority for the DIA. Notes recorded during these meetings include discussions about the home as "man's closest environment;" as the location of good taste; and as a new frontier for GIs.[233] The stated purpose of the exhibition was:

> to promote the best contemporary and progressive designs in home furnishings; to assemble a selection of available home furnishings of the desired quality; to display this selection in a correlated and integrated manner to create the total background of the "new way of living;" and to explain the merits of this "new way of living" as directly and simply as possible.[234]

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[230] In addition to this list, the others were Hilda Reiss, curator at Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and S. Gordon Saunders, general manager of the cycle weld division of Chrysler Corporation.
[231] Alexander Girard to E. P. Richardson, 12 November 1948, Folder 67/11, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[232] Attorney Daniel W. Goodenaugh volunteered as a legal advisor for the exhibition.
[233] Handwritten notes, various dates, Folder 67/08, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[234] Detroit Institute of Arts Exhibition 1949, undated, Folder 67/08, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

Thus, this exhibition participated in the period obsession with "good design," a designation that Kaufmann and MoMA would capitalize on in the forthcoming months. "Good design" was located at the intersection between objects and commerce and was concerned with explaining the wider issue of living in new ways.

For his services as director of the 1949 DIA exhibition, the J. L. Hudson Company paid Girard a fee of $11,500, a huge fee demonstrating the extraordinary wealth of Detroit, as well as the perceived value of Girard's work.[235] Research for the exhibition began in October 1948; Girard collected lists from all the significant modern shows to use as models for Detroit's show.[236] He proclaimed,

> We want to emphasize that the exhibition will be selective in showing only the best examples of contemporary design for the home. In this respect it would differ from the home appliance or builders' type of show, which might have all manufacturers represented with their products.[237]

Further, Girard believed strongly that the exhibition should be "very forceful and dramatic," which he believed could be achieved through a bold theme and dramatic methods of display, including sound, ramps to different levels, moving platforms, and theatrical lighting (Figure 97).[238]

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[235] In 2014, this fee would be over $110,000. Girard countersigned the bottom of the document, agreeing to the arrangement on October 7, 1948. James B. Webber, Jr. to Alexander Girard, 5 October 1948, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[236] Press Release, 12 June 1949, Folder 67/10, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[237] Press Release, 12 June 1949, Folder 67/10, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[238] Notes on Exhibition, undated, Folder 67/08, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

The writings of architectural historian and critic Sigfried Giedion formed part of the foundational ideas explored in this exhibition. As architectural theorist Hilde Heynen has argued, Giedion, who was committed to the idea of architecture as evolutionary and linear, was partly responsible for constructing the myths of the European Modern Movement.[239] Celebrating the engineer, transparency, glass, vaulting, and technology over art, Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941) set out a teleological path and is a classic example of the progress of modernism, following the work of Nikolaus Pevsner.[240] His more recently published *Mechanization Takes Command* (1948) charted a functionalist theory of design that praised so-called anonymous industry and its translation into everyday life in the United States. Girard and the DIA advisors explored this teleological approach, parsing the nineteenth century technological developments about which Giedion wrote to provide Girard (and the team) the opportunity to situate modern design historically.

With advisors working alongside Girard on the project and sharing their ideas on modern design, the DIA show was collaborative. Together, the group alluded to taking a historical approach in the first gallery (in which modern design would be compared to "Victorian" design) "along the line of Giedeon's book."[241] Using Giedion's perspective of evolutionary architecture as a foundation, the first gallery would trace the adaptation of 20th century technology (which also fit with the automotive city of Detroit) in service of

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[239] Hilde Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity: A Critique,* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 29.

[240] Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement: From William Morris to Walter Gropius* (originally pub. 1936). Because of his march through time, Pevsner only allowed for one dominant narrative; histories written in the intervening years argue for multiplicity.

[241] Notes on Exhibition, undated, Folder 67/08, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

modern life in architecture, industrial design, and furnishings. At the same time, however, the group also surmised that:

> It might be a comparison between good modern design and mediocre modern design, along the line of Auerbach's article. It might be simply an explanation of the principles that go into modern design—appropriateness for use, avocation, etc. It might be a theme on the interrelation of the parts, stressing the harmony of the whole. It might be many other things.[242]

In addition to referencing Giedion's writings, the group also mentioned Alfred Auerbach, a design and merchandising consultant and long-time editor-in-chief of *Retailing Magazine* who outlined his version of modern design in an article for Entenza's *Arts and Architecture.* In it, he characterized the modern movement as tied to current technology and social needs; he desired the "basic criteria….[to] better understand modern and more intelligently differentiate between the good and the bad," which he believed MoMA to be executing through its exhibition programs.[243] Auerbach's 1948 article also explored "modern" through the categorization of ten types of design (and whether they were successful in the marketplace).[244] However, most ordinary Americans were not concerned with the designation "modern design;" as industrial designer and author Arthur J. Pulos has noted, in the late 1940s, although many were aware of contemporary furniture, they

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[242] Alfred Auerbach, a founder of the American Design Institute and the Alfred Auerbach Associates, a marking, advertising and public relations firm; this note likely refers to Auerbach's article "What is Modern," from *Arts and Architecture* (March 1948). Notes on Exhibition, undated, Folder 67/08, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

[243] Alfred Auerbach, "What Is Modern," *Arts and Architecture* (March 1948); interestingly, the next article in the magazine features Girard, as part of Saarinen's team for the St. Louis monument.

[244] The main point here is that "modern" means one thing to someone in Nebraska and something else to someone in New York; thus, when divulging figures (modern accounts for 25% or 45% of current sales, for example, as quoted by Auerbach), there is no baseline for interpretation.

still preferred historical styles for their homes.[245] Herman Miller and Knoll, while invested in manufacturing modern design, increasingly understood that the future for this market did not exist in the domestic sphere, but rather, in office and other contract interiors (in fact, the end of the T & O Shop coincided with Herman Miller's realization of this fact; see chapter 4).

E. Spaces of the Exhibition

The exhibition was organized in a sequence to convince the museum public of Detroit's attitude toward modern design. An early sketch dated November 2, 1948 (Figure 98) proposed a chronological sequence, beginning with 1890 and highlighting the years 1910, 1921 and 1932. The visitor would then view spaces arranged thematically—sun and light; natural use of materials; and "unpretension"—before viewing the gift shop, and finally a planned house. This plan was substantially altered, but the ideas were rooted in notes taken during exhibition meetings (Figure 99) During the planning phase, as director of the exhibition, Girard proposed beginning with a late Victorian room that would illustrate "all the undesirable characteristics of this decadent period," and would be symbolic of the "conditions that aroused the desire to find a new solution to our present day living problems."[246] Thus, a primary impulse was to demonize nineteenth century design. Interestingly, one of the ideas presented (although ultimately not utilized) was the theme "Forces That Form Our Taste," which would, according to Girard, show that "advertising, radio, programs, and so forth often have a derogatory effect, how there is

[245] Arthur J. Pulos, *The American Design Adventure* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), 79.
[246] Alexander Girard to E. P. Richardson, 10 November 1948, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

still much of the Victorian left in us—pomp, pretense, and conspicuous wealth," illustrating his desire for the exhibition to reform taste.[247] These comments also reveal that despite the show's emphasis on commercial products, there existed a level of distaste for advertising (despite the centrality of "good" commercial advertising design in Modern Movement design discourse), demonstrating a tension between museums as temples of "Art" and the interventionist (educational) goal as reformers of taste (or "good design"). This is particularly relevant in Detroit because it was located near Grand Rapids—the furniture capital that in the nineteenth century supplied much of the furniture that was derided critically by Girard and others yet was beloved by many at the time.

The exhibition would then delve into a series of small exhibits that illustrated inventive solutions in the development of modern design before the visitor approached "The New Way of Life"—exhibits of room interiors and fine art at the heart of the exhibition. Following these interiors was a space where household objects would be grouped categorically. According to Girard, the final section would critically expose the "faults of imitation—old and misunderstood modern designs."[248] The emphasis was on thoughtful, rational, material-appropriate contemporary objects. Part of the plea for modern design was that imitation of previous eras was dishonest and showed moral weakness. Although Girard would later incorporate earlier eras in his work, at this early stage, he was concerned with legitimizing modern design (particularly given the local context of furniture design in Michigan). In the final scheme, the last two sections were transposed.

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[247] Notes on Exhibition, undated, Folder 67/08, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[248] Alexander Girard to E. P. Richardson, 10 November 1948, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

In opposition to other exhibitions in which rooms were, according to Girard, "made up out of specially made things," the culmination of the DIA exhibition would be the well-integrated interiors composed of furniture and furnishings readily available at stores.[249] Although Girard noted that J. L. Hudson's store "didn't have any of these things in the store," his comment was not entirely accurate because, as supporters of the exhibition, Hudson's had a vested interest in selling modern design. [250] [251] Although much of the furnishings were in contemporary historical revival styles (Figure 100)—that is, the type of furniture that would have been found in most people's homes and made in nearby Grand Rapids—the store also sold some modern furniture and hoped to sell more. The "Modern Galleries" (Figure 101) at J. L. Hudson's department store during the 1940s featured many plain wood tables, an end table with abstracted cabriole legs, and upholstered armchairs and chaises—quite a conservative modernism when compared to some of the *For Modern Living* furnishings. Like the museum, part of Hudson's mission was to educate customers; by 1953, the department store boasted a staff of 48 interior decorators who could advise shoppers regarding furnishings, wallpaper, and space planning, perhaps a desired effect of the exhibition.[252]

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[249] Notes on Exhibition, undated, Folder 67/08, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts. Girard could have been referring to design contests that resulted in exhibitions, such MoMA's "Organic Design in Home Furnishings" competition of 1940, in which designers created prototypes intended to be manufactured by industry and sold by department stores; these "specially made things," such as Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen's first place armchair prototype, never went into production, thus negating the museum's original intention.
[250] Alexander Girard, Interview by Mickey Friedman. Transcript, November 9, 1974. Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[251] That Hudson's sold items of modern design like those on display at the DIA was explicitly stated in the article "Department Store Plugs Modern Design," *Business Week* (October 15, 1949), 22.
[252] "Store Into Institution," *Time* 61 (March 23, 1953), 99.

Girard assembled a group of designers who would demonstrate a variety of modern approaches. These designers worked for industry, thus the cost of the installation could be assumed by the manufacturer; they included George Nelson for Herman Miller; Charles Eames (the public face of the Eames partnership) for Evans Products and Herman Miller; Florence Knoll for Knoll; Edward Wormley for Dunbar; and Pipsan Saarinen Swanson for Johnson Furniture Company. Girard also persuaded Harry Weese ("one of the best younger designers"), who had the exclusive license to sell goods made by Alvar Aalto in Chicago, to create a room using Aalto furniture.[253] These designers had distinct viewpoints about modern design, and would have benefited greatly from the exposure of such a critical show. To further convince the DIA, Girard pointed to their significance nationally, but also to their relationship to the Detroit area:

> Charles Eames was on the Cranbrook faculty for two years. The headquarters of Evans Products Company, who manufactures his chairs, is in Detroit. George Nelson's manufacturer, Herman Miller, is a Michigan firm. Harry Weese is a former Cranbrook student. Florence Knoll is a Saginaw girl and a former Cranbrook student. Pipsan Swanson is, of course, from Bloomfield Hills and has a Michigan manufacturer.[254]

Although Girard envisioned healthy competition among the selected manufacturers, as a designer, he believed in labeling the rooms by the furniture designer (and not the manufacturer). This approach also formed a point of distinction between the DIA show and the earlier *Idea House II* (1947) at the Walker Art Center, in which little reference was made to any particular designer.[255]

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[253] Notes on Exhibition, undated, Folder 67/08, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Winton, "A Man's House is his Art," 379.

Through memoranda preserved in the DIA archives, much can be ascertained about the committee-style discussion and decisions made in this project. Although work by committee was challenging because Girard had to consider many opinions, the final product was likely stronger because many authorities were consulted. For example, the idea of the "Victorian Room" developed at a November 7, 1948 meeting between Girard, Saarinen and Yamasaki.[256] Girard would continue this conversation with Laurie two days later, and with the Executive committee on November 10, at which point Richardson criticized the idea. Also at the same meeting, Kiefer modified the name of the exhibition from "Modern Living" to "For Modern Living." During the course of one month, several exhibition schemes were proposed, with the first one rejected on November 7, 1948, and the final (fourth) solution accepted unanimously on December 1, 1948.

In addition to discussing the intellectual framework of the show, Girard thought pragmatically about how the exhibition would materialize visually. A model of the Great Hall was prepared by Girard and Yamasaki between December 15-18, 1948 (Figure 102).[257] Maquettes of the various sections of the exhibition were constructed in order to better organize the various and complicated elements of installation (Figures 103-105). They could also prove useful in articulating his vision for the exhibition and sharing that with others. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there were two people connected to the automotive industry at one of Girard's maquette meetings—Mr. R. T. Keller, president of Chrysler Corporation, and Mrs. Edsel Ford (Eleanor Lowthian Clay), who was married to the only son of Henry Ford, and was also the niece of Hudson's original owner, Joseph Lowthian

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[256] "DIA Exhibition-Memo #3," 8 December 1948, Folder 67/11, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[257] Memorandum #4, Folder 67/11, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

Hudson. Despite incorporating the car manufacturers in an advisory capacity (likely a necessary concession given the exhibition was taking place in Detroit, and Girard had worked on projects at Ford and Lincoln Motors), he was not compelled to include anything explicitly automotive in an exhibition that was grounded in domestic living (although the implication that American modern design was founded in the technological nineteenth century suggested parallels to the auto industry).

Despite the negative connotations toward streamlined design in the postwar period, Girard included some works by Egmont Arens, Raymond Loewy Associates, and Russell Wright in the exhibition.[258] The old guard of American industrial designers, which included Arens, Loewy, Wright, Donald Deskey, Henry Dreyfuss, and Walter Dorwin Teague, pioneered the field of industrial design, particularly in the fields of transportation, domestic appliances, and machinery. Perhaps in recognition of these established designers, Girard included these three among the nearly 200 designers represented. In fact, this generation of US industrial designers was not well represented at any of the museum exhibitions of the period because they concentrated on home furnishings and decoration, areas that were peripheral to the larger discipline of industrial design. Further, Girard and his cohort were likely trying to shape a new legacy for themselves that was separate from the earlier American designers, many of whom were strongly associated with disparaged streamline design of the 1930s.

[258] David A. Hanks and Anne Hoy, *American Streamlined Design: The World of Tomorrow* (Paris: Flammarion and the Liliane and David M. Stewart Program for Modern Design, 2005).

As part of the planning process for the exhibition, Girard wrestled with many ambitious questions that the exhibition sought to resolve, such as: What are the main themes or convictions under which a designer works? What is the relationship between useful everyday things and modern living? His thought processes are documented in exhibition planning notes, in which he attempted to characterize how design in the contemporary world could ameliorate modern living; undated notes on what the "modern" encompasses includes Girard's musings on space, romance, nature, beauty, morals, honesty, tradition and fashion (see Figure 99), and demonstrate the intellectual underpinning of the exhibition.

By January of 1949, Richardson responded to a number of Girard's requests, including reading John A. Kouwenhoven's recent book *Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization* (1948). While he found Kouwenhoven's presentation of the American background of modern design compelling (following Giedion, he positioned the US democratic-technological vernacular—tools, machinery, automobiles—as a native artistic form), Richardson was disappointed in his prose and intellectual arguments. In the chapter "What is Vernacular?," Kouwenhoven argued that the United States developed a vernacular "art" formed of "tools, machines, buildings, and other objects for use in the routine of daily life," in other words, he located useful things, everyday art or industrial design as a category of art.[259] Richardson believed that Girard's statement of the concept of beauty (presented at one of the executive committee meetings) and George Nelson's ideas (encapsulated in a book forward that Girard had given him) presented the "firsthand quality and authenticity and authority that I like very much in spite of their lack of a

[259] John A. Kouwenhoven, *Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1948), 12.

picturesque and popular style."[260] Although Richardson was less impressed, he eventually acquiesced to Girard as Kouwenhoven wrote the historical background chapter for the exhibition catalog. In it Kouwenhoven resuscitated ideas that he proposed in *Made in America*, in which he wrote about the vernacular as a covert but widespread creative impulse that extended its influence slowly and quietly. Kouwenhoven's ideas suggest an awareness of Austrian art historian Alois Riegl's *Kunstwollen* concept, albeit adding a layer of technology that was not present in Riegl.[261]

The catalog further underscored Giedion's argument from *Mechanization Takes Command* (1948), in which the modern movement was understood through mechanization, particularly as it affected environment and notions of comfort. In the primary catalogue essay, Kouwenhoven argued that modern design developed organically and was "rooted in the vernacular tradition of our machine-age democracy."[262] This followed Giedion's analysis as he traced emerging US industries, particularly agricultural mechanization. Kouwenhoven believed that modern design in the US during the 1930s was dominated by European émigrés, but by the 1940s "a group of young Americans has

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[260] E. P. Richardson to Alexander Girard, 14 January 1949, Folder 67/11, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.

[261] Turn-of-the-twentieth century Viennese art historian Alois Riegl proposed the idea of *kunstwollen*, which suggested an underlying artistic will that explained an evolution of style; Riegl's ideas were taken up during the 1940s to discuss influence in the period. For example, Henry Russel Hitchcock wrote about Frank Lloyd Wright and the European modernists as responding to a "common spirit of times," as an attempt to relate the movement to a kind of *kunstwollen* or *zeitgeist*, which were popular ideas during the time. H.R. Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials: The Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942), 89.

[262] John A. Kouwenhoven, "The Background of Modern Design," *An Exhibition For Modern Living, September 11 to November 20, 1949*, ed. by A. H. Girard and W. D. Laurie, Jr., (Detroit: Institute of Arts, 1949), 21.

begun to turn out work which grows directly out of the American vernacular tradition."[263] Herein lies the difference between the last department store sponsored exhibition (Metropolitan Museum of Art, sponsored by Macy's in 1928) and the DIA show twenty-one years later—the belief that Americans (and not Europeans) pioneered innovative modern furniture design.

The entrance of the DIA boldly announced "An Exhibition For Modern Living" with outdoor banners in a patriotic palette of red, white and blue (Figure 106). The center (white) panel featured the American illustrator best known for his work for *The New Yorker* Saul Steinberg's humorous drawing of a man sitting in a simple chair of modern production with his feet perched on what appeared to the organizers as an overwrought historically derivative carved chair, commenting on the value of these types of "modern" design and indicating the tenor of the show; the same image was reproduced for the cover of the exhibition catalog (Figure 107). Girard selected this drawing of a comfort-seeking sitter, titled "Feet on Chair" that was originally published in the October 12, 1946 issue of *The New Yorker*, as an expression of the exhibition.[264] Steinberg satirized the decision plaguing many when choosing home furnishings during the postwar years, over-simplistically posing the choice as between Grand Rapids historical revivals or modern design in "Psychoanalyze your Furniture," a 1943 article published in *House Beautiful*.[265] Believing in function over beauty, he ridiculed uncomfortable "refined" furniture,

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[263] Kouwenhoven, "The Background of Modern Design," 22.
[264] Joel Smith, *Saul Steinberg: Illuminations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 98.
[265] "Psychoanalyze your Furniture," *House Beautiful* 85 (January 1943), 32-33. He also designed the March 1943 cover for *Interiors* magazine using the same strategy—a mix of modernist and traditional furnishings. I thank Sheila Schwartz, Research and Archives Director at the Saul Steinberg Foundation for bringing this drawing to my attention.

drawing chairs acerbically named "General Inutility" and "Forbidding Fanny." Genuinely interested in the show, Steinberg described Girard's exhibition as "noble and interesting work," and accepted "a token fee" for participating as the muralist.[266]

Once inside, visitors experienced a newly conceived museum, as Girard changed the character of the large exhibition spaces of the Renaissance Revival building (Figures 108-109). One reviewer noted that he "altered their shapes, lowered their ceilings, changed their colors, recovered their walls, re-floored them, and has built ramps and bridges that take people up ten or twelve feet higher in these rooms that they are accustomed to being," creating a completely unique experience for the visitor.[267] Perhaps Girard felt compelled to dramatically modify the museum's galleries in order to shift the experience for museum visitors who were accustomed to the Beaux Arts galleries hung with masterpieces. This radically different exhibition required an altered floor plan in order to appeal to everyone and to disrupt preconceived notions of the (elite) museum.

Inside the entrance gallery, which prompted visitors to chose "a dead end of repetition—or—a new road?" (Figure 110) the wall text suggested one of the themes of the exhibition:

> What is modern design all about? Is it: streamlining, forced originality, anti-traditional, monotonous uniformity, "clinical" design? Or is it: shape for use, simplicity, new forms due to new materials, easier housekeeping, honest expression of mass-production?[268]

This specious argument attempts to defend contemporary design against earlier streamlined design (which was considered modern during the 1930s). There was nothing

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[266] Footnote 86, Smith, *Saul Steinberg*, 239.
[267] Charles Culver, "Detroit's Design for Living," *The Art Digest* 24 (October 1, 1949), 11.
[268] Ibid.

more "honest" about the works mass-produced during the late 1940s, but under the guise of morality and efficiency, this proclamation was an attempt to sell the audience on the type of modern design that they were about to view in the galleries. Even the newspapers, using the narrative presented by the museum, attacked streamlining and orthodox Modern Movement design alike. *The Detroit News* review of the exhibition noted that visitors will not be exposed to the clinical modernism of Le Corbusier's "machine for living," nor would they see the cliché of streamlining—aerodynamic pencil sharpeners and vacuum cleaners.[269] The "dead end" was visually represented by a "Chippendale" chair and silk brocade. Reflected in a pair of mirrors, they symbolized "the futility of endless repetition of designs of the past."[270]

Girard spent a year planning the exhibition, in which every object was carefully scrutinized in the categories of physical and aesthetic characteristics. Through this exhibition that promoted contemporary furniture and accessories, Girard (along the lines that Giedion and others explored) purported that the origins of contemporary furniture design were found in the vernacular forms of the nineteenth century, and that a tremendous variety of modern furnishings and objects existed for contemporary consumption.[271] Perhaps by linking modern design with a nineteenth century American homegrown vernacular, visitors would view these new furnishings in a more patriotic light in the postwar period. Therefore, the realized exhibition brought visitors through a historical display of what purported to be the background of modern design. Loan objects

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[269] *The Detroit News*, found in newspapers scrapbooks, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.
[270] Mary Roche, "For Modern Living." *New York Times* (September 11, 1949), SM48.
[271] "An Exhibition for Modern Living," *Everyday Art Quarterly* 13 (Winter, 1949-50), 12.

for the historical section were borrowed from institutions, such as the Edison Institute (now The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan).[272] One section within the historical sequence traced the evolution of the cantilevered chair through a teleological trajectory (aesthetically interesting, albeit false) that began with a 1857 spring steel cantilevered seat from a R. L. Howard mower, through a 1917 Owen Magnetic touring car jump seat and eventually to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's 1927 MR side chair (Figure 111).[273] Another exhibit examined the common handle through a series of objects, such as a sickle with hand-fitting handle and a contemporary machete designed by Tom Lamb in 1947 that was designed scientifically to fit the hand (Figure 112). All of the objects were intended to set the stage for the subsequent contemporary design galleries, and to impress upon the viewer the leitmotif—American modern design was derived from vernacular nineteenth-century antecedents.

Following this gallery Steinberg created a mural (on an arc constructed within a square room) that commented on modern life and its trappings in a humorous way, particularly the "ridiculous contradictions….in the design of our present environment," such as plug-in fireplaces (Figure 113). His placing of anti-macassars on Eames molded-plywood chairs (Figure 114) was an amusing comment on the use of what the organizers saw as an antiquated decoration on contemporary furniture.[274] It was also a decorated object at a time when the organizers eschewed such ornamentation. As one reviewer commented, "Steinberg's murals parody the rococo horrors of "modernistic" design and

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[272] E. P. Richardson to Woolfenden, Bostick, and Shaw, 29 April 1949, Folder 67/10, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[273] Ludwig Mies van der Rohe chair's did not derive from a mower seat.
[274] "An Exhibition for Modern Living," *Everyday Art Quarterly* 13 (Winter, 1949-50), 12.

some of its antediluvian antecedents."[275] His mural exposed the muddle of historical styles and the eclecticism present in American homes, eclecticism being another feature not approved of by the organizers (Figure 115). This played perfectly into Detroit's agenda—that is, the mural illuminated the need for museums to educate the public about their bad taste (and convert them to modern design).

Correspondence suggests that Kaufmann introduced Steinberg to Girard, but Girard was aware of Steinberg because he had staged an exhibit of Steinberg's drawings in his Grosse Pointe gallery in 1947. By January 1949, Steinberg and Girard corresponded about the murals, including Steinberg's desire to illustrate the brief history of the chair, which humorously ended with an anti-macassar adorning the Eames chair.[276] By July 1949 most of the drawings were submitted to Girard, but he had some suggested alterations. Although Girard embraced Steinberg's drawing of a man sitting on a simple chair with feet on a large Baroque chair (the 1946 "Feet on a Chair" drawing), and was considering it "for outside billboard, catalog cover, etcera," he desired more of a contrast between the two forms, even suggesting that Steinberg rework the drawing to render the modern chair in the form of an Eames chair (see Figure 107).[277] Steinberg did not make the changes.

After Steinberg's mural, the visitor arrived in the hall of objects (Figure 116). In addition to the objects presented, the exhibition promoted contemporary display techniques, including novel lighting, dramatic shifts between the various sections (in tone

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[275] Eleanor Bitterman, "For Modern Living," *Architectural Forum* 91 (November 1949), 124.
[276] Saul Steinberg to Alexander Girard, 26 January 1949, from *Saul Steinberg Correspondence with Alexander Girard*, Margolis & Moss, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
[277] Alexander Girard to Saul Steinberg, 8 July 1949, from *Saul Steinberg Correspondence with Alexander Girard*, Margolis & Moss, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

and environment), and a new system of display, designed by Charles W. Attwood, known as the Unistrut system. Composed of stainless steel struts with shelves at varying levels, the white plastic-coated construction provided a rack system for industrial use.[278] A low cost and easily assembled system, it was appropriated for exhibition display.[279] The structure contained hundreds of objects on various horizontal levels, creating a grid-like pattern. This concept can be observed further in the maquettes that Girard constructed to illustrate his ideas for the exhibition. In addition to sketching ideas on paper, part of Girard's design method included creating maquettes of the exhibition to better understand spatial relationships. Drawn floor plans and three-dimensional scale models were traditional tools that the architect-designer used regularly in his large-scale projects.

The background panels in this section were painted in vivid colors to break up the monotony of white paint (Figure 117). Further visual interest and rich texture materialized through the treatment of textiles in the space (Figure 118). Interestingly, the objects on the shelves included handmade and machined goods and materials. *Architectural Forum* found the hall of objects the "best part of [the] show with tasteful arrangements of useful handmade and machine-made products."[280] The *New York Times* noted,

> The tremendous variety of lines, forms and materials to be found in this huge array of contemporary products is plain evidence that "modern design" cannot be symbolized by tangible features like molded plywood, tubular metal, free forms or streamlining.[281]

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[278] George Nelson, *Display* (New York: Whitney Publications, 1953), 13.
[279] Including Girard in 1949 for Detroit's exhibition, and the Eameses in 1950 for MoMA's "Good Design" exhibition.
[280] Eleanor Bitterman, "For Modern Living," *Architectural Forum* 91 (November 1949), 124.
[281] Mary Roche, "For Modern Living," *New York Times* (September 11, 1949), SM48.

Curiously, the narrative as outlined in the exhibition initially suppressed the handcrafted. The argument purported that US design developed around 1840-50 and the industrial era caused the handcraft era's demise, which was underscored by Richardson who wrote, "the machine age destroyed the handcraft tradition and we sank gradually into the confusion and chaos of aimless ugliness from which we have not yet been able to extricate ourselves."[282] However, with the occasional (but purposeful) inclusion of handmade objects (such as jars by Cranbrook's Maija Grotell and jewelry by Margaret De Patta), Girard's exhibition encouraged the emergence of an aesthetic for the handcrafted object during the postwar period.[283] Even MoMA contributed to the increased attention toward handicrafts; Juliet Kinchin has argued that the institution participated in a "softening and domesticating [of] modernism" during the postwar years (1946-56).[284] Most significantly, Girard did not separate the handmade from the machined object, mixing the two freely, which underlines a process of thinking about the handcrafted object not solely as vernacular (or of that tradition), but also as equal to the machine made and essential or endemic to modernism. In planning documents for the exhibition, Girard parsed out this concept within the ideal of beauty. For him, the beauty of the handmade thing cannot be achieved by machine because it is personal; conversely,

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[282] Richardson, "Introduction," *An Exhibition For Modern Living,* 8.
[283] One can even argue that the reason for the popularity of mid-century Scandinavian design is due to its "softer" form of modernism that was grounded in "rural folk tradition's feeling for natural materials." See Cilla Robach, "Design for Modern People," *Utopia and Reality: Modernity in Sweden*, ed. by Cecilia Wildenheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 197.
[284] Juliet Kinchin, "Women, MoMA, and Midcentury Design," *Modern Women: Women Artistis at the Museum of Modern Art*, ed. by Cornelia Butler and Alexandra Schwartz (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2010), 288.

the beauty and precision of the machined thing cannot be achieved by hand.[285] Girard viewed these as separate but equal, as long as the machined work was honest (an Arts and Crafts tenet). Fundamentally, both were considered "modern" by him, which is why these works were included in the exhibition. Most importantly, Girard's predilection for using folk art in his design projects gradually began during these years, suggesting that these handmade objects allowed him to explore the liminal spaces of modernism.

The exhibition rose to a crescendo in the final area of multi-level exhibits of room settings and the garden (Figures 119-121). A 300-foot steel ramp wound through plantings of trees and shrubbery. The rooms were designed by contemporary designers, and, as a reviewer noted, they

> Stated forcefully that there is no stereotyped pattern; they showed that there is room for individual preference, vagary or fantasy, restraint or austerity—with no sacrifice of good design. Polish woodcarvings, butterflies, and box kites found comfortable and harmonious habitat with Eames chairs and Risom desks.[286]

The settings displayed variations on the "theme of Modern Living," and designers chose the latest modern furniture and accessories for settings that ranged from modest to luxurious.[287] Girard chose seven designers to be featured in the model rooms— Alvar Aalto, Charles Eames (the exhibit was designed by him and Ray Eames), Florence Knoll, Bruno Mathsson, George Nelson, Jens Risom, and Eero Saarinen. The outdoor terrace area included furnishings by Van Keppel-Green.

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[285] Untitled and undated notes on the exhibition (in Girard's hand); file 4.61, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.
[286] "An Exhibition for Modern Living," *Everyday Art Quarterly* 13 (Winter, 1949-50), 14.
[287] Edgar Kaufmann, Jr, "The Exhibition Rooms," *An Exhibition for Modern Living, September eleventh to November twentieth, Nineteen Forty-nine*, ed. by A. H. Girard and W. D. Laurie, Jr, intro. by E. P. Richardson (Detroit: Institute of Arts, 1949), 72.

According to Girard, contemporary interiors must include the following characteristics:

> More freedom in the use of color—as an expression and acceptance of parts rather than the over-all "fashionable-color-scheme" concept; more freedom in the use of form where it is related to use rather than the over-all "fashionable-arrangement" concept; more open space.[288]

Girard's rhetoric participated in the modernist polemic against fashion because the purported modern design that the exhibition promoted was "timeless" and exempt from the vagaries of fashion. It was not; modern design of the late 1940s was inextricably linked to its time, and was thus as "fashionable" as streamlining had been in the previous decade. Girard's task, however, was to install contemporary furnishings and accessories in order to make them appealing for modern consumers, and he invoked this language to emphasize distinctions. The qualities that he referenced may be observed in the rooms designed by the various designers, and each room was tasked with providing solutions to particular problems.

Two exhibition rooms were devoted to the work of European designers Alvar Aalto (Figure 122), the Finnish architect and designer whose work was celebrated for the introduction of bent plywood in large scale furniture manufacture, and the Swede Bruno Mathsson (Figure 123), who came from a cabinetmaking family known for traditional craftsmanship. Chicago architect Harry Weese designed Aalto's room using furniture sold through his retail venture Baldwin Kingrey.[289] Why did Girard and his advisors

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[288] Alexander Girard, "For Modern Living," *New York Times* (September 25, 1949), XX3.

[289] Baldwin Kingrey was a modern design retail store that Harry Weese, Kitty Baldwin Weese, and Jody Kingrey founded in Chicago in 1947 that sold imported furniture by Finn Alvar Aalto, Swede Bruno Mathsson, and Dane Børge Mogensen alongside other locally sourced furnishings and decorative accessories.

select these European architect-designers of an earlier generation? It was probably because they were central to the established "canon," and considered pioneers of mass-production, prefabrication, and posture study. Aalto and Mathsson were acceptable within the functionalist, modernist rhetoric of the exhibition.

Danish-born designer Jens Risom fashioned a space as a study in a townhouse that overlooked a garden (Figure 124). For it, he selected simple, plain furnishings that were delicately joined and exploited the grain of the wood, referencing the "craftsmanlike treatment of materials," which pointed to his Scandinavian roots; the furniture also boasted a hand-rubbed finish with handwoven upholstery.[290] Risom studied furniture design in Denmark (under Ole Wanscher and Kaare Klint) before arriving to the United States, eventually partnering with Hans Knoll.

Florence Knoll designed two Knoll rooms, incorporating furniture produced by the company and designed by Pierre Jeanneret, Richard Stein, Franco Albini, Abel Sorensen, Eero Saarinen, Isamu Noguchi, Hardoy, Bonet & Kurchen, Andre Dupres and Hans Bellmann. Knoll was challenged to create arrangements for family group living in a home with grown-up children, namely a luxurious bedroom (Figure 125), and a combination living-dining room, which integrated a fireplace that receded into the wall (Figure 126); the shelf below it could be cleverly used for sitting or displaying objects and plants. The wall-cabinet on the other side of the space allowed for storage of hobby activities.

[290] Risom was born in Copenhagen, Denmark and studied the trade in Stockholm, Sweden. Kaufmann, Jr, "The Exhibition Rooms," *An Exhibition For Modern Living*, 74.

The most prominent areas were given to Risom, the Eameses, and George Nelson. In Nelson's living room, built-in furniture lines the walls (Figure 127). Accordingly, Nelson's room reflected his design viewpoint, which engaged ideas of comfort and convenience by fitting built-in furniture into the construction of the room. In his writings, Nelson advocated eliminating the drudgery of work by creating automated machines for housekeeping and cooking, indicating the desire for more "livable" homes.[291] For Nelson, the house essentially became a storage area (for all the things associated with leisure pursuits). One of the period's most iconic design objects, the storage wall was marketed as a product to hold newly purchased consumer goods. Developed from built-in and modular furnishings of the early twentieth century, Nelson's storage wall was a recent innovation in prefabricated units that he proposed to architects and the public through articles in *Architectural Forum* and *Life* in 1944; Herman Miller introduced Nelson's storage wall into production in 1946.[292] Responding to contemporary needs for everyday living, the storage wall proposed infinite possibilities for different drawer, open shelving, and closet configurations, rendering it functional and flexible. In the unit designed for the DIA installation, Nelson included storage areas, as well as radio and record-playing supplies. Another idiosyncratic feature of the room was a raised, upholstered floor at one end on which inhabitants could lounge or sit; according to Nelson, this emphasized the "belief that built-in facilities need not duplicate…the forms of existing furniture."[293] In his estimation, Nelson's design highlighted efficiency, beauty and function in modern design.

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[291] George Nelson, *Problems of Design* (New York: Whitney Publications, 1957).
[292] "The Storage Wall," *Architectural Forum* 81 (November 1944): 83-92 and *Life Magazine* (January 22, 1945).
[293] Kaufmann, "The Exhibition Rooms," *An Exhibition For Modern Living,* 83.

Next to the Nelson room at the end of the pathway was an undefined room conceived by Charles and Ray Eames that suggested an "*attitude* toward the space and objects with which one lives" (Figure 128).[294] Unlike the other designers who explored a specific room typology, the Eameses proposed a way of living. Part of their contribution was the "attitude," or the intimation toward the vernacular, craft-inspired, or "folksy" stuff that was largely absent through most of the model rooms. Although Risom's study included religious figures, Mathsson's library shelves contained a bowl and rider on horseback, and Nelson's built-in unit housed a few statues and bibelots, the way the Eameses chose to engage objects was differentiated from the other spaces that included token things. The studded wall functioned as a free space for experimentation, as viewers might imagine hanging their own objects (Figure 129). Whereas most objects for the exhibition were sourced from manufacturers and designers, for this room, the Eameses displayed a personal Guatemalan rug and two box kites and paper flowers.[295] Artistic arrangements abounded—from the ceramics in the Eames Storage Unit and the wall hangings to the decorative lighting fixture, which was called a "sparkly optic sensation."[296] In the catalog, the basic approach was described as being

> ...used by people ever since they became capable of feeling any warmth or affection for anything outside themselves. And going to the heart of the design problem, he suggests that the enjoyment of any two objects is increased proportionately by their proper relation to each other.[297]

Humane modernism, one of the narratives of the American post-war era, was embraced by the Eameses through their functioning decoration, which historian Pat Kirkham has

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[294] Kaufmann, "The Exhibition Rooms," *An Exhibition For Modern Living,* 80.
[295] "List of Articles used in 'For Modern Living' Exhibition," Folder 67/12, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts.
[296] Kaufmann, "The Exhibition Rooms," *An Exhibition For Modern Living,* 81.
[297] Ibid.

defined as "carefully composed arrangements of disparate objects."[298] Perceptively, George Nelson believed that the impact of the Eames room in the exhibition was less about the arrangement of their furniture, and more about how the furnishings and objects were arranged, thus giving the viewers new ways of thinking about how modern design fits into their homes.[299]

In offering different types of furniture and exploring various informal rooms of the American home, the model rooms proposed modern ways of living. To accomplish this, Girard presented three rooms with furnishings by Scandinavians, two rooms designed by Florence Knoll, and two rooms containing Herman Miller furnishings. Although Knoll contended that good modern furniture must be "practical, durable, and inexpensive," her two rooms exuded a more luxurious version of modernism for which the firm would become known.[300] These rooms also display the least number of personal items (apart from a tea set and some magazines); Knoll believed that the "personal atmosphere is left to the relationship of the furniture to the space around it, and to the choice of individual pieces, fabrics and colors."[301] Scandinavian furnishings appealed to Americans because of a shift toward less formal domestic settings, contributing to what designer Edward Wormley called "the movement toward lightness" in the postwar period.[302] The emphasis on the use of wood, simple proportions, and perceived high quality became associated with Nordic products, and were on display in the Aalto, Mathsson, and Risom rooms. Risom's furniture was framed, as was most Scandinavian

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[298] Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames,* 164.
[299] Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames,* 166.
[300] Kaufmann, "The Exhibition Rooms," *An Exhibition For Modern Living,* 78.
[301] Ibid.
[302] Edward Wormley, "The Year in Design," New York Times (Sept. 25, 1949), sec. 20, 3.

furniture during the period, at the intersection of handcraftsmanship and the machine. The furniture that he designed assured "a proper craftsmanlike treatment of the material," leaving the visitor with the impression that Scandinavian design (albeit in the case of Risom, one that was created in the United States) has much to do with the hand, traditional techniques, and natural materials.[303] As Scandinavia was regarded as a locus for humane modernism (with Aalto as its pioneer), these Scandinavian interiors explored the relationship between humanity and nature within modern design. As an alternative to European (not Scandinavian) avant-garde modernism, the Eameses (and others) were greatly influenced by this approach. Within the design discourse of the period, unlike mainstream modernism that viewed non-functional decoration as marginal, whimsical, and unnecessary, humane modernism allowed for this experimentation in the home (and for Girard, his participation was keyed to using folk art in future work).

F. Exhibition Reviews

The Eameses' room was the only part of the exhibition that was criticized by the press. The reviewer from *The Arts Digest* (which generally offered a conservative viewpoint on American art[304]) found the "many unlikely and unnecessary objects" in the Eames room "bothersome."[305] *Architectural Forum* commended the "simple rooms" designed by Florence Knoll, Jens Risom, George Nelson, and Alvar Aalto, but found fault with the "oversimplification" of the Eames room, particularly the "bathtub-cum-

[303] Kaufmann, "The Exhibition Rooms," *An Exhibition For Modern Living,* 74.
[304] Founded as *Arts* (1926-1992), and later known as *Arts Magazine*, this journal propagated a conservative or populist view of modern art.
[305] Charles Culver, "Detroit's Design for Living," *The Art Digest* 24 (October 1, 1949), 24.

toilet seat dream that will at least be a conversation piece."[306] The reviewer was referring to the chaise longue (La Chaise), designed by the Eameses in 1948 for the Museum of Modern Art's *International Competition for Low Cost Furniture Design*, where the judges admired the imaginative molded construction.[307]

Beyond these two critical reviews, the press was overwhelmingly positive about the exhibition and its merits. According to George Nelson, the exhibition "marked the emergence to national recognition of Alexander Girard as one of the country's most brilliantly imaginative and superlatively competent designers."[308] Nelson found that the exhibition presented the most complete examination of contemporary furniture and household accessories; it was also a statement about how a leading museum should mount a major exhibition about modern design. Likewise, it was the "first full-scale treatment of the "good design" theme."[309] Writing in *Arts and Architecture*, Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. noted,

> Exhibitions like this…are essentially reports to the public on the design available to them….it is the most comprehensive statement yet made in favor of modern design rooted in the necessities and character of the American community today.[310]

Kaufmann advocated for exhibitions that selected and recommended good design for the general public, which he undertook as Director of the *Good Design* program at MoMA

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[306] Eleanor Bitterman, "For Modern Living," *Architectural Forum* 91 (November 1949), 124.
[307] http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=2133
[308] Nelson, *Display*, 144.
[309] Ibid.
[310] Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., "For Modern Living, An Exhibition, The Detroit Institute of Arts—Modern Design in America Now," *Arts and Architecture* (November 1949), 29.

beginning the following year; Girard assumed various roles in that program over the years.[311]

Life magazine contextualized the show employing a combative cold war tone, noting that the museum visitor encountered functional, moderately-priced good American design for contemporary living after viewing the historical panels, "which seemed especially heartening at a time when Russia is claiming credit for inventing the submarine, the airplane and Coca-Cola."[312] The magazine accepted the exhibition's argument that European modern furniture designers of the early twentieth century borrowed heavily from nineteenth-century US inventions (such as steel spring seats and pressed veneer), only to have designers in the US reintroduce these designs as "excitingly foreign."[313] This trope gained currency in the period as architectural historians, including Giedion, examined the influence of vernacular structures on modern architecture.[314]

At the close of the exhibition, Richardson and Girard met to discuss the idea of a permanent rotating exhibition of useful objects at the DIA, which Girard believed would make the institution a leader in exhibiting twentieth-century design. Unfortunately, the

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[311] Owing to their professional relationship, Girard participated in MoMA's *Good Design* shows in various ways. In 1950, he was a juror for the Chicago show; and in 1953 and 1954, he designed the installations. See Terence Riley and Edward Eigen, "Between the Museum and the Marketplace: Selling Good Design," *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century: At Home and Abroad*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, distributed by H. N. Abrams, 1994).
[312] "Exhibition of Useful Objects," *Life Magazine* 27 (October 24, 1949), 119.
[313] Ibid.
[314] Le Corbusier also discussed using the forms of industrial building in *Vers Une Architecture* (1923). Reyner Banham would also argue that there was a connection between architectural modernism and the utilitarian structures of North American industry in *A Concrete Atlantis: US Industrial Building and European Modern Architecture, 1900-1925* (1986).

idea was never adopted.[315] A final report on the exhibition noted that 151,000 people attended (Figure 130), and 6,783 catalogues were sold during the run of the show; *For Modern Living* was the most popular exhibition presented by the museum to that date since it opened in 1885.

For Modern Living had a life beyond Detroit.[316] Selections from the show were viewed in New York, under the aegis of MoMA in *Design Show: Christmas 1949*. Objects were chosen that had not previously been exhibited by MoMA; they were clearly meant to inspire holiday shoppers who desired gifts sanctioned by two museums.[317] Museum visitors (and potential shoppers) could admire simple and luxurious objects, and then learn the price, retailer and manufacturer from the information presented with the work (which was exactly what Laurie did not want for Detroit's exhibition). The curator of Architecture and Design at MoMA (and curator of *Design Show: Christmas 1949*) noted that the DIA show "contained probably the largest group of well designed objects shown in the United States in recent years," thus demonstrating Girard's proficiency in curating modern design exhibitions.[318]

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[315] Alexander Girard to E. P. Richardson, 18 November 1949, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts. Also, As late as June 10, 1949, Girard wrote Richardson about his correspondence with architect Bernard Rudofsky, who "came up with the idea of his doing a "Dress" section." Although it was too late for consideration for the current exhibition, Girard suggested that it would make an exciting prospect for a sequel.

[316] The DIA also noted that photographic exhibitions based on *For Modern Living* were circulated by the American Occupation authorities in Japan; another iteration of the show was displayed in the American exhibition at the World's Fair in Haiti during the winter of 1949-50. "The Arts Commission Annual Report For the Year 1949," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 29 (1949-50), 27.

[317] Betty Pepis, "Museum Presents Yule Suggestions," *New York Times* (November 16, 1949), 37.

[318] Press Release, "Museum Design Show: Christmas 1949," November 11, 1949, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.

Girard was also involved in the largest traveling presentation of contemporary design with MoMA's exhibition *Design for Use, USA*.[319] During the period, the US government harnessed the authority of MOMA through the Marshall Plan (1946-52), which partly relied upon exhibitions to persuade the public about American ways of life, especially domestic living. In this way, MOMA was influential as a proselytizer in Europe and participated in what historian Greg Castillo has called the propagandistic, but empowering "soft power of home;" in a divided Germany, domestic environments and consumer goods were used as instruments of power by Western and Eastern countries.[320] Under the direction of Kaufmann, Girard was charged with the installation plans for the exhibition (Figure 131), which was the first large exhibition of US home furnishings to be circulated widely in Europe.[321] Kaufmann selected objects made in the US that demonstrated progressive design and that were regarded as typically American, including stoves, refrigerators, dishwashers, irons, meat slicers and "Hickory rustic furniture" (although some objects, such as ice cube trays, were omitted because they would have been misunderstood in Europe).[322] Like other postwar design exhibitions, Kaufmann omitted streamlined design, probably because it was no longer fashionable, and he had not liked it in the first place.[323] Also typical of exhibitions during the period, handmade

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[319] For more on this exhibition, see Gay McDonald, "The 'Advance' of American Postwar Design in Europe: MoMA and the *Design for Use, USA* Exhibition 1951-53," *Design Issues* 24 (Spring 2008): 15-27.
[320] See Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
[321] Press Release, "Schedule of Activities, September 4-October 1, 1950," September 5, 1950, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.
[322] Press release, "Museum's 'Design for Use, U.S.A.' Exhibition Sailed for Europe January 5," January 8, 1950, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.
[323] Paul Betts, *The Authority of Everyday Objects*: *A Cultural History of West German Industrial Design* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 88.

works (such as textiles and pottery) were displayed alongside mass-produced ones. Many of the objects selected for *Design for Use, USA* had been in Detroit's *For Modern Living* and MoMA's *Good Design* shows.

For *Design for Use, USA*, Girard prepared a setting into which 500 objects could be presented (and then packed up and shipped to multiple cities). Flexible lighting fixtures (fluorescent tubes and incandescent flood lights) alongside demountable display units, each carefully labeled so that the objects (with corresponding tags) could be matched appropriately, demonstrating Girard's predilection for organization and labeling. He also prepared the catalog of the exhibition, which included an essay by Kaufmann, photographs of a selection of objects, and the full checklist, with information about designers and manufacturers. The first museum to exhibit the works was the Landesgewerbemuseum in Stuttgart.[324]

With all the success surrounding the Detroit show, Richardson commented, "the only thing we do not know is whether Detroit stores have felt a perceptible change in the decisions of the people who buy things for their home."[325] Ultimately, the goal was to sell good design. Girard shared a humorous anecdote about this several years later, recalling,

> We had everything ranging from china, glass, furniture, textiles, toys, typewriters, you name [it]….anything that was considered good design. I remember one thing that was very funny because it was a coffeemaker called Chemex…nobody had ever heard of [it]. By accident we ran into this guy who made these things, and they sold so many of these during the exhibition that J. L. Hudson took it

[324] The exhibition was called *Industrie und Handwerk schaffen neues Haugerät in USA* during the German tour. Press release, "Museum's 'Design for Use, U.S.A.' Exhibition Sailed for Europe January 5," January 8, 1950, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.
[325] E. P. Richardson to William Laurie, 28 November 1949, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan.

> on….Very shortly thereafter the company sent to our staff something like 20 Chemex pots, and the staff consisted of three people![326]

Clearly, in the case of the Chemex coffeemaker, the DIA exhibition contributed to the product's popularity, which might be termed the "good design" appellation effect. Richardson also relayed good news to Girard about the MoMA reaction toward Detroit. He wrote,

> Jack tells me that the Museum of Modern Art people are really very much fluttered and upset that Detroit should have put on such an important show, instead of their museum. They are apparently green with envy. Very gratifying.[327]

A few months later, MoMA began staging the *Good Design* shows.

On September 9, 1949, the sales promotion manager of the Chicago Merchandise Mart wrote to Girard asking him whether the DIA exhibition that he organized could travel to Chicago; he believed that "a show of this type would be of great design and publicity value to the whole home furnishings field."[328] Girard informed him that, although the exhibition was not conceived as a traveling show, MoMA "is making a selection of objects and furniture to be presented in two exhibits—one for this Fall and another next year;" these were MoMA's *Good Design* shows.[329] Kaufmann engineered the exhibition held (biannually) at the Chicago Merchandise Mart, which was largest American wholesale marketplace, and (annually) at the Museum of Modern Art in New York as a collaborative effort between art and commercial interests.

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[326] Alexander Girard, Interview by Virginia Stith. Transcription from Charles Eames Oral History Project. October 7, 1977. Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
[327] E. P. Richardson to Alexander Girard, 15 November 1949, Series IX, 8-12, The Edgar P. Richardson Records, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan.
[328] Robert B. Johnson to Alexander Girard, 9 September 1949, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.
[329] Alexander Girard to Robert B. Johnson, 15 September 1949, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.

According to Daniel S. Defenbacher (then director and curator of the Walker Art Center), Girard's larger contribution was the "showmanship, staging, promotion, and popularity" of the Detroit exhibition.[330] *For Modern Living* was motivated by the efforts of artists, designers, and architects who tried to forge a new way of life away from the decadence and excess of earlier periods toward rational thinking about form in art and life. Through this postwar exhibition of modern design, the organizers of the exhibition and its sponsor, J. L. Hudson's department store, hoped to influence and guide consumption patterns and taste in the home. Growing out of industrial art fairs of the interwar years that reflected public taste, postwar good design exhibitions dictated taste to Americans. Under the aegis of the DIA, as an educated architect-designer, Girard the tastemaker participated in trying to improve the taste of museum visitors by selecting contemporary design.[331] Although, as Beatriz Colomina has noted, these exhibitions were essentially advertisements for products, these were very particular products related to particular ideas about good design.[332] The implications for Girard, I believe, are that he experienced this critical discourse about "good design" firsthand, but then he moved on from it quickly, when he relocated to Santa Fe, literally removing himself from a critical axis of the design cognoscenti. Although the majority of the exhibition was devoted to contemporary design, this show was conceptually significant because the DIA (through Girard's leadership) situated a historical view of the vernacular within modernism. This

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[330] "An Exhibition for Modern Living," *Everyday Art Quarterly* 13 (Winter, 1949-50), 13.

[331] There was period discussion about this, for example, in the work of Herbert Gans. Gans believed that popular culture creators tried to impose their own taste and values on the audience, and that many saw themselves as popular educators, trying to improve audience taste. Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture*, 34.

[332] Beatriz Colomina, *Domesticity at War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2007).

approach underlies Girard's aesthetic motivations thereafter, and is related to the resurgence of handicrafts in the midcentury, and, most importantly, Girard's exploration of global folk art within modern design.

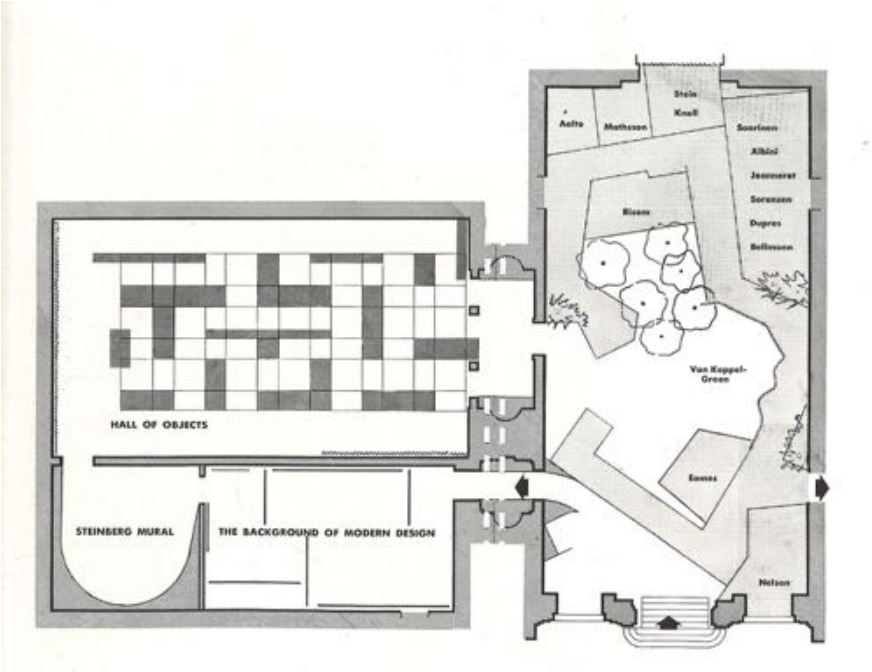


Figure 92
Plan of *For Modern Living*
"For Modern Living: An Exhibition," *Arts and Architecture* (November 1949)

Figure 93
Wood sculptures by Girard, photographed for *Arts and Architecture* (July 1945)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04729_09

Figure 94
No-Sag Showroom
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-4651

Figure 95
No-Sag truck design
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04815_02

Figure 96
Display cases for special exhibition, Detroit Institute of Art
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04746_06

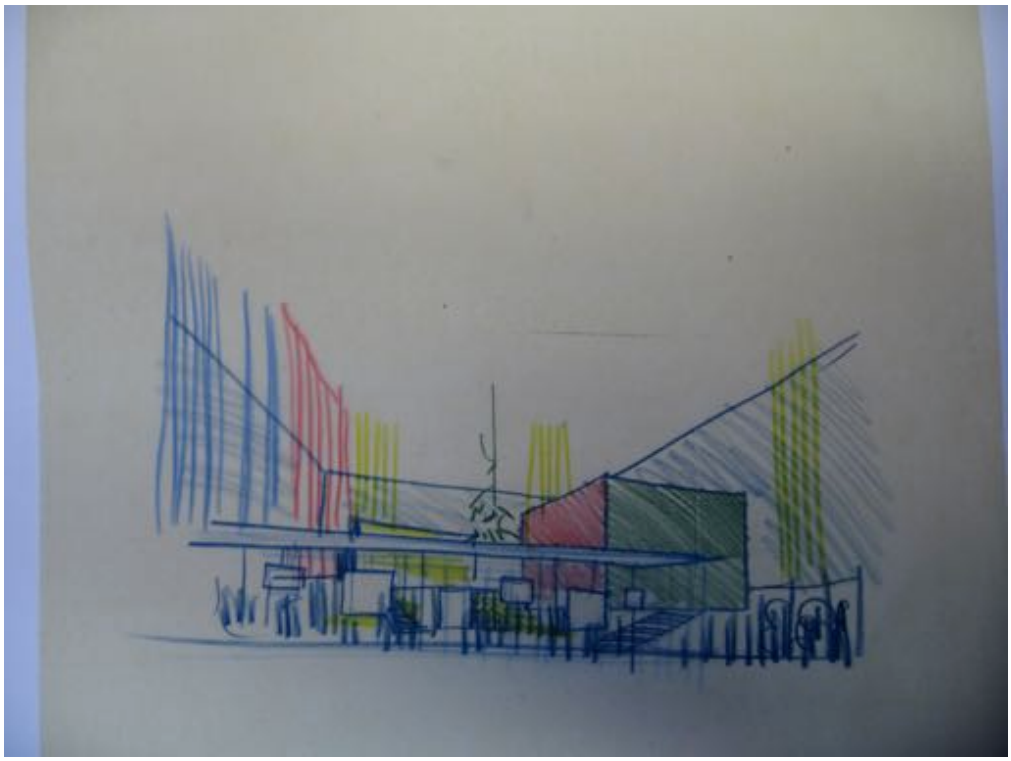


Figure 97
Girard's sketch of spaces of exhibition
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard

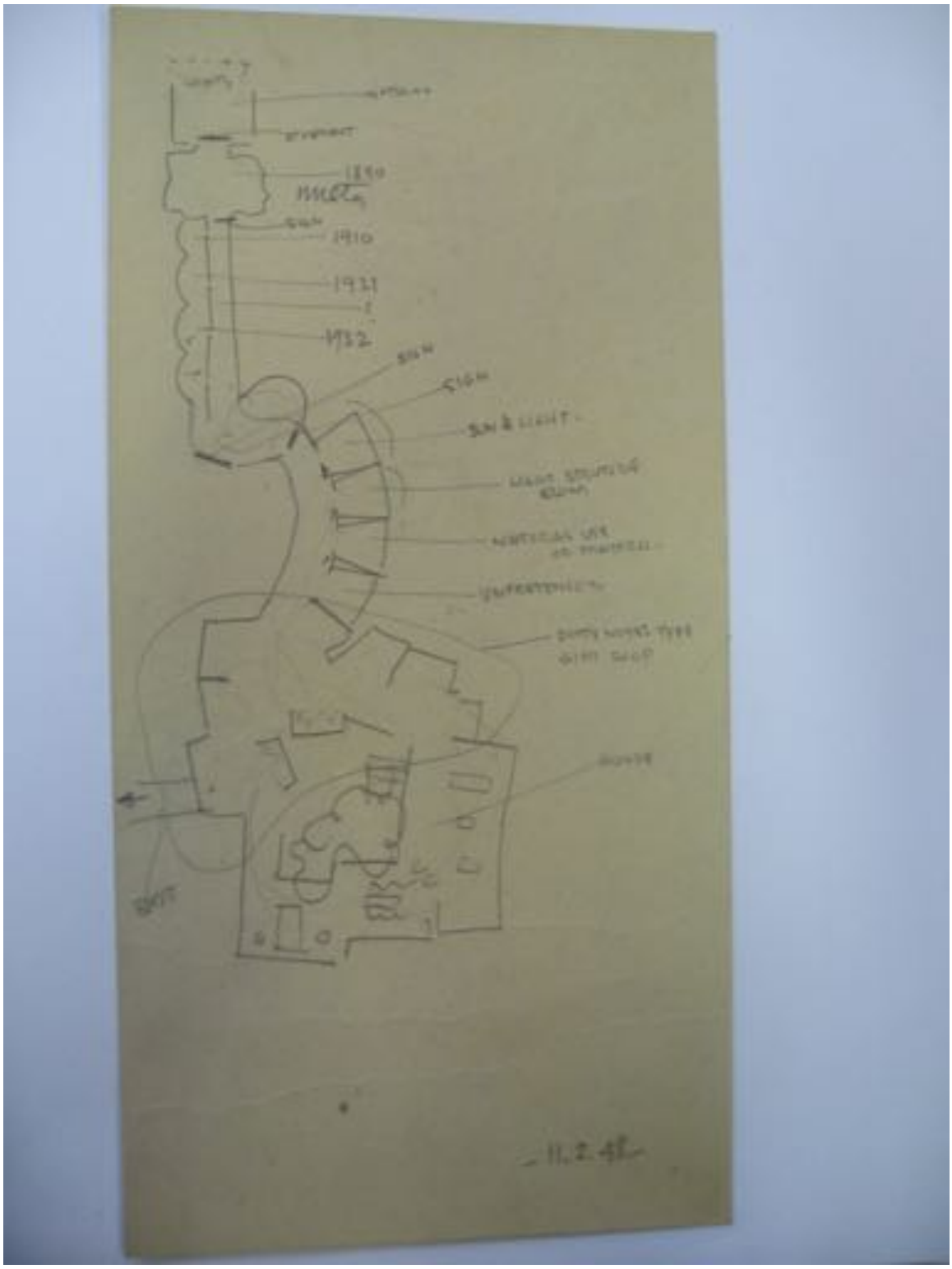
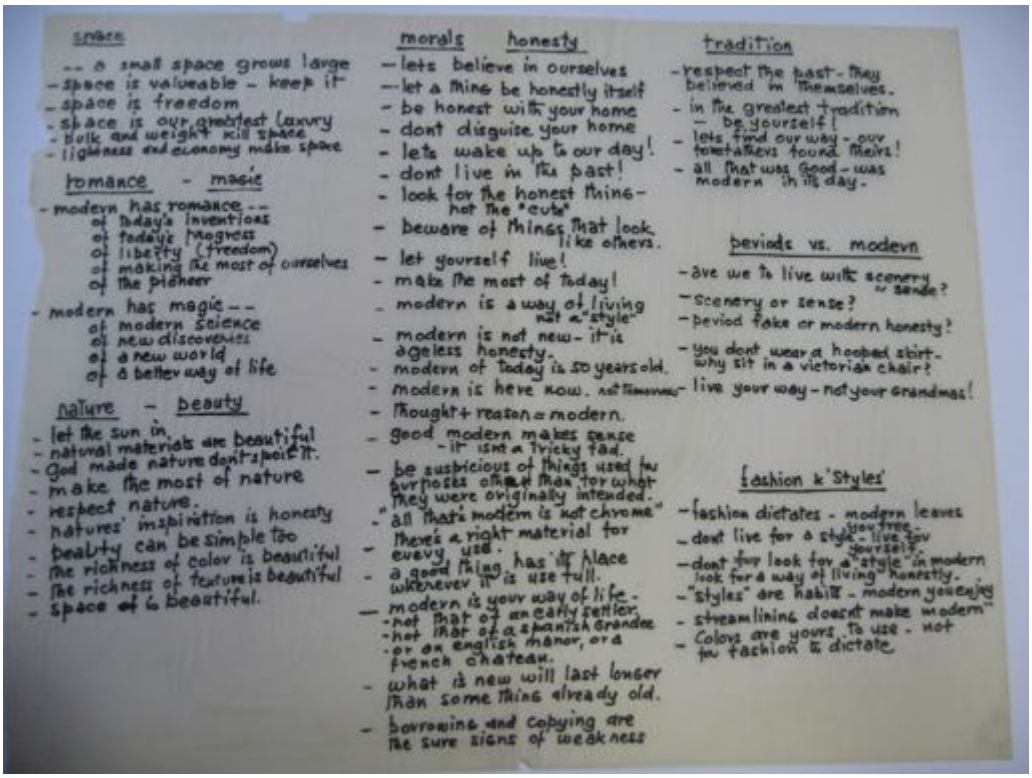


Figure 98
Sketch of exhibition layout, dated November 2, 1948
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard



space

-- a small space grows large
- space is valueable - keep it
- space is freedom
- space is our greatest luxury
- bulk and weight kill space
- lightness and economy make space

romance - magic

- modern has romance --
  of today's inventions
  of today's progress
  of liberty (freedom)
  of making the most of ourselves
  of the pioneer
- modern has magic --
  of modern science
  of new discoveries
  of a new world
  of a better way of life

nature - beauty

- let the sun in.
- natural materials are beautiful
- God made nature don't spoil it.
- make the most of nature
- respect nature.
- natures' inspiration is honesty
- beauty can be simple too
- the richness of color is beautiful
- the richness of texture is beautiful
- space of is beautiful.

morals honesty

- lets believe in ourselves
- let a thing be honestly itself
- be honest with your home
- dont disguise your home
- lets wake up to our day!
- dont live in the past!
- look for the honest thing - not the "cute"
- beware of things that look like others.
- let yourself live!
- make the most of today!
- modern is a way of living not a "style"
- modern is not new - it is ageless honesty.
- modern of today is 50 years old.
- modern is here now. not tomorrow
- thought + reason = modern.
- good modern makes sense - it isnt a tricky fad.
- be suspicious of things used for purposes other than for what they were originally intended.
- "all that's modern is not chrome"
- there's a right material for every use.
- a good thing has its place wherever it is useful.
- modern is your way of life.
  - not that of an early settler
  - not that of a spanish grandee
  - or an english manor, or a french chateau.
- what is new will last longer than some thing already old.
- borrowing and copying are the sure signs of weakness

tradition

- respect the past - they believed in themselves.
- in the greatest tradition - be yourself!
- lets find our way - our forefathers found theirs!
- all that was good - was modern in its day.

periods vs. modern

- are we to live with scenery or sense?
- scenery or sense?
- period fake or modern honesty?
- you dont wear a hooped skirt. why sit in a victorian chair?
- live your way - not your grandmas!

fashion & 'styles'

- fashion dictates - modern leaves you free.
- dont live for a style - live for yourself.
- dont for look for a "style" in modern look for a way of living honestly.
- "styles" are habit - modern you enjoy
- streamlining doesnt make modern
- Colors are yours to use - not for fashion to dictate.

Figure 99
Exhibition notes
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard

Figure 100
Furniture Display, J. L. Hudson Store, Detroit
Detroit Historical Society

Figure 101
J. L. Hudson's Modern Galleries
Detroit Historical Society

Figure 102
Planning for the exhibition (R. T. Keller (Chrysler Corp. president); James B. Webber, Jr.; Mrs. Edsel Ford; Girard; Edgar P. Richardson)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_52

Figure 103
Maquette of Interiors Section
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_28

Figure 104
Maquette of Household Section
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_41

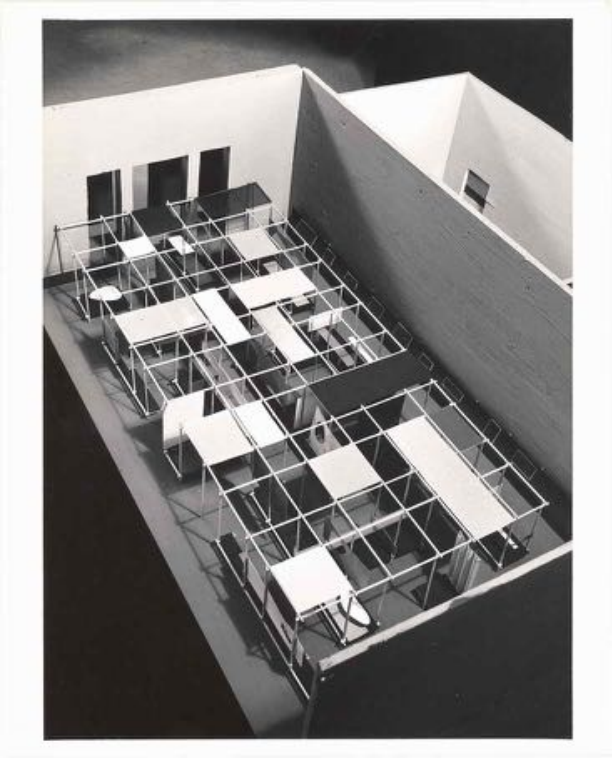


Figure 105
Maquette of Household Section
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_29

Figure 106
Detroit Institute of Art, Banners, *For Modern Living*
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_38

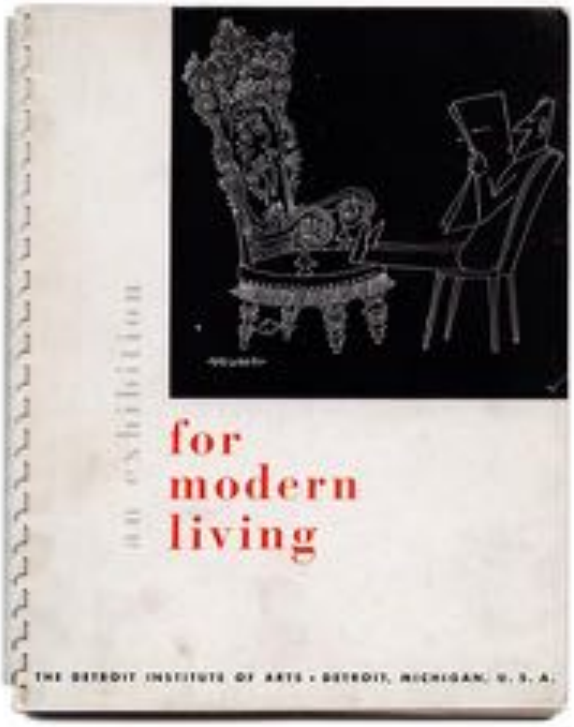


Figure 107
Cover of Catalog designed by Girard, using Saul Steinberg drawing

Figure 108
Entrance to the Great Hall, Detroit Institute of Art
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_13

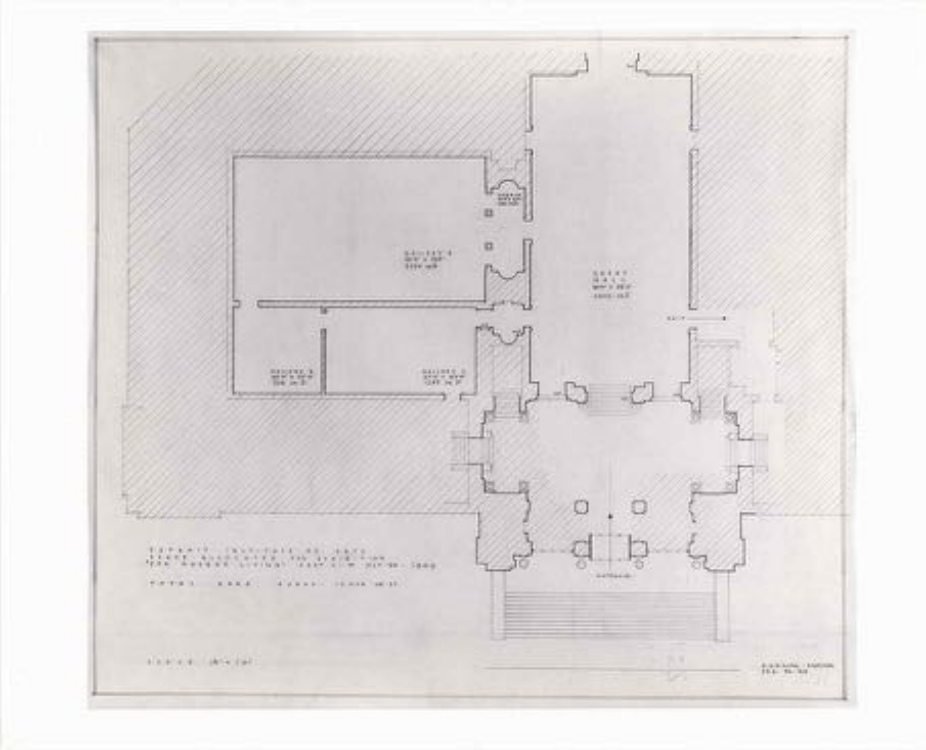


Figure 109
Plan of Entrance and Galleries, Detroit Institute of Art
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_16

Figure 110
Entrance to Exhibition
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_11

Figure 111
View of Historical Section
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_18

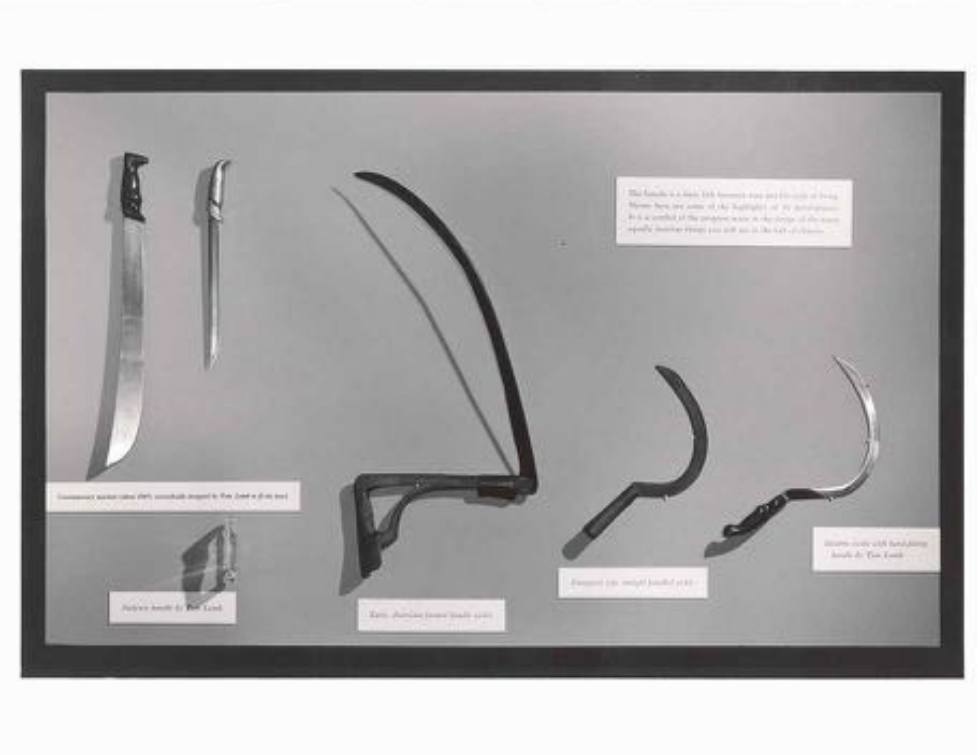


Figure 112
Exhibit on Handles, from Historical Section
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_35

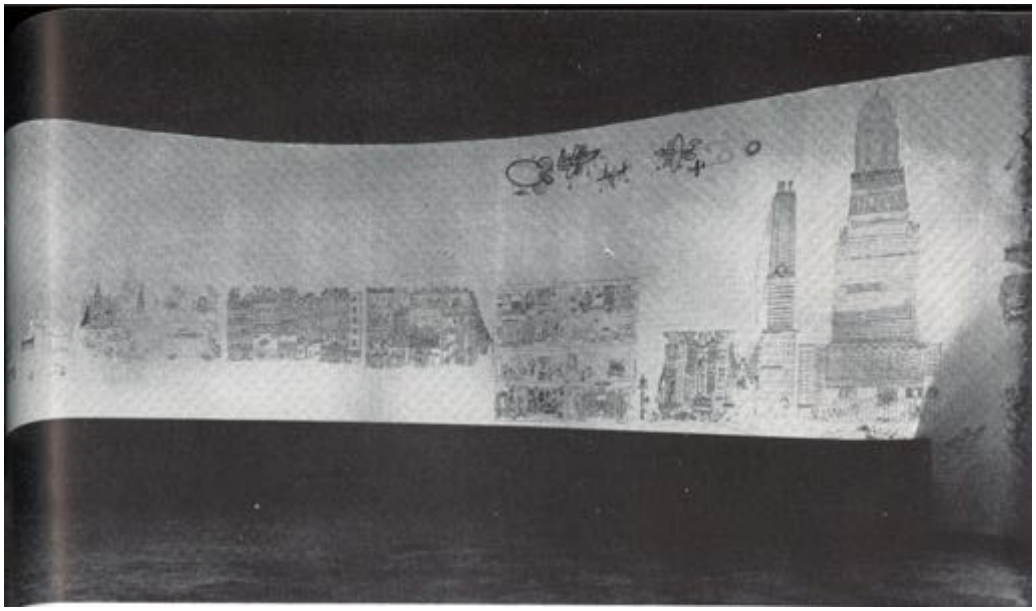


Figure 113
Steinberg Mural
"For Modern Living: An Exhibition," *Arts and Architecture* (November 1949)

Figure 114
Steinberg detail, back cover of catalog, *An Exhibition for Modern Living*

Figure 115
Steinberg detail, from *An Exhibition for Modern Living*

Figure 116
Individual objects section
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_30

Figure 117
View of Objects section
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_14

Figure 118
Textiles in the Objects section
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_34

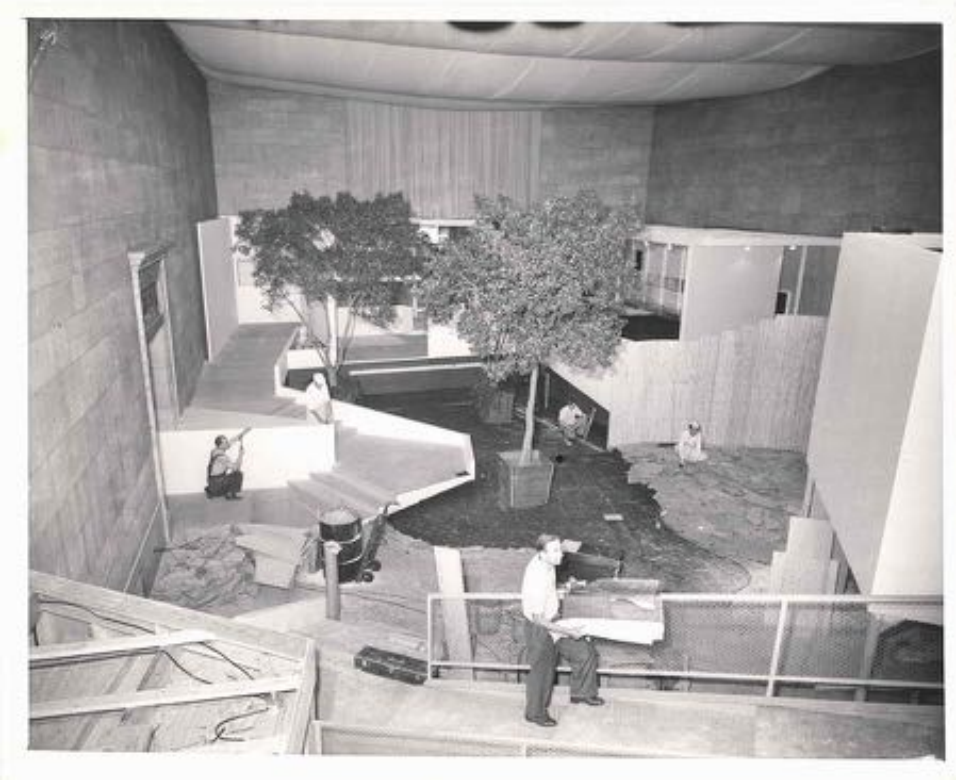


Figure 119
Girard during installation
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_42

Figure 120
Plan of Interiors Section
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_26

Figure 121
Arrangement of Rooms and Garden Area
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_32

Figure 122
Alvar Aalto room
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_36

Figure 123
Bruno Matthson room
An Exhibition for Modern Living catalog

Figure 124
Jens Risom room
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_25

Figure 125
Knoll bedroom
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR--04762_22

Figure 126
Florence Knoll designed interior
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_39

Figure 127
George Nelson room
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_10

Figure 128
End of Pathway, Eameses room
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_01

Figure 129
Eameses room
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04762_15

Figure 130
Corner of Knoll living-dining room
Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts (1949-50)

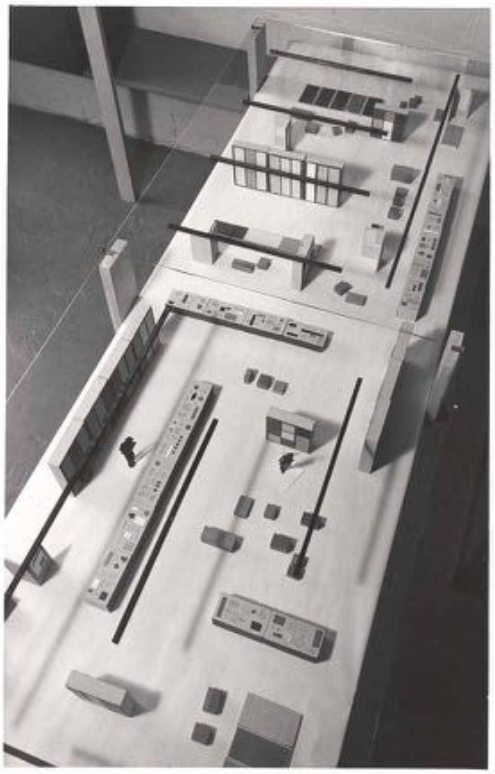


Figure 131
Maquette for *Design for Use, USA*, photographed September 1950
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04778_01

IV. SELLING FOLK ART AND MODERN DESIGN:

HERMAN MILLER'S TEXTILES AND OBJECTS SHOP (1961-1967)

> This [folk art] was an attempt to bring color into the market in a very abstract way.[333]
>
> -Alexander Girard, 1983

During the late 1940s George Nelson and the Eameses acknowledged the paucity of well-designed fabrics for use in buildings and interiors, and they encouraged Dirk Jan (D. J.) De Pree of the Herman Miller Furniture Company (later Herman Miller, Inc.) to hire Alexander Girard to ameliorate this. [334] Girard's association with the company was announced by the firm in October 1951 in a press release that touted his credentials as a "modern architect….who has gained wide recognition for his many contributions to the modern movement."[335] Despite this statement, part of the firm's advertising of Girard's fabrics included language seemingly antithetical to modernism. Girard moved to Santa Fe in 1953, and Herman Miller acknowledged that, in addition to the Southwest, "the world wide folk tradition which employed brilliant color and simple geometric forms" also inspired his work.[336] The folk quality found in Girard's work was "by no means exclusive

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[333] Alexander and Susan Girard, Interview by Linda Wagenveld and Barb Loveland. Transcription from Santa Fe, October 23, 1983. Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

[334] Herman Miller was founded in 1923 in Zeeland, Michigan. In 1931 New York designer Gilbert Rohde convinced De Pree to adapt production from historical revival styles to modern and clean furniture with simple lines, even though the traditional lines remained the most popular in the industry at that time.This forward-thinking modification forever changed the character of American furniture design and saved Herman Miller from depression-era bankruptcy.

[335] Alfred Auerbach Associates, Press Release: Girard to Head Fabric Program from Herman Miller, Received date: 25 October 1951, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

[336] "….About The Herman Miller Fabric Collection (Designed by Alexander Girard, AIA)," (1957), GIT 22, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

to the Indians of the Southwest, as it can be found from Lapland to Peru, in the remotest Orient, or the heart of Africa," thus it represented a more global viewpoint.[337] As Girard suggested, it was "the smell, or, the unassuming quality that is the essential nature of all the truly good things," an innocuous statement that suggested Girard's work moved beyond a visual or aesthetic concern to one that harnessed all the senses in a total environment.[338] Girard began his tenure with Herman Miller by coordinating and creating a fabric division for the firm. Perceiving a gap in the market, Herman Miller introduced Girard-designed fabrics alongside its established furniture repertoire to better serve their clients.[339] Girard's initial fabric collection was established "on the basis of his training as an architect…..plain upholsteries and geometric drapery prints, stripes, circles and triangles—all with a very specific architectural quality."[340] During Girard's first year with Herman Miller, one of the press releases announcing his line of wallpaper noted that it exhibited an "architectural quality." A photograph of "Retrospective," a hand-printed wallpaper composed of architectural elements appropriate for contemporary settings, featured a mermaid folk art object, which intimates Herman Miller's initial foray into a more playful and whimsical approach to selling modern living (Figure 132).

According to a Herman Miller press release, Girard was able to produce "completely original" fabrics "by avoiding efforts to create originality for its own sake, or

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[337] Ibid.
[338] Ibid.
[339] For more information on Girard's textiles designs, see Leslie Piña, *Alexander Girard Designs for Herman Miller* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., 2002).
[340] "Part 1—General Information and History," GIT 19, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

in response to the dictates of fashion or saleability."[341] Girard designed bold fabrics and wallpaper in abstract patterns.[342] The Herman Miller Textile Division was officially formed in 1952, and Girard directed it until his retirement in 1973. For Herman Miller, this was an advantageous development in its pursuit to be a "modern" furniture retailer.

Before his appointment at Herman Miller in 1951, Girard's textile designs garnered recognition. He received an honorable mention for his fabric design in the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *Printed Textiles for the Home: Prize-Winning Designs from National Competition*, which opened concurrently at the Museum on March 12, 1946 and at nineteen retail stores across the country.[343] This exhibition and its association with MoMA likely contributed to Girard's burgeoning relationship with the Knoll Company, for which he designed a birch and metal sofa table[344] and textiles, including *Spines* and *Links*, which were sold in his own Grosse Pointe shop as well as by Knoll.[345] In 1950, Florence Knoll also showed some of his textiles at *Tissus des Etats-Unis 23rd Salon des Arts Menagers* in Paris. In addition to his textile designs, Girard was recognized as a talented exhibition designer through his efforts at the Detroit Institute of Art (*An Exhibition For Modern Living*, see chapter 3) and the Museum of Modern Art (*Good Design* exhibitions).

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[341] "….About The Herman Miller Fabric Collection (Designed by Alexander Girard, AIA)," (1957), GIT 22, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[342] For more information on the history of American textiles, see Mary Schoeser, *English and American Textiles: From 1790 to the Present* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1989); for a look at the early 20th century precedents, see Virginia Troy Gardner, *The Modernist Textile: Europe and America, 1890-1940* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2006).
[343] Press Release, "Museum of Modern Art Exhibits Fabrics Made from Prize-Winning Designs. Simultaneous Display by Nineteen Leading Department Stores Throughout Country," March 7, 1947, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.
[344] For an advertisement of the table, see *The New Yorker* (November 12, 1949), 50.
[345] See *Knoll Textiles*, ed. by Earl Martin (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, published for the Bard Graduate Center, 2011).

Girard parlayed his previous experiences designing textiles, exhibitions, and retail settings into an idea for an entirely new venture for Herman Miller—the Textiles and Objects Shop. The T & O Shop, which was established in 1961 in New York City, stocked an unusual combination of Girard-designed and Girard-sourced fabrics as well as complementary objects, including folk art objects. Girard produced dynamic merchandising displays for this highly unusual venture on the part of Herman Miller. This experimental shop gained critical success, but only remained open to the public for a few short years. This chapter uses the T & O Shop to demonstrate one way in which modern design and folk art was sold in the period. The showroom as a type, of which the T & O Shop is an example, demonstrates "the tendency to connect the way the product is presented with the image of the business," and the T & O Shop projected the Herman Miller Company as a furniture retailer of modern design enlivened by whimsical folk art and other objects.[346]

A. <u>San Francisco Showroom</u>

Showrooms served to display goods in ways that the owners, whether manufacturers or retailers, hoped would generate greater consumption of their products.[347] Girard was familiar with showroom projects, having designed a showroom and a corporate identity program for the No-Sag Spring Company in 1946 (see Chapter 2). Showrooms were important aspects of corporate design, because they presented the brand and its products in ways aimed to capture the ultimate goal—increased sales.

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[346] Karl Kaspar, *Shops and Showrooms: An International Survey* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 6.
[347] "Planning Techniques Include Four Whole Showrooms," *Architectural Forum* 66 (June 1937): 501-514.

While Girard worked on the idea of the T & O Shop, which took several years to convince management of its merit, he also designed showrooms for Herman Miller.[348] Herman Miller's first showroom was located in Grand Rapids, Michigan; it was redesigned a few times, including by George Nelson Associates in 1948, and then by Girard in 1953 (Figures 133-134). The firm opened a showroom in Chicago's Merchandise Mart in 1939, which was redesigned by Nelson's firm in 1948.[349] In 1953 Nelson's firm redesigned the company's space in New York City, another important market in which Herman Miller opened a showroom in 1941. The Los Angeles showroom was opened in 1942, and the Eameses reconfigured and designed the space in 1949.[350] Girard had the advantage of seeing what Nelson's team and the Eameses had done with the showrooms they designed; indeed it is likely that the Eameses discussed their plans for the Los Angeles showroom with Girard. By 1956, there were seven showrooms across the United States—New York, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Grand Rapids, Kansas City, and Los Angeles—alongside spaces shared with partner firms in

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[348] Scholars have begun to argue that the "commercial furniture showroom served as an important staging area in the articulation and promotion of the American 'way of life,'" suggesting that politics and national identity are integral to furniture production. The author would like to thank Margaret Maile Petty, Victoria University of Wellington, for sharing her research on "The Politics and Stagecraft of the Postwar American Showroom," which was given as a paper at the Society of Architectural Historians Conference (2013).

[349] Stanley Abercrombie, *George Nelson: The Design of Modern Design* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 251.

[350] John Neuhart, Marilyn Neuhart, and Ray Eames, *Eames Design: The Work of the Office of Charles and Ray Eames* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1989), 103.

Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, and Vancouver. Herman Miller also entered the international market in 1957, contracting with a licensee in Basel.[351]

Herman Miller and the Knoll Furniture Company (founded by Hans Knoll in New York City in 1938) were two leading manufacturers of modern furniture in the United States. Small retail shops and department stores continued to sell modern design, but these specialized manufacturers were the most important US furniture houses in the mid-century and their showrooms sought to educate potential customers through merchandising and display. In contrast to Herman Miller, Knoll imported European modern furniture alongside its production of furniture and textiles, and it also became known for its innovative interior design section. When the firm opened its New York City showroom in 1948, Florence Knoll was extolled for her use of bold color and texture within an architectural skeleton that exuded elegant sophistication and simplicity (Figure 135).[352] Knoll's showrooms, which also embodied the corporation's identity, articulated the "Knoll look"—an image of opulence and refinement within their architectural approach to interiors.[353]

Hailed as a critical triumph, the "Barbary Coast" showroom (1959) in San Francisco was the next city on Herman Miller's horizon (Figure 136). After scouting different buildings with Charles Eames and Hugh De Pree (D. J. De Pree's son), Girard

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[351] Information about the Herman Miller showroom locations and dates can be found in Leslie Piña, *Alexander Girard: Designs for Herman Miller* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1998).
[352] Bobbye Tigerman, "'I Am Not a Decorator': Florence Knoll, the Knoll Planning Unit and the Making of the Modern Office," *Journal of Design History* 20 (2007), 61-74.
[353] Petty, "The Politics and Stagecraft of the Postwar American Showroom"; Bobbye Tigerman, "The Heart and Soul of the Company: the Knoll Planning Unit, 1944-1965," *Knoll Textiles*, ed, by Earl Martin (New Haven: Published for the Bard Graduate Center by Yale University Press, 2011), 178-227.

and Eames convinced De Pree to ask his father to forgo his initial building choice for 555 Pacific Avenue in the Barbary Coast, a building that was erected in 1907 as a music hall.[354] Girard was given the commission, which participated in the architectural revival of the Barbary Coast area (an impulse Girard would revisit in Columbus, Indiana years later during a main street "facelift" commissioned by J. Irwin Miller). According to *Arts and Architecture,* Girard illustrated a "unique approach to showroom design, combining fantasy, history and function."[355] For Girard, the space possessed just the right amount of historical patina, fantasy and bold color with which to work.

Geographically, the Barbary Coast was a nine-block area that centered on Pacific Avenue. With its origins in the 1849 California Gold Rush, the neighborhood (a red-light district) was notorious for its seedy saloons, brothels, and opium dens. The Barbary Coast lost many buildings during the 1906 earthquake and fire that consumed the area between Jackson Square and Telegraph Hill.[356] 555 Pacific Avenue—a dancehall with a circus atmosphere—was built one year later in 1907. The revival of the Barbary Coast was part of a larger national agenda of historic preservation. Most famously, McKim, Mead, and White's Pennsylvania Station (1910) in New York City, despite the rallying cries of architects and concerned urban dwellers, was demolished in 1963, inciting a generation of historic preservationists.[357]

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[354] Roger R Olmsted and T. H. Watkins, *Here Today: San Francisco's Architectural Heritage* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1968), 57. Pat Kirkham has questioned whether Ray Eames was on this trip because her father ran music halls in California during this time.
[355] New Showroom for Herman Miller by Alexander Girard," *Arts and Architecture* 76 (January 1959), 24.
[356] Olmsted and Watkins, *Here Today,* 57.
[357] New York City's Landmarks Preservation Law was established in 1965.

Part of the revival encompassed a trend to renew downtrodden neighborhoods in an effort to revitalize downtown urban centers, including the Barbary Coast. In 1960 writer Harold Gilliam proposed that planning was needed to enhance San Francisco's growth; the Barbary Coast presented an example of private planning "where dilapidated but picturesque old buildings were ingeniously rehabilitated by private developers, trees were planted along the streets, and the area—renamed Jackson Square—became the city's wholesale decorative trades center."[358] Thus, it was an appropriate location for Herman Miller's San Francisco showroom.[359] The building stock was also fitting, as the "cast iron pillars employed in these and many other buildings of the period now permit an almost totally glazed façade for the first floor, a characteristic that makes such buildings eminently eligible for modern shop use."[360] According to a 1960s San Francisco guidebook, Girard

> brought the old days back with 'stop 'em dead' color combinations that the Barbary Coast had never seen. The circus-like arcade façade, with its beveled glass oval inserts in swinging doors, the fan-lights, and the gilded dimpled rosettes, is not [to] be taken too seriously architecturally but it is the best possible example of pointing up amusing and delightful details with unexpected color.[361]

"With many a chuckle, but few architectural alterations, Alexander Girard transformed a den of iniquity into Herman Miller's new San Francisco Showroom," wrote *Interiors* magazine about Girard's design.[362] It is tempting to speculate what

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[358] Harold Gilliam, *The Face of San Francisco* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1960), 229-232.
[359] In 1956, the AID (American Institute of Decorators, founded in 1931) held its annual conference in San Francisco, touting Jackson Square as "the showroom center for the decorative trades." *Interiors* 115 (April 1956).
[360] Roger R Olmsted and T. H. Watkins, *Here Today: San Francisco's Architectural Heritage* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1968), 52-53.
[361] Olmsted and Watkins, *Here Today: San Francisco's Architectural Heritage*, 57.
[362] "Barbary Coast." *Interiors* 118 (February 1959): 86-91.

aspects of the exterior entrance of the derelict "den of iniquity" (Figure 137) fascinated Girard, but most probably the classical-inspired caryatids and the intricately-carved columns composed of arabesques and sinewy vine patterns (Figure 138) set within a symmetrical framework of doors and lunette windows sparked his imaginative vision. The theatrical heritage of this space must have also appealed to Girard, who manipulated elements of the dilapidated building into a fresh statement for Herman Miller. In fact, theatre had long been a fascination of Girard's, and he collected puppets, masks, shadow play figures, juvenile dramas (toy theatres), nativities and dollhouses. Girard made the entrance more minimal by stripping away the classical caryatid figures from the exterior, but their trace remained via the bulging pilasters that mimic their predecessor's shape (Figure 139). Drafted on February 12, 1958, Girard's elevation of the entrance portico delineated the dimensions of these new wooden pilasters (Figure 140). Maintaining the architecture of the lunettes and doors (Figure 141), Girard also salvaged the reflective glass, the original intaglio marble alcove floor, as well as the "wedding cake friezes," the term that the press used for the decorative plasterwork (Figure 142). According to *Interiors,* Girard had "out-Victorianed his uninhibited predecessors with an application of gold leaf and blue, crimson, and violet paint that would make them swoon with envy."[363] This explosive use of color can be viewed as the nascent stage of another variation on modernism, one that proceeds beyond the clean and spare (of the International Style, for example) toward the grandiloquence of revival styles.

[363] "Barbary Coast," 87.

Social, political, and economic shifts occurring during the postwar period ushered in an era of nostalgia (for the recent past).[364] Aspects of Girard's interiors suggest an awareness of a midcentury "Victorian" revival, which was part of a larger engagement with "decoration, luxury, glamour, symbolism, and nostalgia" by some designers.[365] In San Francisco, one aspect of a Victorian architectural revival began in the 1960s when the Victorian Alliance started grassroots efforts to preserve local architecture (which for much of the 20th century had been viewed as blighted structures).[366] Further, evolving opinions about Victorian taste appeared during the postwar period (with books published in England and American decorating guides extolling the virtues of the Victorian); for example, when Ernie's Restaurant in San Francisco was remodeled in 1956, it incorporated flocked wallpaper, floral scroll carpets and tufted velvet upholstered banquettes in order to evoke the Victorian period.[367] Anne Massey has observed that during the period "Victorian furniture, reviled by serious connoisseurs of decorative arts, was painted in bright gloss."[368] In this context, Girard's use of a brightly painted façade and antiques (in the T & O Shop) was fashionable in some circles.[369]

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[364] Elizabeth Guffey, *Retro: The Culture of Revival* (London: Reaktion, 2006).
[365] *History of Design, Decorative Arts, and Material Culture, 1400-2000*, ed. by Pat Kirkham and Susan Weber (New York: Bard Graduate Center and Yale University Press, 2013), 629.
[366] Catalyzed by The Victorian Society in England (founded in 1958), which was charged with preserving fine examples of Victorian and Edwardian architecture as a response to the increasing threat of demolition. The Victorian Society, *Saving a Century: The Victorian Society, 1958-2008* (London: Victorian Society, 2008), np. The San Francisco group was founded in 1973.
[367] Ernie's restaurant, designed by A. Dudley Kelly, is featured in *Interiors* 115 (April 1956) on pages 122-123.
[368] Anne Massey, *Interior Design of the 20th Century* (London: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 1990), 175.
[369] Opened by Barbara Hulanicki in 1964 in London, Biba featured clothing hung on Victorian hat-stands and ostrich-feathers in 19th century vases. Scholars have interpreted

The central shop window (Figure 143) suggested a glimpse of what was offered inside through three large windows, but also presented an orthodox vignette of contemporary living—George Nelson's pretzel chair (1952) and a Nelson pedestal table (1954) among an assemblage of potted plants. The other two settings visible through the front shop windows offered other arrangements: Eames chairs surrounding a dining table suggesting breakfast service and another Eames chair bordered by an LTR table and an ETR (surfboard) table.

Girard meticulously labeled the zones of the shop on his July 28, 1958 floor plan, which survives with fabric samples, suggesting the bright displays and varied textures (Figure 144). Using the San Francisco showroom, I propose the hallmarks of a Girard interior. The first of these includes the use of an octagonal "carousel" (Figure 145), located on axis with the entrance door (Figures 146-147). Called a "fantasy carousel" by *Arts and Architecture*, the ceiling panel (Figures 148-150) was composed of various geometric and organic shapes in vibrant hues of red, pink, orange, and purple. Two Eames office chairs and a table were perched on this proverbial stage set, which bears resemblance to Americana carousels, a folk art connection that Girard likely made.[370] (This motif was revisited most prominently in Girard's design for the installation of the Girard Foundation's collection at the Museum of International Folk Art in 1978, and was also used in La Fonda del Sol.)

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this point as the beginning of Pop in London, which was conceived by young people who desired to set themselves apart from previous generations in a fun, fashionable way. Massey, *Interior Design*, 175.

[370] The author thanks Pat Kirkham for this idea.

Behind more furniture groups and a fabric screen appeared a second characteristic of Girard's design—the brightly paneled, well-organized storage wall filled with disparate, but deliberately chosen objects (Figure 151). George Nelson famously introduced the storage wall system in a January 22, 1945 article commissioned by *Life* magazine (Figure 152).[371] Girard adapted Nelson's concept by transforming the utilitarian quality of a storage wall (which was originally placed against a wall) into freestanding shelving for niche displays and room dividing. *Interiors* effusively admired this feature, noting,

> Designer Girard's partitioning system is a triumph, simultaneously achieving a mysteriously weightless airiness while organizing the space and setting off the Herman Miller fabric line, designed by Girard himself, with the most alluring display on record.[372]

Situated near the center of the main space, the room divider was "filled with a varied assortment of articles whose value is based on appearance rather than price."[373]

Another hallmark of Girard's interiors—the use of folk art—was expressed within the niches of the storage wall in the "most alluring display on record."[374] Using backgrounds and multitudinous panels of color, Girard installed a varied mixture of "tourist-type" objects, from a Native American basket and Mexican doll to African prints. The divider was intended to store things, but it also visually cataloged them through delightful arrangements. According to Girard, this seemingly disparate collection "is no more varied than the objects found in many American homes."[375] Girard, who like many

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[371] Announced to the American public via *Life*, the storage wall was discussed earlier in *Architectural Forum* (November 1944).
[372] "Barbary Coast," 89.
[373] Rita Reif, "Bric-a-Brac Gets Setting in a Divider," *New York Times* (December 6, 1958), 27.
[374] "Barbary Coast," 89.
[375] Ibid.

at the time saw women as the primary homemakers, sought to teach them methods of arrangements; he commented,

> Bring it together in a wall and, while arranging it, you will improve your taste by testing sizes, proportions, colors and materials and how they blend in what becomes one large painting.[376]

For Girard, the act of arranging a display wall would ameliorate the level of taste in the United States. Further, *Interiors* believed the storage wall brimming with folk art to be "one of Girard's most carefully calculated actions, aimed at counteracting the slightly puritanical flavor of the Herman Miller name."[377] This indicates an understanding of Girard's mediation of what was pure Herman Miller style modern. Part of Girard's agenda in the showroom was to unite these seemingly contradictory impulses to create a harmonious accumulation, which also reflected Herman Miller's identity.

For the San Francisco showroom Girard further partitioned spaces beyond the storage wall. Using fabric and existing columns, Girard created another vignette of a George Nelson desk, an Eames-designed RAR rocker, enclosed within walls of three Girard fabrics (Figures 153-154). Girard also used architectural elements, such as the "carousel," to create spatial delineation. In another example, a well-devised pavilion (Figures 155-156) inconspicuously concealed an office space in the middle of the showroom, while displaying many Girard-designed fabrics on its four "walls." Bolstering this effect of partitioned spaces is the grid-patterned carpet, designed by Girard (and made by James Lee in a dense wool velvet) (Figure 157). By using neutral shades of black, white, and gray, Girard lessened the rigidity of the pattern, but also provided a light-colored background for the dynamic textiles circulating within the space. Further,

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[376] Ibid.
[377] "Barbary Coast," 91.

the rectilinearity of the carpet is reinforced by Girard's installation of fabric samples on the sidewalls of showrooms (Figure 158). The straight lines of the carpet may have also provided perusing customers a guiding way through the space. The dense texture and visual effect of regularity in the carpet was offset by the light decorative ceiling border (Figure 159) that recalled the "wedding cake" columns located at the entrance, demonstrating another element of the original building that was retained. Painting the frieze stark white minimized the contrast between the decorative treatment of the floor and ceiling.

Using fabrics to create temporary exhibition spaces recalls the work of the German designers Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich, who collaborated on various projects from 1926 to 1939. Commissioned by Verein deutscher Seidenwebereien (Association of German Silk-Weaving Mills)—of which Hermann Lange, one of Mies and Reich's greatest patrons, was a board member—the duo designed the Café Samt und Seide (Velvet and Silk Café) for the trade fair *Die Mode Der Dame* (Ladies' Fashion) in Berlin from September 21—October 16, 1927 (Figure 160).[378] For this temporary exhibition, Mies and Reich formed curved and straight walls of velvet and silk fabrics (in several colors: black, orange, red and yellow) that hung from tubular steel rods at varying heights. The pair also used hanging curtains in domestic interiors to functionally divide space in an open-planned interior, emphasizing the Bauhaus characteristic of textiles in service of architecture.[379]

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[378] Christiane Lange, *Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich: Furniture and Interiors* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2006), 13-14.
[379] These fabric partitions recall the themes of exposure / concealment and the military tent. Marianne Eggler, "Divide and Conquer: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lilly

A final Girard design element present in the showroom is his use of artistic table arrangements, a standard trope in the display of dining tables. In addition to his interest in creating displays within niches of the storage wall, Girard also delighted in assembling table settings. He was celebrated for conceiving fashionable settings; Just Lunning (the son of the founder) of Georg Jensen, the luxury retailer on New York's Madison Avenue, had commissioned him to create eight table settings in April of 1956 as part of an exhibition within the store (Figure 161).[380] Girard also designed oversized color-blocked tablemats that were sold at Georg Jensen, as well as four new dinnerware patterns that debuted during the exhibition.[381] Unlike more traditional table settings, Girard here mixed such unrelated objects as a handmade wood and tin spice chest, Thai bronze flatware, a Mexican wine decanter, and an Italian glass vase in one setting, suggesting what Betty Pepis of the *New York Times* referred to as the "happy relationship of good friends who get along well together despite many differences of character."[382] Girard advocated for playful collecting in this exhibition, mixing tableware that could be purchased at Georg Jensen (which sold American and European housewares and furnishings) with his personal "inexhaustible collection of bright discoveries."[383] Having

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Reich's Fabric Partitions at the Tugendhat House," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 16 (Spring-Summer 2009), 67.

[380] Although the New York retail store sold Georg Jensen silver, it was an entirely separate venture from the Georg Jensen Company in Denmark. The author would like to thank David Taylor at the Library of Congress for his email regarding the lack of archives.

[381] The mats sold for $2.75. Betty Pepis, "Settings for Spring," *New York Times* (April 1, 1956), 197.

[382] Betty Pepis, "Settings for Spring," *New York Times* (April 1, 1956), 197.

[383] *House Beautiful* noted that the table setting exhibition could be viewed at the National Home Furnishings Exposition in New York's Coliseum, August 25-September 19; the exhibition had a life beyond Georg Jensen. "The Playful Possibilities of Setting a Table," *House Beautiful* 98 (August 1956), 62-67, 113.

demonstrated this sensibility in several commissions and within his own home, he used it to a lesser extent in the San Francisco showroom (Figure 162). The objects not made by the firm were not for sale in a company space, at least not until Herman Miller unveiled the Textiles and Objects Shop.[384]

1. The Origination of the Textiles and Objects Shop

As suggested by *Interiors* magazine, the San Francisco showroom revealed an "un-Herman Millerish display of levity."[385] The company allowed Girard to experiment with several design elements, enabling him to hone his technique in anticipation of his next showroom venture for Herman Miller—the T & O Shop. Opening on May 22, 1961, the store displayed Girard's fabrics and decorative accessories alongside global folk art selected by Girard to create a veritable exhibition offering an "exciting visual experience of color and texture."[386] As D. J. De Pree noted, Susan Girard played a significant role in realizing this project. He stated,

> The occasion of "Textiles & Objects" is a culmination of a ten-year dream of Mr. Girard and Herman Miller. Alexander and Susan Girard have put the best of their talented lives into this program. They were the first to see the value of such a showroom.[387]

By early February 1958 (although the conversation had informally begun much earlier), Girard and De Pree corresponded about a proposed New York Textile Showroom. In an

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[384] For the Georg Jensen commission, many of the objects that Girard used were retailed by the store (except for the objects that Girard made, such as the tin). Interestingly, Girard sold many of these objects, including mats, napkins, and glassware, that were retailed by Georg Jensen to the Millers.
[385] "Barbary Coast," 87.
[386] "Fact Sheet for the Textiles & Objects Shop," 2./G.4.1.4, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[387] D. J. De Pree letter, 5 May 1961, GITO 8, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

effort to entice De Pree, Girard offered to charge only for drafting and miscellaneous expenses, and not for his time, forgoing his usual design fees.[388] From Girard's viewpoint, a textile showroom was crucial to enlarge Herman Miller's fabric business; further, the additional media coverage regarding Girard's designs would enhance his reputation. Although a name had not yet been decided upon, Girard proposed giving the fabrics division a special designation—Girard Textiles, a division of the Herman Miller Furniture Company.

Even though the title he proposed suggested that the textiles were all designed by him, Girard discussed "a collection of special 'one' or 'few of a kind' textile items of assorted types and from assorted places."[389] For Girard, these special items would add interest and create a desirable atmosphere for the textile showroom. Understanding that this needed to be done on a business-like basis, Girard offered a number of solutions to the problem of stocking and paying for these non-Herman Miller-manufactured works. Although Girard would be able to obtain some textiles on an approval basis, others would need to be purchased beforehand, thus he suggested that the latter category of goods be sold at the "purchase plus handling costs, or possibly with an added margin for profit."[390] His aim was to assemble the most interesting group of textiles for the launch of the showroom, and, as further incentive, told De Pree that "if this idea proved worthwhile and develops into a continuous process of buying and selling, we can agree on my

[388] Alexander Girard to Hugh De Pree, 2 February 1958, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[389] Alexander Girard to Hugh De Pree, 12 February 1958, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[390] Ibid.

receiving some compensation."[391] In anticipation of the projected opening date in 1959, in early 1958 Girard drafted letters to Charles Kunzman of the Far Eastern Textiles Inc, New York, and Louis Slavitz of the Pan American Shop, New York, to introduce the idea of a Herman Miller fabric shop and to gauge their interest in consigning textiles to it.[392]

2. Retail Pioneers

Of course, the T & O Shop did not exist in a vacuum, nor was the idea to sell folk art unique. Aileen O. Webb, who founded the magazine *Craft Horizons*, established America House (1940-1971) as a retail shop dedicated to bringing American crafts to a broad audience.[393] Originally located at 7 East 54th Street (in 1960 it moved to 44 West 53rd Street; Textiles & Objects would open a block away one year later), America House was provided a "central location for the sale and distribution of American handicrafts."[394] Some of the preeminent craftspeople in the United States sold their wares through the store, including jeweler Elsa Freund, ceramist Marguerite Wildenhain, and cabinetmaker Wendell Castle.

Herman Miller's investment in a fabric shop signaled increased competition in the field of textiles. Its main rival, Knoll, began a textiles division with a separate New York showroom in 1947 (to which Girard contributed some early designs); Knoll's textile showroom merged with the main showroom a year later when Florence Knoll redesigned

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[391] Ibid.
[392] Both agreed to participate as suppliers of textiles.
[393] Bella Neyman, "The (America) House that Mrs. Webb Built," *Magazine Antiques* (July/August 2012), 120-127.
[394] Undated letter from the Handcraft Cooperative League of America, as quoted in Bella Neyman, "The (America) House that Mrs. Webb Built," *Magazine Antiques* (July/August 2012), fn 5.

601 Madison Avenue.[395] Herman Miller harnessed the opportunity to enter the field in 1952 with Girard at the helm. Design historian Lesley Jackson has noted that Girard's patterns for Herman Miller "with their simple, flat, cutout shapes and rich, layered colors, provide fascinating parallels with Marimekko."[396] Known for its bold colors and innovative prints, the Finnish firm Marimekko expanded internationally, including to the United States. Beginning in 1959, Marimekko was sold to consumers via Design Research.[397] Although Girard's textiles and those produced by Marimekko (and others) engage in the period's fascination with bright color and abstracted pattern, his designs are indebted to his folk art collection.

Many stores sold vernacular goods across the country, including Design Research, which was founded in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1953 by architect Benjamin Thompson as a home furnishings shop, was a pioneer in selling a lifestyle that engaged with modern design in domestic settings. The store sold "a warm, eclectic, colorful, and international version of modernism, one that mixed folk art and Mies van der Rohe, Noguchi and no-name Bolivian sweaters."[398] Ben Thompson (like many others) also sold toys and folk art, searching through Mexican markets for interesting native crafts.[399] With

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[395] Ann Marguerite Tartsinis, "Chronology," *Knoll Textiles, 1945-2010*, ed. by Earl Martin (New Haven: Published for the Bard Graduate Center by Yale University Press, 2011), 27.
[396] Lesley Jackson, "Textile Patterns in an International Context: Precursors, Contemporaries, and Successors," *Marimekko: Fabrics, Fashion, Architecture*, ed. Marianne Aav (New York: The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture, 2003), 78-79.
[397] The textiles were further distributed by Crate and Barrel, Gordon Segal's Chicago housewares store that opened in 1962. Jane Thompson and Alexander Lange, *Design Research: The Store that Brought Modern Living to American Homes* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2010), 99.
[398] Thompson and Lange, *Design Research,* 11.
[399] Thompson and Lange, *Design Research,* 121.

their experimental satellite store in New York City on Lexington and 65th Street, they were part of a field of modern design stores that also sold vernacular goods.[400]

B. Building T & O

By April of 1958, the idea for the store shifted to displaying a special collection of antique and modern textiles and related accessories, such as pillows, and less closely related items, including picture frames, within the established New York Herman Miller showroom. Girard, likely disappointed by the news, noted that when he initially "volunteered to work on the proposed shop at no charge" he felt that "the shop would warrant the necessary investment of my time," but because of the change, he began charging for design and supervision costs for the proposed new textile division space within the existing New York showroom.[401]

The idea for a fabric showroom was soon reinstated, however, along with the development of an "Accessories and Oddments Program" for various showrooms across the country, allowing Girard to help steer Herman Miller in a new direction. In late 1959, Max De Pree circulated a two-page memorandum to acquaint the company's executive committee with the purpose of the program:

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[400] The Walker Art Center published an article recommending eight modern design shops in 1948. Interestingly, vernacular goods were also sold by these shops recommended by the Walker, including Richmond Bradshaw in Washington D.C. (which sold Puerto Rican mats and Mexican pottery and baskets) and New Design, Inc. in New York City (which sold Guatemalan cottons and Finnish, Swedish and Czechoslovakian glass). Girard's Grosse Pointe shop was highlighted for its collection of modern furniture, objects, and textiles, as well as the "Italian, Swedish, Mexican, Portugese, and Finnish handcrafts." See "Where to Buy Well Designed Objects," *Everyday Art Quarterly* 7 (Spring 1948): 1-5.

[401] Alexander Girard to Hugh De Pree, 10 April 1958, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

1. To build traffic in the showrooms
2. To extend an additional service to our customers
3. To enhance the image of the company
4. To give a feeling of change and activity in the showroom and a feeling of freshness, which is not usually accomplished by our designs which are rather long-lived[402]

The concept of freshness is intangible, much like Girard's "smell," but it is nonetheless an important factor in our understanding of the outlook at Herman Miller. De Pree's comments about image enhancement are clear—every US business sought to set itself apart, but his remarks on "freshness" implied that he had been influenced by George Nelson's recent musings on the US predilection for "Kleenex" culture, meaning a culture based on constant change and the "throwing away" of items.[403] "Accessories and Oddments" would give consumers the ability to change their interiors with a few small alterations. Items (to be decided) for the new program were to be purchased by Nelson, the Eameses, and Girard (and occasionally, the executive committee) for sale in the showrooms. These items would be sold on a wholesale basis (similar to furniture and fabrics), because the firm did not desire to enter into the retail business.[404] According to Max De Pree,

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[402] Max De Pree to Executive Committee (Gene Eppinger, Glenn Walters, Clare Hintz, and Con Boeve), 25 November 1959, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

[403] George Nelson reflected the zeitgeist in his discussion of "Kleenex culture" (which suggests awareness of Reynar Banham's 1955 statement, "we live in a throw-away culture"); he acknowledged the irreconcilability of the modernist project with design in a consumer-driven commercial society. He concluded by stating, "the purpose of good design is to ornament existence, not to substitute for it," suggesting that design should improve the user's life, in so far as it doesn't become an object of conspicuous consumption or a pawn in the battle of taste. Nelson, *Problems of Design*, 13.

[404] Items were going to be marked up by a third to one-half of the cost on a "cash and carry" basis. Vern Poest was assigned to pricing and inventory for the project. Max De Pree to Executive Committee (Gene Eppinger, Glenn Walters, Clare Hintz, and Con

> This program is not charged with the responsibility to make a profit or to build a volume of sales. It is to provide a growing and continuing fund so that the program itself can continue to grow and thereby more adequately carry out the purpose.[405]

Hugh De Pree proposed two new names for the brand, "Herman Miller Fabrics" and "Herman Miller Textiles," the latter being Girard's preference. Girard still attempted to insert his name by reintroducing "Alexander Girard Textiles, a Division of Herman Miller, Inc," which was obviously more advantageous to him.[406] One possible reason for De Pree's reluctance to accept Girard's preferred name surely stemmed from the possibility of selling other textiles through Herman Miller.[407] Girard did not like what he considered interference with his project, alerting Hugh De Pree,

> As I expect my job not to be interfered with by the intrusions of designs by others, I similarly assume that I should not intrude in Herman Miller Furniture field. Am I right in this attitude?[408]

By March of 1960, Hugh De Pree informed Girard that the name "Herman Miller Textiles" had been chosen for the textile division of Herman Miller Inc. (the name having recently changed from the Herman Miller Furniture Company.)[409] De Pree explained the rationale behind not including "Girard" in connection with the division, namely that such

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Boeve), 25 November 1959, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

[405] Max De Pree to Executive Committee (Gene Eppinger, Glenn Walters, Clare Hintz, and Con Boeve), 25 November 1959, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

[406] Alexander Girard to Hugh De Pree, 1 February 1960, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

[407] Handwritten on Girard's letter, probably in De Pree's hand, is "other designer pieces." De Pree responded to several of Girard's points in this manner on the document. Alexander Girard to Hugh De Pree, 1 February 1960, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

[408] Ibid.

[409] Hugh De Pree to Alexander Girard, 10 March 1960, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

a move would force the firm to consider naming the furniture division after the Eameses and Nelson. De Pree, however, acceded to Girard's desire to retain name recognition by including "Alexander Girard Designs" or "Designs by Alexander Girard" alongside "Herman Miller Textiles" on letterhead and other paper goods.[410] Further, De Pree argued that although the shop's opening continued to be delayed, the promotional program, controlled by New York publicist Elaine Sewell, should commence. In his letter, De Pree also addressed the issue of tablesetting design, agreeing with Girard that it was a complex matter and should be left alone for the time. But, De Pree and the executive committee had made some decisions regarding the accessory program. Girard would soon receive $500 to immediately begin buying "so that there are mark-up factors applied to the price of the accessories," which included a 2% royalty for Girard and Herman Miller's profit.[411] Profits that the firm accumulated would be used to expand the program. Beyond the royalty, Herman Miller also paid Girard's travel expenses, and he would replace any items that sold in order to maintain the inventory. De Pree reassured Girard that he would be the designer of the textile showroom, writing: "there isn't any question at all on this."[412]

D. J. De Pree announced the idea of the T & O shop to Herman Miller employees by restating the two basic guiding principles at the firm—good design must be seen and experienced in order to be understood, and the good selling of products requires visible,

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[410] The letterhead design work was executed by Irving Harper, whom Max De Pree and Girard agreed would be best suited for the job. Girard was also interested in doing specific graphics projects.
[411] Hugh De Pree to Alexander Girard, 10 March 1960, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[412] Hugh De Pree to Alexander Girard, 15 March 1960, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

accessible, and strategically located showrooms.[413] Before adding that the firm was now embarking on a new venture that would display Herman Miller fabrics in a "dignified day-after-day 'kiosk'….to a quality audience" at 8 East 53rd Street in New York, De Pree also mentioned the introduction of a "special attraction," namely a collection of objects selected by Girard "for their design interest and design quality, not for their intrinsic value." He continued,

> We believe this collection will prove a boon to many persons who enjoy such decorative objects but who have no opportunities to explore the creative centers of other civilizations and discover such things for themselves, or who do not have the good judgment and taste of a Girard.[414]

Through Girard's curatorial choices, Herman Miller hoped to sell goods to people whose taste included the types of interiors, full of objects from different cultures, that were associated with Girard, the Eameses, and others. By providing a continually changing cache of such objects, Girard and the Herman Miller Company played a role in making such interiors more readily accessible to consumers.

As a "departure in marketing," the shop was an innovative experiment—part showroom (for textiles) and part retail store (for objects).[415] The fabrics that had been predominantly available through trade sources were now available to the larger public for browsing and consumption. For D. J. De Pree, the purpose of showrooms was "to get close enough to the users to help them see our products in an attractive setting and to help them use these products effectively."[416] During the 1920s and 1930s US consumers

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[413] D. J. De Pree letter, 5 May 1961, GITO 8, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[414] Ibid.
[415] Press Release from Elaine K. Sewell Public Relations for Herman Miller, Inc., "New Departure in Marketing," Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[416] Ibid.

viewed contemporary design in local retail settings and larger department stores (occasionally in partnership with museums). According to Herman Miller, the firm pioneered early-stage marketing of contemporary design beginning in the 1940s and developed "recognition for the dual-purpose and space-saving designs which are accepted as a part of today's furniture vocabulary" in their new design showroom.[417] Building upon Girard's extensive experience with museum exhibitions, Herman Miller invoked in 1960 the language and outlook of MoMA in the 1950s acknowledging that the T & O Shop, as a showroom and retail shop "affords a wider opportunity today for exposure of "good design" in fabrics than the consumer experienced previously."[418]

Girard brought a unique set of skills to the T & O Shop, as he had previous experience in showroom design for Herman Miller (Grand Rapids and San Francisco), and familiar with modern design shops. The trend for retailers of goods identified as "modern" was expanding from coast to coast, including a few Midwest outposts, such as Baldwin Kingrey in Chicago and Alexander Girard in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. Prior to opening his own store, Girard designed the Junior League "Little Shop" in Grosse Pointe, Michigan in 1938 (Figure 163). Featured in a contemporary book about the resurgence of retail settings, alongside Morris Ketchum, Morris Lapidus, and Raymond Loewy, the author included Girard's small shop "because of its direct simplicity and clean handling of detail….the accent is directly upon the merchandise."[419] Located at 379 Fisher Road, Girard's shop developed into a beacon for modern design in one of Detroit's wealthy suburbs, Grosse Pointe (Figure 164). Following wartime scarcity of materials, Girard's

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[417] Ibid.
[418] Ibid.
[419] Emrich Nicholson, *Contemporary Shops in the United States* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing, 1945), 79.

reuse of an old hamburger stand in 1946-47 demonstrated his ability to find a creative expression through adaptive reuse. Both Girards were involved in the business at this early date, as the new space included two offices—one for Girard's architectural practice and one for a decorating shop run by Susan Girard (Figure 165).[420] The large structure included a lobby, showroom, two offices, and a drafting room (Figure 166). In this arrangement, the Girards were capable of servicing many facets of design work. In addition to offering architectural and decorating services, there were rotating art exhibitions, which featured the work of many artists and craftsmen, including Kurt Versen, Eva Zeisel, Russel Wright, James Prestini, and Italian, Swedish, Mexican, Portuguese and Finnish handcrafts (Figure 167).[421] Beyond the fine art and sculpture, various types of fabric samples, wall finishes, and building materials were displayed alongside selected furniture—much of it designed by Girard, but the store also sold other furniture, such as Eames plywood chairs (Figure 168). Girard noted that after the DIA *For Modern Living* exhibition, "Most people used to come and look at this as if [it] were some sort of freak show or museum, and they didn't buy very much, but the people from General Motors and various other big corporations came around and looked at all these things."[422] Girard's statement is important for thinking about the consumer in the postwar USA; perhaps not many ordinary people bought from Girard's shop (or other progressive stores), but it was another space for learning about modern design trends. Girard moved his office and store a few blocks west to 16841 Kercheval Place in Grosse Pointe by mid-

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[420] "Nostalgia and Curiosity Produce Identical Results," *Grosse Pointe News*, (Jan. 16, 1947), 1.
[421] "Where to Buy Well Designed Objects," 3.
[422] Alexander Girard, Interview by Virginia Stith. Transcription from Charles Eames Oral History Project. October 7, 1977. Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

1950 (Figure 169), finally shuttering the doors when he and his family moved to Santa Fe in 1953.

C. Architecture and Design of T & O Shop

The floor-to-ceiling glass wall of the T & O storefront (18 feet wide by 10 feet high) revealed a brightly-lit jewel-box interior to passersby (Figure 170). The interior (20 x 100 feet) was deep and narrow, and therefore Girard hung fabric panels from the ceiling to disrupt the long continuous space and help in the creation of vignettes. All surfaces, walls, ceiling and floor, were painted white in the manner of orthodox Modernist galleries and exhibitions, to form a noncompetitive canvas for the fabrics and objects; in other words, the architectural framework of the store receded "into the background to become an anonymous shell."[423] Following German architectural theorist Gottfried Semper, who believed that architecture evolved from handicrafts, architectural ornament was not simply decoration, but it formed a symbolic language that embodied the visual expression of a building.[424] In this way, the surfaces and ornamentation of Girard's textiles were more important in articulating the message of the space than the architectural white structure enveloping the interior.

The entrance banner illustrated Girard's printed textile "April" as a background for the bold, graphic lettering announcing the shop as "designed or selected by alexander

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[423] Kaspar, *Shops and Showrooms*, 6.
[424] Gottfried Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, translated by Harry Frances Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Semper linked the four elements of architecture (hearth, platform, roof and enclosure) to the four crafts (ceramics, masonry, wood, and textiles), of which textiles was the first consideration.

girard" (Figure 171).[425] The graphic identity of the store was enhanced by the entrance and exit arrow (Figure 172), which vaguely referenced American folk art motifs (Figures 173-174). The T & O Shop's storefront was critical in cementing a positive first impression for customers because, according to contemporary retailing guides, the shop window was a "glorified advertising sign."[426] Further, the transparent façade facilitated the display of all goods, creating an open container for observation, similar to the large shop windows of the major department stores or the stage in a theater. As architect-designer Frederick Kiesler observed in his book about contemporary display, "looking through the glass into the show window is really like looking at the stage—with this difference: the actors, in art terms, are speaking plastics in motion, whereas the merchandise is a silent, static object," in other words, these were merchandising stage sets.[427] The idea of store as a showcase was entrenched in the architectural rhetoric of the period, as a contemporary source noted, "the primary effect of this shop is that of a life-size showcase, through which the customer may pass to view the fabrics designed by Alexander Girard and the folk art selected by him."[428]

Unlike previous Herman Miller showrooms, which were laid out in room settings, textiles and objects were displayed in vignettes without a hierarchy. Built-in display fixtures were employed throughout the shop, including low stools and shelving visible in the front window display. The stools displaying textiles were composed of white

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[425] Designed by Girard, the banner and other graphics were executed by John Neuhart.
[426] Gene Burke and Edgar Kober, *Modern Store Design* (Los Angeles: Institute of Product Research, 1946), 52.
[427] Frederick Kiesler, *Contemporary Art Applied to the Store and Its Display* (New York: Brentano's, 1930), 110.
[428] "Shop Designed Like a Display Case," *Stores and Shopping Centers*, ed. by James S. Hornbeck (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962), 31.

cellulosic-coated cast aluminum turned legs (Figure 175); the white-coating was also used to treat the front door and cupboard door handles (designed by Girard) throughout the shop (Figure 176).[429] Designed by Girard, a display tower was constructed of chrome-plated steel with white cellulosic-coated aluminum rods that supported shelves with integrated lighting (Figure 177). Lining the walls of the store were storage cupboards, which Girard faced with panels of fabrics (Figure 178). He also designed a white counter containing fabric samples (Figure 179), the reception desk (Figure 180), and the display easels, all of which were manufactured by Herman Miller. Important to Girard was the store equipment, which allowed the brand to "express its own individuality."[430]

Building on that individuality, Girard also devised the lighting—over 350 bulbs in ceiling strips that ran parallel (with 36 inches in between each strip) from the front to the rear of the shop (Figure 181). *Industrial Design* noted that the setting was "almost clinically harsh: the light is dazzling and the white walls and ceilings are refrigerator-shiny, yet the combination produces glareless, shadowless illumination at eye level."[431] A specially designed bulb (used in the ceiling strips) reflected much of the light back up against the white ceiling. Girard's lighting design—"a notable departure from the recessed downlights typical of the high-style interiors of the period"—influenced late 1960s designers.[432] However, like other retail equipment, lighting fixtures should be

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[429] "Fact Sheet for the Textiles & Objects Shop," 2./G.4.1.4, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[430] Burke and Kober, *Modern Store Design*, 66.
[431] "Display Case for Fabrics," *Industrial Design* 8 (July 1961), 66.
[432] Robert A. M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman, *New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Second World War and the Bicentennial* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995), 487.

considered beyond their function (as illumination); they should also "in a reasonably subdued way, carry out the store motif."[433] Stated more emphatically, according to another modern retailing guide, "lighting takes the place of architecture. It is the finest display tool available."[434] Girard seemed to understand these points as he worked to achieve a delicate balance between an artful and functional presentation of textiles and objects that respected various elements of the interior scheme.

Within the intervening spaces between the lighting strips were rows of perforated steel angles from which fabrics were suspended on an arrangement of hooks and rods (Figure 182). Girard used a total of 92 different fabrics from 47 series, including five custom printed fabrics designed for the interior treatment of the T & O Shop.[435] These new fabrics ("Barber Pole," "Nastri," "Fruit Tree," "Alphabet," and "Tent") were designed to coincide with the opening of the shop.[436] Girard hung these fabric panels from the ceiling to create intimate spaces throughout the store. Spatially, the panels formed overlapping planes within the interior, creating ever-changing displays as the customer walked through the interior and observed parts of it from varied angles.

As a focal point for the front of the store (Figure 183), an antique sofa was upholstered in bright, solid colors, and thus provided a curious hybrid object—part "antique"; part "modern"—within the confines of a modern store. Although Girard's choice was unusual, it was not unique; designer James Lamantia incorporated a similar

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[433] Burke and Kober, *Modern Store Design*, 28.
[434] Morris Ketchum, *Shops & Stores* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corp., 1948), 190.
[435] Press Release from Elaine K. Sewell Public Relations for Herman Miller, Inc., "Fabric Schedule for Textiles & Objects Shop," 22 May 1961, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[436] Press Release, "Drapery Textiles from Herman Miller's 1961 Collection," 22 May 1961, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

antique sofa alongside Harry Bertoia chairs in his design for a clothing store in New Orleans (1956) (Figure 184).[437] Retailing guides also noted the preference for neutral monochromatic interiors within modern stores, "but psychologists have long contended that people are 'starved' for color."[438] Historian Regina Blaszczyk claims that most US citizens were "chromophobic" until the postwar era, when colorists were employed in advertising, architecture, merchandising, and product design to combat the predisposition.[439] While contemporaries saw it as an interwar trend rather than a condition, prewar design was not without color; (indeed, this is the period in which color film and Technicolor were marketed.) Girard responded to this call by tapping into the psychological need to experience color in the mid-century. Beyond injecting the interior with another colorful tableau, the tri-lobed sofa may have served a further function. Girard was no stranger to utilizing antique furniture, having used nineteenth-century furniture and farm implements to illustrate the supposed "progression" toward modern design at the Detroit Institute of Art's *For Modern Living* exhibition (1949) (Figure 185) (see chapter 3).

1. <u>Objects</u>

The "air-conditioned bazaar," as the T & O shop was identified by *Interiors,* resembled a pure white box (a decidedly Modernist aesthetic choice, it was a seemingly neutral space that was free of context for art works, but as artist-critic Brian O'Doherty

[437] "Modern with Antiques for the Carriage Trade," *Interiors* 115 (July 1956): 49.
[438] Burke and Kober, *Modern Store Design*, 86.
[439] Regina Blaszczyk, *The Color Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, in association with the Lemelson Center, Smithsonian Institution, 2012).

has demonstrated, the gallery white cube should be viewed as a historical construct[440]) into which Girard added fabrics and objects. Part of the concept, according to Girard, was to relieve the "monotony of just textiles and give it more sort of context."[441] For him, the feeling of the shop and the quality of the textiles and objects differentiated the T & O Shop's agenda from an antiques, contemporary craft, or design store. The mixture of textiles and objects recalls the notion of "companionate merchandising," which developed in retailing circles during the mid-century. According to one guide,

> The relationship of one department…..to another is a subject requiring careful study. Much of the success attained by department store merchandising has resulted from the development of "companionate merchandising" to a point where no section is considered entirely as a separate, independent unit, but always with a view to its relation to other departments.[442]

For the T & O Shop, the two "departments"—textiles and objects—required fluid planning, or "a deliberate absence of regularity and uniformity; the end result is to move traffic smoothly from one section to its companionate department" on the sales floor.[443] Within the T & O Shop, the consumer could experience the two "departments" simultaneously. Modern retailing guides also suggested that a store's economic success depended on "how well it stimulates impulse buying. If a store sold only demand or convenience merchandise that its customers had planned to buy before they ever entered the store, it would soon be in bankruptcy."[444] Desiring to produce fresh objects for consumers, Girard designed a few new lines for the shop, including a napery (tablecloths,

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[440] Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica, CA: Lapis Press, 1986).
[441] Alexander Girard, Interview by Mickey Friedman. Transcript, November 9, 1974. Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[442] Burke and Kober, *Modern Store Design*, 28.
[443] Burke and Kober, *Modern Store Design*, 24.
[444] Ketchum, *Shops & Stores*, 13.

mats, and napkins) collection in "Checkerboard," "Mosaic," and "Cut-out" patterns on printed linen, and "Mexicotton," a fabric handwoven in Mexico that had interesting texture and color variations (Figure 186).[445] In addition to pillows in Indian silk, Girard designed an extensive range of pillows in cotton, linen, and wool as part of the retail experiment (Figure 187).[446] The shop also featured ceramics made in Italy by his brother Tunsi and handmade, embroidered, one-of-a-kind cloth dolls made by Marilyn Neuhart of Los Angeles, and sold exclusively at T & O (Figure 188).[447] Displayed prominently in the shop's front window, Neuhart's dolls were an inspired choice of contemporary craft that used a traditional toy type (the doll) to advertise the store. Girard was introduced to Neuhart's dolls, which she began to make in the late 1950s for her family, through Ray Eames.[448] He eventually asked Neuhart to make a quantity of dolls (100) by Christmas 1960 to sell at the T & O Shop.[449]

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[445] Pricing was different between printed a set of 4 linen mats, which retailed for $2.95, and a set of 4 mexicotton mats, which retailed for $5.95. Press Release, "Napery in Herman Miller's New Textiles and Objects Collection," 3 November 1962, T & O-N1, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

[446] Retail prices ranged from $9.95 for cotton and linen varieties to $12.95 for wool and $13.95 for hand-woven silk pillows. Press Release, "Pillows in Herman Miller's New Textiles and Objects Collection," 3 November 1962, T & O – P, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

[447] These dolls retailed from $12. Press Release, "Herman Miller's New Textiles and Objects Collection," 3 November 1962, T & O -01, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

[448] According to Marilyn Neuhart, she made one for Ray Eames, who said that she must also make one for "Sandro" (Girard's nickname). Neuhart obliged, and Eames delivered a doll to Girard for Christmas (probably 1958). Author interview with Marilyn Neuhart, February 27, 2014, Hermosa Beach, California. A Neuhart doll is pictured in Girard's living room by April 1959. See "Books Belong In Every Room," *House and Garden* 115 (April 1959), 105.

[449] According to Neuhart, Girard showed up unannounced to the Neuhart's Venice storefront (a temporary space for printing), asking whether she had any examples of her embroidery there. She did not, but they made a later appointment for Girard to examine

In addition to these contemporary objects, the program included folk art that was sourced and assembled by Girard. Those who had visited Restaurant Associates' La Fonda del Sol (1959; in the Time Life Building) would have been familiar with Girard's folk art displays within a contemporary setting (Figure 189). Chosen from various parts of the world, crafts—objects such as bowls, candelabra, rugs, and jars—were selected for their individuality and visual appeal (Figure 190). These objects were not to be considered as high art, but what Girard called "the delight department of daily use; that is, things used simply for delight."[450] Although Girard collected these objects as artistic works, they were affordable bibelots to be used in the furnishing of an interior program and enjoyed as "toys" or crafts, rather than as fine art.[451] Girard's rhetoric can be further observed in the press release for the T & O Shop, which proposed that "each object is unique and expresses the spontaneous imagination of the craftsman who fashioned it for [*sic*] his own delight and enjoyment."[452] This statement supports how Herman Miller planned to sell these disparate objects to an American public. Although collectors began acquiring folk art in earnest in the early twentieth century, they were a small and elite

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her embroidery at the Eames Office (likely in early 1960). Author interview with Marilyn Neuhart, February 27, 2014, Hermosa Beach, California.

[450] William C. Eckenberg, "Folk Art is Offered 'Simply for Delight,'" *New York Times* (November 27, 1962), 42.

[451] There is a considerable body of literature, in the art historical and anthropological disciplines, related to the differentiation of art, artifacts, and crafts. For example, see *Anthropology and Art: Readings in Cross-Cultural Aesthetics*, ed. by Charlotte M. Otten (Garden City, NY: Published for the American Museum of Natural History, 1971); *Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections* (New York: Center for African Art, 1988); *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World*, ed. by Nelson H. H. Graburn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); and Ronda L. Brulotte, *Between Art and Artifact: Archaeological Replicas and Cultural Production in Oaxaca, Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013).

[452] Press Release, "Herman Miller's New Textiles and Objects Collection," 3 November 1962, T & O-03, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

group that focused on Americana for the most part.[453] The majority of objects selected by Girard could be considered global folk art, and thus would have fallen into the category of what some people would have dismissed as the "tourist art."

These objects can be categorized as the pejoratively termed "tourist art"—or "the kinds of things visitors may find when they visit foreign countries, but which they seldom see in usual retail outlets either abroad or in this country."[454] Anthropologist Christopher B. Steiner considers "tourist art" as a paradigmatic form of mass-produced art and argues, "its authenticity and cultural rationality flow from the qualities it shares with *other* mass-produced objects and commodities throughout industrial and postindustrial history."[455] In this way, folk art or tourist art should be considered on the same terms as the modern design environments into which Girard placed these "mass-produced" objects. As suggested by Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, the enthusiasm that consumers have toward tourist art, which represents the handmade object and preindustrial ways of living, exists at the "intersection of a scholarly discourse of authenticity and an emerging discourse on the canons of "good" or "refined" taste."[456] The notion of refined taste recalls French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's influential text *Distinction: A Social Critique*

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[453] For examples, see Elizabeth Stillinger, *A Kind of Archeology: Collecting American Folk Art, 1876-1976* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011). There were some exceptions, as collectors such as Herbert Pickering Lewis and Emily Johnston de Forest, amassed Mexican talavera pottery in the early twentieth century.
[454] Press Release from Elaine K. Sewell Public Relations for Herman Miller, Inc., "New Departure in Marketing," Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[455] Christopher B. Steiner, "Authenticity, Repetition, and the Aesthetic of Seriality: The Work of Tourist Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds,* ed by Phillips and Steiner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 89.
[456] Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, "Art, Authenticity, and the Baggage of Cultural Encounter," *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds,* ed by Phillips and Steiner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 13.

of the Judgment of Taste (1979), in which he demonstrated that by the 20th century, the middle classes were able to distinguish themselves through the display of "cultural capital" (including art and other high culture), which was only made possible by the modern consumer society. The folk art program at the T & O Shop participated in the period discourse about good design, and may be understood as objects of good taste (particularly because they were selected by a known tastemaker).

One example of this type of object sourced by Girard is sculpture made by Mexican craftswoman Teodora Blanco, who was born into a family of Oaxacan potters (Figure 191). Her unglazed terracotta figures ranged from small figurines to large-scale monumental sculpture; accordingly, prices for her work increased based on the scale of the object.[457] These sculptures were not inexpensive, and notable collectors, such as Nelson Rockefeller and others, purchased Blanco's work during the midcentury. Objects, like Blanco's sculpture, were framed as a "contrast against the mass produced items usually found in stores."[458] Girard has remarked that "we have become so practical that anything that is not functional is overlooked as not worth doing…..but people buy folk art because it fills a need that is not satisfied at another level."[459] Conspicuously non-functional, Blanco's sculpture filled a desire, on the part of some consumers, to own handmade, decorative, one-of-a-kind bibelots that were made by natives or "others," but could still be construed as good design.

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[457] For example, a 34-inch sculpture retailed for $180 ($180 in 1962 is $1340 in 2011). Press Release, "Herman Miller's New Textiles and Objects Collection," 3 November 1962, T&O-06, Herman Miller Archive, Zeeland, Michigan.
[458] Press Release from Elaine K. Sewell Public Relations for Herman Miller, Inc., "New Departure in Marketing," Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[459] William C. Eckenberg, "Folk Art is Offered 'Simply for Delight,'" 42.

Of course Girard did not consider these objects "tourist art." Although some of the objects acquired by Girard were available as "tourist art," other works were procured through a network of contacts that he established. According to him, "the process of finding inventive folk art—and not, "the abject horror stuff made for tourists"—requires an education by accident."[460] He took great pride in sourcing unusual and aesthetically pleasing objects for all of his commissions. Girard continued to acquire folk art for the T & O Shop through late 1962, when he and Susan took a three-month trip to Portugal, Morocco, Turkey, Greece, Sicily, Italy, England, and Poland. But they also acquired many objects closer to home; one of Girard's favorite pastimes was antiquing in the United States and Mexico.[461] The objects participated in creating a type of humane modernism, one of the narratives of postwar America that was embraced by Girard and fellow Herman Miller-designers (and friends), Charles and Ray Eames, as Pat Kirkham has demonstrated. She also discusses the practice of "functioning decoration," which incorporated groups of varied objects, including handcrafted toys and folk art objects, carefully arranged to create "extra-cultural surprise," and encouraged historians to think of the overall aesthetic in terms of an aesthetic of plenty; an aesthetic of addition, accretion, excess, juxtaposition, layering, etc.[462] This deliberate act of decorating with

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[460] Ibid.

[461] Girard would antique with many friends, including the Eameses and the Neuharts. Neuhart talks about "going junking" with Girard in their part of Southern California—antique shops in Long Beach, in the valley, and in Pasadena, for example. Girard would buy so many objects that he would ship them back to Santa Fe. Author interview with Marilyn Neuhart, February 27, 2014, Hermosa Beach, California.

[462] Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames,* 164. Also see Pat Kirkham, "Humanizing Modernism: The Crafts, 'Functioning Decoration' and the Eameses," *Journal of Design History* 11 (1998), 15-29.

folk art and other objects, one of Girard's forms of artistic practice, is prevalent within the spaces of the T & O Shop.

2. Reception

Corroborating the period conflation between museum exhibitions and showrooms, *The New York Times* viewed the T & O Shop as an exhibition, "the shop resembles….a relaxed exhibit in a progressive museum."[463] The *Times* reporter understood Girard's predilection to mine previous projects for inspiration to use in current endeavors. Thus, for this particular retail space, Girard's extensive experience designing museum exhibitions served him well. Moreover, museum exhibitions, particularly when related to design, obfuscated the fine line between retail and museum space.[464] And yet, while this store interpreted the modern retailing setting, an element of 1960s views of the "old" and the "antique" that permeated the store (beyond the tri-lobed sofa). Girard's artistic practice incorporated artful arrangement, which included careful placement of tiny objects on the delicate, floating stools in the front windows (Figure 192); the positioning of a (noh-type) mask, a fashionable motif of Girard's (see his Detroit house in chapter 2) above one of his designed mirrors (Figure 193); and the elegantly arranged kaffir lillies located in front of "Flores" wallpaper—a photo opportunity that was not lost on Ray Eames, who photographed the T & O Shop (Figures 194-195). These artful arrangements

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[463] "Shop is Latest Venture for Designer," *New York Times* (May 22, 1961), 36.
[464] The relationship between commerce and the museum began in the early 20th century with Macy's and the Metropolitan Museum of Art working together in 1913 to "bring art into everyday life and improve public taste." This project was taken up by Marilyn Friedman, who examined the relationship between the department store and the museum in the formation of modern design in America. See Marilyn Friedman, *Selling Good Design: Promoting the Early Modern Interior* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2003).

recall, yet were different from, the "chinamania" mode of decoration, or the cozy "Indian corner," of the late nineteenth century, in which more was more (and thus better) because of the number of small objects used. Seen within the spare, and some near spartan spaces, of the mid-twentieth century, Girard's "more is better" model of interior decoration (which was not unique, as others such as Dorothy Draper and Morris Lapidus engaged in it) reflected the interest in period revivals.

This same "more is better" approach was utilized in the advertising poster for the T & O Shop (Figure 196). The poster designed by Girard appears as visual cacophony—seemingly disorganized, discordant, but full of life. Girard carefully arranged the varied folk art objects—toys, masks, ceramics, etc.—on a plain white background (similar to the white cube of the retail space) so that they may engage in a dialogue introducing notions of "the modern" as represented by whiteness and white space. With very little white space between the objects, horror vacui (fear of empty space) prevails. This convention reflects Girard's interest in accumulating things and artful arrangements. For the graphic identity of the T & O Shop, Girard transformed objects found at the shop for the poster. And just as the store was neatly organized in varied vignettes, so too was the poster (Figure 197). Objects were neatly arranged in rows, demonstrating that color conceals the actual tidiness (but perceived chaos) of the poster.

The invitation for the opening (Figure 198) announces the T & O Shop as a wholesale and retail store that offered textiles designed by Girard and manufactured by Herman Miller alongside "unusual and sympathetic decorative objects selected by Alexander Girard." Restricted to a simple color palette of red, blue and black on a cream background, the text is centered, which creates an essential structure as each line of the

invitation features a different font. The invitation reflects Girard's design approach—a modernist typographic structure with whimsical interludes, such as the folk art-inspired arrows and hearts, that suggest the handcrafted. As part of a typographic revival in the midcentury, Girard's design references nineteenth-century wood type through his use of ornamental typefaces.

For the opening, Girard and the Herman Miller public relations team invited over 1100 people during the course of three days (May 17-19, 2961) for a series of events (Figure 199). Many important magazines and newspapers came to the press preview on the morning of May 17, 1961, including *American Fabrics, Architectural Record, Architectural Forum, Craft Horizons, House and Garden, House Beautiful, Industrial Design, Interiors, Ladies' Home Journal, Life, New York Herald Tribune, New York Times, New Yorker, Progressive Architecture, Time, Town and Country,* and *Vogue*. These magazines and newspapers suggest the type of consumer that Herman Miller targeted—well-educated, urbane, sophisticated people who would regard the eclectic offerings as the height of sophisticated taste. Many publications, including *Vogue*, *The New York Times*, and *The New Yorker*, suggested shopping for unique gifts at the shop, and the *New York Herald Tribune* thought that it "couldn't be more satisfying," while noting the unusual quality of being both wholesale and retail.[465] *Home Furnishings Daily* found that the fabrics and accessories "seem to float within the all-white shell."[466] Given that the shop was located in Manhattan, an urban, culturally elite, upper middle class

[465] "A Contemporary Curio Shop," *New York Herald Tribune* (May 22, 1961), found in newspapers scrapbooks, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.
[466] "Textiles and Objects," *Home Furnishings Daily,* (May 19, 1961), found in newspapers scrapbooks, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.

consumer was the most likely to read magazines, such as *Craft Horizons*, which made recommendations in November 1962 for Christmas gifts. In addition to selecting holiday gifts from America House, Bonniers, and Georg Jensen, the editors highlighted four items from the T & O Shop—dolls by Neuhart and three items of Mexican and Indian folk art.[467] Poised alongside rustic ceramics, Swedish pine salad servers, and other objects of whimsy, these gifts are clearly aimed at the discerning shopper, who was looking for "objects that have been given special life by the hand of the designer and the craftsman."[468]

D. <u>The Good Years</u>

Beginning with *For Modern Living* (1949), Girard noted a "transition from the initially austere design climate to one that allows for a broader variety of influences," which, for him, included folk art.[469] He capitalized on this shift, and a few months after the T & O Shop's opening, he proposed a plan for a Herman Miller Objects Division.[470] For him, the *raison d'etre* for such an endeavor was rooted in his twenty-year career, as he had been "directly involved in both the development and promotion of 'Good Design' in useful and decorative objects for domestic or public use," were also stated in his proposal.[471] Although Girard did not wish to dismiss the groundbreaking work of designers and architects of the recent past, he felt that "that today a more human,

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[467] "Christmas Shopper," *Craft Horizons,* (November/December 1962), 10-17, 53.
[468] "Christmas Shopper," 10.
[469] Alexander Girard, "Proposed Herman Miller Objects Division," December 18, 1961, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[470] Ibid.
[471] Ibid.

entertaining, colorful and decorative approach to design is desired."[472] He reasoned that the "demand for a relief element has largely been filled by the supply of antique or Folk Art objects, accessories or props," and felt that supply was quietly diminishing.[473] Thus, Girard felt that a "new source of significant material is now urgently needed to fill the demand," and therein lies the justification for his object designs, which would be different from, but sympathetic to, the textile program.[474] Girard's experience in product design included recent efforts for Georg Jensen and La Fonda Del Sol. He proposed to design a range of objects, which would include eating and drinking vessels, display containers, storage containers, reading and writing accessories, smoking equipment, measuring devices, lighting, fire equipment, visual objects, floor coverings, seating, festive equipment, tables, and clothing accessories.[475] Girard insisted that his objects would be of a "decorative, unique, or occasional" nature, and thus would not compete with the "utilitarian or commercial "regular" lines of products" at Herman Miller.[476] He stressed that the Objects Division would need to remain separate from the Textiles Division, and that he would be in charge of selecting the (handcrafted) objects. Girard persuaded Herman Miller to consider embarking on this program, demonstrating that the

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[472] Ibid.
[473] Ibid.
[474] Ibid.
[475] Ibid.
[476] In his memo, Girard acknowledged that research still needed to be undertaken to discover whether manufacturing facilities exist (that are capable of producing Girard's designs). He suggested that he can create designs first and then seek out manufacturing possibilities, or manufacturing can be sourced first and then design work based on production capacity. Further, in order to realize a "significant" group of objects, Girard would need to plan a long range (likely over two years) and extensive design program; he also outlined the business structure of such an endeavor for Herman Miller. Alexander Girard, "Proposed Herman Miller Objects Division," December 18, 1961, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

firm valued his design ideas, but, after much discussion, the firm chose to test only a few features of the program, including Girard-designed pillows and mirrors that went on sale at T & O Shop (Figures 200-201).

Nearly a year after Girard's initial plan, in November of 1962 Herman Miller crafted a policy proposal that adopted Girard's viewpoint on objects, namely that "objects are not incidental to our lives but primary and paramount."[477] Recognizing the integral nature of objects to a whole environment, Girard (and Herman Miller) desired to reintroduce significance back into the object by using objects to create dramatic relationships that Girard regarded as central to living. Company executives feared that "if we do not grasp the essential essence of what Girard is aiming for," the company was in "danger of leveling the entire Objects program to a point of mediocrity.[478]

At the same time (late 1962), the company continued to refine its position on the folk art program. Executives confirmed that

> Herman Miller should endeavor to win source loyalty and market advantage by discriminate selection, by knowledgeable juxtaposition of objects, by standards of excellence, by service, by organizational assistance, by promotional assistance, and by endorsement—not by over-investment on a product-by-product level.[479]

Thus, the firm aspired to offer the best folk art from various countries to the general public. At one stage executives were thinking about selling "Herman Miller Folk Art" to

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[477] "Policy Proposal, Herman Miller, Objects Division," November 14, 1962, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[478] Herman Miller also suggested that Girard's object program could be marketed or sold through museums and galleries; (their rationale: these places sell paintings and sculptures, so why not Herman Miller objects?). For Herman Miller, these are the right customers who will understand these types of objects. Further, the economics of galleries makes sense for the "object" program. "Policy Proposal, Herman Miller, Objects Division," November 14, 1962, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[479] "Marketing Structure, Herman Miller, Folk Arts Program," November 14, 1962, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

individual vendors, who would then be allowed to price individual objects or else follow the company's suggested retail pricing.[480] Herman Miller salesmen anticipated more information about the folk art, photographs of the objects, and other material to aid them in promoting folk art. The aim was to sell groups of objects. A memorandum of November 14, 1962 read:

> We are selling Herman Miller collections of folk art, not folk art objects. The specific Herman Miller composition (juxtaposed collection) is the most unique feature Herman Miller has to sell. If the collection is broken and objects are sold individually competition can easily usurp us.[481]

La Gardo Tackett (best known as a studio ceramist, Tackett briefly worked for Herman Miller during the period of the T & O Shop reorganization[482]), writing on behalf of the Herman Miller Company's program, used the term "juxtaposed collection." The company understood that objects were of an integral nature to the spaces or environments that Girard designed. In other words, the selection of groups of objects—not individual folk art objects—was seen as critical to this enterprise and therefore Girard's expertise was seen as central to it. This sentiment is important for several reasons: firstly, it established the firm's desire to sell folk art well; secondly, it demonstrated the firm's devotion to

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[480] Although this element of the Folk Art Program never got off the ground, Herman Miller considered teaming up with sponsoring organizations, clubs, museums, and galleries "for the purpose of exhibiting and selling folk art." "Marketing Structure, Herman Miller, Folk Arts Program," November 14, 1962, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[481] Ibid.
[482] The author would like to thank Dr. Peter Swanson, who is writing a book about La Gardo Tackett. Swanson has suggested that perhaps the relationship between Girard and Tackett began during the MoMA "Good Design" exhibition (1950), in which Tackett's architectural pottery became nationally recognized. Email between author and Peter Swanson, June 12-14, 2012. Unfortunately, there is no further information in the Herman Miller Archive regarding Tackett beyond the letters referenced in this chapter.

brand identity; finally, Girard as selector created the Herman Miller collection of folk art, thus solidifying his importance to the firm.

E. Disenchantment and Failure of T & O

During their meeting in Santa Fe on February 8 and 9, 1963, Max De Pree and Girard discussed several Herman Miller matters, including compensation for textile design, the design of objects, the selection of objects, and publicity graphics. Girard noted, "since our last year's figures showed a loss on the Objects Program, I am now looking forward to the new sales organization you have established to move into high gear so that we may all realize some compensation for our joint efforts."[483] Just a short time into the "Objects" experiment, and, in typical democratic Herman Miller fashion, all parties analyzed ways to ameliorate the program.

Hugh De Pree expressed reservations regarding the royalty fees on Girard-designed objects. In a company memo to Max De Pree, Hugh questioned whether this arrangement, while in Girard's best interest, was fair to Herman Miller.[484] According to Hugh, the $1,000 fee to develop object products might have been too high and he speculated whether Girard had invested any of the 5% royalty paid to him for his design work (textiles design, objects design, object selection, graphic design and special jobs). Hugh concluded by suggesting that before Max returned to Santa Fe for discussions with Girard, "we should work out a projection on how Herman Miller is doing on Girard-designed objects and should have some idea of the price that the traffic will bear and then

[483] Alexander Girard to Max De Pree, 15 February 1963, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[484] Hugh De Pree to Max De Pree, 18 March 1963, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

an evaluation of whether the cost that we have to put into this can come within such prices."[485]

Responding to Hugh's memo, Max agreed that the $1,000 development fee was prohibitive, but noted that Girard did invest "his 5% back into design work" because he did not charge for his time or talent—thus, his full remuneration was derived from royalty payments.[486] In the end, Max proposed that he speak with Girard the following week in Santa Fe "about the possibility of changing the royalty to 4% at least during the period between now and the $250,000 volume point at which we agreed to review it."[487] Herman Miller attempted to cautiously move forward with this project, while holding out to Girard the possibility of reaching or surpassing the not inconsiderable sum of a quarter of a million dollars (in 2015, over $1.9 million dollars).

In mid-1963, Herman Miller conducted a comprehensive review of the Objects Division with members of the policy committee, namely D. J. De Pree, Max De Pree, Vernon Poest, Glenn Walters, Dick Ruch, Con Boeve and Hugh De Pree. Girard, La Gardo Tackett and Clare Hintz (who worked in the textile division) were also present for the meeting.[488] The Objects Division was reviewed in the context of ongoing issues at the firm—the need for increased profits; the problem of the T & O shop; a reduction of budget within several divisions; and the postponement of a Washington D.C. branch. At this meeting, several items were discussed, including the lack of a satisfactory way to sell folk art at a profit; the current high inventory of folk art; Christmas promotion planning;

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[485] Ibid.
[486] Max De Pree to Hugh De Pree, 22 March 1963, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[487] Ibid.
[488] Policy Committee Minutes, 3 June 1963, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

the proposed sale of folk art to museums; and the strength of the Objects Division (found in Girard-designed objects). At this pivotal meeting, the firm decided to cut back on the folk art program. The executive committee resolved to make no further purchases "until the inventory is reduced from $68,000 to $40,000," thus setting a new inventory limit at $40,000.[489] Once inventory was diminished, the committee would then determine whether further funds would be available to Girard to purchase more objects. It decided that folk art should only be sold at the T & O Shop, in showrooms, and through the Planning Division; that the efforts to sell to outside sources (museums and the Junior League) should be cancelled; and that the number of staff involved was to be reduced. The company was not yet eliminating the folk art program, but it reduced its scope.[490]

The second major decision was that the Objects Division should focus on Girard-designed things. Max De Pree outlined these as falling into two categories: "immediate" and "under consideration." Objects that the company immediately required, included pillows, napery, mirrors, hanging panels, Neuhart dolls, Tunsi figures, and stools; objects "under consideration" included miniature chests, boxes, occasional tables, ironwork, paperweights, hourglasses, and rugs. Max suggested that volume estimates, expense estimates, and a selling program should be outlined for each item, and that the firm act upon this matter quickly and systematically.[491]

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[489] Ibid.
[490] Herman Miller also reduced Tackett's role, as he now supported sales of folk art in showrooms and the T & O Shop.
[491] De Pree felt that Tackett's primary job would be in this arena, as a manager of the division, and as a product manager working with Girard to develop products and bring them to market. Policy Committee Minutes, 3 June 1963, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

The third policy shift was the transfer of the management of the T & O Shop to the Textile Division. Company executives contended that the Shop would still function as a space for the introduction of works from the Objects Division and for the sale of folk art, but would focus on selling textiles and displaying objects in a manner that would enhance the display and sale of fabrics. Herman Miller decreed that any profits, which were hugely important to the business, would be given over to the Textile Division to reconcile expenses of the T & O Shop.

Only a few months later, La Gardo Tackett tendered his resignation as manager of the Objects Division, effective November 30, 1963.[492] A few months later at the January 1964 policy meeting, the firm finally closed the Objects Division. A reconfigured T & O Shop was to display and sell textiles, selected objects and furniture (such as Eames stools, miniature chests, Girard stools, tray tables, and the 670 lounge chair). In an attempt to amplify sales, the firm advertised regularly (using the same graphic imagery as the entrance banner in Figure 171) in New York magazines and newspapers. Hugh De Pree confirmed that textiles would be maintained as a wholesale business, and other items were to be sold on a retail basis.

A special report on the T & O Shop submitted by Clare Hintz in late February 1964 established that many of Girard's original objectives, such as distinguishing the fabric business from the furniture side; that there should be a discrete location for display and sale of fabrics; that the fabric showroom should be located near others; that the image of Herman Miller should be projected at street level; the desire to increase sale of fabrics;

[492] Following Tackett, Larry Bratschie, who was working for the firm on the Household Experiment, became responsible for marketing Objects and working with Girard on development and production of his designs. Max De Pree to Herman Miller Personnel, 24 September 1963, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

and that an accessories shop be located within the fabric showroom, had been guiding principles in the formation of the store.[493] Hintz reviewed the present status of these objectives, noting that T & O was active as a fabric showroom, sales office, and accessories salesroom; that there was no current advertising or promotional activity; and that the staff was minimal, with only a manager, a saleswoman, and a secretary, thus revealing an incongruity between Girard's original objectives and the current state of affairs. Hintz's recommendations for the future of the T & O Shop included an increased number of fabrics on special display that would rotate quarterly (thus providing a "freshness"); objects designed by Girard should become the responsibility of the Textile Division; the development of a fabric advertising program to appeal more directly to the retail trade; and to provide Girard, as Director of the Textile Division, with complete control over design and display of the T & O Shop.

In April 1964, Glenn Walters circulated a confidential memo to members of the Policy Committee regarding an offer from the Philippine Government to sublet the T & O Shop.[494] The offer was for $18,000 per year, and in order to make a decision, the yearly expenses for the T & O Shop were outlined, including operations and personnel (which totaled $51,900). Sales figures for textiles from the Eastern, Southeast, Midwest, and Western regions were also provided for four years, beginning in 1960; although figures for sales increased once the T & O Shop was introduced, there had been a steady decline in the Eastern and Midwest regions, while the Western region experienced increased sales. As of March 31, 1964, a total of $54,644 of folk art inventory was on hand.

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[493] Clare Hintz to Max De Pree, 26 February 1964, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[494] Glenn Walters to the Policy Committee, 23 April 1964, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

Further, sales figures were provided for objects and folk art from the T & O Shop, with gross profit diminishing from 1961 to 1964.[495] The projected market for Girard-sourced folk art did not materialize.[496] Finally, retail fabric sales were also not voluminous, with $2,198 from 1961-62, $993 from 1962-63, and $1,548 from 1963-64 (during the first six months).

A new policy statement summarizing the firm's objectives and goals for objects and folk art was drafted for distribution to Herman Miller employees on May 1, 1964; a copy was sent to Girard, explaining the need to create such a document after Tackett departed. The firm, he was told, felt compelled to change course and not to pursue objects as a business any longer.[497] New goals for Herman Miller included recommending a limited group of folk art and objects selected by Girard (in the price range of $40-$300 each); proposing a less expensive category of objects designed or selected by Girard (such as ceramic objects made by Tunsi, Girard's brother, in Florence) available exclusively through Herman Miller; and offering items designed by Girard for Herman Miller, such as pillows and mirrors. Herman Miller declared that its "purpose in doing this is to offer our customers an opportunity to avail themselves of the services of an extraordinary selector—Alexander Girard," thus acknowledging Girard's skill as an assembler of objects.[498] According to Herman Miller, Girard's folk art was still

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[495] Profit (sales less cost of sales) from the sale of objects and folk art was as follows: 1961-62 = $14,665; 1962-63 = $11,546; 1963-64 (first 6 months) = $3,426. The gross profit does not take into consideration the expenses for these objects. Glenn Walters to the Policy Committee, 23 April 1964, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[496] Pat Kirkham has suggested that perhaps the folk art was priced too high.
[497] Hugh De Pree to Alexander Girard, 13 May 1964, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[498] Ibid.

considered a "worthwhile cultural contribution which will reflect favorably on the other aspects of the business," but the firm continued to reduce elements of the T & O Shop's business activities, acknowledging that although folk art might not produce a significant profit, the company would not carry it at a loss.[499] Of course, the main goal of business is to make a profit, but Herman Miller desired to couple this goal with maintaining its identity as a cultural beacon through Girard's things.

On the heels of this new policy statement regarding folk art and objects, and after much deliberation, the policy committee voted to retain the T & O Shop. Hugh De Pree drafted a memorandum to the committee outlining some of his misgivings about the shop, but the firm declined the Philippine government's offer due to various factors, including long-range goals for textiles and the potential strain between the firm and Girard.[500] Hugh De Pree acknowledged that this was a short-term resolution, and the committee should work on a revised New York plan and to continue to correspond with Girard regarding the economic issues.[501]

In a follow-up letter to Girard, Hugh De Pree eased into the contentious matter, asserting that the "T & O Shop…has played an important role in increasing the textile volume."[502] De Pree reminded Girard that the firm experienced a sharp increase in the Eastern Region textile sales following the introduction of the T & O Shop, but,

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[499] Ibid.
[500] De Pree felt Herman Miller's relationship with Girard "would suffer because of this sudden action." Hugh De Pree to Policy Committee, 14 May 1964, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[501] As De Pree noted, "It is possible to read into the decision to stay in the T & O Shop a relaxation on our goal of 8% profit. Our goal is still 8% profit. We have to work to achieve it." Hugh De Pree to Policy Committee, 14 May 1964, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[502] Hugh De Pree to Alexander Girard, 21 May 1964, Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

unfortunately, robust sales had not continued. And, although publicity from the T & O Shop was gratifying for Herman Miller, the firm had had to write off the large initial investment; while the recurring investments of approximately $50,000 per year were not covered by profits. The team desperately attempted to find a solution for this expensive experiment. De Pree wondered whether the T & O Shop required a better promotional program, but, of course, this required injecting more capital. The firm now believed that sourcing and buying objects had been too costly. Further, the environment of the mid-1960s was drastically different than that of ten years earlier. The firm felt that business was moving in a new direction, toward contract work; the fields of office and commercial, educational-institutional, and hospital-institutional offered high-volume sales. Of course, textiles were important in these endeavors, but Herman Miller thought it prudent to establish all its New York business in one location. Thus, De Pree decreed that the furniture showroom would move from 305 E. 63rd Street, consolidating the entire New York display.[503] De Pree apprised Girard of the options—continue on "with emphasis on textiles and objects as icing;" continue in this manner with "an advertising and promotion program; move the T & O to the 63rd street showroom immediately; combine it with the rest of the business in one location; [or] eliminate it entirely."[504] At that moment, the firm believed that combining it with the rest of the business would yield the best results.

The De Prees and Girard met a few days later on June 2 and 3, 1964 to discuss the T & O Shop, about which Girard said that there was "nothing to be gained by talking

[503] Ibid.
[504] Ibid.

about why the T & O hasn't succeeded up to this point."[505] Concerned about his role in the revision of the New York space, Girard believed that there should still be space for objects and that "the new setup should contribute to the image of Herman Miller," as he believed the T & O Shop had done successfully.[506]

By October of 1964, Herman Miller concentrated its efforts on a new showroom space on the corner of Madison Avenue and 58th Street in New York.[507] Because of the firm's large investment in the property (and the necessary consolidation of the T & O and the 63rd Street showrooms), De Pree suggested that all parties meet in January to "discuss how best to use this space in light of the tremendous investment and importance of the space to our entire program."[508] Following up on this company memo, Hugh De Pree sent a note to Nelson, Eames, and Girard apprising them of the firm's desire to move into this space, which had two floors for exhibits, sales, planning, meeting spaces, office room, and flexible space (to include the T & O operation.)[509] In December of 1964 the policy committee weighed the option of moving to 600 Madison Avenue and whether the investment should include the ground floor.[510] Ultimately deciding against the ground floor, Hugh De Pree discussed with Girard the possibilities of a second floor showroom,

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[505] "The following is taken from a June 5 memo on the Girard visit, June 2 and 3, 1964," Folder 15, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[506] Ibid.
[507] Max De Pree to Gordon Chadwick, 8 October 1964, Folder 52, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[508] Hugh De Pree to George Nelson, Charles Eames, and Alexander Girard, 12 October 1964, Folder 52, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[509] Ibid.
[510] Hugh De Pree to Policy Committee, 10 December 1964, Folder 52, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

setting a future meeting for the end of January 1965.[511] At this date Herman Miller also began searching for a suitable tenant for the T & O Shop space.[512]

In light of the consolidation of the T & O Shop and the first New York showroom, the concept for the 600 Madison Avenue showroom was viewed as a tool, "or a series of tools, which help….salesmen to sell, particularly in the institutional and office furniture markets."[513] This new showroom was an important next venture for Herman Miller economically—as they were committed to a fifteen year lease and about $1,000,000 in rent—as well as conceptually—as the firm sought to "solve the problems of providing tools for our various products and markets."[514] Hugh De Pree met with the three design directors on January 28, 1965 in New York, where they reached a unanimous decision to create a "tool concept"—referring to planning systems for contract furnishings— for the space (rather than a museum display), with the option to extend the concept to other showrooms. This is important because it suggests that Girard's early approach to design was no longer relevant or fashionable. Further, the choice of language employed by Herman Miller—"museum display"—clandestinely points toward this new attitude at the firm. Although the designers initially desired to collaborate on the space (and perhaps fearing another T & O Shop debacle), they required more feedback from the sales team before embarking on the project.

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[511] Hugh De Pree to Max De Pree and Glenn Walters, 19 January 1965, Folder 52, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[512] Interestingly, company memos reveal that George Nelson thought that the closing of the T & O Shop was good for the company because "he feels it has sapped some of the strength from the company." Hugh De Pree to Max De Pree and Glenn Walters, 19 January 1965, Folder 52, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[513] Hugh De Pree to George Nelson, Charles Eames, Alexander Girard, Max De Pree, Glenn Walters, 20 January 1965, Folder 52, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[514] Ibid.

Hugh De Pree officially informed sales and management personnel about the changes occurring in New York through a memo issued on February 22, 1965.[515] De Pree met with Girard in Chicago on March 29, 1965 regarding the new New York space. They discussed design costs and royalty, as well as Girard's designs for the Objects Division. Perhaps in an effort to maintain his viability at the firm, Girard also notified De Pree of three forthcoming jobs, including the lobby of Cummins (J. Irwin Miller's firm in Columbus, Indiana), into which Girard would incorporate Herman Miller products. While they discussed the design of the New York Showroom at length, they only made passing reference to the vanishing T & O Shop.[516]

The T & O Shop finally ceased operation in 1967.[517] Many, including Girard, have speculated why the venture, although critically successful, fell short financially. According to Girard, part of the issue was the economic structure of the shop, which functioned as a wholesale and retail operation. For him, the sale of textiles "was never

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[515] Hugh De Pree to Herman Miller personnel, 22 February 1965, Folder 52, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan. Glenn Walters suggested that Hugh make this announcement internally, but wait on public notification until Herman Miller firmed up the details of the sublet. Glenn Walters to Hugh De Pree, 9 February 1965, Folder 52, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

[516] Girard mentioned that (Frederick) Lunning, who directed Georg Jensen's U. S. store, could be a possible tenant for the space. Hugh De Pree, "Notes on Meeting with Alexander Girard, Chicago, March 29, 1965," Folder 52, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

[517] Although the T & O Shop closed, a few items originally sold in the shop continued to be available to the consumer. Dolls made by Marilyn Neuhart (ranging in price from $11.40-$42.00) and ceramic figures made by Tunsi (Girard's brother in Florence, Italy) (prices for these handmade ceramic figures range from $6.18-$13.50) were available through Herman Miller from November 1, 1967. Further, Girard's pillows (in Herman Miller-Girard Collection fabrics or in six designs—Madonna, Heart, Moon, House, Sun, or Angel) were available for $11.95, as were Girard's mirrors made by Herman Miller in various fabric combinations (priced at an outstanding $90 for an 18 ½ in. square), Girard-designed printed graphics, and tablecloths (mosaic, cut out, checkerboard) designed by Girard.

clearly explained…[and] was one of the reasons why we thought it would automatically carry the rest of the bric-a-brac." [518] Further, following the logic of Herman Miller's top executives, Girard also believed that the firm experienced the "economic burden [of] having two places" and they wanted to have a highly visible (but more expensive) space on Madison Avenue.[519] "That's what killed both places was the move to Madison," he later commented.[520] Blame was assigned variously—D. J. De Pree believed that Clare Hintz did not manage the shop properly, while Hintz thought he "was not given the proper management support," and sales director Jimmy Eppinger later revealed that never believed that it was "appropriate somehow for a manufacturer to try and get into a retail outlet."[521] Herman Miller memoranda also suggest another explanation—the early equivocation on the part of executives to commit to the project, coupled with the lack of a coherent plan. Because this was a totally new type of project for Herman Miller, the firm did not have the benefit of prior retail shop experience. For Girard, there was no difference in composing vignettes of folk art objects for the T & O Shop (Herman Miller retail), the Miller House (domestic commission), or Braniff Airlines (contract interior). It did not matter to him as a designer whether the objects were for sale or not, but it mattered to him that it be a success because he had poured so much time and energy into it.

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[518] Alexander Girard, Interview by Mickey Friedman. Transcript, November 9, 1974. Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[519] Ibid.
[520] Ibid.
[521] Alexander and Susan Girard, Interview by Linda Wagenveld and Barb Loveland. Transcription from Santa Fe, October 23, 1983. Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

Fundamentally, the T & O Shop was too peripheral to Herman Miller's strategy and vision—textiles and objects functioned in support of the furniture, despite Girard's best efforts to increase the visibility of the textile program. Herman Miller took a calculated risk because they believed in Girard's vision and valued his opinions (and he lobbied for nearly ten years to open a dedicated space for textiles). He has remarked that he desired a visceral reaction, or "shock value" by "putting this Mexican beautiful junk in a context," but clearly, the type of objects he selected did not translate into robust sales.[522] The folk art and handcrafted works that Girard selected contributed to a softening of modernism during the period, but the firm was not a retailer of folk art, but rather was a producer of contract furnishings. Girard as textile designer and as a "selector" of distinctive objects within the T & O Shop prototype participated in the earlier concern with educating the public about the value of good design, but times were changing. The US social, political and economic landscapes were greatly in flux in the late 1960s, as the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement, the military occupation of Vietnam (among other events), and counter-cultural responses to what were seen as the excesses of affluence and materialization, affected many aspects of American culture, all of which contributed to shifting consumer taste and lifestyle during this more turbulent era. The legacy of the T & O Shop—beyond the showrooms that absorbed some of the folk art, textiles, and objects in specially designated areas—is its contribution to Herman Miller's brand identity, its attempt to interject whimsy in the selling of modern design in the midcentury, and the example it offers of Girard's ideal of an accumulative vision put into practice.

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[522] Ibid.

Figure 132
"Retrospective" Wallpaper, Press Release photograph (December 1952)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04803_04

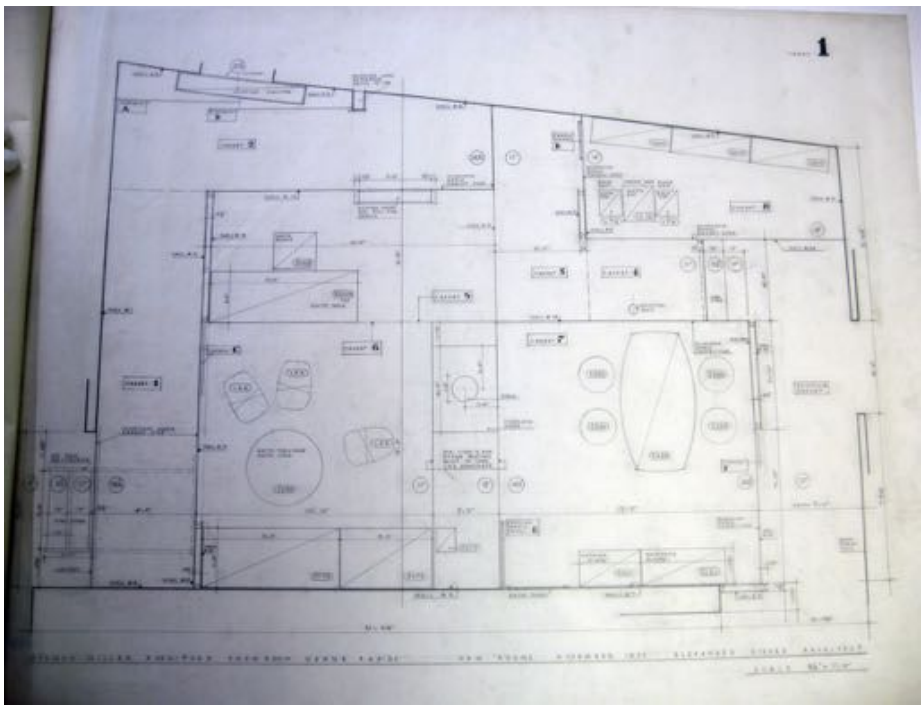

Figure 133
Alexander Girard, Grand Rapids Showroom, 1952
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 17252

Figure 134
Model Room, Grand Rapids Showroom, Photographed by Dale Rooks (June 1953)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04810_03

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Figure 135
Knoll Showroom, 601 Madison Avenue, New York, 1948
Photographed by Ezra Stoller

Figure 136
Exterior Entrance, Herman Miller Showroom, San Francisco
"Per Herman Miller, a San Francisco," *Domus*, April 1959

Figure 137
555 Pacific Street, San Francisco
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04503_0002

Figure 138
Detail of column (before)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04503_0009

Figure 139
After renovation
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00861_00002

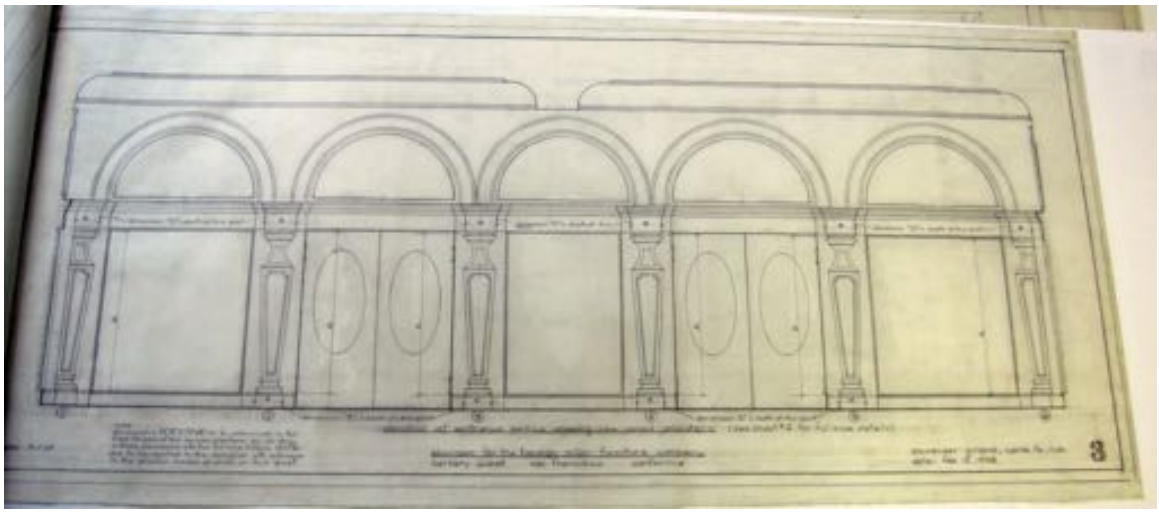

Figure 140
Elevation of Entrance Portico, February 12, 1958
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4929

Figure 141
Reflection of entrance
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00861_00005

Figure 142
Detail of column (after)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00861_00008

Figure 143
Central shop window
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00861_00004

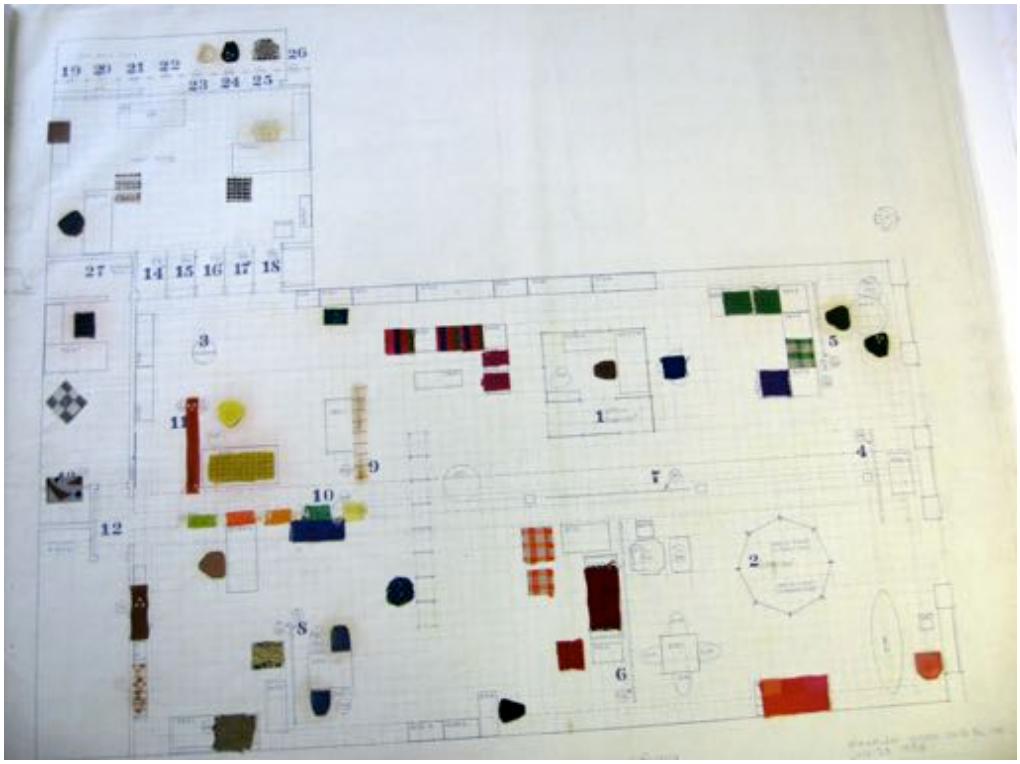

Figure 144
Alexander Girard, July 28, 1958, Floor Plan with textures
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4929

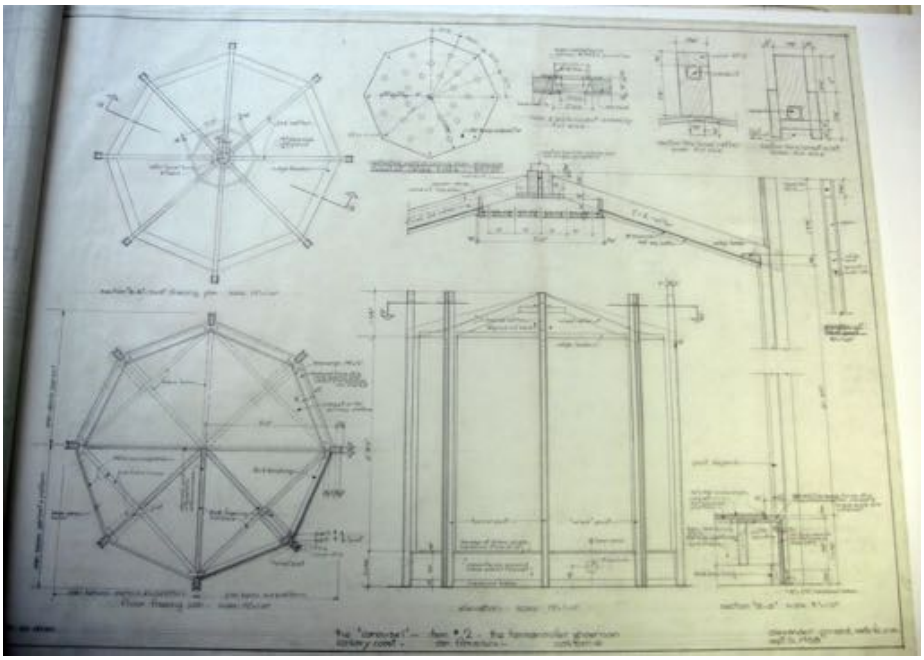

Figure 145
Alexander Girard, Plan for the "carousel," September 5, 1958
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4929

Figure 146
Entrance door opened to “carousel”
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04503_0026

Figure 147
View to carousel
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00861_00011

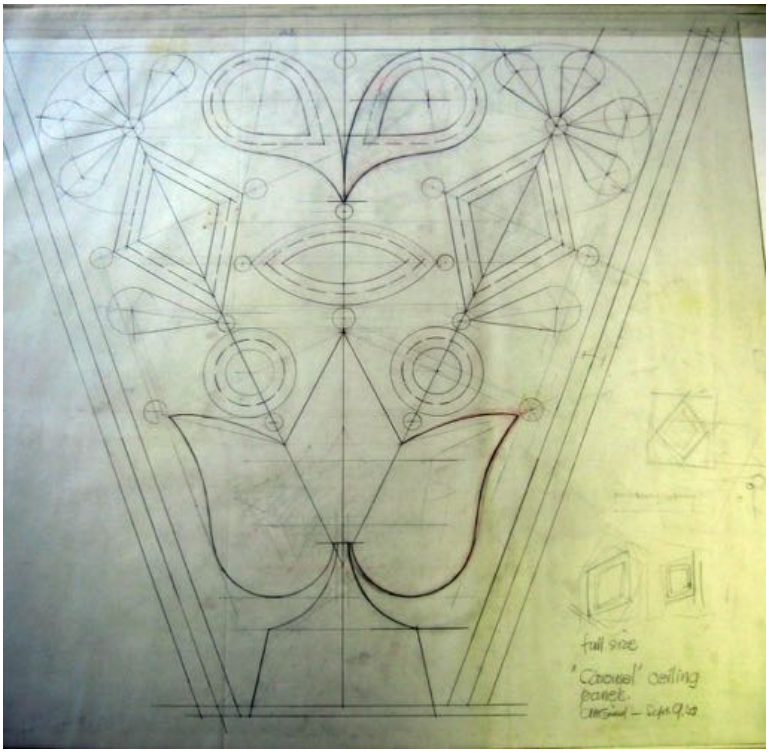

Figure 148
Alexander Girard, "Carousel" ceiling panel drawing, September 9, 1958
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4929

Figure 149
Ceiling panel
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00861_00012

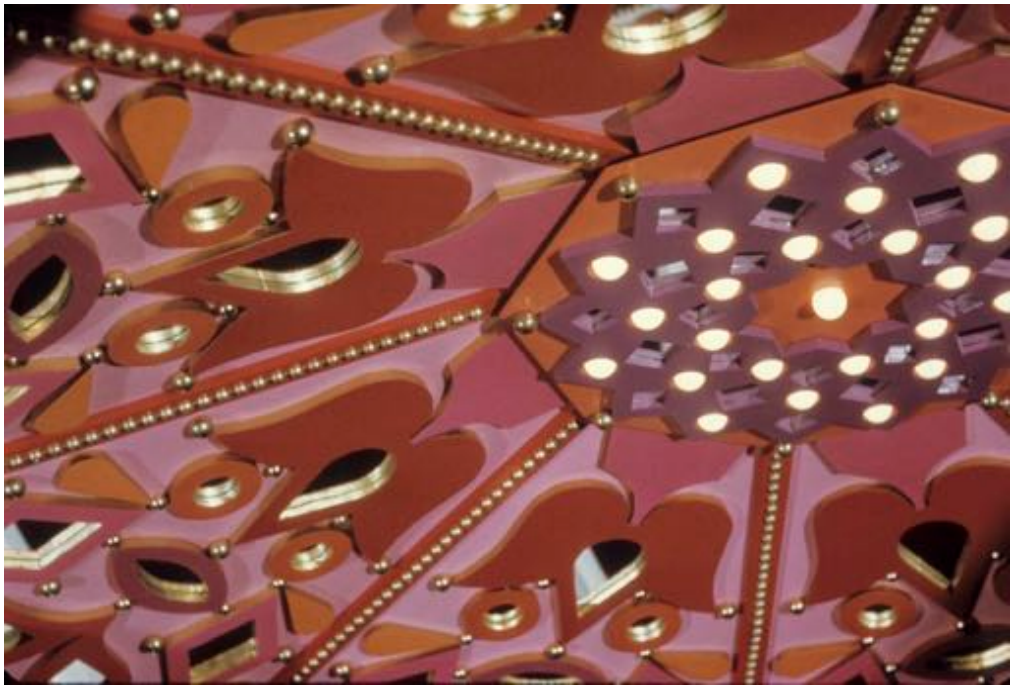

Figure 150
Ceiling panel (detail)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00861_00013

Figure 151
Storage Wall
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00861_00022

Figure 152
"Storage Wall," *Life Magazine*, January 22, 1945, p. 68

Figure 153
"Fabric room" (view one)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04503_0038

Figure 154
"Fabric room" (view two)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04503_0042

Figure 155
View from center of showroom
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00861_00016

Figure 156
Pavilion / Office Space
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04503_0061

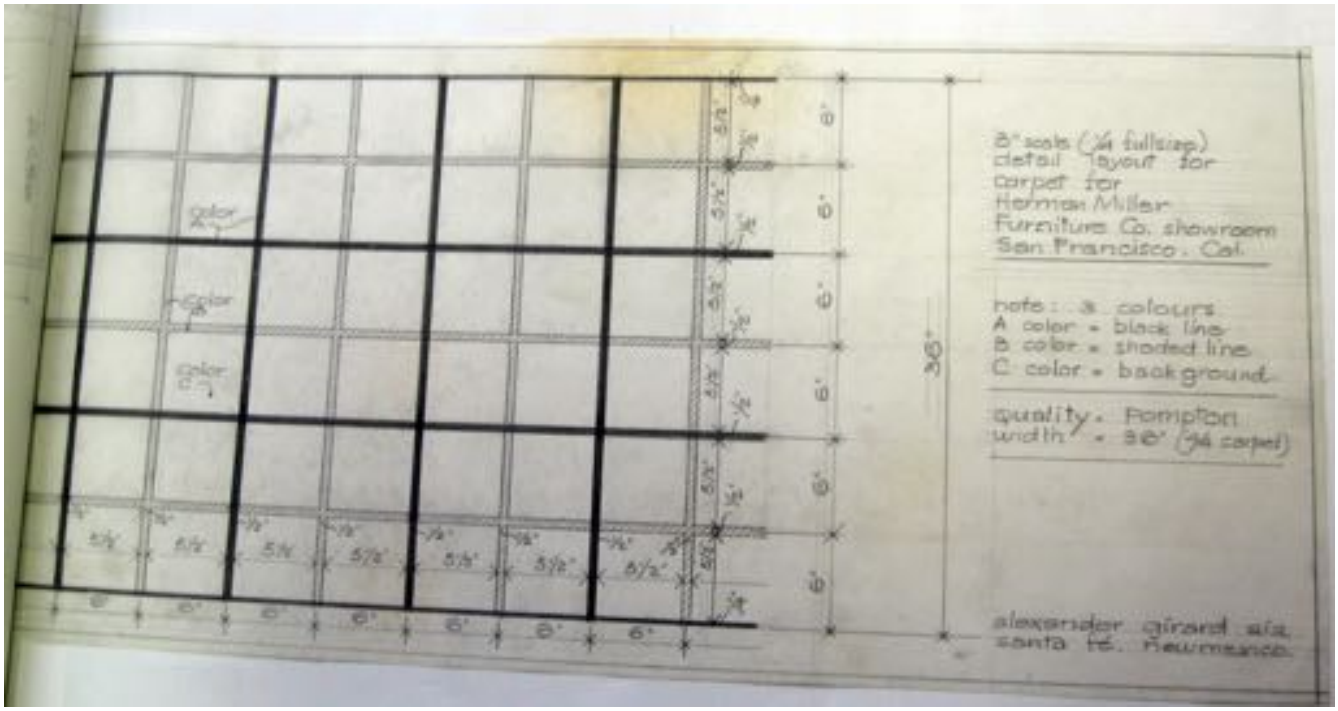

Figure 157
Alexander Girard, Detail layout for carpet design
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4929

Figure 158
Fabrics displayed on side walls
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00861_00033

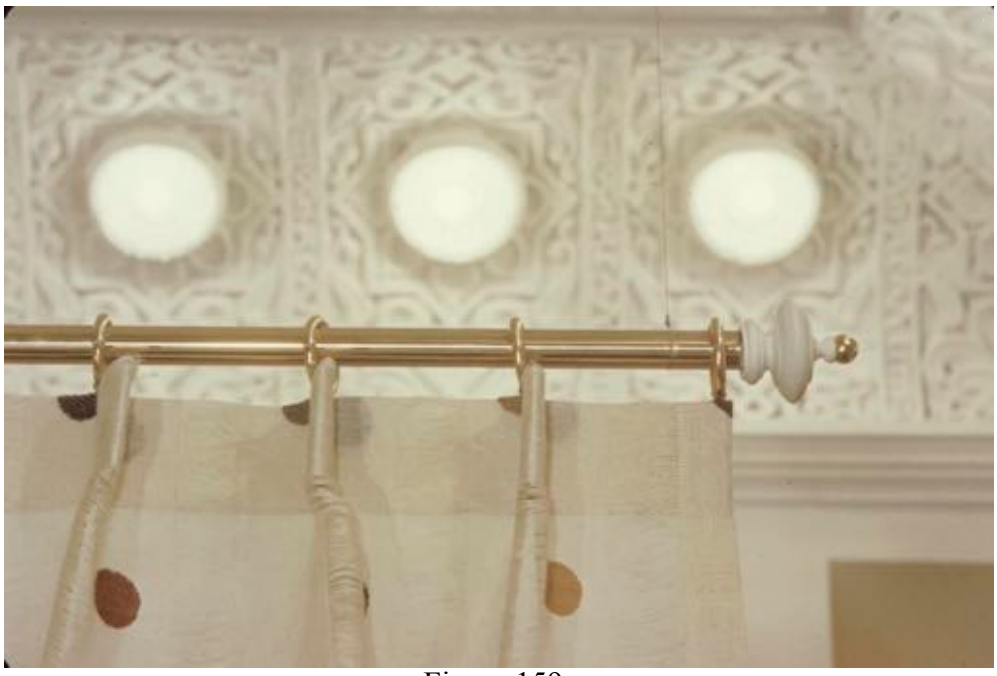

Figure 159
Decorative ceiling border
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04503_0056

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Figure 160
Café Samt und Seide, Die Mode der Dame, Berlin, 1927

Figure 161
One of eight table settings for Georg Jensen show
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04835_06

Figure 162
Table Setting
"Per Herman Miller, a San Francisco," *Domus*, April 1959, p. 32

Figure 163
Alexander Girard, Junior League Little Shop, Grosse Pointe, Michigan
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04693_03

Figure 164
Girard storefront, 379 Fisher Road, Grosse Pointe, Michigan
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04744_03

Figure 165
Susan Girard office, 379 Fisher Road, Grosse Pointe, Michigan
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04744_02

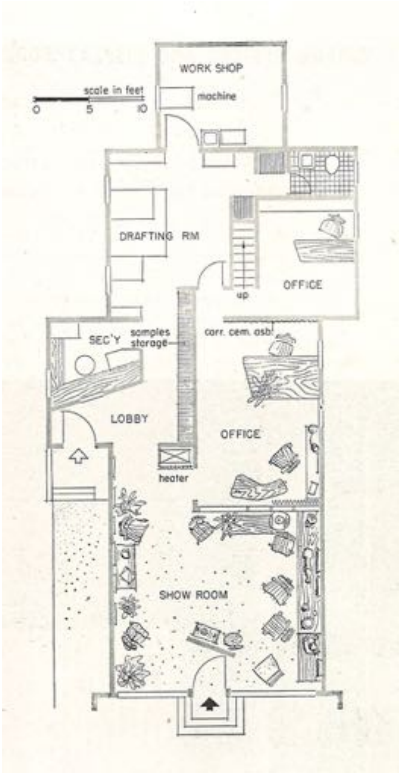

Figure 166
Floor plan, 379 Fisher Road, Grosse Pointe, Michigan
"Offices and Display Room," *Architectural Forum* May 1947

Figure 167
Card announcing exhibition in Girard's store
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard

Figure 168
Showroom, 379 Fisher Road, Grosse Pointe, Michigan
"Offices and Display Room," *Architectural Forum* May 1947

Figure 169
Girard Office, 16841 Kercheval Place, Grosse Pointe, Michigan;
photographed by E. Astleford
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04780_10

Figure 170
Streetscape with T & O Shop
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_0015

Figure 171
Entrance banner
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_0017

Figure 172
Entrance arrow
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_0020

Figure 173
Heart-and-arrow weathervane, probably Pennsylvania or Ohio, c. 1890
The Rick and Terry Ciccotelli Collection, Northeast Auction, August 4, 2012, Lot 521

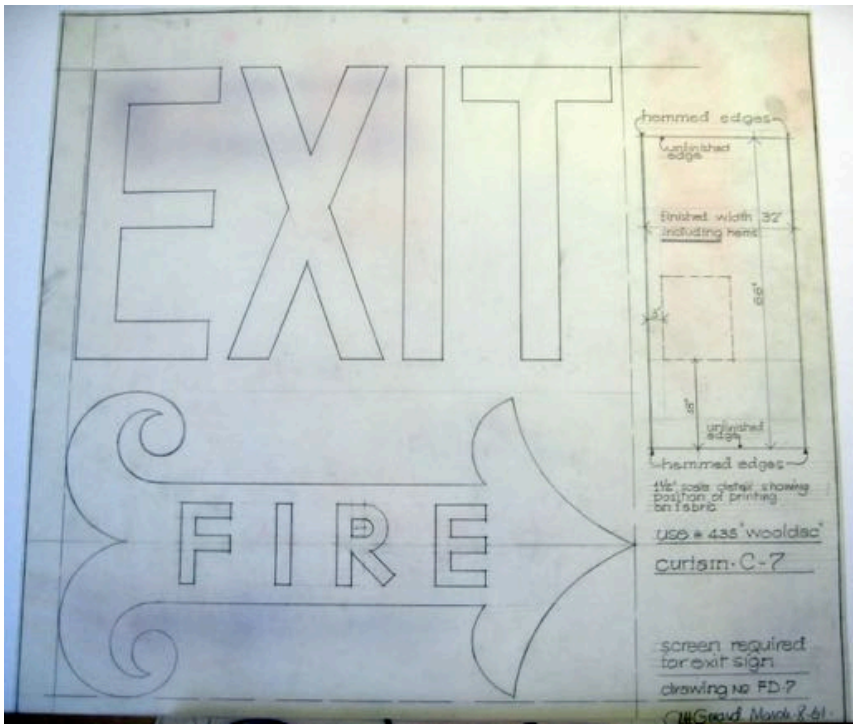

Figure 174
Alexander Girard, exit sign, March 8, 1961
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 17277

Figure 175
Front stools in front window display
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00860_00019

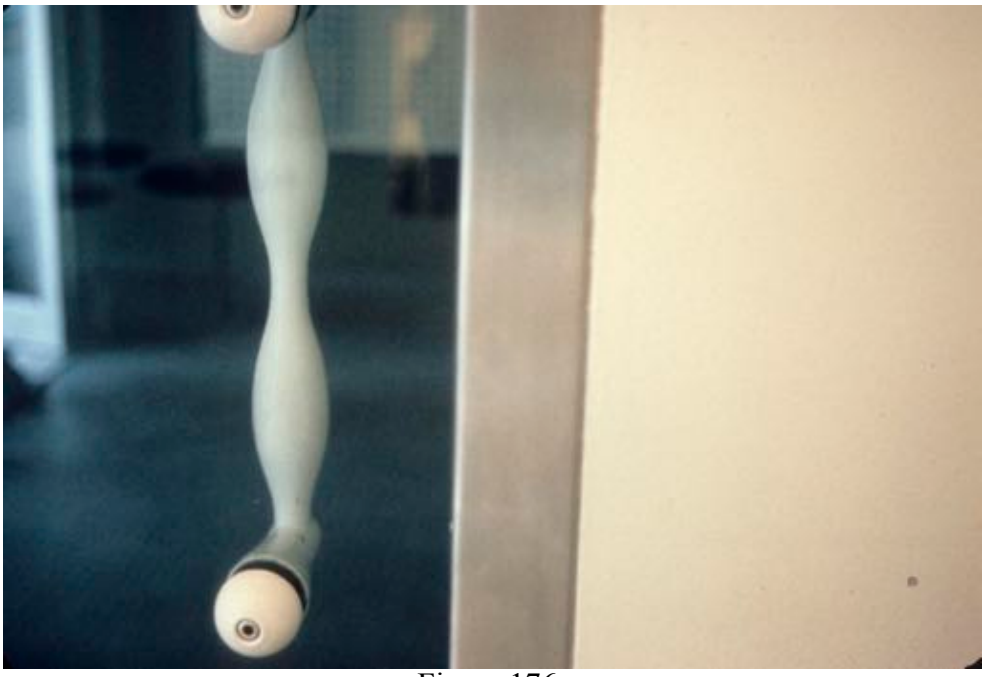

Figure 176
Specially-designed handle
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_0016

Figure 177
Girard-designed display case
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00856_0001

Figure 178
Another view of case pieces
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_0066

Figure 179
View of ceiling lighting and fabric storage case piece
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00860_00003

Figure 180
Workstation and T & O Shop bag
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_0041

Figure 181
View of vertical display case and fabrics hanging from ceiling
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00860_00011

Figure 182
Front of the store (rods for textiles visible)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00905_0005

Figure 183
Victorian sofa and niche
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_0050

Modern with antiques for the carriage trade

Victoriana and Bertoia chairs are employed with knowledgable aplomb by James Lamantia in his design for The Fashion Post in New Orleans, where the mood encourages insouciant buying. The glass facade of this Victorian mansion leads into an open interior with white ceiling, gray carpet, white Robbins' vinyl tile. Walls are beige, greige, and ocher; columns are slate gray and white. Stairs are cypress wrapped in cocoa matting. Special flexible display racks by Lamantia are black.—*L.W.*

Figure 184
James Lamantia, The Fashion Post, New Orleans
"Modern with Antiques for the Carriage Trade," *Interiors* (July 1956)

Figure 185
View of the historical section, "For Modern Living," Detroit Institute of Art, 1949
"For Modern Living," *Art and Architecture* (November 1949)

Figure 186
View of napery and fabrics
"Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_0073

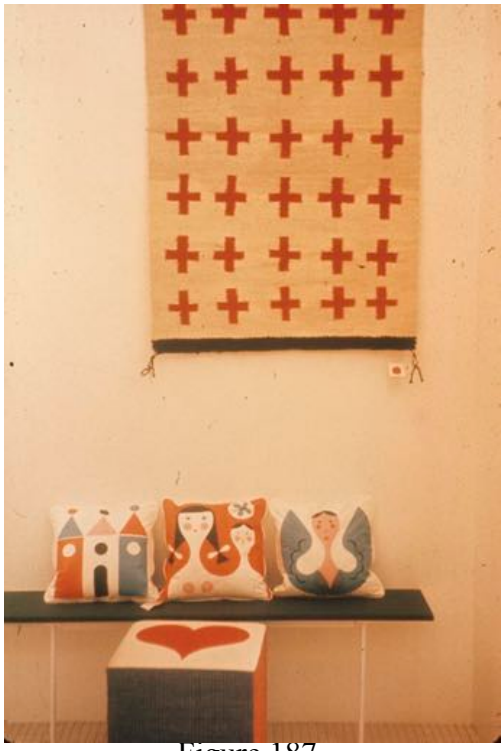

Figure 187
Girard-designed pillows below Native textile
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00860_00015

Figure 188
Marilyn Neuhart dolls in front window
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_71

Figure 189
View of La Fonda del Sol, Time-Life Building, New York
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04865_03

Figure 190
Installation of T & O: folk art objects ready for selection
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00860_00039

Figure 191
Teodora Blanco ceramics
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04506_0023

Figure 192
Careful and artful arrangement in front windows
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_0026

Figure 193
Artful arrangement on wall
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04506_0024

Figure 194
Artful arrangement
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_0048

Figure 195
Ray Eames taking photographs of the installations
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_0039

Figure 196
Poster for T & O Shop; photograph by Todd Webb
Collection SFMOMA, Gift of Carl James, 2005.16

Figure 197
Arrangement for poster for T & O Shop; photograph by Todd Webb
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04869_01

Figure 198
Invitation to T & O Shop opening
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 16786

Figure 199
One of the many press events related to the opening
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04504_0032

Figure 200
View of pillows and Teodora Blanco ceramics
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04505_0053

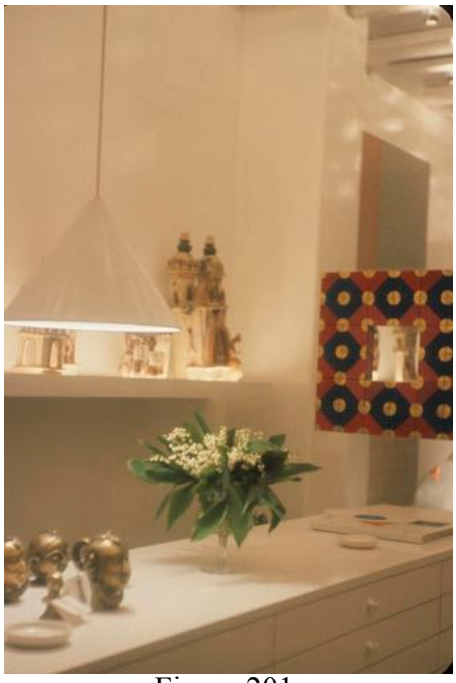

Figure 201
Girard-designed mirror alongside folk art objects
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04506_0013

V. TOTAL DESIGN:
CORPORATE IDENTITY AND BRANIFF AIRLINES

> Management's initial reaction to my proposal was conservative opposition, but with the support of the president of their advertising agency, it was pushed through…..obviously it proved pretty successful because there was nothing else like it in the industry, and it gave Braniff a very clear identity.[523]
>
> -Alexander Girard, c. 1977

In an effort to reshape the existing corporate image of Braniff Airlines (1928-1982) that executives felt was too old-fashioned, Alexander Girard (Figure 202) was hired in 1965 to fashion a "space-age concept" for jet age travel and plan a new visual identity, from a new logo to terminal architecture, as part of a larger total program to more greatly differentiate Braniff within the airline industry.[524] To coordinate with other improvements the airline was making, including new methods for ticketing and baggage handling, improved on-time performances, increased schedules, enhanced food services, and a high fashion uniform collection (designed by the Italian fashion designer Emilio Pucci), Girard was hired to overhaul the design of facilities, equipment, and graphics—from airplanes and lobbies to service utensils and interoffice memos.[525] For the interior of the planes—the exteriors of which were painted in seven different vibrant colors—Girard selected Herman Miller textiles and unconventional fabrics for these jet-age machines. During the twentieth century, more companies began to pay greater consideration to their corporate image, in combination with innovative advertising, as an

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[523] "Alexander Girard and the Girard Foundation Collection," undated (but probably c. 1977), Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
[524] "Alexander Girard: Pacesetter of Design," (undated), Public Relations Department, Braniff International, Dallas Texas. General Aviation Collection, McDermott Library, University of Texas, Dallas.
[525] "Color Sets Styles, Spirit of Braniff International Approach for Air Travel," (undated), Public Relations Department, Braniff International, Dallas Texas. General Aviation Collection, McDermott Library, University of Texas, Dallas.

instrument in shaping identity that would ultimately drive greater consumption. This concept incorporates various visual elements, such as logo, letterhead, brochures, and advertisements, to create a distinctive, unified message for the general public. The airline industry, in particular, understood the significance of a strong and compelling corporate identity in order to create perceivable difference for the buying public in a field that was highly regulated by the government.[526] Further, competition in postwar aviation was intense due to the lucrative nature of the market as more people wanted to travel. Cementing a recognizable public image was necessary for an airline's success. After contextualizing Girard's work within the fields of industrial and corporate design, this chapter highlights his contribution to Braniff's company agenda, which included an integrated approach that exuded the image of modernity, efficiency, luxury and delight; Girard's particular point of difference in the redesigned visual image of a US airline in the 1960s was the insertion of folk art within the corporate identity of Braniff Airlines.

A. Airlines, Corporate Identity, and Design

Girard gained experience developing corporate identity during the 1950s through his work at Herman Miller. During the early 1950s at Herman Miller, George Nelson, the Eames office, and Girard were responsible for a portion of the advertising program—graphic design and copy.[527] Hugh De Pree (President of Herman Miller) praised the design team for the company image that they crafted—"a combination of the product, its

[526] See R. E. G. Davies, *Airlines of the United States Since 1914* (London: Putnam, 1972).
[527] Hugh De Pree, Paper for the 1956 Design Congress, organized by the Council of Industrial Design, The Design Centre, London, England, September 12th and 13th, Folder I8, ACCN 3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

use, statements concerning it, the presentation of it, and the publicity connected with it."[528] Although corporations like Herman Miller were acutely aware of the need for good publicity and strong design programs in the postwar era, the precedent was established earlier. In the nineteenth century, mass-market modern advertising sold specific products—everything from shoes to proprietary medicine.[529] Beginning the 1890s and 1900s, architects and designers created distinctive visual identities for large corporations.[530] German architect and designer Peter Behrens (1868-1940) pioneered the phenomenon of cohesive design with his ideas for harmonious advertising and corporate design for AEG (a German electrical industrial company) to induce people to buy more products that utilize electricity; although Behrens' work has been lauded as an early example of corporate design through a comprehensive visual program, his great contribution was that his control extended from the graphic design for the firm's printed material to products and factories—a range of responsibilities rarely matched even by designers working for large multinationals today.[531]

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[528] Ibid.
[529] Charles Goodrum and Helen Dalrymple, *Advertising in America: The First 200 Years* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 43.
[530] My thanks to Pat Kirkham for bringing the Eastman Kodak company example to my attention, in which British designer George Walton fashioned a new identity for the corporation in anticipation of its international expansion. Jennifer Bass and Pat Kirkham, *Saul Bass: A Life in Film and Design* (London: Laurence King, 2011), 282.
[531] As Meggs notes, Berens reformed typography, advocated for sans-serif type, and used a grid to structure his design. Phillip B. Meggs, *Meggs' History of Graphic Design,* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 233.

The rise of new professions of industrial design and graphic design emerged in the United States during the interwar years.[532] Industrial designers, such as Walter Dorwin Teague, Henry Dreyfuss, Norman Bel Geddes, Donald Deskey, Harold Van Doren, Russel Wright, and Raymond Loewy, acted as design consultants to large corporations and figured prominently in a modern consumer culture that was predicated on merchandising and styling products to improve sales**.** Alongside modernizing visual appearance, corporations were also interested in presentation and advertising. Industrial designers moved beyond styling and creating new packaging, to updating logos and fashioning comprehensive corporate identity programs.[533] Many of these tasks (particularly merchandising-related) were also offered by advertising agencies, making the two enterprises occasionally indistinguishable. The roots of industrial design may be found in advertising, as many designers such as Loewy and Teague, also worked in the advertising field before becoming industrial designers. Industrial design, according to Van Doren, was able to succeed in fabricating products and selling them through a "shrewd knowledge of consumer psychology" and aesthetic appeal.[534]

With many aspects of US manufacturing boosted by World War II, postwar industry expanded and the consumption of newly available consumer goods increased. The phrase "good design is good business" was championed by many during these years, as success in the marketplace and technological progress was linked to American corporations and their leaders, who desired a strong, diversified corporate image to

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[532] Jeffrey L. Meikle, *Twentieth Century Limited: Industrial Design in America, 1925-1939* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).
[533] Glenn Porter, *Raymond Loewy: Designs for a Consumer Culture* (Wilmington, DE: Hagley Museum and Library, 2002).
[534] Harold Van Doren, *Industrial Design: A Practical Guide* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1940), 3.

further economic prosperity. In one example of this impetus, Thomas J. Watson Jr. (President of IBM) famously declared, "good design is good business" in reference to IBM's corporate design ideology.[535] Watson argued that good design bred good taste in the consumer (which was also argued by the museum directors who rationalized design exhibitions—see Chapter 2), produced engaged employees, and instilled the impression of rationalized management. To this end, he hired architect Eliot Noyes as consulting director of design to improve the company's design (architecture, typography, color, interiors—the entire corporate structure). As Watson later noted, "We also know that you have to pay a premium for good design, but that premium is paid back as many different benefits to the corporation in its activities."[536]

Although trademarks and symbols have been used for identification for hundreds of years, beginning in the postwar period, corporations (such as IBM, among many others) desired a cohesive image through the unification of systems of communication.[537] Further, the desire for these systems to be legible internationally (as American corporations increasingly interacted in the global marketplace) was paramount for success. Postwar visual identification developed through the "pioneering efforts by strong individual designers who put their personal imprint on a client's designed image."[538] Girard's personal imprint was his folk art collection, which he employed to great effect

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[535] Architectural historian John Harwood has traced the reformative ideals of this Deutscher Werkbund slogan. John Harwood, *The Interface: IBM and the Transformation of Corporate Design, 1945-1976*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minneapolis Press, 2011), 3.

[536]Thomas J. Watson, Jr. "Good Design is Good Business," in *The Art of Design Management: Design in American Business*, ed. by Walter Hoving (New York: Tiffany & Company, 1975), 61.

[537] Meggs, *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*, 399.

[538] Meggs mentions Behrens at AEG; Giovanni Pintori for Olivetti; William Golden for CBS; and Paul Rand for IBM. Meggs, *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*, 399.

for Braniff's visual identity. In fact, alongside other large corporations that developed a corporate identity in the postwar period, airlines quickly standardized their visual communication in order to differentiate their design from the competition. The total design of airline identity included graphics, interiors, products, as well as uniforms, in order to create a cohesive image.

Airlines operating in America began to understand the increasing importance of corporate identities that would distinguish their brand because each airline offered similar services. Further, until the mid-1950s the CAB (Civil Aeronautics Board) regulated domestic routes, which followed grandfathered routes from the 1930s; but with relaxed regulations thereafter, airlines began flying similar domestic routes while expanding internationally, and needed to differentiate their brands from one another.[539] Compounding this issue was the advent of jets that allowed more Americans to fly, and travel moved from the realm of the elite to the upper middle classes and middle classes. Understanding the aviation landscape and the growing trend in corporate design, pioneering Pan American Airways (PAA) hired architect Edward Larabee Barnes in 1955; and he and architect Charles Forberg redesigned the corporate identity for PAA, which included adapting its name to "Pan Am."[540]

Aware of Pan Am's model of modern corporate design, in 1962, Lufthansa German Airlines debuted its visual identification system that was created at the Ulm

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[539] Steven A. Morrison and Clifford Winston, *The Evolution of the Airline Industry* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1995).
[540] *Building for Air Travel: Architecture and Design for Commercial Aviation*, ed. by John Zukowsky (New York and Chicago: Prestel and Art Institute of Chicago, 1996), 24.

Institute of Design.[541] Using the International Typographic Style (a graphic program developed in Switzerland that emphasized use of grids, sans serif type, and an asymmetric layout to create a clean, legible product), the designers created a large-scale corporate identity that included all visual communication and product design.[542] Lufthansa's closed identity system, a controlled approach that embraces uniformity across multiple elements, became a model for airline corporate identity worldwide.

Other international airlines, including Air France, forged a corporate identity during the postwar period. Air travel, perceived as modern and luxurious, was defined at the high end by comfortable and appealing interiors (alongside other amenities, such as quality food). Additionally, European carriers were viewed as representatives of the state and were obliged to present visual displays of lifestyle and national identity. In 1950, Air France commissioned Charlotte Perriand, a designer who had worked alongside Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, to create the interiors of a five-story housing block in Brazzaville (then capital of Congo) for airline personnel.[543] Several years later, the airline hired her to design several international offices (Paris, London, and Tokyo) in an effort to establish a cohesive brand identity. The Air France ticket office in London (1957) featured Perriand's signature thick, chunky shelving system that functioned as a room

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[541] Airlines possess logos that imprint a visual image for its travelers. An early attempt to brand an airline was Lufthansa's predecessor, Deutsche Luft Reederei, which used a flying crane as a logo starting in 1919.
[542] Meggs, *History of Graphic Design*, 411.
[543] Roger Aujame, "A Synthesis of the Arts: The Collaborations of Charlotte Perriand and Jean Prouvé," in *Charlotte Perriand: An Art of Living*, ed. by Mary McLeod (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003), 138.

divider (Figure 203).[544] Interestingly, built-in lighting highlighted the handicrafts from foreign destinations to which Air France traveled, inviting voyagers to consider new places.[545] An inveterate traveler, could Girard have seen Perriand's display of exotic craft in London? In the nascent years of the jet age following the successful campaigns of several airlines, such as Pan-Am, Lufthansa and Air France, Braniff Airlines desired to be viewed as a design leader within this environment, which was only achieved with an innovative corporate identity.

B. Cultural history of flying and Braniff's history

To bolster the burgeoning companies in the early twentieth century, the United States government aided the nascent airline industry by creating policies, such as subsidizing airmail (which is how most airlines originated—with an airmail route). Regulatory government agencies promoted safety and manufacturing standards, and aviators, such as Charles Lindbergh and Amelia Earhart, helped to create a fascination with flying during the 1920s.[546] During the 1930s the government supported the development of aviation through infrastructure, including building airports, creating safety measures, and regulating routes. Postwar commercial aviation profited from wartime technological advances, further additions in infrastructure, and increased pilot training. Developed in the late 1940s, passenger jet airliners of the 1960s allowed more people to fly, bringing

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[544] Jochen Eisenbrand, "Airline and Corporate Design," in *Airworld: Design and Architecture for Air Travel*, ed. by Alexander von Vegesack and Jochen Eisenbrand (Weil am Rhein, Germany: Vitra Design Museum, 2004), 155.
[545] Jacques Barsac, *Charlotte Perriand: Un art d'habiter, 1903-1959* (Paris: Norma, 2005), 445.
[546] Janna Eggebeen, 2007, *Airport Age: Architecture and Modernity in America,* PhD dissertation, City University of New York.

the middle classes into the domain of leisure aviation; more availability in flying coupled with less costly tickets resulted in airplane travel overtaking railroads (for domestic travel) by 1951.[547]

Thomas Elmer Braniff and four friends founded the Oklahoma City-Tulsa Airline in Oklahoma City as a carrier between the two cities in 1928.[548] After a few years, the company was awarded a coveted airmail route between Dallas and Chicago in 1934, initiating a move to Love Field, Dallas. The following year, through further airline acquisitions, Braniff gained mail contracts that connected Texas with Mexico, a fortuitous allocation given the airline's future in the Central and South American markets.[549] While the war effort and its aftermath occupied the firm during the 1940s, in the 1950s Braniff was allowed to expand its domestic routes. It merged with Mid-Continent Airlines; and the new company began in earnest to incorporate South America into its schedule.[550] In 1965 the Greatamerica Corporation, which was headquartered in Dallas, Texas, purchased the Midwestern carrier and installed Harding Lawrence as Braniff's new leader in April 1965.[551] The airline eventually folded in 1982, in the post-airline deregulation world, due to rising fuel cost, overexpansion and a recession.[552]

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[547] McMillan Houston Johnson, 2011, *Taking Off: The Politics and Culture of American Aviation*, PhD Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 259.
[548] An abridged history of Braniff Airways, Inc. has been written by Jon Kutner, Jr., "Braniff Airways," *Handbook of Texas Online*, published by the Texas State Historical Association, accessed via http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/epbqm
[549] Braniff acquired Long & Harmon in 1935 and Bowen Air Lines in 1935-36. George Walker Cearley, *Braniff, With a Dash of Color and a Touch of Elegance* (Dallas: 1981).
[550] Earlier, Braniff possessed a subsidiary in Mexico known as Aerovias Braniff from 1943-46.
[551] John J. Nance, *Splash of Colors: The Self-Destruction of Braniff International* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1984), 19.
[552] Roger E. Bilstein, *Flight in America: From the Wrights to the Astronauts* (Baltimore: Johns Hokins University Press, 2001), 292.

Braniff was a conservative mid-level airline, in its business plan and image, until the dynamic Lawrence, who was hired away from Continental Airlines, led Braniff Airlines into an era of expansion. The new owners wanted him to facilitate a rupture with the past.[553] The airline had been flying internationally to the Caribbean, South America, and Central America since 1946, but Lawrence was compelled to find a big idea to transform the then lackluster airline into an international sensation. At its height during the late 1960s, Braniff was considered the sixth largest airline in the world.[554]

In the early 1930s, domestic passenger travel was dominated by four airlines—United Airlines, Eastern Airlines, American Airlines, and Trans World Airlines. Pan American Airways, which pioneered routes from the United States to Latin America, controlled international travel.[555] With its origin as an airmail carrier, Pan American began service in 1929 with a route from Miami to San Juan. The airline possessed passenger routes to the Caribbean, Central and South American by 1930.[556] Pan Am enjoyed a monopoly on flying south of the American border until 1946, when President

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[553] After founder Tom Braniff died in a plane crash in 1954, Charles E. Beard, who started as a traffic manager and rose to executive vice president, assumed the reigns, but maintained Braniff as a small and profitable company through the 1950s. The dynamism of the 1960s, coupled with changes in the industry with the rise of jet airliners, aggravated Braniff's upper management. It was this lacuna that Greatamerica Corporation perceived as a potential investment opportunity.
[554] Jon Kutner, Jr., "BRANIFF AIRWAYS," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/epbqm), accessed February 17, 2015. Uploaded on June 12, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
[555] "Airplanes and Air Transport," *Oxford Encyclopedia of American Business, Labor and Economic History*, ed. by Melvyn Dubofsky (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 31-34.
[556] Pan American World Airways Collection, HistoryMiami

Truman ordered the CAB to allow Braniff to fly to South America.[557] Interestingly, Braniff had only asked for routes to Mexico and the Caribbean, but the government was convinced that Pan Am needed competition. Thus, Braniff gained official government protection as an international carrier, creating rivalry for international flights, and changed its name to Braniff International (BI; in 1948).[558] Because the government regulated airfares (until the industry was deregulated in 1978), airlines were compelled to differentiate themselves by means other than prices in order to attract passengers.[559]

One way to achieve differentiation was through brand identity. On his first day at Braniff, Lawrence informed his senior staff that the company had to double in size and transform its look.[560] He had experience with both concepts at Continental, where Lawrence increased profitability and pioneered the overhaul of its image with the "Proud Bird with the Golden Tail" campaign.[561] At Braniff, Lawrence aspired to a distinctive image that would "add sheer beauty to the exciting technology of flight," thus he hired the advertising agency Jack Tinker & partners, with Mary Wells as creative director for the Braniff account. Lawrence knew Wells' work because the "Proud Bird with the Golden Tail" campaign for Continental Airlines was her idea; this was an advertising plan that exploited the connotation of gold as luxury by highlighting the golden-colored

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[557] Carl Solberg, *Conquest of the Skies: A History of Commercial Aviation in America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 292.
[558] Under Tom Braniff, the airlines originated a subsidiary in Mexico called Aerovias Braniff (1943); desiring to maintain its monopoly, Pan Am lobbied Mexican authorities to delay progress on Braniff's entrance into Mexico.
[559] During the period, the United States Government controlled fares, routes, and the formation of airlines. "Air Travel in a Changing America," America By Air, Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, http://airandspace.si.edu/exhibitions/america-by-air/online/jetage/jetage04.cfm
[560] Nance, *Splash of Colors,* 32.
[561] Nance, *Splash of Colors,* 33.

features of the airline, including the airplane tail, cabin accents, and stewardess uniforms. Wells worked for Jack Tinker & Partners, which was founded in 1960 by McCann-Erickson (then one of the largest, global advertising agencies) as an experimental creative think tank that would analyze projects collaboratively; the key personnel included art director Jack Tinker; motivational research psychologist Dr. Herta Herzog; copywriter Don Calhoun; and marketing director Myron McDonald.[562] Jack Tinker hired Wells in 1963 (before this, she wrote copy as fashion advertising manager for Macy's, and worked as writer and copy head at the McCann-Erickson agency and copywriter at the Doyle Dane Bernbach agency).[563]

Undertaking preliminary research for the project, Wells and her team visited airports within Braniff's system to gain greater perspective of the project; what they saw at the airport facilities elicited the following impressions: "a jail, the army, a prison camp, a ghastly desert and a lot of grey people," in other words, the antithesis of Wells' visualization for a modern airline.[564] Developing out of the military complex, many airlines had not yet entered the consumer-driven modern world. Wells noticed that an important marketing tool—color—was missing from Braniff's image. As historian Regina Blaszczyk has noted, a color explosion occurred in the postwar period on everything from cars, appliances, and house paint to clothing, factories, schools, and

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[562] Andrew Cracknell, *The Real Mad Men: The Renegades of Madison Avenue and the Golden Age of Advertising* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2011), 185.
[563] At Tinker, she worked alongside art director Stewart Green and writer Dick Rich on the successful Alka Seltzer project, which launched her meteoric career. Before arriving to Tinker, she worked for Macy's, McCann-Erickson, Lennen & Newell, and DDB.
[564] Mary Wells Lawrence, *A Big Life in Advertising* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 34.

hospitals.[565] Wells would have also been aware of Pan-Am founder Juan Trippe, who hired colorist Howard Ketchum to design a comfortable aircraft in the signature Pan-Am blue color palette; many Americans were wary of flying and the calmness of the blue and the "airy" Pan-Am color scheme was intended to soothe passengers.[566]

Wells dreamed up the idea to paint the planes ("The End of the Plain Plane" campaign) in different colors, and convinced Braniff to follow this vision as part of a new corporate identity (Figure 204).[567] Prior to this intervention Braniff planes were painted sedately in white with silver, blue, and red accents (Figure 205); these colors were utilized by many US airlines as reflective of the nation's flag. With a background in fashion advertising, Wells also desired to dazzle the passengers with a fashion parade on the multi-colored flying jet, so she met with Italian couturier Emilio Pucci to discuss uniforms. Her interest in creating the most stylish airline extended to her search for the most relevant designer to deliver a "high-octane color montage of Mexican and modern"—Alexander Girard.[568]

Wells was well acquainted with his work, as she had visited Girard's confection of a restaurant, the Latin-American themed La Fonda del Sol, which had opened in 1961 (Figure 206).[569] She was impressed by Girard's treatment of the interior of the restaurant,

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[565] Blaszczyk, *The Color Revolution*, 256.
[566] Blaszczyk, *The Color Revolution*, 231.
[567] The writer on the account was Charlie Moss and the art director Phil Parker. Lawrence, *A Big Life in Advertising*, 38; "Advertising: Taking Off with Talk," *Time* (June 2, 1967), 62.
[568] Lawrence, *A Big Life in Advertising*, 35.
[569] According to culinary historian William Grimes, New York's first themed restaurant (Murray's Roman Gardens) opened in Times Square in 1908. The Restaurant Associates, a business that operated fine-dining restaurants around New York City, decided that after their recent success (with the Four Seasons and Forum of the Twelve Caesars), it was time to open New York's first serious Latin American restaurant—La Fonda del Sol in

but also by the graphic and industrial design program (except for uniforms, he created a comprehensive visual program, which included signs, matchbooks, menus, tableware and service carts.).[570] Girard staged a village without verisimilitude; instead of specific historical depictions, he suggested the outdoors through a tiled fountain, glittering suns, a blacked-out ceiling, and an adobe house, which contained the bar area. A canopy fashioned by embroidered Columbian skirts (a Girard hallmark that he employed in many interiors, including the T & O Shop) surmounted the central dining space (Figure 207). Other vernacular touches included the abundant display of folk art employed to delight and fascinate diners; these works were placed within vignettes (windows) cut into walls and lit with concealed lighting.[571] In fact, *New York Times* restaurant critic Craig Claiborne wrote that the folk art, which Girard and the team had collected during trips to Latin America over the course of two years, was "one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the restaurant."[572] The result was a pastiche in which "even the saltshakers smile in Alexander Girard's dream village of glittering suns and amiable puppets."[573] The abstract setting was not an authentic display of Latin America, despite

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the Time Life Building. The team, led by Joseph H. Baum (president of Restaurant Associates from 1963-1970), traveled to South America to brainstorm and to research genuine Latin American food, eventually importing some staff to New York City (demonstrating the firm's commitment to the restaurant's authenticity). Like his later work for Braniff, Restaurant Associates commissioned Girard to design a completely new and different restaurant through décor and atmosphere by creating a symbolic space that represented all South American cultures—from indigenous peoples to the conqueror Spaniards. William Grimes, *Appetite City: A Culinary History of New York*, (New York: North Point Press, 2009), 144.

[570] Similarly, like the Braniff commission, another designer was commissioned to execute the uniforms (Rudi Gernreich designed the waiter's uniforms at La Fonda del Sol).

[571] Richard Kelly was the lighting consultant for La Fonda del Sol.

[572] Craig Claiborne,"Three City Restaurants Boast Dramatic New Interiors," *New York Times* (September 22, 1960), 22.

[573] "The Inn of the Sun." *Interiors* 120 (February 1961), 89.

using many real objects, but rather a theatrical setting meant to evoke Latin America (a persistent theme in Girard's work).

Beyond his qualifications as architect, designer of fabrics, furniture, and graphics, color specialist, and folk art collector, Girard was, according to Braniff executives, "respected and idolized by all of his contemporaries in the world of design. He….clearly understands the past and future potential…[and] is extremely well known for his influence of warm rich colors that typify Latin America."[574] Important in the creation of Braniff's new identity was design, which was supported by period discourse that indicated it was viewed as another function (alongside sales, advertising, research and development) in the arsenal of a company's strategy.[575] Girard was selected for his design authority, but also because of his interest in Latin American culture, which, for Braniff, meant that he deeply understood the origins and history of the locations that the airline served; he was able to narrate Braniff's agenda through the Latin American folk art objects that he had been collecting for years. Just as folk art informed Braniff's corporate identity, Girard imprinted his own personal identity through the utilization of folk art within his disparate design projects.[576]

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[574] "A Progress Report, Braniff International, August 1965," Braniff International, Dallas Texas. General Aviation Collection, McDermott Library, University of Texas, Dallas.
[575] "Five Viewpoints on the Designer as Manager," *Industrial Design* 4 (July 1957): 61-72.
[576] The author thanks Bob Bruegmann, who astutely pointed out that Girard was also fashioning his own "corporate identity" through the folk art.

1. Press

The combination of Wells, Girard, and Pucci (as uniform designer) had initially confounded Dallas, but caused the national stir on which Lawrence was betting.[577] Both Wells and Girard knew that the success of the "end of the plain plane" campaign rested with national media coverage that would (hopefully) generate public interest in flying a bold airline. A successful media launch was important, but advertising was extremely expensive. Fortunately, Lawrence acutely understood the correlation between advertising the newly improved airline and increased ticket sales, thus the advertising and promotional budget doubled his first year on the job.[578]

In a splashy promotional effort, Braniff held a special press conference to show off five Boeing 707 planes, each painted one of the following colors—blue, green, yellow, red and turquoise. The shocking color scheme, initially proposed by Wells, and selected and tested by Girard in Braniff's hangars, was a complete departure from traditional airline livery practices, which traditionally incorporated national colors. But the gamble paid off as new was perceived as better to many consumers. On November 6, 1965, Braniff invited 120 "luminaries representing the nation's top newspapers, wire services, radio and television stations and networks, national consumer and trade magazines" to Dallas, where they witnessed a parade of the freshly painted planes (Figure 208).[579] The 120 journalists were then flown to Acapulco on a pre-inaugural flight for a weekend of activities that flaunted Braniff's new look. This expensive endeavor proved

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[577] Nance, *Splash of Colors,* 34.
[578] Harding Lawrence Remarks to the Press, June 16, 1965. Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.
[579] This information may be found in the issue of *BI B-Liner* that detailed the press preview, found in newspapers scrapbooks, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.

successful because 300 reporters from around the world wrote about the "fly-by" that Braniff staged.

Beyond the architectural and design journals, Braniff received national attention for the redesign in articles across a wide variety of magazines, including *Life, Time, Newsweek, Business Week,* and *Aviation Week*.[580] Citing its earlier failings (late flights, sloppy service and shoddy equipment), *Time* was pleased that Braniff was turning its image around with an increased budget (from $2.5m to $6.5m) to make flying fun by using "the color brush as a quick way to paint over a dowdy image."[581] *Business Week* published an article referring to the "razzle-dazzle" of Braniff, noting that in addition to increasing efficiency and extra services, it "woos fares with fancy paint on planes and fancy pants on hostesses."[582] This publicity was important because Braniff was virtually unknown on the East Coast, and in the Midwest, it was known for its poor time-keeping record. For American businesses, success is measured in profits, and the first year of Lawrence's presidency brought an 18% increase in revenues and a 58% rise in profits, thus the airline gained greater market share due to the publicity generated by the redesign.[583]

As Lawrence noted in his remarks to the press on June 16, 1965, "almost every carrier, in the last several years, has announced a program designed to build a new image. Unfortunately…you find a sameness among carriers that must be dull and

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[580] Nance, *Splash of Color*.
[581] "Colors Are Fun," *Time Magazine*, (April 15, 1956), 90.
[582] "Braniff Refuels on Razzle-Dazzle," *Business Week* (November 20, 1965), found in newspapers scrapbooks, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.
[583] Nance, *Splash of Color,* 36.

uninteresting."[584] Braniff strived to be different, and it chose ways that were aligned with mid-1960s cultural developments and the "youth revolution." [585] Sex and sexuality were not new to advertising but advertising became much more explicit during the freer 1960s. In the era of Playboy "bunnies" (Playboy Clubs opened in 1960), alluring women were available for the delectation of traveling businessmen and others. Mary Wells capitalized on the supposedly more liberal outlook towards women exposing more of their bodies in public by introducing in 1965 the Braniff "Air Strip" (televised and print) promotion, in which a hostess removed successive layers of Emilio Pucci-designed clothing during international flights in a provocative way.[586] Braniff preferred the term "hostess" to "stewardess," which may have put the male clientele more at ease in this power relationship. In addition to business travelers, Lawrence also desired to capture new travelers, as 78% of the public (in 1965) had not yet flown in a jet. Seducing this sector of the potential audience with Braniff's new look offered the possibility of market expansion.[587]

2. Psychological effects of flying

As early as the mid-1930s, there were attempts to make Americans more "air-minded" through newspaper ads dispelling flying myths, offering wives free flights (to travel with their husbands), and even creating toys to entice parents to travel with

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[584] Harding Lawrence Remarks to the Press, June 16, 1965. Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.
[585] Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 179-185.
[586] To view the advertisement, visit YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TZXryuhSMg
[587] Harding Lawrence Remarks to the Press, June 16, 1965, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.

children.[588] In fact, flight attendants were initially installed on flights to persuade the public that flying was safe enough for young ladies. Public opinion began to change slowly as airlines educated the public about the safety of flying; they created a more comfortable flying experience; and airport facilities improved.[589]

Behavioral science research began to be applied to industry in postwar America, fundamentally trying to understand why humans act the way they do. And, according to period discourse, the physical manifestation of designed objects, while important, would become subordinate to motivation research, or understanding the psychological elements before attending to the physical ones. Thus, with air travel on the rise in the 1960s, contemporary critics commented on the psychological effects of airplane travel. According to one source (albeit a public relations or advertising position), the vibrant colors and folk objects of Braniff Airlines provided a welcome distraction and a new sense of security for the traveler.[590] This was the type of consumer motivational research practiced by advertising-sympathizers, including the firm of Jack Tinker and Partners.[591] *Advertising Age* noted that, unlike other airlines, Braniff eschewed lauding its safety record in favor of focusing on surface changes—flying in a "colorful, giant bird" as opposed to a "mechanical monster."[592] Through Girard's design and object selection, the image of Braniff Airlines focused on color, style, and elements of surprise in air travel, as

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[588] Hasso Spode, "Let Us Fly You Where the Sun Is:'Air Travel and Tourism in Historical Perspective, *Airworld,* 21.
[589] Eggebeen, "Airport Age," 96.
[590] "Airline Designs for Passengers," *Interior Design Data* (March 1966), pubs 7662, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[591] See Vance Packard's *the Hidden Persuaders* (1957), which exposed the field of advertising as a business of coersion and sublimation.
[592] Stephen Baker, "Some Graphics Finesse and a Bucket of Paint," *Advertising Age* (May 9, 1966), found in newspapers scrapbooks, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.

the airline desired to impart the belief that "travel to a destination should be as exciting and interesting as the destination itself."[593] The sharp, contrasting colors, and tremendous variety in fabrics and furniture was intended to preserve the customer's interest, provide discussion topics, and, perhaps the most powerful psychological tool, provide a distraction from the fear of flying.

An internal Braniff document on "The New Image" (which was delivered as a speech to employees) proclaimed that part of the reason that the airline needed to establish itself as "modern, dynamic, progressive, international" was due to the human fear of flying.[594] In an era when "most men interviewed express[ed] a need to be catered to by an airline," in order to overcome fundamental fears, airlines needed to ensure that their customers felt safe and important.[595] Thus, Girard's new scheme was a "deep bow to the perceptual sensitivity of passengers," that is, persuasive tactics that signaled the public to perceive the airline as successful.[596] Braniff may have understood the "research scientists" (employed by advertising firms in the midcentury), who put forward the idea that emotional responses are the most direct human reactions; that is, the consumer responds to the total company image that communicates the company's personality. And, it was Braniff's entire new program—redesigned graphics, facilities and equipment, on-time arrival, excellent service (attention and care lavished on passengers to assuage fears,

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[593] 1965 Annual Report, Braniff Collection, History of Aviation Collection, University of Texas, Dallas, Texas.
[594] "A Progress Report, Braniff International, August 1965," Braniff Collection, History of Aviation Collection, University of Texas, Dallas.
[595] Ibid.
[596] "Airline Designs for Passengers," *Interior Design Data*, March 1966, pubs 7662, Herman Miller Achives, Zeeland, Michigan.

which included serving well-presented tasty food), and a manifestly larger airline—that Braniff highlighted to create the perception of a safe and dependable airline.

C. Girard's Task: Staging Luxury with Folk Art

Braniff's new corporate identity was a powerful statement that was accomplished by Girard's staging of luxury alongside "primitive" artifacts. Tasked with altering the physical appearance of everything "Braniff," Girard revealed that there were two guiding forces behind his work for the project—to design in depth ("provide variety, interest, excitement") and, in a nod to modernism, to strip a beautiful, basic form of non-essentials (or to "strip it clean of clutter").[597] Girard's redesigned thousands of items for Braniff, and the work falls into three categories—graphics, equipment, and facilities. The following examples highlight and represent the whole project.

1. Graphics: Typeface and Posters

Girard developed a typeface composed of straight and slanted letters for use on everything from planes to letterhead (Figures 209-210).[598] He had previous experience designing graphics; examples include Girard's work for the No-Sag corporation and the *For Modern Living* exhibition (see Chapter 3), and before departing for Santa Fe, Eero Saarinen, President of the AIA Detroit Chapter (the second largest in the United States at

[597] "Suggested Remarks by Alexander Girard in the Braniff Club," Braniff Collection, History of Aviation Collection, University of Texas, Dallas.
[598] Typographic Service Company of Albuquerque supplied the typographic services, according to Katy Woolston, "Santa Fe Architect, Designer Gives Airline a New Look," found in newspapers scrapbooks, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany; By the 1960s, phototypesetting was introduced, telegraphing the end of the dominance of metal type.

the time), asked him to redesign its graphic identity in 1953. In addition to the letterhead, Girard redesigned the *Bulletin*, establishing a format and typeface, selecting a new type of paper, and reforming the layout for advertisements (Figure 211).[599] The "BI" in Girard's new font became Braniff's logo, as shorthand for Braniff International. Braniff's "BI" was reminiscent of the modernized, corporate redesign of Pan American Airlines, which included the shortened name "Pan Am."

Many corporate identity designers in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s chose to use Helvetica, which, with its "well-defined forms and excellent rhythm of positive and negative shapes," was the most used typeface internationally during this period.[600] To create his type, Girard drew upon some of the most popular elements of Helvetica, such as the dynamism and modernity of the crisp, clear sans serif font. But for the Braniff type, he distorted the shape by inclining and rounding upper case letters, which suggested forward-propulsion or jet-age speed, and the backwards incline also implied reclining airplane seats. In keeping with "progressive" graphic design of the period, the "BI" logo was reductive and modernist.[601] However, the Braniff typeface is also inspired by

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[599]http://aiamichigan.wildapricot.org/Resources/Leadershp%20Retreat/AIA%20MI%20History.pdf

[600] Meggs, *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*, 361. Designed by Max Miedinger and Eduard Hoffmann in 1956-57, New Haas Grotesk (later renamed Helvetica) began life as a Swiss font created for Haas Typefoundry. Through efforts including advertising pamphlets, articles written by Hoffmann, a name change, and a move from manual to machine typeface, Helvetica began to be adopted by many Swiss organizations by the late 1950s. It was part of a larger movement in "Swiss Typography" (and globally) toward neutral typefaces. Part of the type's success is due to international companies adopting the font for their corporate identities; in fact, Helvetica was used for Lufthansa's 1962 redesign. See *Helvetica Forever: Story of a Typeface*, ed. by Lars Müller and Victor Malsy (Baden, Switzerland: Lars Müller Publishers, 2009), 39.

[601] Technologically, it was possible by the 1960s for companies to introduce a typeface because the capabilities of phototypography, whereby type was set by exposing negatives to photographic paper, expanded. Meggs, *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*, 392-3.

Girard's penchant for folk art, as the all caps font was hand-drawn and maintained a folksy and amateurish quality, suggesting that ideas of comfort (to assuage fearful passengers) were also present in the font.[602]

In a drawing dated June 22, 1965, Girard had envisioned three possibilities for a Braniff logo: two different examples with "BI" in upright font within a winged shield and a third idea for a bird (perhaps an abstracted dove) (Figure 212). Although no correspondence has yet surfaced, presumably, after consultative meetings, this early drawing was worked into the final format (Figure 213). The wings recall the trope of birds being used by many airlines (including Continental) to suggest flight. The Braniff bird also demonstrated Girard's predilection for abstracting folk art motifs.[603] For the final typeface, while both bowls of the "B" are the same size, the strokes are a bit tapered in the center of the letter and bolder on the outsides, adding visual rigidity to the letter, particularly next to the "I." The abstracted golden bird, which Girard had intended as part of the logo, was retained for use on several products, including lapel pins and sugar packets (Figure 214), but otherwise disposed with. Additionally, in lieu of selecting one trademark color, or a small group of colors, with which to associate the airline, Girard opted for panoply of colors (Figure 215), which fit with the multiplicity of plane colors. Girard had a reputation as a master colorist, spending much time thinking and experimenting with colors for his commissions. Although there were variations in color used across the many Braniff branded objects, the typeface provided Braniff graphics with a unified image.

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[602] The author would like to thank Marcia Lausen for her observations about the connections between Girard's graphic design and folk art.
[603] Marcia Lausen has noted that Braniff's bird seems more folk art-inspired, especially when compared to Lufthansa's more constructed and geometric logo (1963).

Many airline posters advertised tourists frolicking in the sun, visiting a monument, or traveling to diverse destinations (Figure 216). In an effort to exploit the exotic locations that Braniff served, Girard designed 24 different photolithographic posters that functioned as focal points in various locations. They hung onboard the aircraft in front of each compartment (Figure 217), for example, and also at the ticket counters, where they alternated with "BI" posters (Figures 218-219), advertising Braniff as an unconventional airline. After selecting the objects for the photographs taken by Harvey Lloyd, Girard laid out the colors (for the typeface) and composed the print (Figure 220).[604] Lloyd photographed the folk art that Girard assembled from his personal collection for a series of posters on countries, including Peru, Ecuador, Columbia, Panama, Mexico, and Brazil. For the Panama print, Girard selected examples of Panamanian folk art—dolls, from the Kuna Indian culture, made of balsa wood that originally protected the user from evil spirits; interestingly, the dolls used in the advertisement were likely made in the 20th century, but may have been clothed in Pre-Columbian textiles (1000-1400 CE), as were many examples sold in the tourist trade.[605] These posters trade in the exotic, the unknown, and were meant to stimulate interest. Using complex and aesthetically appealing folk art, the message of the print is simple—it suggested to the traveler that by traveling with this airline, he or she would have a unique and exciting experience.

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[604] Harvey Lloyd Productions was a firm that produced advertising content through film and multimedia for various clients, including Eastern Airlines, Air France, Swiss Air, and Braniff Airlines.

[605] For example, the Art Institute of Chicago has several of these examples—dolls made in the mid-20th century with Pre-Columbian textiles as clothing (1984.1055). Scholars have also commented on imitation dolls in the antiques trade; see Thomas P. Myers, "Imitation Chancay Dolls and the Antiques Trade," *Council for Museum Anthropology Newsletter* 6 (January 1982), 3-4.

The method of reducing the language of advertising to one word and one image, as exemplified on the Braniff photolithographs, recalls the early twentieth century *Sachplakat* (object poster) (Figure 221) design in Germany that incorporated bold, reductive graphics, flat color, and minimal text in straight font.[606] For his designs, Girard selected one object or group of objects that related to the product, in the case of Braniff—a travel destination (Figure 222). The posters were clear and reductivist, and approached minimalism in their composition, but not in their subject matter (because of the inherent nature of folk art). They were also part of the 1960s "new emphasis on the concept, message, and the means by which the message could be best communicated," whether this occurred through television advertisements or print advertisements based on photographs.[607]

2. Equipment: Planes and Textiles

Historically, airplane interiors featured practical fabrics that were, according to Girard, without "visual or sensory appeal."[608] American industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes, in his work for Pan American Airways, was one of the pioneers in the design of modern aircraft interiors, which included color-coordinated carpeting, curtains and

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[606] Meggs, *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*, 271.
[607] R. Roger Remington with Lisa Bodenstedt, *American Modernism: Graphic Design, 1920 to 1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 159. This notion recalls media theorist-philosopher Marshall McLuhan, who published the influential dictum "the medium is the message," whereby the medium (or the vehicle that carries information) was understood as primary. His theory referred to new media (including television), and was particularly fixated on the medium, and not the content of the program. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).
[608] "Suggested Remarks by Alexander Girard in the Braniff Club," History of Aviation Collection, University of Texas, Dallas.

walls.[609] Comfort, important for assuaging a passenger's fear of flight, was given precedence at Pan American when the firm authorized Geddes in the mid-1930s to reduce the plane's passenger capacity so that he may create sleeping compartments, kitchen galleys, and separate rest rooms (reminiscent of railroad passenger car design).[610] By embracing comfort, convenience, and practicality, Raymond Loewy's airplane cabins possessed a "calm, tweedy, restful" tone.[611] According to market research from the period, bright and cheery colors were important to travelers, thus Loewy's airline interiors mixed abundant color with good lighting and modern and traditional surface materials.

With the arrival of the jet age came a new approach to the design of aircraft cabins, as well as the introduction of Tourist Class fares (instituted by the International Air Transport Association) in 1952.[612] Unlike previous designs from the 1930s—such as those by Geddes, Loewy, and Dreyfuss that privileged separate spaces and comfort—because airlines could transport more people at a faster pace, rational cabin design was implemented during this period; in 1956, for the Boeing 707, Teague Associates set the standard for the airline cabins that we know today.[613] Beginning in 1959, Braniff Airlines

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[609] *Norman Bel Geddes Designs America*, ed. by Donald Albrecht (New York: Abrams, for the Henry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin and the Musuem of the City of New York, 2012), 76.
[610] Jeffrey L. Meikle, *Twentieth Century Limited: Industrial Design in America, 1925-1939* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 110.
[611] Porter, *Raymond Loewy.*
[612] Barbara Fitton Haub, "A Trip Through Time in the Aircraft Cabin," *Airworld*, 107.
[613] In the integration of the modular wall panels and the passenger service units, with signal buttons, fresh air vents and reading lights. Haub, "A Trip Through Time in the Aircraft Cabin," *Airworld,* 108.

flew the standardized Boeing 707s (see Figure 205).[614] However, despite a regularity in interior components during the postwar era, small luxuries persevered in order to differentiate airlines.[615]

In his redesign for Braniff, Girard sought a rupture with the past. The aircraft livery was painted in seven vibrant colors—dark blue, light blue, ochre, beige, lemon yellow, orange (Figure 223), and turquoise. Within the planes he used several different kinds of fabric—Herman Miller textiles, vinyl, plastic and Mylar (standard airplane materials). By the midcentury, industrial designers carefully orchestrated airline interiors, but airplane planning had begun earlier in the century. For Girard's redesigned airplane interior, he chose modern fabrics for their practicality because they were fire, dirt, and wrinkle resistant, and used a variety of them to add depth, contrast and variety to the design. Upholstered plane seats could be changed and cleaned readily because they were attached using Velcro (introduced commercially in the late 1950s). The seven distinctly colored planes used a total of 56 different fabrics; that is, each plane incorporated eight different fabrics—five solids, two stripes and one checked pattern—for the seats. For example, the red-colored interior featured red linen, magenta-and-orange striped wool, fuschia linen, pale-pink-and-red checked wool, and purple linen (Figures 224-225). Girard defined the color schemes for each of the seven interiors; red, green, blue, black,

[614] The flight attendant uniforms were designed by Terry Labus, a flight attendant who won a Braniff employee contest; they were made by Nardis in Dallas, and feature narrow, charcoal wool pencil skirts alongside boxy jackets with black trim, or "jet jackets." These uniforms were quite classic compared to the Pucci-redesigned ones several years later.
[615] One example was Braniff's "Silver Service" during the late 1950s, which offered gourmet meals, beverages served from sterling silver tea sets, and a complimentary sterling silver souvenir salt spoon.

orange, yellow, and brown.[616] These bright colors coordinated with the exteriors, and, singly and in groups, were meant to evoke the tropical locations to which Braniff traveled. Further, following earlier 1930s market research (as suggested by Loewy), passengers still preferred cheerful colors when flying. Although Girard designed patterns for Herman Miller before the Braniff commission, the geometric design (stripes and grids) of the textiles was well suited as a rational backdrop for riotous color. In order to make certain that the varied fabrics were spread evenly throughout the cabin, Girard devised a chart to delineate the fabrics numerically and spatially (Figure 226). He admitted that using this quantity of varied fabrics (56 as opposed to one or two) was certainly more expensive (and likely why no other airline had ventured in this direction), but he believed the "return to Braniff International, in the sensory pleasure of its passengers, will more than compensate for the extra cost."[617] He also designed a series of seven blankets (Figure 227), to coordinate with the fabric scheme for each of the seven distinctly colored planes. The blankets (Figure 228) bear tags that let the voyager know that American Fabrics S. A. in Lima, Peru created them expressly for Braniff. The gridded, flat expanses of color recall traditional US patchwork quilts, but also reference bright contemporary color field painting.[618] Interestingly, around 1966 there was a humorous television advertisement for Braniff in which an elderly woman, in an act of "souvenir hunting," steals many of the Braniff-branded items on her flight (including the

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[616] The boards depicting upholstery choices were likely used for management presentations.
[617] "Suggested Remarks by Alexander Girard in the Braniff Club," History of Aviation Collection, University of Texas, Dallas.
[618] My thanks to Bob Bruegmann for pointing out the similarities.

blanket) presumably because she coveted them for her home.[619] This speaks to the desirability of the Girard-designed items for Braniff (many of which may be found on Ebay and Etsy today). Clearly, by circulating the advertisement, Braniff understood that these works were liable to be stolen, but the company also understood that the collectable nature of the works added to the prestige of the redesigned airline.

3. Facilities: VIP Room

Girard designed many facilities—offices (Figure 229), a waiting room, and ticket counters, among other spaces—for Braniff, but the VIP room received the most attention. Airline VIP lounges originated in the 1930s as special places for frequent travelers and people the airline deemed important.[620] For the first Braniff terminal passenger club (VIP room at Love Field), Girard created modular rooms within one large space, to "break up the room into different activity areas" and to "provide privacy" for individual pursuits (working, playing cards, visiting the bar, etc.) (Figure 230).[621] Girard noted that passenger clubrooms had historically resembled hotel lobbies—a large room without much privacy (Figure 231)—and he was determined to change that convention. He also inserted original folk art, set within modular screens to create a harmonious, colorful, and artistic setting, along the lines of Girard's domestic interiors and the T & O Shop.

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[619] In addition to seeing the many Girard-designed items, such as tableware and the photographic prints, the Pucci-designed uniform may be viewed: //www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jfSyzH5z2M

[620] Helen E. McLaughlin, *Walking on Air: An Informal History of Inflight Service of Seven U.S. Airlines* (Denver: State of the Art, 1986), 99.

[621] "Suggested Remarks by Alexander Girard in the Braniff Club," History of Aviation Collection, University of Texas, Dallas.

Girard used three different types of fabric in the VIP space, all Herman Miller textiles in vivid colors and with tactile strength; shiny, space-age vinyls and plastics; and handwoven colorful Mexican cottons, which were chosen expressly to "encourage people to fly to Mexico."[622] "The Latin American fabrics," Girard said, "were chosen because they are interesting and beautiful in themselves and with the further objective of having people gain a new appreciation of Latin America so that they will want to visit there—via Braniff."[623] Girard alluded to the idea of an authenticity achieved by using native textiles, which, according to him, would appeal to contemporary travelers. Sparingly used, these vividly colored fabrics possessed tactile strength (important for industrial use), but they had a "homespun or handwoven look."[624]

As architect of the VIP Room, Girard visualized an open space fragmented by walls constructed by a double pole system that was part of Herman Miller's Comprehensive Storage System (1959-1973), which offered suspended storage components affixed to stationary poles for residential and industrial use.[625] Girard used grid-like sections to organize the space and obscure electrical outlets (Figure 232). The grid, as a modular but flexible tool, was an instrument of the organizational complex.[626] The brightly colored partitions covered in textiles provided passengers with more

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[622] Ibid.
[623] Public Relations Department, Braniff International, Dallas Texas, "Comments by Alexander Girard on his Design Concepts for Braniff International," History of Aviation Collection, University of Texas, Dallas.
[624] Press Release, "Comments by Alexander Girard on his Design Concepts for Braniff International," History of Aviation Collection, University of Texas, Dallas.
[625] Author email with Linda Baron, Corporate Communications, Archives, Herman Miller, July 31, 2014.
[626] According to architectural historian Reinhold Martin, the system displayed "architecture's immanence within a network of networks." Reinhold Martin, *The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media, and Corporate Space* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2003), 3.

privacy, and allowed for intimate spaces that could accommodate furniture specially manufactured by Herman Miller (Figure 233). Girard designed the original furniture for the Braniff commission (later, he would use the same pieces for the L'Etoile Restaurant commission).[627] According to Girard, his furniture was "like a chameleon: its character remains intact yet its skin texture and color change to suit the environment."[628] For the design, Girard preserved a low sight line (at 26 inches high), which was "highly desirable in contemporary low-ceiling spaces," creating a "feeling of space and repose."[629] The rectilinear structure of the VIP room provided a backdrop for the soft, elegant chairs and sofas with rounded corners (Figure 234). The wing-like shape of furniture (noted by *Progressive Architecture* as "fly-away furniture"[630]), alongside the folk art, suggested airplane travel.

More than any other space designed for Braniff, the VIP lounge demonstrated a jarring juxtaposition of sleek machine-made furniture and industrial partitions alongside global handmade crafts and textured surfaces. While the former spoke to the airline's commitment to modern luxury, the latter intimated a more human-centered approach to travel. Girard believed that folk art deserved to be seen by many, and part of his legacy is his tenacious perseverance in proposing the relevance of such artifacts by continuing to use them in his design projects.

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[627] Memo from Howard Sutton re: the Girard Group, 1 May 1967, GIF 6, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan. Both of these were special order Herman Miller-manufactured objects, until the Girard Group was launched by Herman Miller in 1967.
[628] Alexander Girard, "Girard Group Statement," 10 March 1967, GIF 6, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.
[629] Ibid.
[630] "Airline Designs for Passengers," *Progressive Architecture* (March 1966), 179.

The partitions also acted as canvases for the display of his creativity with original artifacts purchased from Girard's Foundation (Figure 235). To reinforce the theme of traveling to the countries on Braniff's Latin American routes, Girard incorporated Latin American textiles and folk art. Noticeably absent from the VIP room were the posters illustrating folk art, likely due to the display of actual artifacts. Even the company's 1967 annual report featured Girard's folk art (Figure 236).[631] By the mid-1960s Girard's use of folk art was not new, but it had become his signature design element. Based on the "Index of Objects" (Figures 237-238) and the meticulous recordkeeping of Girard's office, the types of objects Girard installed are known (and, on some occasions, where he positioned them). One space was enlivened by a Teodora Blanco sculpture (Figure 239); the "index of objects" lists the Blanco sculpture, procured from Oaxaca, Mexico as 38 inches in height. Beyond the retablos, textiles, embroidered panels, masks, pottery, and santos, twentieth-century technology was present in the guise of a television displaying departure times (Figure 240)—in between a mask and painted chest. Interestingly, the VIP room was built as a prototype for other airports, and although Girard was commissioned to buy objects for the VIP room at Kennedy Airport (renamed in 1963) in New York, the project never materialized.

D. <u>Latin America, Folk Art, and Tourism</u>

In 1962 Girard commented on the interest in folk art, saying, "We have become so practical that anything that is not functional is overlooked as not worth doing…but

[631] By the midcentury, such reports were developing into important corporate communications tools.

people buy folk art because it fills a need that is not satisfied at another level."[632] Girard's use of folk art in his designs supported Braniff's aspiration to capitalize on consumers' desire to see new places and hopefully fly the newly redesigned airline out of curiosity. Perhaps the futuristic flight attendant costumes, the clever advertisements, and the excellent press coverage caused people to book flights with Braniff Airlines. Braniff's success in the 1960s must also be attributed to the popularity of Latin America as a destination. Indeed, a few years later the 1968 Hemisfair in San Antonio (see chapter 5 for Girard's involvement) was devoted to the "confluence of civilizations in the Americas," a concept which speaks to a notion of global unity that was manifested in Girard's folk art and his Braniff identity program.[633]

Latin American culture was increasingly visible in the mid-twentieth century, as evident in popular magazines, such as *House Beautiful*. The August 1966 cover boasted "The new reign of Spain: stunning news from the Costa Brava, Lima, Bogotá, and Mexico City—and how it will change your ideas." An article within discussed the travel treasures of the Andes: "Columbia, Peru, Ecuador—why-hasn't-someone-told-me countries—only a few hours away," including exotic destinations such as Bogotá and Lima that the voyager can encounter flying aboard Braniff Airlines.[634] The article also featured the type of objects or souvenirs that the tourist could obtain in Columbia, Peru and Ecuador. The article further suggested that "one can always study the patterns and

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[632] Richard D. Lyons, "Alexander H. Girard Dies at 86: Architect and Interior Designer," *New York Times* (January 2, 1994), 28.
[633] Art historian Robert Haddow mentions that the era of jet travel, alongside "people to people" programs, world's fairs, the establishment of the UN, for example, revived the idea of global unity in the postwar period. Robert H. Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*: *Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in the 1950s* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), 95.
[634] "Travel Treasures of the Andes," *House Beautiful* 112 August 1966), 66.

textures of Alexander Girard's cannily composed decorative scheme" aboard a Braniff flight.[635] *Vogue* also carried features and advertisements promoting Latin American tourism at the mid-century. Two articles in the January issue from 1966 included "Five Secret Clues to Mexico" and "Bettina's Adventures in Mexico," which illustrated the former fashion model's travels to Mexico and South America, including Peru and Brazil. Braniff's thriving publicity campaign in coordination with increasingly popular Latin American destinations contributed to a 58% rise in Braniff's stock value in 1966, an immediate response to the 1965 corporate design.[636]

Arts and Architecture magazine, which promoted modern architecture and design, also contributed to the visual imagery of Mexico at the time, as for example, the January 1964 cover (Figure 241) that featured an abstracted rendering of two Maya warriors. This issue offered articles on Maya art and architecture and on the mosaics of Juan O'Gorman (written by California critic and writer Esther McCoy). In fact, this was an approach taken by some airlines to lure visitors to Mexico, including the Mexican national airlines, which suggested that Americans should fly to Mexico to view ancient ruins by picturing them in advertisements (Figure 242). By placing emphasis on pre-Hispanic civilizations, the Mexican authorities also enticed tourists with archaeological sites as a way to capture the mysticism of a lost civilization. Girard's approach to selling Mexico (and Latin America) also depicted an ancient past through references to "lost" artifacts—that is, dying art forms (according to him) that signified ancient traditions and a common humanity across nations and cultures. These artifacts, alongside the monuments, conjure

[635] Ibid.
[636] Eisenbrand, "Airline and Corporate Design," *Airworld*, 164.

up the same types of visual memories, and these approaches reconstructed the lost civilizations that Braniff (and others) utilized to their benefit.

In his use of Latin American folk art in advertising and within the physical spaces of Braniff International, Girard positioned folk art in new and meaningful ways that were intended to articulate a modern narrative. Cultural historian T. J. Jackson Lears has argued that a turn-of-the-twentieth-century fascination with a cultural, spiritual, and physical "antimodernism" persisted beyond this period by a segment of the population. Reinhold Martin also referenced the modern and antimodern currents within mid-twentieth-century culture, highlighting the work of Eero Saarinen as a key figure whose work incorporated both tendencies. While Girard was certainly inspired (and sympathetic, as evidenced by his whittled wood sculptures) by traditional crafts, his design work for large corporations belies this approach. Instead, I contend that Girard used folk art to express a modern way to connect with the work of previous generations through engaging in the visual and material delight of arranging spaces with craft.

Further, because the folk art objects, such as retablos and pottery cats, in Braniff's design were not functional, they could be read as superfluous and decorative in these high modern interiors for a major corporation. However, as artifacts purchased by Braniff Airlines, the folk art within Girard's spaces were part of tourist culture because Girard acquired them on buying trips, even though he was far from a typical US tourist abroad. The objects were also markers for the places where Braniff passengers might obtain their own souvenirs. As touristic objects, the folk art was not in the purview of high culture; Girard refused to think of himself as a collector, but rather as someone with highly refined taste who was exposing people in the USA to an underappreciated area of the art

market. In this way, Girard's accumulating and arranging of folk art for Braniff was part of the French theorist André Malraux's claim that we can all appreciate art from anywhere across the world.[637] Indeed, Girard was aware of Malraux as a thinker, and in 1961 sent the Millers a copy of André Malraux's *Metamorphosis of the Gods* (1957). Thus, Girard's folk art program was part of the modernist ideal of using similar forms and colors to communicate across cultures; indeed, the main goal for corporate design was to articulate a message using visual symbols that could be read globally.

As discussed in earlier chapters, Girard was not simply enamored of individual items of folk art that he acquired in Mexico and beyond. He also believed in the resilience of artifacts and the ability of the handicraft tradition to tell human truths, and he forged a relationship between Herman Miller as distributor and a Mexican cotton mill as producer of textiles. As the advertisement for the Herman Miller textiles "Mexicotton" and "Mexidot" explains, these textiles were dyed and woven in the homes of villagers in Urawapan, Mexico (Figure 243). Although the textiles were produced in a Mexican mill, this Herman Miller advertisement sought to convey the same authenticity that Girard searched for in his Braniff project. Similarly, Braniff's poster images were translated to postcards, a type of souvenir that, if sent to a friend, could circulate this brand of cultural tourism (Figure 244). As visual culture and tourism scholars David Crouch and Nina Lübbren have argued, "images play a crucial and formative role in the practices of tourism," and there is an inextricable relationship between visual imagery and the tourism

[637] I am grateful to Robert Bruegmann for bringing Malraux's "Museum without Walls" to my attention.

depicted within advertisements.[638] As opposed to material depictions of touristic sites, Braniff traded the immediate recognition of places, such as a Maya ruin, for the symbolic experience of travel or a metaphorical depiction. Scholars have noted that tourists respond strongly to images circulated through the press and other media about touristic destinations. Sociologist Rob Shields has argued that "people's perceptions of particular places are indebted to ……'place-myths,' conglomerates of place-images…..stereotypes and clichés associated with particular locations in circulation within a society."[639] By the mid-1960s, because Girard had been collecting folk art for many years (and had established the Girard Foundation), his perception of Latin America was inscribed onto these artifacts. These "place-myths" that he constructed for Braniff International, however, were no more authentic than Aeoronaves de Mexico's illustration of ruins.

The seed for change was planted before Lawrence took over the reigns at Braniff. In a prescient letter written in 1955 to Charles Beard (the president of Braniff prior to Lawrence), as a "friendly suggestion" Neiman-Marcus's founder Stanley Marcus recommended that Braniff overhaul its decorative scheme because he believed that the current plane interiors provided the airline a disservice.[640] In an effort to create a distinctive, modern, and luxurious airline, Lawrence claimed, "our intention is to give spirit and color to each Braniff flight. We want to ensure better, more pleasurable service

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[638] David Crouch and Nina Lübbren, *Visual Culture and Tourism*, ed. by David Crouch and Nina Lübbren (New York: Berg, 2003), 4.
[639] Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1991), 4-5.
[640] Stanley Marcus to Charles Beard, 30 November 1955, Stanley Marcus Collection, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. Of course, this was ten years before Harding Lawrence engaged Alexander Girard, so Charles Beard hired Gale Arthurs, a designer who had done work for Marcus and other Braniff executive committee members.

to our customers to give them a feeling of a new experience with every flight, with something different to look at, eat and talk about."[641] Following Lawrence's aims, Girard provided variety in his designed spaces so that each traveler might notice new details every time he or she experienced Braniff Airlines, and, according to Girard, his designs would prove a "powerful sales force."[642] For Girard, "the individual parts work together to give a totality of effect. No one element would be sufficient in itself. It is the interaction of the total number of individual pieces that create the Braniff world of color."[643]

In the end, what did Braniff Airlines communicate about itself through Girard's design—a mixture of handcrafted, indigenous objects alongside high style Herman Miller-manufactured furniture placed within colorful settings? The corporate design of Braniff capitalized on expanded potential to fly to Mexico, Central and South America, and a growing interest in Latin American culture. Girard's interest in folk art from an array of cultures, which formed part of his earlier projects, such as La Fonda de Sol, and emphasized in exhibitions, including Hemisfair 1968, was repurposed for Braniff's corporate image. Braniff continued to use Girard's services after the 1965 unveiling of his scheme, designing the interiors of the Braniff Hostess College (Dallas) in 1968.[644] As a common practice in the airline industry, by 1973, Girard's color scheme had been

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[641] "Color Sets Style, Spirit of Braniff International Approach for Air Travel," History of Aviation Collection, University of Texas, Dallas.
[642] "Suggested Remarks by Alexander Girard in the Braniff Club," History of Aviation Collection, University of Texas, Dallas.
[643] "Comments by Alexander Girard on his Design Concepts for Braniff International," History of Aviation Collection, University of Texas, Dallas.
[644] Barbara Ganson, *Texas Takes Wing: A Century of Flight in the Lone Star State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 95-96.

replaced.[645] Braniff needed to remain fashionable, and as tastes changed, so too did Braniff's look.

[645] Braniff hired the artist Alexander Calder, who produced the "Flying Colors" design for the airline. Keith Lovegrove, *Airline: Identity, Design and Culture* (Krefeld: teNeues, 2010), 124.

Figure 202
Girard (with team) working on Braniff commission
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04507_0052

Figure 203
Charlotte Perriand, Air France ticket office, London (1957)
Jacque Barsac, *Charlotte Perriand: Un Art d'Habiter, 1903-1959*

Figure 204
"The End of the Plain Plane" Advertisement
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04596_0009

Figure 205
Braniff International Airways pre-Girard painted plane (Boeing 707)
Braniffpages.com

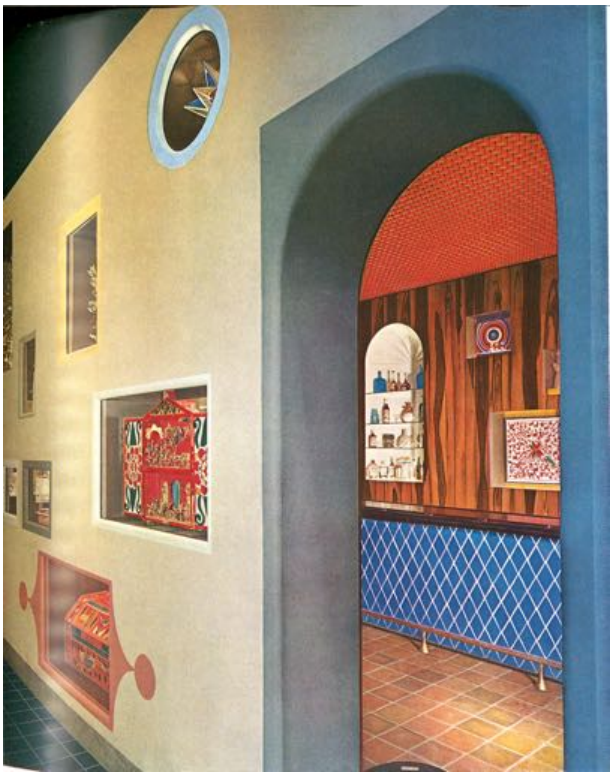


Figure 206
"Adobe house" as bar, La Fonda del Sol
"The Inn of the Sun," *Interiors* (February 1961)

Figure 207
Central canopy behind pillars, La Fonda del Sol
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-4493_179

Figure 208
Light Blue Plane with BI equipment
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04507_0002

Figure 209
Examples of "BI" Type
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4983

Figure 210
BI Letterhead
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard

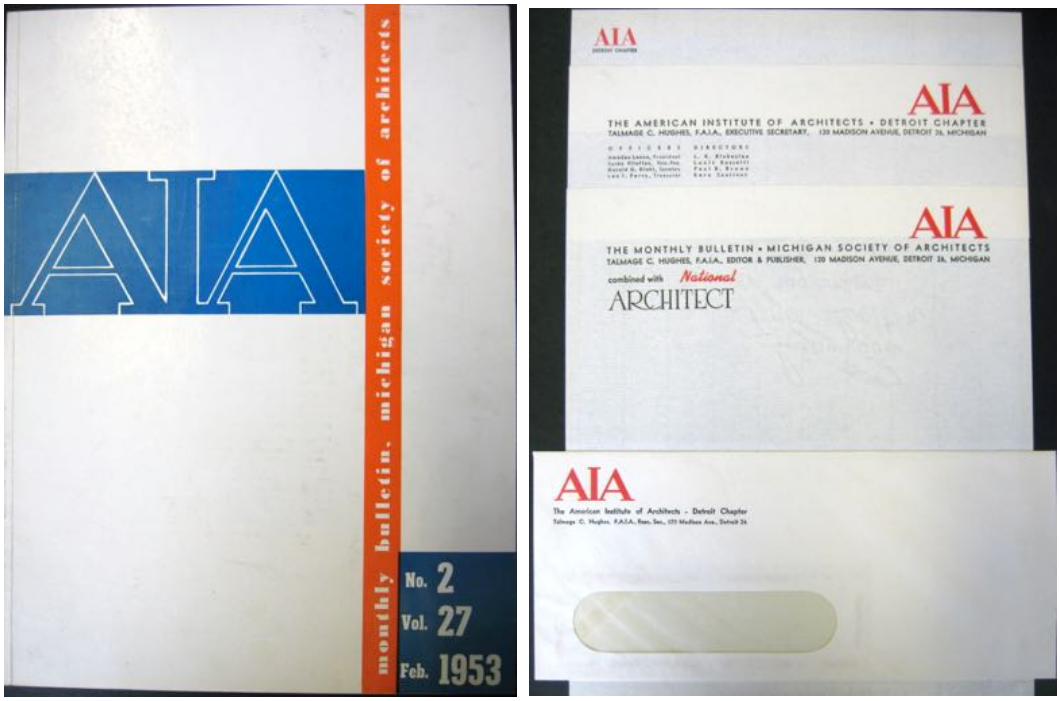


Figure 211
Girard redesigned AIA graphic identity in 1953
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard

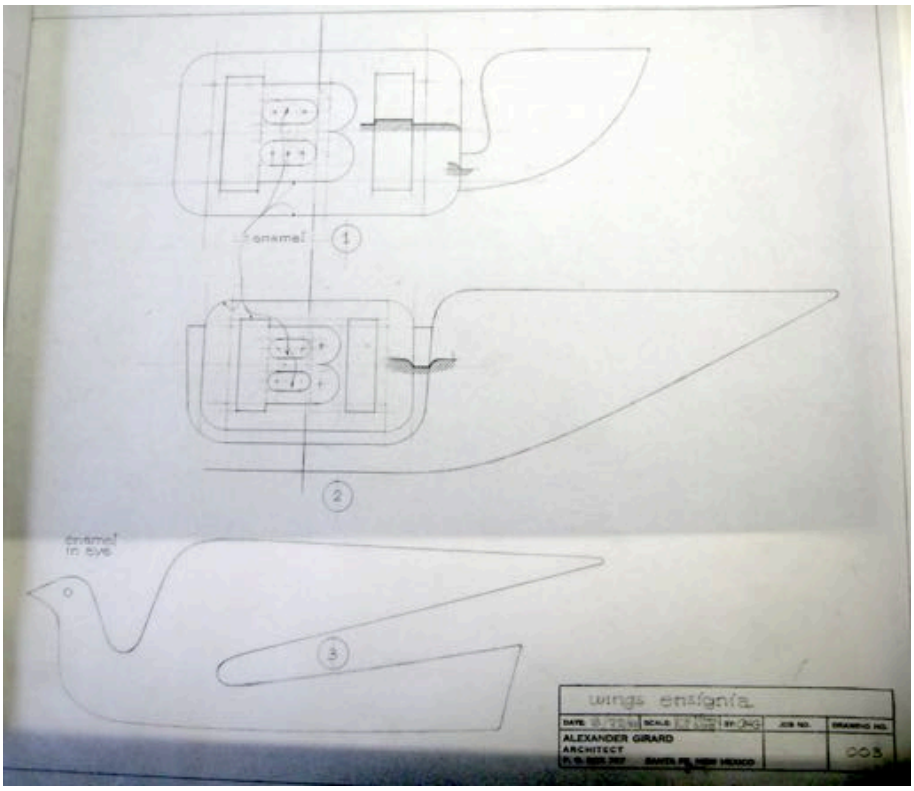


Figure 212
"Wings Insignia" Drawn by Girard on June 22, 1965
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-17348

Figure 213
Girard's Figural Graphic Identity
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04507_0048

Figure 214
Sugar Packets, Braniff International
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard

Figure 215
Braniff International Air Cargo Service tags
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard

Figure 216
Advertisement for Northwest Airlines, c. 1951
Vintageadbrowser.com

Figure 217
Publicity Still in Braniff cabin
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04508_0005

Figure 218
New Braniff ticket counters with posters in background
Braniffpages.com

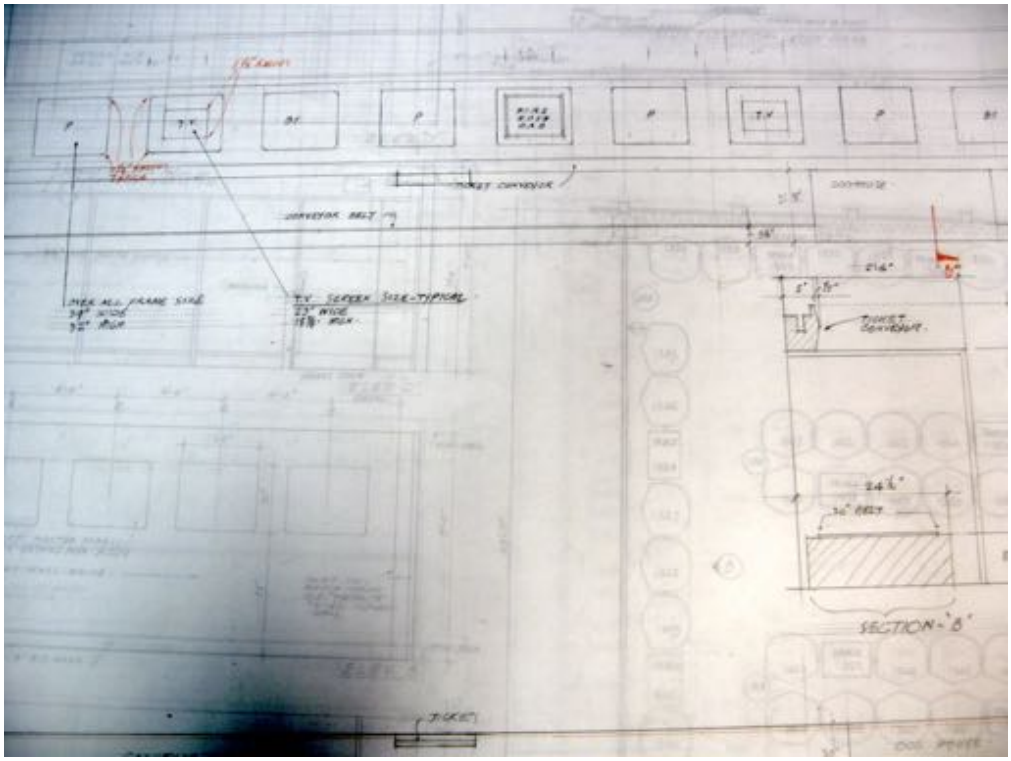


Figure 219
Detail of Plan, Ticket Office, Love Field, Dallas (July 30, 1965)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-17296

Figure 220
Harvey Lloyd (photographer), Offset photolithograph
National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, A19960153000

Figure 221
Lucian Bernhard, Stiller (Lithograph) 1908
Museum of Modern Art, 468.1987

Figure 222
Harvey Lloyd (photographer), Offset photolithograph
National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, A19960158000

Figure 223
Orange Plane
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04507_0049

Figure 224
Interior of a Braniff plane (red scheme)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04507_0030

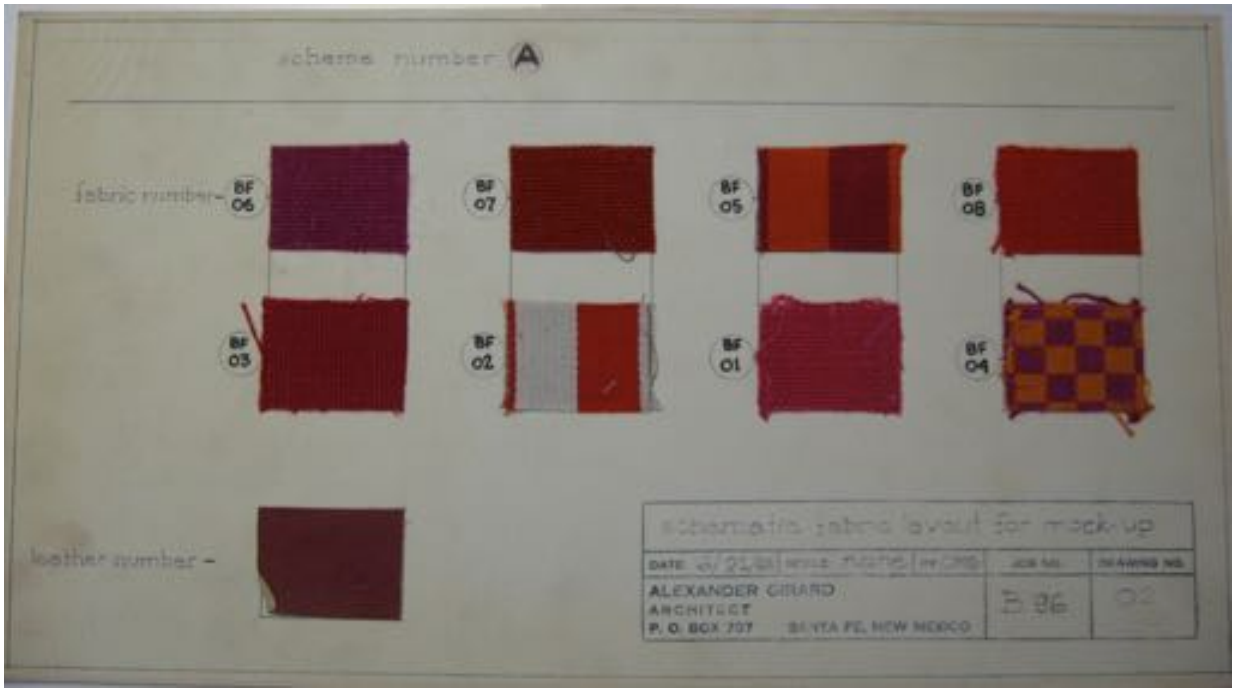
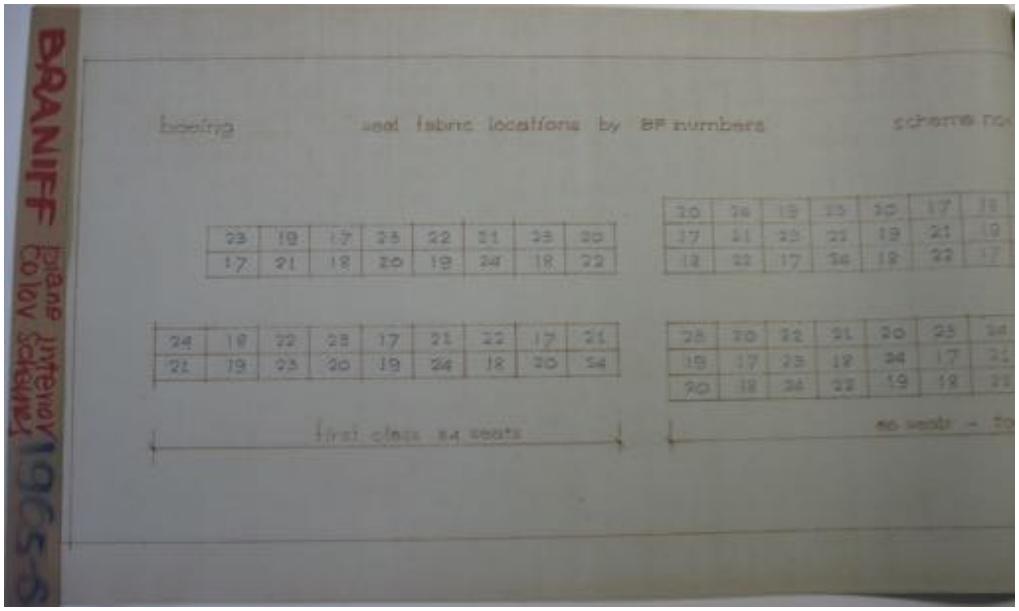


Figure 225
Scheme A (1 of 7)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4983



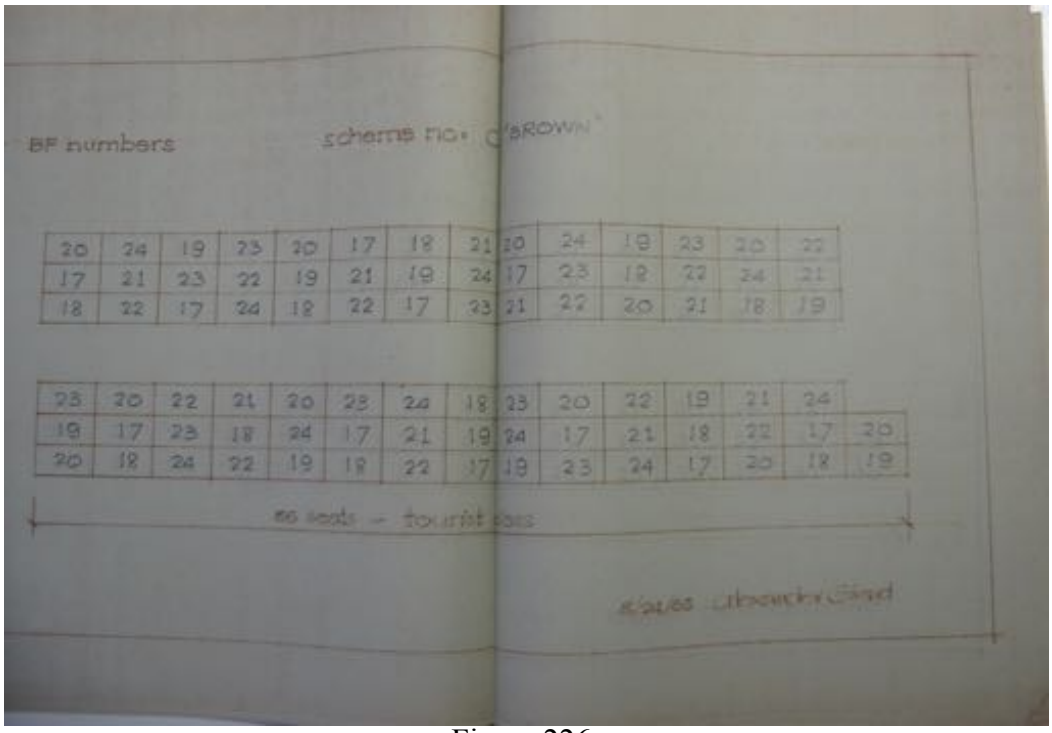


Figure 226
Braniff, Plane Interior Color Scheme, August 24, 1965
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard

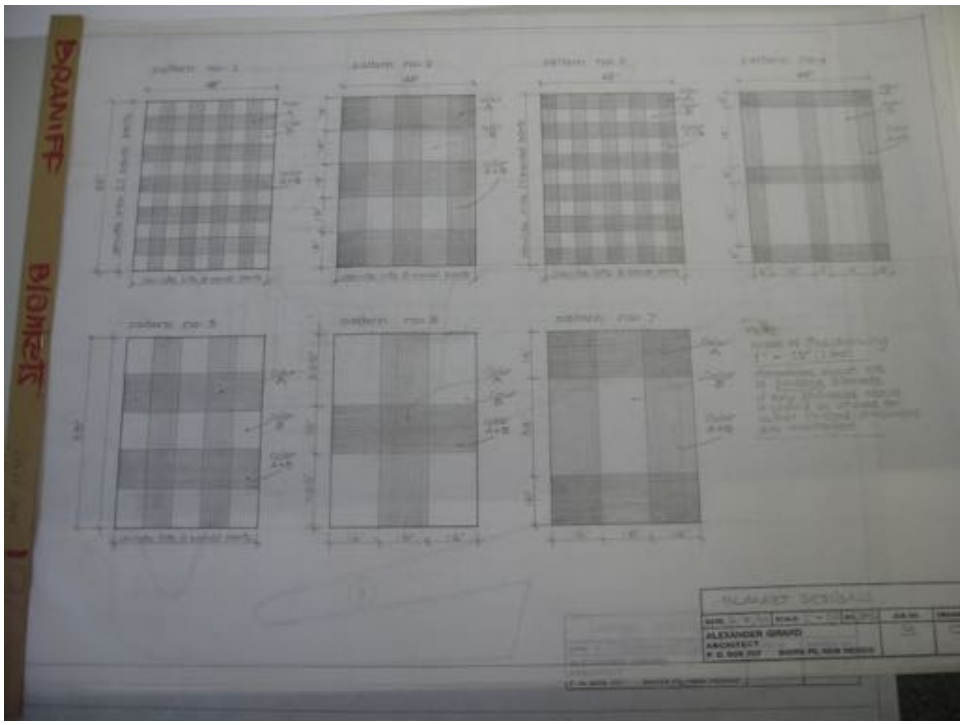


Figure 227
Designs for Blankets
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 17358

Figure 228
Braniff Blanket (Pattern no. 7)
Sold at Wright Auctions, Chicago, March 20, 2004 (lot 441)

Figure 229
Maquette for Offices, Love Field Terminal
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04508_0028

Figure 230
Discrete sections of VIP Room
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04507_0045

Figure 231
Pan-American Airlines, Havana Terminal, photograph taken in 1945
Pan American World Airways, Inc. Records, University of Miami Libraries

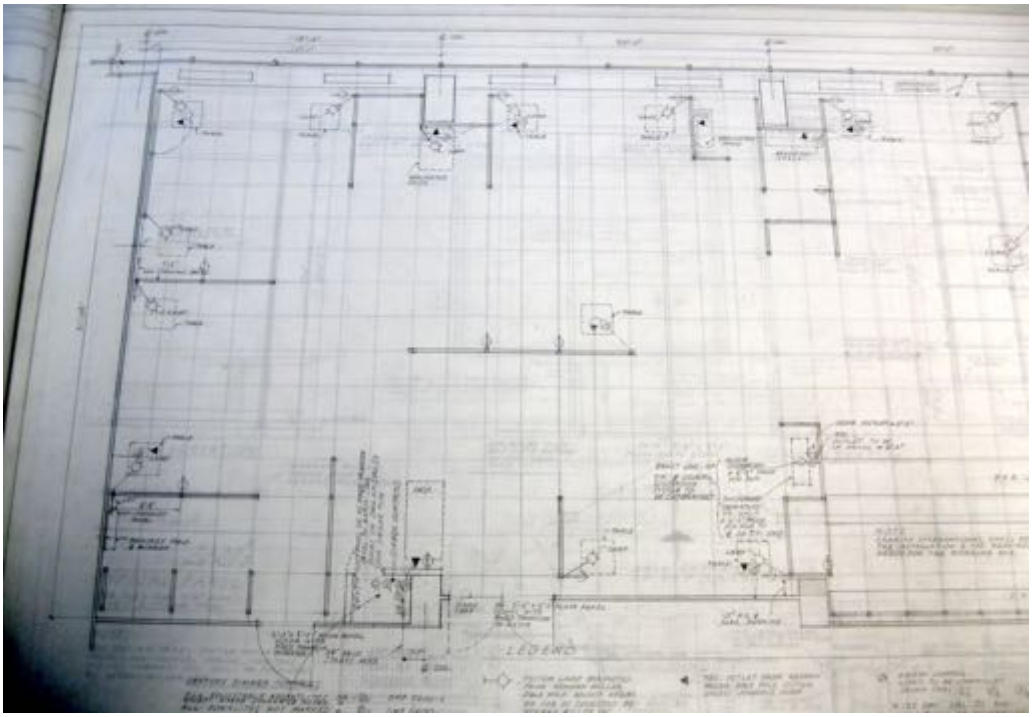


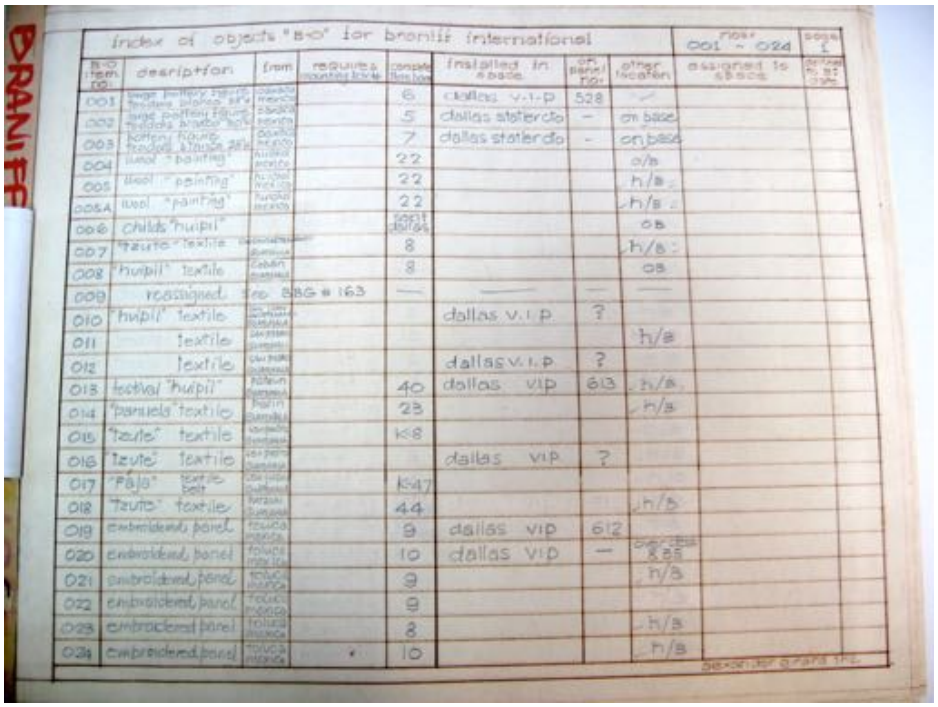
Figure 232
Electrical and Partition Floor Plan, VIP Room (August 28, 1965)
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 17296

Figure 233
Girard-designed, Herman Miller-manufactured Braniff furniture
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00853_0001

Figure 234
Herman-Miller furniture in Girard textile with folk art on walls
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04507_0022

Figure 235
Masks, textiles, and pottery in a vignette
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-00853_0002

Figure 236
1967 Braniff Annual Report
Collection of Paul Bright, New York

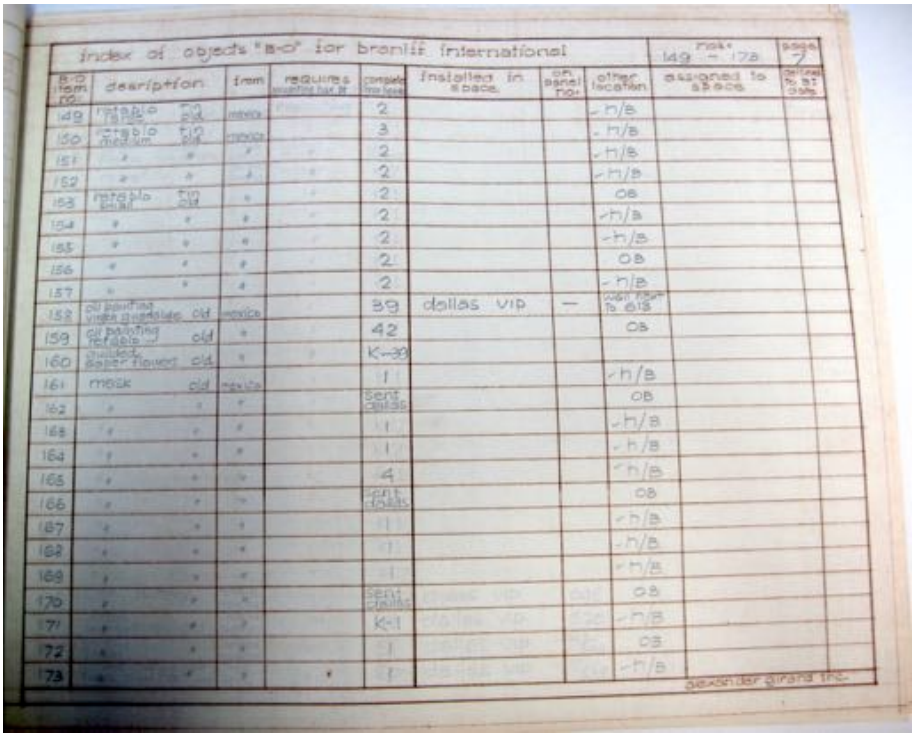


index of objects "B-O" for braniff international — nos. 001 ~ 024 — page 1

B-O item no.	description	from	requires mounting brkt	complete inventory	installed in space	on panel no.	other location	assigned to space	delivered to BI date
001	large pottery figure	mexico		6	dallas v.i.p	528	✓		
002	large pottery figure	mexico		5	dallas statler clo	–	on base		
003	pottery figure	mexico		7	dallas statler clo	–	on base		
004	wool "painting"			22			o/s		
005	wool "painting"			22			h/s		
005A	wool "painting"			22			✓h/s		
006	childs "huipil"			sent dallas			OS		
007	"tzute" textile			8			✓h/s		
008	"huipil" textile			8			OS		
009	reassigned	see B&G # 163		—	—	—	—		
010	"huipil" textile				dallas v.i.p	?			
011	textile						h/s		
012	textile				dallas v.i.p	?			
013	festival "huipil"			40	dallas vip	613	h/s		
014	"paneles" textile			23			✓h/s		
015	"tzute" textile			K-8					
016	"tzute" textile				dallas vip	?			
017	"faja" textile belt			K-47					
018	"tzuts" textile			44			✓h/s		
019	embroidered panel			9	dallas vip	612			
020	embroidered panel			10	dallas vip	—	OS & BS		
021	embroidered panel			9			✓h/s		
022	embroidered panel			9					
023	embroidered panel			8			✓h/s		
024	embroidered panel			10			h/s		

alexander girard inc.

Figure 237
Index of Objects for Braniff International
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 17298



index of objects "B-O" for braniff international — nos. 149 ~ 173 — page 7

B-O item no.	description	from	requires mounting brkt	complete inventory	installed in space	on panel no.	other location	assigned to space	delivered to BI date
149	retablo tin 24"	mexico		2			✓h/s		
150	retablo tin medium 24"	mexico		3			✓h/s		
151	" "	"		2			✓h/s		
152	" "	"		2			✓h/s		
153	retablo tin small	"		2			OS		
154	" "	"		2			✓h/s		
155	" "	"		2			✓h/s		
156	" "	"		2			OS		
157	" "	"		2			✓h/s		
158	oil painting virgen guadalupe	old mexico		39	dallas vip	—	over door to 613		
159	oil painting retablo	old "		42			OS		
160	"huichol" paper flower	old "		K-39					
161	mask	old mexico		1			✓h/s		
162	" "	"		sent dallas			OS		
163	" "	"		1			✓h/s		
164	" "	"		1			✓h/s		
165	" "	"		4			✓h/s		
166	" "	"		sent dallas			OS		
167	" "	"		1			✓h/s		
168	" "	"		1			✓h/s		
169	" "	"		1			✓h/s		
170	" "	"		sent dallas			OS		
171	" "	"		K-1			✓h/s		
172	" "	"		1			OS		
173	" "	"		1			✓h/s		

alexander girard inc.

Figure 238
Index of Objects for Braniff International
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 17298

Figure 239
VIP Room
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04507_0015

Figure 240
Technology (TV screen showing departures) alongside folk art
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04507_0012

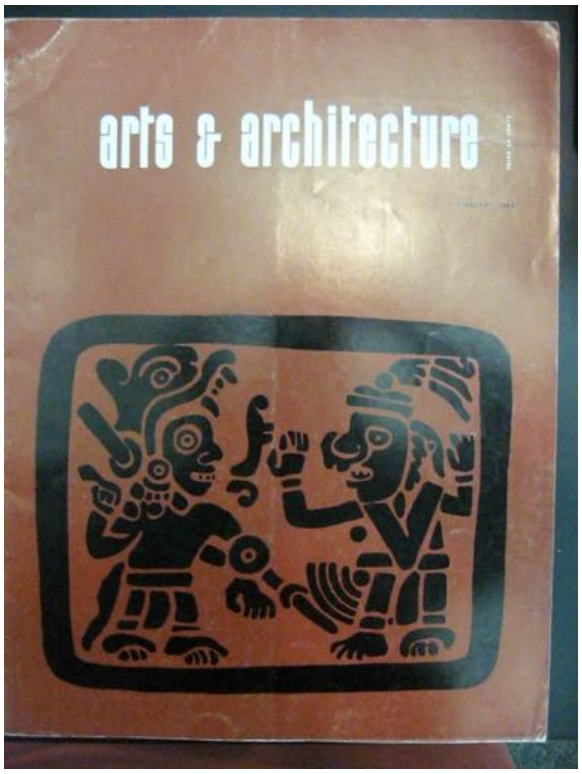
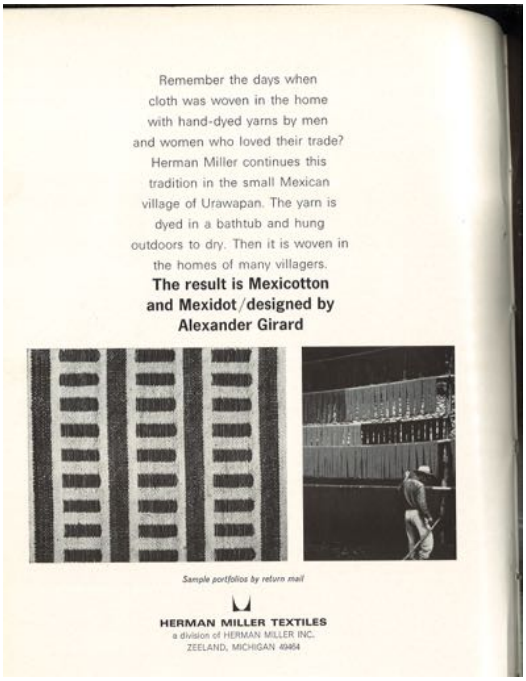


Figure 241
Arts and Architecture cover (February 1964)

Figure 242
Advertisement for Aeronaves de Mexico, from *Arts and Architecture* (Feb. 1964)



Remember the days when cloth was woven in the home with hand-dyed yarns by men and women who loved their trade? Herman Miller continues this tradition in the small Mexican village of Urawapan. The yarn is dyed in a bathtub and hung outdoors to dry. Then it is woven in the homes of many villagers.

The result is Mexicotton and Mexidot/designed by Alexander Girard

Sample portfolios by return mail

HERMAN MILLER TEXTILES
a division of HERMAN MILLER INC.
ZEELAND, MICHIGAN 49464

Figure 243
Herman Miller Advertisement for Girard's Mexidot

Figure 244
Ecuador Postcard
[From: https://www.etsy.com/listing/130509912/alexander-girard-braniff-international?ref=sr_gallery_2&ga_search_query=alexander+girard&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_page=4&ga_search_type=all&ga_facet=alexander+girard]

VI. COLLECTING VERNACULAR, DESIGNING MODERN: *THE MAGIC OF A PEOPLE* AT HEMISFAIR '68

> In most of us there is a tendency to try to halt time, to relive the past through the accumulation of souvenirs, to which we cling as a child might cling to an old doll.[646]
>
> -Alexander Girard, 1968

A. Collecting Folk Art

Alexander Girard actively collected folk art from the 1930s, and he began creating exhibitions with this material in the late 1950s. He accumulated folk art while designing modern displays, exhibitions, and interiors.[647] There were two criteria for collecting that guided the Girards: "visual, aesthetic excellence" and "how an acquisition could be used in a display."[648] He valued an object's display value over its economic value. This strategy parallels the criteria for display techniques—to show aesthetically appealing objects and to merchandise and sell them well. But Girard's statement also reveals that he began collecting with exhibition design at the fore; this is a drastically different approach when compared with traditional connoisseurship collecting, in which the collector relishes objects of rarity, quality, and notoriety. According to Girard, collecting can become a "status thing" when the only condition that consumes the

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[646] Alexander Girard, *El Encanto de un Pueblo; The Magic of a People: Folk Art and Toys from the Collection of the Girard Foundation* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), np.

[647] The author thanks Robin Schuldenfrei for her suggestion of "collecting vernacular while designing modern" as a shorthand way to think about this chapter.

[648] Charlene Cerny, "The Girard Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art," *American Indian Art Museum* (Spring 1983), from the Alexander H. Girard vertical files, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe

collector is the number of objects acquired.[649] Instead, Girard considered himself a selector as he assembled an extensive collection of folk art based on his needs as a designer of diverse projects. This chapter articulates Girard's vision of a harmonious global future through his exhibition *The Magic of a People* for the 1968 world's fair held in San Antonio.

Girard's vision was part of a larger trend of collecting without preconceived notions and with an eye toward handwrought objects. Similarly, Charles and Ray Eames did not consider themselves collectors, although they too acquired a wide range of objects and were influenced by their friend, Girard, in their collecting of crafts from around the world.[650] Most importantly, they wished for this artistic pursuit to be taken seriously (and not as a dilettantish exercise in collecting) because these objects were essential or integral to the spaces they designed. Girard and the Eameses collected vernacular objects while they designed in a modern vocabulary. Writing about the Eameses, Beatriz Colomina has suggested an "obsessive domesticity documented in fetishistic detail" that required "a new kind of architecture;"[651] that these decorative objects inhabited a temple of modern architecture (the Eames case study house) demonstrates a new approach to postwar living (one that was suggested in the model rooms of Detroit's *For Modern Living* exhibition). Pat Kirkham has written about the Eameses' domestic practice of "functioning decoration" as a way of arranging disparate works in an aesthetic of "addition,

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[649] Alexander Girard, Interview by Charlotte Cerny. Transcription to Tape 810.5. January 27, 1982. Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico
[650] Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames*, 179-183.
[651] Beatriz Colomina, *Domesticity at War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2007), 19.

juxtaposition, composition, changing scales, and 'extra-cultural' surprise."[652] Girard's system of accumulating things differed slightly because he acquired objects while thinking about designing various projects alongside building a personal and professional folk art collection. His approach to interior design was similar to the Eameses in some respects, especially in terms of carefully composing table arrangements, for example, but Girard also loved structure; whether outfitting the niches of a storage wall in a domestic commission, or creating a museum exhibition plan, Girard was a designer who liked organization, which provided him a platform for arranging small objects within these spaces.

As designers Girard and Ray Eames possessed collections of ordinary and exotic objects; Ray collected everyday things that she installed in her home and work environments, such as showroom designs and film sets, and Girard collected folk art to narrate his design projects. These objects also contributed to and became symbolic of the humanization of modernism, which is one way to understand how these objects functioned in the postwar world.[653] In a nod toward humane modernism, Girard believed that "a society which has all but lost the awareness of its childhood's memory of innocent dreams, drifts towards inhumanity, where the essence of beauty, poetry, and humor are lost in a world of materialistic realities."[654] Like the Eameses, Girard collected for the

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[652] Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames*, 164.
[653] The converse of humanism, as suggested by Saloni Mathur, is an imperialistic approach. Girard's design for Hemisfair bears this potential, but I do not believe that Girard was intentionally operating as an imperialist (however, as a product of his generation, there may be some traces). For an interesting examination of the Eameses relationship to India, see Saloni Mathur, "Charles and Ray Eames in India," *Art Journal* 70 (Spring 2011), 34-53.
[654] Alexander Girard, "The Collector," February 1966, Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico

love of the objects. Unlike the Eameses, Girard relied on these objects to recreate the past. He also collected en masse to be able to possess the quantity needed to outfit narrative scenes. Because he accumulated things intuitively, some of his collection was superb and rare (by museum standards), while other parts were commercially driven works made for the "undiscriminating tourist."[655] In the end, the economic value of these objects did not matter because they were important because of their potential to spark creativity (through color and texture) for future design projects, as well as functioning as modern markers with rooms. Additionally, both Girard and the Eameses were interested in toys; in fact, one critic believed that "the key to Eames' world is his toys."[656] Girard wrote extensively about them, believing them to be playthings for both children and adults.[657] They too may provide a key to Girard's world, as he was also of the persuasion that toys and folk art provided "incalculable and innumerable value," which is why he and Susan began a foundation.[658]

The Girards formed the Girard Foundation in 1960 with the intention of "acquiring, preserving, and exhibiting an international collection of toys."[659] He described the folk art that they collected as "unsophisticated or naïve in character; direct in expression; sincere in creation; bounded by the vigorous limitation of a tool, a

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[655] Kate P. Kent, "The Girard Foundation Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art," *African Arts* 17 (November 1983), 64.
[656] Lawrence Alloway, "Eames' World," *Architectural Association Journal* (July-August 1956), 54.
[657] Alexander Girard, "Definition of a Toy," April 14, 1960, Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico
[658] Alexander Girard, "The Collector," February 1966, Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico
[659] Kate P. Kent, "The Girard Foundation Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art," *African Arts* 17 (November 1983), 60.

material, a handcraft, or a machine process."[660] For Girard as a collector "love of objects came first, and there was absolutely no other criterion for collecting."[661] He did not buy the earliest or the best, as did many collectors interested in connoisseurship; instead, he would buy en masse because his larger design goal was to weave narratives with the objects into tableaux. His collecting methodology informed his design for exhibitions, as he placed greater emphasis on an object's design value, rather than its historical or cultural meanings. About exhibition design, Girard proclaimed,

> Part of my passion has always been to see objects in context. As a collector who was often able to visit the workshop of the artist and see the actual environment in which a piece was made, I've often felt that objects lose half their lives when they are taken out of their natural settings. To me, nothing could be worse than an exhibition in which a number of objects are just lined up in cases. I believe that if you put objects into a world which is ostensibly their own, the whole thing begins to breathe. It's creating a slice of life in a way. Then the exhibition becomes alive; it becomes theatre.[662]

For Girard, folk art begets nativity scenes, which references theatre, a long-lived passion of his that was sparked by childhood memories. According to him,

> The nativity is where everything started. People in all cultures seem to produce folk art figures of animals, people and buildings…all those things are in the nativity scene. I was fascinated by the fact that you could get them without spending a fortune. I started collecting them, and my parents encouraged me—maybe because you didn't have to spend a fortune![663]

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[660] Mary Cable, "Artless Art," *Horizon* 8 (Spring 1966), Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico

[661] Alexander Girard, Interview by Charlotte Cerny. Transcription to Tape 810.5. January 27, 1982. Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico

[662] As quoted in Kent, "The Girard Foundation Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art," 64.

[663] Kate Bennett, "A Party Honoring Alexander Girard and His Connecting Worlds," *Pasatiempo*, Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Girard collected everyday objects as part of a narrative collection. Cultural theorist Mieke Bal has suggested that collecting can be understood as a narrative itself.[664] She writes about "seeing collecting as a process consisting of the confrontation between objects and subjective agency informed by an attitude."[665] For Girard, part of this "attitude" incorporated composing narrative collections using objects of "extra-cultural surprise."[666] He collected folk art to narrate his design projects, and, as museum studies professor Susan Pearce has suggested, the motivation to tell stories through collections begins in childhood (which was definitely the case with Girard, who wrote frequently about this impetus).[667] Similarly, Susan Stewart also locates exotic souvenirs at the intersection of childhood and notions of the primitive.[668] Girard's collecting exemplifies what Stewart called the practice of the "replacement of the narrative of production by the narrative of the collection, the replacement of the narrative of history with the narrative of the individual subject—that is, the collector himself."[669] However, the notion of a collector implies assigning value to objects and a process of discrimination. Girard preferred to not call the practice collecting, instead describing it as a "matter of selecting than of collecting."[670] Girard may be more appropriately termed an accumulator, as he

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[664] Mieke Bal,"Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting." *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. by John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books, 1993), 100.
[665] Ibid.
[666] The term "extra-cultural surprise" was used by Alison and Peter Smithson to describe an aesthetic of deliberate juxtapositions during the 1960s; quoted in Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames,* 181.
[667] Susan M. Pearce, "Collecting Reconsidered," in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), 193-204.
[668] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 146.
[669] Stewart, *On Longing,* 156.
[670] "The Pungent Designer: Alexander Girard: *The Containers We Live In*," *Design Forecast* 2 (1960), 51, Herman Miller Archives, pubs 7648

bought objects in mass, arranged large quantities of works, and provided mass-produced trinkets and handmade textiles, for example, in equal measure. He has also suggested the term

> …….excerptors, in the sense that one plucks something good out of its environment and places it in a new setting that heightens its significance. That is the real mark of discrimination, to be able to see something out of context, to take something because one sees it and wants to see it again. And the proof comes when one does see it again, and finds that it looks even better than it did the first time.[671]

He has also suggested that he acquired folk art "to spark my own creativity" and to "recapture all the wonderful enthusiasm and the spirit of discovery that we experience as children."[672] Fundamentally, the Girards were not interested in collecting as connoisseurs; rather, they were consumed with the all-encompassing power of *things*.[673]

Girard began introducing folk art from around the world into US culture before Hemisfair 1968, San Antonio's world's fair. In addition to his well-publicized projects that incorporated folk art, such as the restaurant La Fonda del Sol (1960), Girard staged an exhibition culled from his collection of nativities from all over the world in 1961 that opened at the Museum of International Folk Art in his adopted hometown of Santa Fe.[674] As a publicity piece for the 1961 Christmas issue, the magazine *House and Garden* invited Girard to express the "essence of folk art—its spontaneity, its vibrant colors, its

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[671] Ibid.
[672] Charles Lockwood, "A Perfectionist at Play," *Connoisseur* (January 1983), 98, Publicity Girard Wing Book III, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe.
[673] Charlene Cerny, "A Feast of Folk Art," *Americas* (January/February 1985), 30-37, , Publicity Girard Wing Book V, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe.
[674] Yvonne Lange, "How Does a State Museum Acquire a Megacollection?," in *Multiple Visions, A Common Bond: The Girard Foundation Collection*, ed. by Sarah Nestor, (Santa Fe: International Folk Art Foundation, distributed by the Museum of New Mexico Press, 1983), np.

engaging mixture of solemnity and gaiety."[675] In order to do so, he composed several vignettes using his personal folk art collection as artistic inspiration (Figure 245). Similarly, two years later, in the wake of another nativity exhibition (sponsored by Hallmark Cards) that he curated in Kansas City, Girard staged inspiring crèches for *House and Garden* readers.[676] Collected over three decades, Girard exhibited 170 of his nativity scenes from 20 countries at the William Rockhill Nelson Art Gallery in Kansas City, Missouri, from November 1962 through January 1963.[677] Although primarily an art exhibition, it was part of the International People-to-People program, which was initiated by President Eisenhower to promote world peace through understanding world cultures.[678]

The popularity of Girard's crèches was not restricted to Santa Fe and Kansas City. On December 24, 1962, NBC aired a television special that examined his collection of Nativity paintings with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and chorus providing background music.[679] The feature on his personal collection was part of a series called "Art of Collecting;" the other four private collections were those of New York's Robert Lehman and Governor Rockefeller, Chicago's Leigh B. Block, and Seattle's John Denman. Hosted by Aline Saarinen, the programs were shown on NBC during the 1963-

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[675] "How to Make your House Blossom for Christmas," *House and Garden* 120 (December 1961), 126.
[676] "How to Stage an Inspiring Creche," *House and Garden* 124 (December 1963).
[677] Donald Janson, "Creches from 20 Nations Placed on View," *New York Times* (November 22, 1962), 42.
[678] The power of the government in conjunction with art exhibitions during the postwar years demonstrates the politics of displaying American culture abroad. Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis, 2010).
[679] Television programming, *Chicago Daily Tribune* (December 22, 1962), C10.

64 season as hour-long color specials.[680] Saarinen chose these five particular collectors to demonstrate diverse possibilities—from high end fine art (Lehman and Rockefeller) to the more affordable collections (Denman, who was a Northwest Airlines pilot, and Girard)—but they all had two things in common: "quality and the fact that each was a creative expression of its assembler."[681]

In an article in *Horizon: A Magazine for the Arts* (Figure 246) in 1966, art critic Russell Lynes proclaimed that since the end of World War II, folk art objects had increasingly become collectors' items, and posited that Girard "may, indeed, be partly responsible for the vogue."[682] One specific example of this occurrence may be observed in the relationship between Girard and Ruth Adler Schnee, the Detroit-area textile designer who trained at Cranbrook. She recalled that experiencing Girard's interior of La Fonda del Sol "started our [her and her husband's] search for Mexican crafts. It started our Mexican trips."[683] Like Girard, the Schnees (who were acquaintances of the Girards) acquired "tourist art" from markets across Mexico to sell at their modern design shop in Detroit, which they opened in response to the Detroit Institute of Arts' 1949 *For Modern Living* exhibition, and the perceived lacuna for such goods in the Detroit marketplace.[684] Writing for the *New York Times*, Aline Saarinen noticed that by the late 1950s many people in the US owned original works of art, as opposed to earlier in the century, when only "highbrows" could afford it, and felt that part of this impetus toward collecting

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[680] Val Adams, "N. B. C. is Filming Art Collections," *New York Times* (June 11, 1963), 75.
[681] Aline B. Saarinen, "The Art and Passion of Collecting Art," *New York Times* (January 19, 1964), X17.
[682] "Artless Art," *Horizon* 8 (Spring 1966), 72.
[683] Author email with Leslie Edward, Archives, Cranbrook, January 25, 2012.
[684] Author interview with Ruth Adler Schnee, April 18, 2012, Southfield, Michigan.

objects was the result of accelerated travel.[685] For those unable to travel internationally, they could voyage to San Antonio in 1968 to view Latin American cultures on display at the Hemisfair (aboard Braniff Airlines, see chapter 4).

B. The Origins of Hemisfair '68

San Antonio's world's fair, Hemisfair '68, materialized during the culture wars of the 1960s. Unlike previous world's fairs that focused on the future and technology, Hemisfair emphasized culture and cultural fusion, and San Antonio businessmen and politicians conceived of a world's fair to aid growth and development in the city as a way to boost a stagnant economy.[686] Intended to celebrate the mutual cultural heritage of San Antonio and Latin America, San Antonio's world's fair was planned over a six-year period to display the city's Pan-American identity.[687] Open to the public for six months from April 6 through October 6, 1968, Hemisfair commemorated the 250th anniversary of San Antonio's naissance when Spain founded the Misión de San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo). As the first world's fair located in the Southwestern United States, it was also important as a representation of Texas; San Antonio was the seat of both Spanish and

[685] Aline B. Saarinen, "Everybody's a Collector." *New York Times* (March 8, 1959), SMA16. Saarinen's use of "highbrow" references Russel Lynes, "Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow," *Harpers Magazine* (February 1949).
[686] Sterlin Holmesly, *HemisFair '68 and the Transformation of San Antonio* (San Antonio: Maverick Publishing Company, 2003), 1.
[687] Robert Alexander Gonzalez, *Designing Pan-America: US Architectural Visions for the Western Hemisphere* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 179-196.

Mexican governments, and when the war over independence was waged between 1835 and 1836, the city was nearly all Mexican in population.[688]

Unlike other world's fairs that were traditionally located on the outskirts of cities, this fair was situated on 92 acres of an (147 acre) urban renewal project in downtown San Antonio. Although local politicians and business people supported the fair, opponents questioned the choice of location—the "old city" of San Antonio, which contained historic buildings and local residents. The conflict was amplified because a combination of public funding (federal, state, and city) and private outreach financed the fair.[689] Planners cleared (what they considered) blighted areas, mixed-industrial buildings, and dilapidated historic houses as a form of urban renewal on the edge of the central business district of San Antonio, thus providing the opportunity for new fair buildings that could be retained by the city for post-fair use.[690] Two of the areas that were nearly eradicated were German town (although the King William area survived) and "the old Mexican town" on the near West Side, which lost everything except for three stone buildings.[691] Despite the positive outlook that planners conveyed, during the 1960s urban renewal

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[688] Joseph Milton Nance, "REPUBLIC OF TEXAS," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mzr02), accessed February 17, 2015. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
[689] $12.2 million from the United States Housing and Home Finance Agency to acquired and clear the site; $11 million in city bonds to construct the convention center and area; $5.5 million from city general revenues to construct the Tower of the Americas; $10 million from state to construct the Institute of Texan Cultures; and $7.5 million from United States Congress to construct the US Pavilion. Frank Duane, "HEMISFAIR '68," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/lkh01), accessed September 10, 2014. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
[690] Ada Louise Huxtable, "HemisFair, Opening Tomorrow, Isn't Texas-Size, But It's Fun." *New York Times* (April 5, 1968), 49-50.
[691] Charles Ramsdell, *Special Supplement to the Hemisfair Edition of San Antonio: A Historical and Pictorial Guide* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 22-26.

frequently meant dislocating the (and in the case of San Antonio, Mexican) poor people who lived in economically viable inner city areas, often using federal funding and the jurisdiction of eminent domain.[692] Preservationists and progressives were embroiled in battles during the planning period in attempts to save historic structures; in fact, in order to receive federal funding fair planners were required to save as many buildings as possible because a Texas senator advanced legislation with a historic preservation amendment.[693] In the end, although the architectural committee had originally proposed to rescue 120 structures, only twenty-two survived, and were incorporated as restaurants and boutiques during the fair.[694]

As a celebration of the Americas, Hemisfair planners sought to better understand the concerns of the Western Hemisphere through the theme of converging cultures. With an ethnically mixed population, fair planners desired to position San Antonio as the center of a crossroads between Latin America and the United States for future commercial and cultural exchange. The fair has also been situated as a "showcase of San Antonio's Pan-American identity," in which multiple cultural groups cohabitated in a decidedly "Mexican American cultural landscape."[695] The fair emphasized "cultural

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[692] For San Antonio's Hemisfair, laws were enacted to clear "slums" by the San Antonio Development Agency (SADA). For an inventory of projects related to the "Urban Renewal Civic Center Project 5 Tex-R 83 (Hemisfair), see http://www.sanantonio.gov/clerk/Archives/FindingAids%5CUrban-Renewal-Civic-Center-Tex-R-83-HemisFair.pdf. Of course, there was an opposition; Jane Jacobs was one of the first critics of urban renewal on a large scale. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).
[693] Frank Duane, "HEMISFAIR '68," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/lkh01), accessed September 10, 2014. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
[694] Ada Louise Huxtable, "HemisFair, Opening Tomorrow, Isn't Texas-Size, But It's Fun." *New York Times* (April 5, 1968), 50.
[695] Gonzalez, *Designing Pan-America,* 180.

fusion resulting from the 'peaceable' interactions among indigenous, European and African 'migrations,'" with native populations and historic districts positioned alongside futuristic modernity.[696] While many countries mounted separate national pavilions, some countries were bound together (because it was economically more feasible) in a five-nation Central American exhibition area and a special pavilion representing the Latin American countries, called the Organization of American States. Several corporations (including Ford Motor Company, General Electric, IBM, and Gulf Oil Corporation) also prepared pavilions.

Beyond the official theme of "The Confluence of Civilizations in the Americas," the fair's subthemes—Legacy, Harvest, Promise, and Folklore—created rich narratives for visitors. The Legacy encompassed the main section of the fair with government buildings, the Tower of the Americas (the 750-foot theme structure of the fair), and an interesting display in which visitors could embark upon the experience of becoming a "citizen of the Western Hemisphere through the process of immigration."[697] The Harvest comprised displays of current production, while the Promise featured exhibits of the future, a standard trope in the production of world's fairs. Within the Folklore section, which was reserved for "theme-controlled food, merchandise, handicrafts, entertainment, and amusement activities," Girard captivated the public with his folk art exhibit of Latin-American village life.[698] At the very moment when global capitalism continued to homogenize products across the world, Hemisfair's reliance on indigenous performances, folk art, and handcrafts was an attempt to reify the "traditional as something utterly

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[696] Claire F. Fox, *Making Art Panamerican: Cultural Policy and the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 181.
[697] Gonzalez, *Designing Pan-America,* 188.
[698] Gonzalez, *Designing Pan-America,* 189.

distinct from the modern, an exotic other to be admired for its 'authenticity.'"[699] Within this context, Alexander Girard's pavilion for Hemisfair was called *The Magic of a People* (*El Encanto de un Pueblo*), and featured over 10,000 Latin-American folk art objects from the Girard Foundation.

Girard wrote:

> Perhaps the exhibition 'El Encanto de un Pueblo' can best be described as what it is not—it is neither archaeological nor ethnographic. It does not respect national or chronological limits. It does not give the viewer crutches on which to hang assumptions. What it is, is a purely visual experience, heightened by sound, allowing the viewers to reach their own personal and unconditioned conclusions. Hopefully, it will communicate some of the 'Magic of a People'—the Latinamerican people, a magic that is fast extinguished by the exigencies of modern life. Included in this magic was the unconscious habit of producing beauty even in the most insignificant things of everyday life: an instinct which somehow has become devalued in the present.[700]

Written by Girard to introduce his exhibit, the pamphlet outlines the parameters of his display; the viewer should not expect an "archaeological" or "ethnographic" presentation of Latin American people. In fact, his remarks intimate a cultural stereotyping of "Latinamerican people." Girard traveled extensively in Mexico and the Americas, and he was well aware of the diversity of cultures present. However, he was a product of his generation, and the use of "Latinamerican people" throughout the fair was likely a cultural shorthand, and a naive word choice not intended to malign people of Latin descent. Surprisingly, given the year, location, and diversity of races present in San Antonio, there were few racial tensions at the fair.

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[699] Fox, *Making Art Panamerican,* 193.
[700] Alexander Girard, pamphlet by Girard Foundation for Hemisfair, Estate of Alexander Girard, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.

Girard's exhibit, and to a certain extent the fair, sought to conjure up idyllic images of Latin American pasts. It was not a vision that accommodated contemporary concerns of Americans of Mexican (and other ethnicities) descent, for example, the Chicano movement of the 1960s was gaining traction in many parts of the country, including San Antonio, where some Chicanos peacefully protested Hemisfair's race and class bias and the poverty issues facing the city, but it was not represented at the fair.[701] Although Girard would have been aware of these concerns (and living in Sante Fe, he was aware of class and race issues[702]), I contend that he viewed his exhibitions as a way to transcend contemporary politics by using folk art as a way to be mesmerized by the wonders of foreign and far away cultures. Despite his profound respect for the varied cultures represented, such displays trivialized any such lofty ambitions.

C. Planning *The Magic of a People*

There is no doubt that Girard's exhibit was visually stunning. The *New York Times* architecture critic, Ada Louise Huxtable, called Girard's exhibit "the fair's greatest delight……this is life, art, culture and confluence all rolled into one and worth the trip to Texas."[703] In order to create a cohesive visual identity for *The Magic of a People*, Girard designed the poster, brochure, ticket and catalog for the exhibition. He also designed the murals that depicted a sun, a moon, a tree of life, and angels, which reflected the content of the exhibition on the exterior of the fair buildings. Girard was the architect of record

[701] Gonzalez, *Designing Pan-America,* 194.
[702] In fact, this is something that the author and Marshall Girard, Alexander and Susan's son, discussed.
[703] Ada Louise Huxtable, "HemisFair, Opening Tomorrow, Isn't Texas-Size, But It's Fun." *New York Times* (April 5, 1968), 49-50.

on the plans for the pavilion building and its interior; he dated the plan June 26, 1967 and it was received on July 13, 1967 by "Hemisfair 1968 Design and Architecture."[704] The local architectural firm Roberts, Allen and Helmke provided the site plan for the fair. *The Magic of a People* was the most popular single exhibit at the Fair, exceeding the fair planners' expectations;[705] originally estimated for 276,500 visitors, Girard's exhibition was viewed by 503,797 people.[706]

The building was located in the center of the government displays (or Las Plazas del Mundo) (Figure 247). Girard selected vibrant colors to anchor the exterior planes, which were canvases for the individual symbols that he designed—a sun, a moon, a tree of life, and a series of angels (Figures 248-250). Unlike other exhibits, which were largely sponsored by government or corporations, Girard's foundation provided the 13,729 objects for the interior exhibit space (3470 sq feet; 44' 8" wide by 77' 8" long). The exhibit was composed of a series of 42 tableaux "of different aspects of Latin-American life and imagination," including fiestas, marketplaces, sports and town life. Admission to the Girard collection was 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children.[707] These visualizations were experienced around a perimeter through windows, with specific names or themes described on the corresponding wall text panel, such as "Peruvian Village," "Toy Shop," and "Procession" (Figure 251). The 42 visualizations

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[704] The plans are in the collection, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[705] Robert K. Winn, Interview with Mrs. Esther MacMillan, January 31, 1979, Bexar County Historical Commission, The Institute of Texan Cultures Oral History Collection, 1967-2011, University of Texas at San Antonio.
[706] "Past Exhibitions," Appendix VI, Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
[707] John Handley, "Here's a Guide for Fun at Hemisfair," *Chicago Tribune* (July 28, 1968), 11.

were not constructed uniformly, as each story had different spatial requirements; some settings were deeper or more elaborate and one setting, "San Miguel," was set apart from the perimeter (Figure 252). Girard's plan also reveals that he rearranged the originally numbered groups (1-41) around the perimeter in a different order to provide more aesthetic variety and to better control the viewer's journey. "Day of the Dead" was followed by "Wake," while "Hell" was also a part of the story that Girard desired to tell. After such tragic stories, he ended the exhibition on a positive note with the final window portraying "Paradise."

While visitors peered through the windows, music chosen by Girard further enhanced the atmosphere (Figure 253).[708] This multi-sensory approach is reminiscent of "Art X," a lesson commissioned by the University of Georgia in 1952 (later shown at UCLA) and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. George Nelson, the Eameses, and Girard collaborated on this multi-screen visual slide presentation with aural and olfactory components.[709] The motivation of the lesson was "to develop high-speed techniques for exposing the relationships between seemingly unrelated phenomena" and to understand how we communicate, which was an obsession of designers during the period.[710] Girard was slated to fabricate "a facsimile exhibit" to accompany each of the lectures, but his

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[708] Girard picked the "Indian" (Native American) music and a Santa Fe organization put the 45-minute tape together. Robert K. Winn, Interview with Mrs. Esther MacMillan, January 31, 1979, Bexar County Historical Commission, The Institute of Texan Cultures Oral History Collection, 1967-2011, University of Texas at San Antonio.

[709] Nelson referred to the lesson as "Art X," while the Eameses called it "A Rough Sketch for a Sample Lesson for a Hypothetical Course." Eameses work in film has been well documented, but Girard's participation is less well-known

[710] George Nelson, "Art X=The Georgia Experiment," *Industrial Design* 1 (October 1954), 45. The lesson, particularly when given at UCLA, was hugely influential, as many designers remember seeing it during their formative years. Author interview with Marilyn Neuhart, February 27, 2014, Hermosa Beach, California.

most enduring contribution was introducing synthetic smells via the air conditioning system during the lesson to make it a multisensory experience.[711]

Uncertain about what types of displays to construct, the Hemisfair planners hired a New York consultant to elucidate the possibilities; for the fine arts exhibits, "Contemporary Fine and Folk Art of the Western Hemisphere" was one of six areas suggested by the commission.[712] During the planning phase, fair organizers identified over six hundred corporate prospects to approach for participation in Hemisfair, including Braniff International (Girard had redesigned the corporate identity for Braniff in 1965, see chapter 4).[713] It was not Braniff, but rather Robert L. B. Tobin who suggested Girard as a potential exhibitor. At the February 14, 1967 meeting of the cultural participation committee of Hemisfair 1968, Tobin (the committee's chairman and the person to whom Girard dedicated the exhibition catalog) reported that Girard collection's was very appealing and that negotiations were "underway to provide an appropriate sponsor for the exhibition."[714]

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[711] Nelson, "Art X=The Georgia Experiment," 44-51.
[712] "Fine Arts Exhibits," of the "Hemisfair Performing Arts; Fine Arts and Amusement Area" (February 18, 1965), p. 26, Folder 23.4, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[713] Richard E. Miller to James M. Gaines (New York World's Fair), 25 August 1965, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[714] Robert Tobin, a San Antonio art collector and opera connoisseur, also maintained a home in Santa Fe and served on the board of the Santa Fe Opera; Girard must have made his acquaintance in Santa Fe. Cultural Participation Committee Memo, 14 February 1967, Folder 63.5, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.

In his proposal to the fair organizers, Girard noted that "both in location and in spirit, 'Magic of a People' lies close to the heart of Hemisfair '68."[715] Girard envisioned a series of windows arranged around a perimeter in which thousands of objects would illuminate Latin American and Southwestern cultures through narratives of weddings, christenings, fiestas, sports, markets, farming, town life and the afterlife. The costs calculated for mounting this exhibition varied in each proposal, but the original projected figure for the Girard show was $202,154. One proposal (that was marked up by fair officials) suggested that they "use [an] old house" as a way to reduce building costs, but this adaptive reuse was not implemented.[716] An invoice lists the dates and amount of hours Girard and his assistants spent on doing design work during March 1967, as well as expenses incurred, on such things as materials and telephone calls, amounting to a total of $13,077.94.[717] The original schedule that Girard proposed billed Hemisfair every month for roughly $14,440.00, therefore his March 1967 expenditure was within that budget.[718]

To enhance the proposal, Girard suggested designing a special promotional poster and a striking catalog illustrated with photographs taken by Charles Eames. Girard's visual exhibition would communicate "the wealth of variety, contrasts, charm, humor, color, drama and poetry of the Latin American people," without any regard for proper

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[715] "Magic of a People" proposal, p. 3, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[716] "Exhibit A, Brief Resume of Exhibition Theme and Content," San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[717] Invoice, Alexander Girard to James Gaines, 31, March 1967, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[718] "Exhibit A, Brief Resume of Exhibition Theme and Content," San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.

historical, ethnographical or geographical information.[719] Girard desired to use English, Spanish, and Portuguese for all official exhibition materials (but Portuguese was eventually abandoned in most cases).

The Board of Trustees of the Girard Foundation accepted the Hemisfair Committee's invitation to participation on February 21, 1967.[720] In a separate letter to the Committee for Cultural Participation, Girard outlined the scope of the project; for Hemisfair, he would construct the building to house the exhibition; plan and design the interior, including decorative finishes and mechanical provisions; select objects through loan and acquisition; pack and ship the works; and install the exhibit.[721] Furthermore, Girard and several assistants would need to live in San Antonio for two months prior to the opening of the exhibit in order to mount the works properly.

By early May 1967 Pic Swartz, director of cultural exhibits for Hemisfair, approved Girard's request to take a short trip to Brazil to procure additional objects for the exhibit.[722] Existing plans for the exhibit demonstrate that Girard refined elements of the building over the course of June and July of 1967. He also corresponded with several designers during the planning of the pavilion, including Charles Eames and soft toy designer Marilyn Neuhart, as well as with folk art vendors—Brimful House in Detroit;

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[719] Memo from Pic Swartz to James Gaines, 21 March 1967, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[720] Girard Foundation to Arnold Swartz (Committee for Cultural Participation), 21 February 1967, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[721] Alexander Girard to Arnold Swartz, 21 February 1967, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas; The letter also outlined expenses and billing for the committee.
[722] Money was a constant struggle for Hemisfair planner, but they agreed to a $2,000-3,000 expenditure, which was to be applied against the $20,000 contingency built into Girard's budget. Pic Swartz to Alexander Girard, 5 May 1967, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.

Sam Hilu in New York; and Victor Fosado in Mexico City—thus employing a similar DIA strategy of gathering expert opinions to create a cohesive yet diverse plan.[723] Correspondence between Hemisfair personnel reveals that they were pleased with Girard's progress by June 1967, indicating that the exhibit's "superb quality…reflects its prodigious cost."[724]

Part of the Hemisfair planners' financial arrangement hinged on sponsorship. They believed that after consulting many corporations, Hallmark was a likely candidate as sponsor of Girard's exhibition because the firm had contributed an exhibit at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair. In the end, Hallmark did not underwrite Girard pavilion; in fact, Girard asked Hemisfair not to approach Hallmark.[725] Hemisfair planners conceded that, despite their best efforts, at having pitched the idea to Chrysler, American Greeting Cards, Reynolds Metals, among others, the Girard material did not lend itself easily to corporate needs, acknowledging that the $530,000 that the Hemisfair committee was asking for was a large sum, even to large corporations.

Proceeding without sponsorship, Girard's pavilion was fully planned and ready for installation on time. Girard spent several weeks supervising the mounting of the pavilion, frequently "permitting no one else to set the figures in their places."[726] One

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[723] Invoice, Girard to James Gaines, 31 March 1967, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[724] Memo from Pic Swartz to James M. Gaines (cc: Frank Manupelli, Dick Miller and Jack Reiss), 15 June 1967, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[725] According to a letter, "Pic said he surmises the reason might lay in past associations." Memo from Jack Reiss to Paul Howell, 25 August 1967, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.This is a bit odd because Girard worked on several Hallmark projects, including a nativity show and an apartment for Mr. Hall (but perhaps the relationship ended poorly).
[726] Howard Taubman, "The Magic of a People," *New York Times* (April 5, 1968), 51.

person who was allowed to help mount the show was Robert K. Winn, an artist and folk art collector from San Antonio.[727] Winn became acquainted with Girard in the mid-1960s when the latter visited San Antonio to buy textiles, toys, and other folk art at La Sirena, Winn's riverfront retail store that sold Mexican folk art from 1962. Girard borrowed one of Winn's nativities for the "The Nativity" exhibition held at the Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City, which further cemented their relationship. After Girard expressed his concern about installing the San Antonio exhibition without local help, Winn offered his services. Winn said,

> Naturally, he had never seen anything that I had really done except the shop. He [Girard] said, "I hate to put you on a menial chore, but this has to be done and I want it done the way I want it done."[728]

For "Hell" in the "Heaven and Hell" scene (Figure 254), Winn created the stalactites and stalagmites, which were composed of cheesecloth and plaster, and after having met Girard's high standards, he was given other tasks. Winn noted,

> It was interesting…it was *his* show and obviously he wanted it to look like his show. So he would tell me what he had in mind and I would basically set it; then he'd come along and say, "that's fine" or "no, I want it this way." Then if it was not right the first time, I'd re-set it and let him look at it again before I fastened it down.[729]

Winn fabricated most of the landscaping for the scenes—the mountains, trees, shrubbery and rocks—using a type of papier maché to build up the landscape.[730] Although Girard had assistance throughout the staging process, like a master craftsman he directed every vignette and painstakingly approved every last detail. After Girard explained his vision,

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[727] Robert K. Winn, Interview with Mrs. Esther MacMillan, January 31, 1979, Bexar County Historical Commission, The Institute of Texan Cultures Oral History Collection, 1967-2011, University of Texas at San Antonio.
[728] Ibid.
[729] Ibid.
[730] Ibid.

Winn would create a scene that Girard would examine. Once scenes were completely approved, then they were fastened and firmly set behind the glass partition.

The other notable figure who contributed to the pavilion was Georgia O'Keeffe.[731] O'Keeffe and the Girards were good friends who lived near one another in New Mexico, spent weekends at one another's homes, sent holiday greetings, dined often, and traveled together. The Girards and O'Keeffe wrote letters, including one in February of 1960 in which Girard's secretary enclosed for O'Keeffe a toy article that Girard penned for her review.[732] As part of their relationship, O'Keeffe sent the Girards a particular toy; he was happy to receive it as "Charles Eames has one, but I did not."[733] Likely for the inauguration of the Girard Wing at the Museum of International Folk Art (December 5, 1982), O'Keeffe wrote a dedication to Girard's collection, stating, "Sandro Girard is a collector—no matter where he goes and what is around he always finds something to pick up and bring home that will be part of his collection."[734] A trusted friend, O'Keeffe attended many of Girard's exhibition and project openings (including HemisFair), but was also invited to more personal events, including their daughter's

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[731] Girard wrote to O'Keeffe, "Am very happy to know that you are coming to the opening! I think you will be pleased with the rocks." Alexander Girard to Georgia O'Keeffe, postmarked March 2, 1968, Box 192, folder 3268, Alfred Stieglitz / Georgia O'Keeffe archive, 1728-1986, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.

[732] Felice Zimmerman to Georgia O'Keeffe, February 18, 1960, Box 192, folder 3263, Alfred Stieglitz / Georgia O'Keeffe archive, 1728-1986, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.

[733] Alexander Girard to Georgia O'Keeffe, April 27, 1960, Box 192, folder 3263, Alfred Stieglitz / Georgia O'Keeffe archive, 1728-1986, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.

[734] Georgia O'Keeffe, "Sandro Girard is a Collector…." 1982, Box 192, Folder 3270, Alfred Stieglitz / Georgia O'Keeffe archive, 1728-1986, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.

commencement from boarding school.[735] When the Girards entertained business guests at their Santa Fe home, often they would invite O'Keeffe also to stay for the weekend; she was a vital contact in the area, lending an important artistic influence to their circle. The relationship was like many that the Girards maintained, part-business arrangement and part-social entertainment.

As with any exhibition, there were hazards and areas to safeguard. Girard was concerned about potential vibrations caused by crowds of people walking throughout the building. In anticipation of this problem, he designed the walkway leading to the exhibit and the flooring of the exhibition building as two separate structures to individually absorb weight (Figure 255).[736] Another issue that concerned Girard was lighting. With hot, persistent bulbs, the folk art, especially those works painted with watercolors were likely to fade, within the Girard exhibit colors faded over the six-month period. Girard accepted a level of damage, and was prepared to accept that such objects had to be considered "discard and replacement material."[737]

1. Graphic Material

Girard provided a cohesive identity for the pavilion by shaping the exhibit's graphic material, which included designs for a poster, brochure, ticket, catalog and

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[735] Alexander Girard to Georgia O'Keeffe, February 5, 1963, Box 192, Folder 3265, Alfred Stieglitz / Georgia O'Keeffe archive, 1728-1986, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.
[736] Winn discussed Girard's concern about vibrations, but conceded that although he had considered it in the design process, his idea did not actually work because, in the end, vibrations from the crowds did cause objects to move within displays. Robert K. Winn, Interview with Mrs. Esther MacMillan, January 31, 1979, Bexar County Historical Commission, The Institute of Texan Cultures Oral History Collection, 1967-2011, University of Texas at San Antonio.
[737] Ibid.

exterior murals. The exterior murals directed visitors toward the brightly painted pavilion. One oversized mural proclaimed "EL ENCANTO DE UN PUEBLO THE MAGIC OF A PEOPLE O ENCANTO DUM POVO" with an arrow pointing toward the pavilion (Figure 256). A surviving design drawing highlights Girard's decision to use distinct colors to separate the languages (Figure 257). Next to this informational mural was a figural one of an angel soaring above a devil (Figure 258). The same figures, also found within the exhibit, were repeated in Girard's poster design for the exhibition (Figure 259). This method reclaimed the figures for multiple purposes to achieve a more cohesive graphic plan; in the face of hundreds of folk art objects assembled throughout the pavilion, the symbolic figures of Heaven and Hell loomed above all others, literally, outdoors on the mural, as well as on the souvenir poster purchased by many visitors (Figure 260). The greatest difference between the design drawing and the realized poster, beyond altering the language of the title of the exhibition, is the removal of the Hemisfair logo. In a unified effort, art for the poster was also used for the mural on the building, tickets, and the book jacket.[738]

The exhibition catalog was another key element of the total design project of Hemisfair. The Portuguese language was also utilized on the introductory mural and poster, as well as on the title page of the exhibition catalog. Early drawings for the title page reveal the symbols that Girard desired to incorporate into the graphic design, including a mountain, sun, cross, and wavy lines (suggesting water) (Figure 261). The realized title page included some of the same images that Girard used for the exterior

[738] It was also to be used for a soft cover book, but Viking Press seems to have not printed this version. Memo from Alexander Girard to Pic Swartz, 26 September 1967, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.

murals—a sun, angels, and a blossoming tree of life (Figure 262). Similarly, for the final product, the Hemisfair logo was removed (Figure 263). During the planning of Hemisfair, Girard suggested using Eames to photograph works for the book because of his prominence in the design community, but also because as a member of the Girard Foundation, he would donate his services on the project. As a budget item that was never clearly articulated, when Pic Swartz received an invoice from Eames for $3,771.24 to cover the photography expenses for the Girard book, he was "frankly shocked at the size of this statement" and believed it to be contrary to the verbal arrangement he and Girard had established.[739]

Eames photographed several of Girard's objects in color for the catalog, but the experience of the catalogue is dramatically different from that of the exhibition. The highly edited catalog, in which relatively few individual objects set artfully outdoors were highlighted in each photograph, was in opposition to the experience of the exhibition, in which objects were densely congested, creating a horror vacui effect (an approach that may be observed in other Girard projects). One of Girard's highlighted folk art works, a carved and painted Pueblan angel (Figure 264), may have been the inspiration for the angel figure in the graphic identity for *The Magic of a People*.

2. <u>The theatrical settings of Girard's pavilion</u>

The exhibition design for *The Magic of a People* was dissimilar from exhibitions in which objects are typologically lined up in a case, an approach that Girard disliked. For Hemisfair he used his folk art objects placed within environments to tell stories.

[739] Memo from Pic Swartz to James M. Gaines, 10 January 1968, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.

Because he collected these works with an eye toward exhibition design, a connection between Girard's exhibitions and theatre can be forged. About his folk art collection (eventually donated to the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe), he has said,

> …. It becomes alive more to me, it becomes theatre….it also becomes not an exhibition of a collection, because nothing can be worse than a collection, which means numbered objects lined up in a case…..[740]

Girard was less interested in collection-building from an expert's viewpoint; rather, he preferred possessing the ability to build sets, or environments. He also said,

> I think you are enriching the pieces by giving them a world, environment, interior that is more than a simple thing; so that the context, to me, is more important than the object, if there isn't a context, then it becomes stamp collecting. [741]

More important than educating the public overtly (and thus in direct contrast to the earlier DIA exhibition), folk art was engaged in order to give the viewers the *freedom* to creatively construct their own experience. He believed that "theatre offers extracts or essences of atmospheres, the best of which exude a pungency of the particular world portrayed."[742] Girard's goal was to emphasize looking and discovery so that the viewer could make connections within the symbolic context that he fashioned. For Girard, placing objects within a context was paramount in designing exhibitions. When traveling to foreign countries, Girard visited artists and craftsmen within their studios to understand the environment in which an object was made; he firmly believed that when taken out of their native surroundings, the objects lose "half their lives," in other words,

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[740] Alexander Girard, Interview by Charlotte Cerny. Transcription to Tape 810.5. January 27, 1982. Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
[741] Ibid.
[742] "La Fonda del Sol: Questions and Answers," GI3, Herman Miller Archives, Zeeland, Michigan.

their meaning.[743] When Girard constructed contexts, he did not replicate the artist's workshop, but rather simulated symbolic fantasy settings, such as those for Hemisfair.

In fact, Girard referred to his vignettes for the Hemisfair as "sets"[744]; for him, "the underlying philosophical idea is that you should show things in context," as opposed to standard didactic museum displays.[745] This follows what Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimlett characterized as in-situ exhibiting; that is, objects are "surrounded by as full a recreation as possible of its original setting. Authenticity and knowledge, at least as far as external features are concerned, are the hallmarks of in-situ exhibitions."[746] Three philosophies governed the display of folk art during the 20th century. At the turn of the century, within the natural history approach, objects were often grouped according to geographic point of origin. Fine art museums tended to treat folk or primitive art as precious objects, considering them (although hesitantly) as high art. As a third approach, Girard used themes that transcended cultural boundaries. This type of exhibition is also exemplified by its lack of labels or educational devices, about which Girard felt strongly. Resisting a hierarchical approach, Girard believed that people should be able to control an individual narrative.[747]

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[743] Kent, "The Girard Foundation Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art," 64.
[744] Alexander Girard, Interview by Paul Winkler and Charlene Cerny. Transcription. January 25, 1979. Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
[745] Ibid.
[746] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimlett, "Objects of Ethnography" in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 380.
[747] And for his final, most monumental project, the Girard wing of the Museum of International Folk Art (opened in 1982), there are so few labels within the massive exhibit.

Girard's viewpoint also follows the idea of a museum without walls, which was proposed by French writer André Malraux. He recommended eradicating the traditional boundaries of museums (that is, by country; by time period; by medium).[748] Girard must have been aware of this important theory during the midcentury as this was exactly his methodology in display (and Girard knew of Malraux, as he had sent the Millers of Columbus, Indiana a copy of his 1957 book, *Metamorphosis of the Gods*). Similarly, during the period Bernard Rudofsky recommended breaking down the narrow concepts of architecture in his *Architecture Without Architects* exhibition (1964) at MoMA.[749] For Rudofsky, vernacular architecture, which was immune to changing fashions, was important and notable, as each culture had its own distinctive non-pedigreed architecture (which can be viewed as a correlation to folk art). In the era of travel as an industry, exotic architecture, in the form of "picture-postcard towns" in "fairy-tale" countries was quite popular.[750] These examples demonstrate that Girard's use of folk art within high modernist spaces during the midcentury was part of a larger cultural project of rupture and change across multiple fields.

From religious scenes to traditional narrative scenes, the themes for the 41 tableaux within Girard's pavilion varied wildly; they included Garden of Eden; Noah's Ark; Christening; Parade; Bullfight; Nativity; The Three King; Wedding Banquet; Indians; Mermaids; Village; Beauty Queen; Peruvian Village; Mexican House; Fair;

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[748] André Malraux, *The Voices of Silence* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1953).
[749] The author thanks Penelope Dean for suggesting a corollary from the world of architecture. Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects: An Introduction to Nonpedigreed Architecture* (New York: Museum of Museum Art, distributed by Doubleday, 1964).
[750] Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects*, 3.

Mexican Kitchen; Market; Magic; Cock Fight; Marionettes; Mexican Village; Café; Mexican Village; Toy Shop; Cowboys; Indian Pueblo; Fantastic Village; Musicians; Procession; Boats; Saints; Peruvian Procession; Indian Market; Market; Garden; Mexican Town; Last Supper; Day of the Dead; Wake; Hell; and Paradise. Girard's meticulous planning included drawing floor plans for each individual scene, such as the "Portugal Procession 043," which outlined the placement of figures within an architectural setting (Figure 265). For window #10 (Mermaids), this scene (Figure 266), which had far more under lights than any other scene (Figure 267), glowed like a stage set, brilliantly illuminating the central *La Sirena* figure (Figure 268); this piece of Oaxacan painted pottery was also photographed by Eames for the exhibition catalog (Figure 269).[751] The other mermaids chosen by Girard were variations on the same theme, carefully arranged around rocks and within a radiant white cave, likely inspired by the Mediterranean mythological homes of these sirens. Although frequently considered a European figure, in the planning documents Girard emphasized that mermaids also appeared in the ancient Americas, thus demonstrating their relevance to *Magic of a People*.[752]

Other tableaux implied more narrative scenes; for the "Café" visualization, Girard constructed *Café de las Palomas*, a bustling scene in which tables were filled with figures eating, drinking, and relaxing (Figure 270). The objects for this scene were procured from Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Portugal, and the United States. Some tableux explored customs and traditions, like Christenings or the Mexican holiday "Day of the Dead" (Figure 271). Girard, who traveled extensively throughout Mexico, was positioned to comment on this

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[751] See figure 58 in the catalog for a photograph of the Oaxacan mermaid set on fountain within a landscape. Alexander Girard, *El Encanto de un Pueblo,* np.
[752] Planning document for "The Magic of a People," San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.

celebratory festival, as he collaborated with the Eameses on a Day of the Dead film in 1956.[753] In an act of whimsy, Girard even wrote himself and his wife into the scene by inscribing "Sandro" (Girard's nickname) and "Susan" on two skulls in the foreground (Figure 272). Writing about this Mexican holiday, Girard noted that "elaborate and beautiful objects of sugar are made in the shapes of skulls, tombs and angels; they became toys which are played with and finally eaten."[754]

Using the dominant language of communications during the 1960s, Girard declared that non-representational folk "toys" made for children were basically "screens onto which the child's imagination may be projected," whereas the folk art that adults find interesting represent objects.[755] For him, these displays of toys, or folk art, communicate creativity, and were a way of recapturing a way of communication as they "incorporated many basic forms and features from many folk cultures."[756] In the quickly moving postwar world, for Girard, toys were a way to understand former ways of living and learn from earlier cultures, as he considered them "a mirror of life."[757]

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[753] The film was funded by the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, and was released by the Eameses in 1957 (with the assistance of Susan and Alexander Girard and Deborah Sussman, with Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. narrating the script). The film observes how the objects that are part of the Day of the Dead (November 2) celebration are made, sold, and used. The film may be viewed here: http://www.eamesoffice.com/the-work/day-of-the-dead-2/

[754] Alexander Girard, "Definition of a Toy," April 14, 1960, Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

[755] Ibid.

[756] Alexander Girard, Definition of a Toy, Encyclopedia Britannica, Box 192, Folder 3263, Alfred Stieglitz / Georgia O'Keeffe archive, 1728-1986, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.

[757] Alexander Girard, Definition of a Toy, Encyclopedia Britannica, Box 192, Folder 3263, Alfred Stieglitz / Georgia O'Keeffe archive, 1728-1986, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.

In the end, Girard's installation cost $236,728.38, but the final budget was approved at $208,050.00. After the exhibit opened on April 6, 1968, Girard wrote to Pic Swartz about the final bill ($28,678.38), which was the amount expended over budget; he did not want to bear the burden of a financial loss, and thus attempted to recoup the costs from the fair planners.[758] Hemisfair's staff attorney, Sam Wolf, examined the original contract entered into by Alexander Girard, Inc. and San Antonio Fair, Inc., and determined that "no further payments to Girard are legally authorized" because Hemisfair was not obligated for an amount in excess of $208,050.00.[759] In mid-July 1968 Girard appealed to Henry B. Zachry, chairman and CEO of Hemisfair, for the remaining balance owed, expressing the popularity of *The Magic of a People*, particularly the "favorable attention and publicity in the national press…numerous magazines, and also notably on television on the 'Today Show.'"[760] Beyond the assumed financial success (due to the exhibit's popularity), Girard also outlined some of the vague terms of the contract that were unfavorable to the designer in an effort to appeal to fair officials.

Following the conclusion of Hemisfair, there were proposals for the continuation of *The Magic of a People*. One idea was for the City of San Antonio to maintain the exhibit through the city's Chamber of Commerce for one year on the site of Hemisfair, with an option to renew, but nothing ever materialized.[761] The objects returned to Santa

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[758] Alexander Girard to Arnold Swartz, 15 April 1968, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[759] Memo from Sam Wolf to Arnold Swartz, 8 July 1968, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[760] Alexander Girard to H. B. Zachry, 16 July 1968, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.
[761] Douglas Harlan to Alexander Girard, 11 September 1968, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records, 1962-1995, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.

Fe, where they would eventually reside in perpetuity in the Girard Wing (and in storage) at the Museum of International Folk Art.

The planners of Hemisfair imagined a Pan-American space that was possible in a city of a mixed population of Anglo Americans and people of Latin American descent. The fair focused on exhibits and activities based on Texans, Mexicans, and Mexican-Americans, identities that were well represented in San Antonio.[762] Into this multicultural world's fair, Girard interjected his exhibit of folk art, *The Magic of a People*, which he believed to be a "human comedy on the scale of Tinker Bell."[763] He reasoned, "folk art tells us there are no 'foreigners.' The colors vary, their languages vary, but their spirits and aspirations are interwoven into on incredibly rich humanity."[764] This is significant because his comments participate in the tradition of humane modernism, but further, he did not parse the varied cultures present in San Antonio, or get involved in the culture wars. He believed (perhaps naively) that folk art can tell stories of a humanity that will cross gender, race, class, and identity divisions.

During the turbulent late 1960s, when the American social, cultural, economic and political landscapes were radically shifting, Girard chose to remain dedicated to his folk art collection. As with Girard's other notable projects, *The Magic of a People* was positively reviewed in the national press, and its juxtaposition with major national news of the day is quite jarring. For example, the cover of *Life* magazine (May 10, 1968) featured the barricaded student revolt at Columbia University, while *The Magic of a*

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[762] Gonzalez, *Designing Pan-America,* 196.
[763] "Alexander Girard and the Girard Foundation Collection," undated (but probably c. 1977), Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
[764] Elizabeth Tallent, "For Collectors: Exalted Play—Alexander Girard's International Folk Art," Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

People was treated in the article, "Fair That's Easy to Take In." Similarly, the cover for *Time* magazine pictured Los Angeles Chief of Police under the banner "The Police and the Ghetto," which explored how Los Angeles was dealing with post-race riot community policing, while the "stars of Hemisfair," or Girard's toys and dolls, delighted readers a few pages away.[765] Viewed within this context, Girard's steadfast commitment to folk art may also be understood as a soft political statement. He was acutely aware of the world changing around him (even in isolated Santa Fe), and he used folk art to articulate a solution. For him, the "examination of folk art of one culture by members of another has brought about understanding and admiration among peoples of the world."[766] This approach evokes the postwar solution of soft power; a generation later in 1968, Girard's non-violent stance seems old-fashioned and traditional, which correlates to the denouement of his career during the 1970s.

Girard proposed that objects outside of their context lose meaning, which explains his penchant for contextualizing objects and constructing scenes. He also installed exhibitions with numerous components so that visitors would return many times to view repeatedly. Girard has said that he desired for "people to be tremendously confused," or, more likely, surprised or stimulated.[767] But, there was always an underlying rationalism to Girard's seemingly ambiguous or overwhelming displays because of his extreme attention to detail. For him,

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[765] Scrapbooks include *Time* (July 19, 1968), Alexander Girard Archive, Vitra Design Museum.
[766] Scrapbooks include Alexander Girard, "Folk Art," *People-to-People* (Summer 1963), Alexander Girard Archive, Vitra Design Museum.
[767] Alexander Girard, Interview by Charlotte Cerny. Transcription to Tape 810.5. January 28, 1982. Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

> Good exhibition design should create a climate that makes it possible for people to see new things, should create a mood and allow the visitor an opportunity to associate with the objects. Like a painting, it uses emphasis, repetition, juxtaposition, and color to do that.[768]

In the end, Girard created an experience with *The Magic of a People*—the experience of viewing *his* understanding of varied Latin American culture, which was a naïve, backwards looking, traditional viewpoint that was full of fiestas, bull fights, and religious scenes. By assimilating and accumulating these disparate works together in a pavilion, Girard attempted to extrapolate the similarities across cultures to humanize us, and to make the visitors realize that they were more similar than dissimilar in a period of tumultuous cultural and social upheaval.

[768] Kent, "The Girard Foundation Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art," 64.

Figure 245
"Make Your House Blossom with Folk Art," *House and Garden* (December 1961)

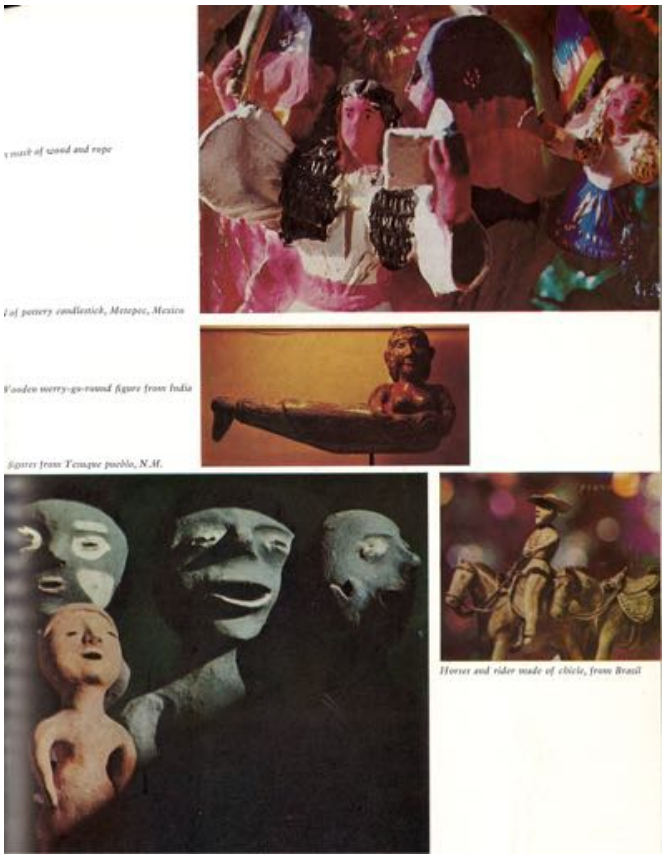

Figure 246
"Artless Art," Horizon (Spring 1966)

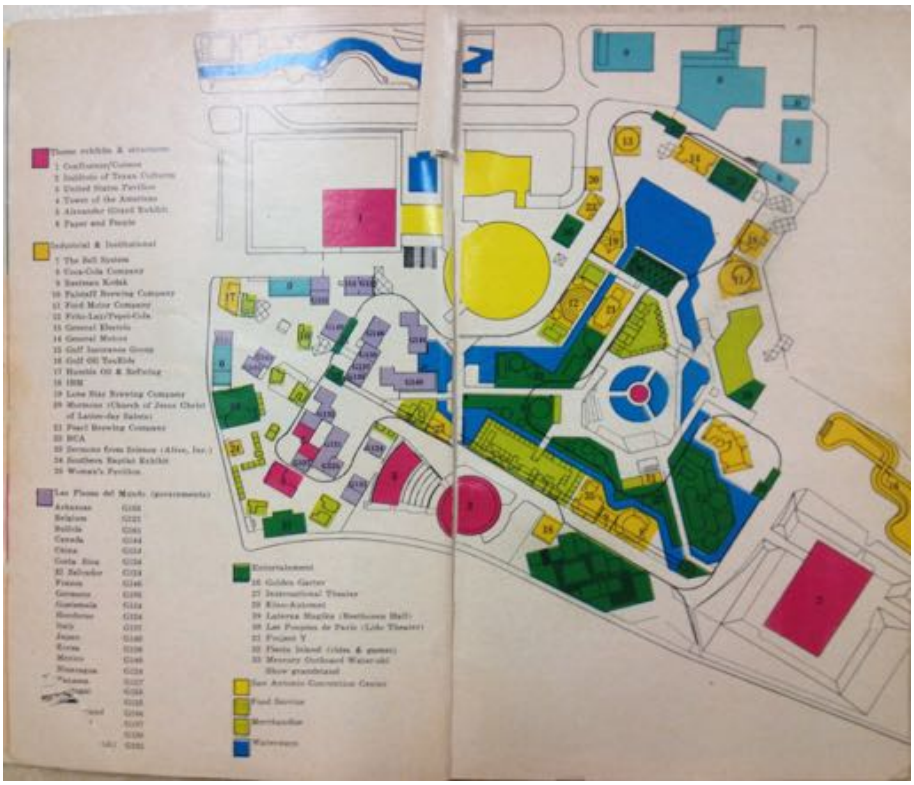

Figure 247
Location of Girard exhibit within Hemisfair
Official Catalog of Hemisfair 1968

Figure 248
Exterior of Girard Pavilion
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04652_0013

Figure 249
Postcard from HemisFair '68,
San Antonio Fair, Inc., records, MS 031, box 504, folder 5

Figure 250
Exterior of Girard Pavilion
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04652_0042

Figure 251
Interior of Girard exhibit, San Antonio Fair, Inc., Records, MS 31
University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections

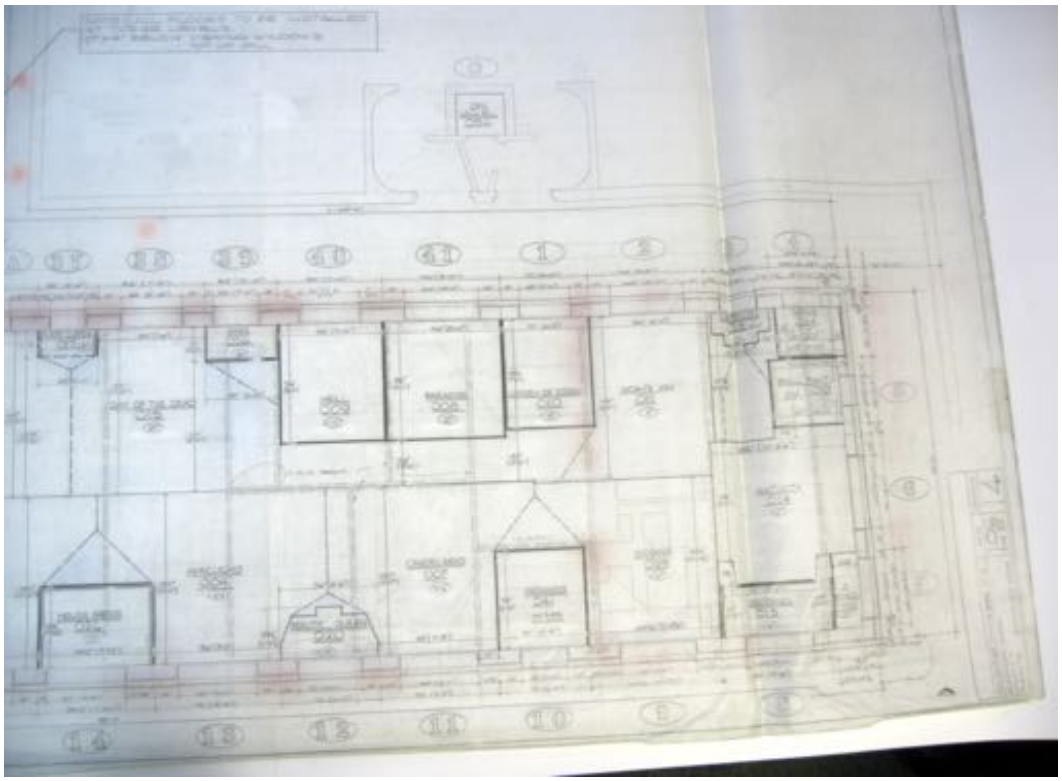

Figure 252
Floor Plan of Exhibit Spaces
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard

Figure 253
Visitors peering through the "Fair" visualization, San Antonio Fair, Inc., Records, MS 31
University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections

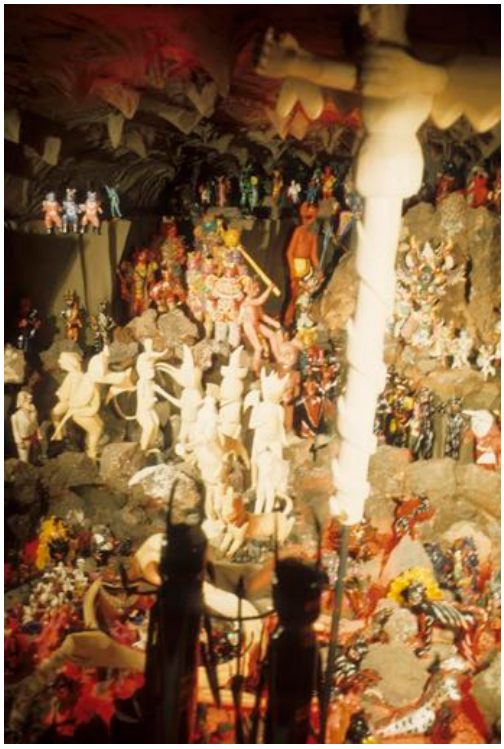

Figure 254
Stalagtites by Robert Winn
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04656_0044

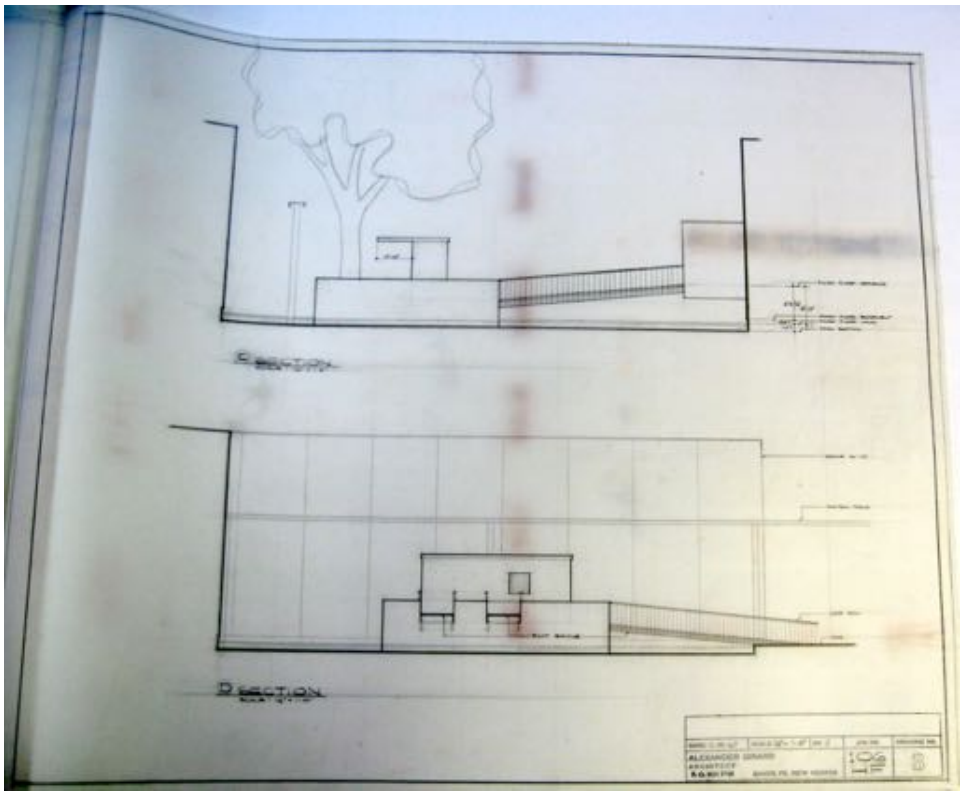

Figure 255
Elevation of Hemisfair Exhibit Buildings and Walkway
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard

Figure 256
Visitors to Hemisfair
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04652_0028

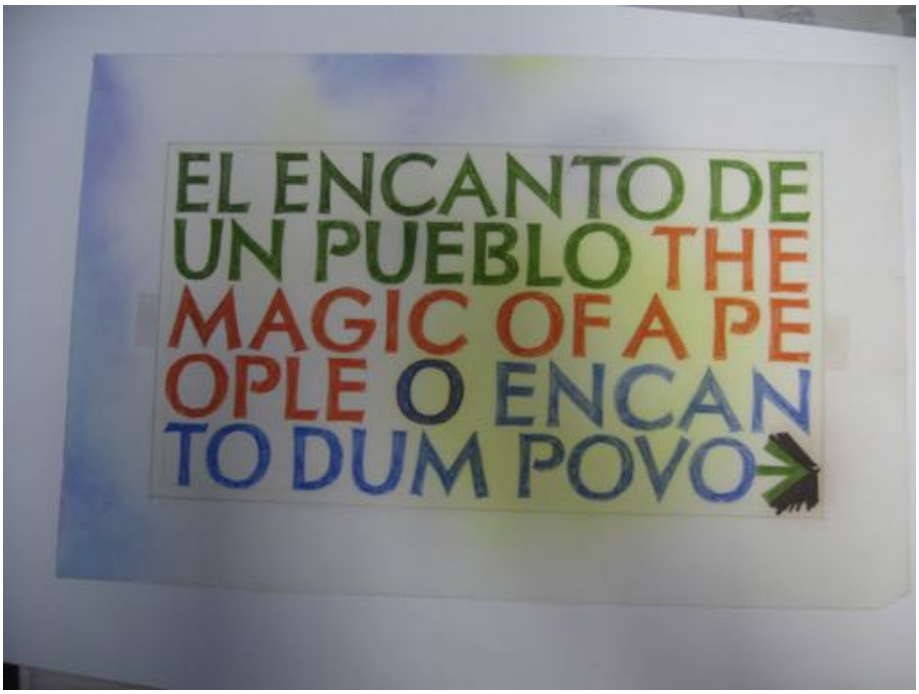

Figure 257
Design Drawing for Entrance Banner
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4902

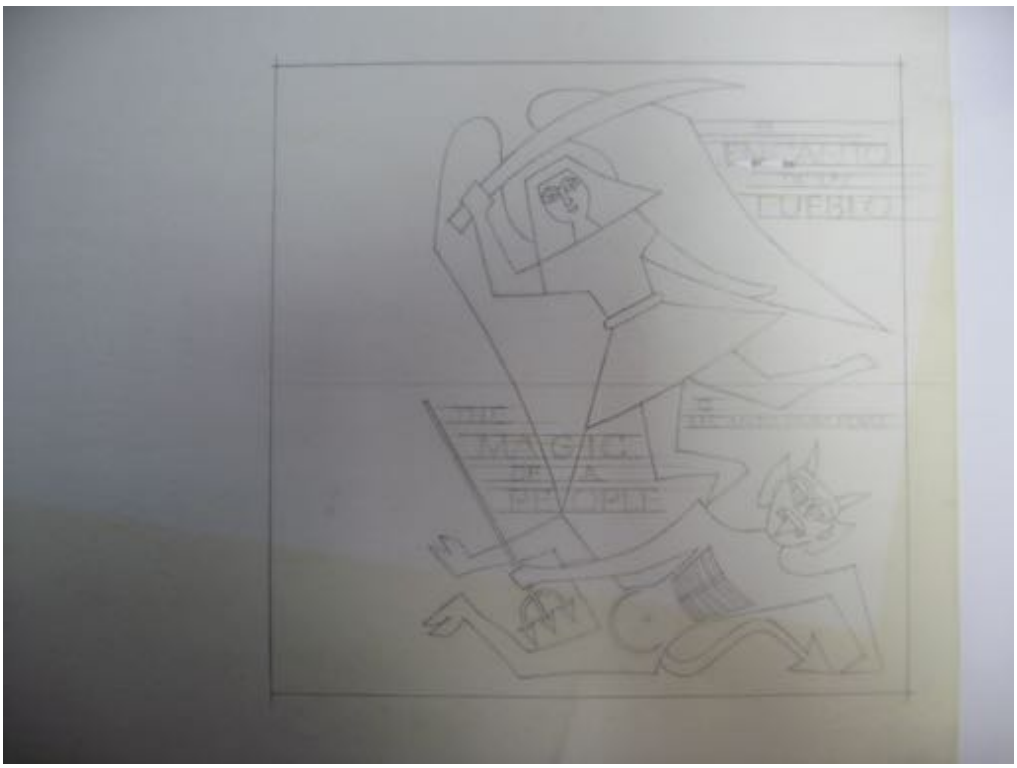

Figure 258
Design Drawing for Poster
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4902

Figure 259
Design Drawing for Poster
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4902

Figure 260
The Magic of a People poster advertising Girard's pavilion at Hemisfair

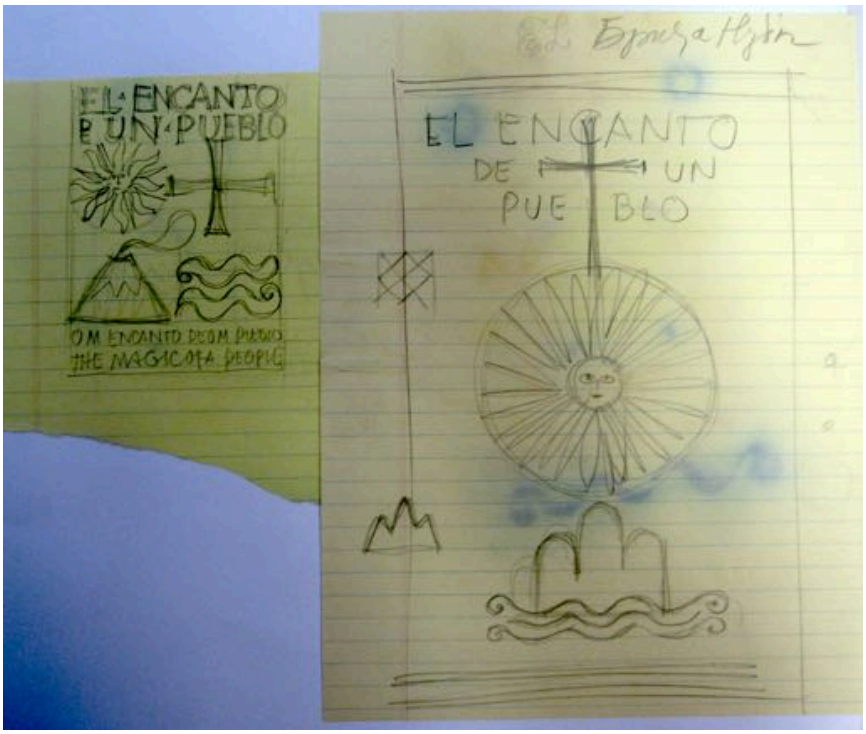

Figure 261
Drawings for Title Page of Catalog
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4902

Figure 262
Design Drawing for title page of catalog
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4902

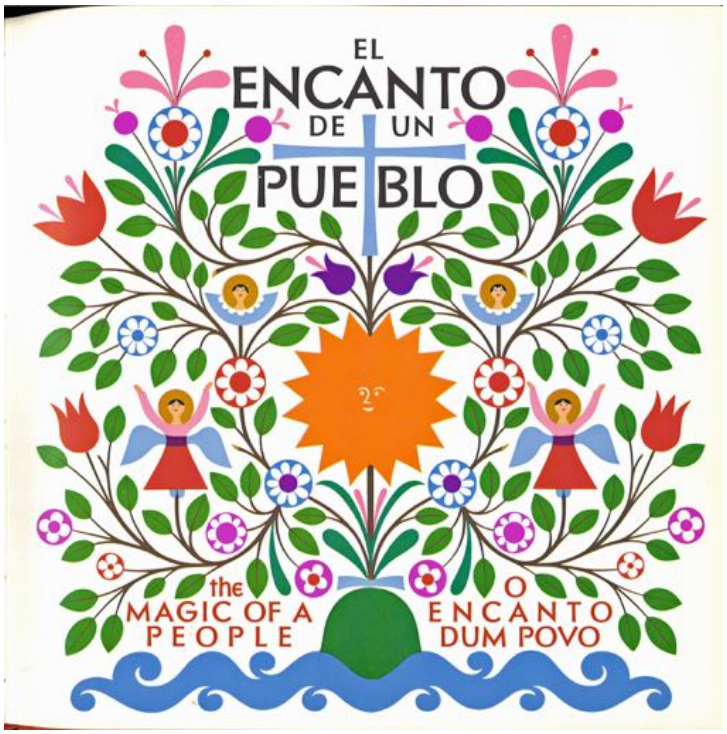

Figure 263
Title page of *The Magic of a People*

Figure 264
Pueblan Angel from *The Magic of a People*

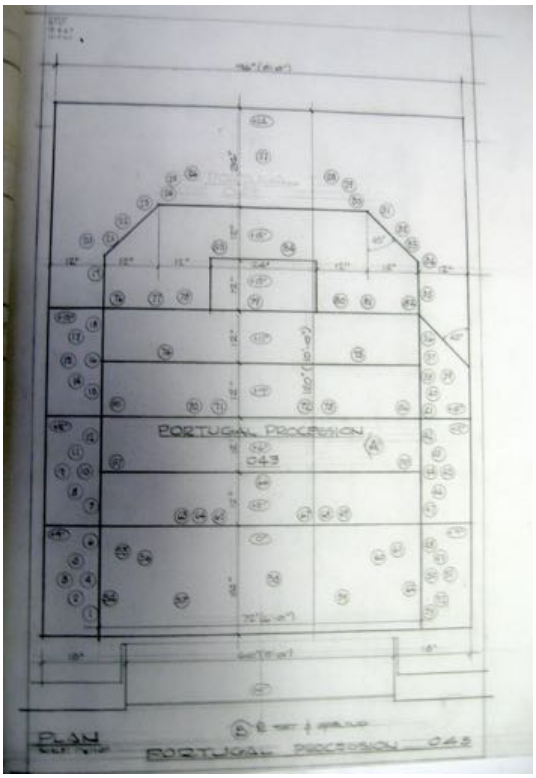

Figure 265
Plan, Portugal Procession 043
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard

Figure 266
Mermaids Window
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04653_0042

TBD	LIGHTING REQ.						
SC. #	NAME						
010	CROWN OF THORN		3	4	750	2	[illegible]
011	NOAH'S ARK		3	4	[illegible]	3	[illegible]
018	CHRISTENING		4	2	750		
044	SPAIN		2	3	[illegible]		
019	BULL FIGHT		3	2	750		
014	NATIVITY		3	4	[illegible]	3	[illegible]
055	3 KINGS		2	2	[illegible]		
013	WEDDING		7	4	[illegible]		
029	INDIANS		3	4	[illegible]	4	[illegible]
041	MERMAIDS	10			[illegible]	2	[illegible]
007	CANDELABRO		3	4	750	4	[illegible]
020	BEAUTY QUEEN		3	4	1050		
004	BYBOWCHO		3	4	[illegible]	3	750
026	HOUSE (RATIO)	1		4	[illegible]	3	[illegible]
021	FAIR		3	4	1050	3	[illegible]
025	KITCHEN		3	4	[illegible]	1	150
015	TLAQUETAQUE		3	4	350	3	750
012	MAGIC		4	4	[illegible]	3	[illegible]
039	COCK FIGHT		3	4	1050	1	150
057	MARIONETTES		3	4	1050	1	[illegible]
006	TECOMATEPEC		3	4	1650	3	[illegible]
049	CAFE		3	2	750		
001	HETEPEC	4	3	4	[illegible]	3	[illegible]
048	TOY SHOP		3	4	[illegible]	1	150
028	COWBOYS		3	4	350	3	750
005	PUEBLO		3	4	[illegible]	3	[illegible]
042	SCHWETZ		3	4	[illegible]	3	[illegible]
032	MUSICIANS		3	4	1650	3	[illegible]
043	RITUAL PROCESSION		3	4	[illegible]	3	[illegible]
024	BOATS		4	4	[illegible]	1	150
040	SAINTS		3	4	[illegible]	3	[illegible]
051	PROCESSION		4	4	[illegible]	2	[illegible]
053	NOAH MARKET		3	4	[illegible]	3	[illegible]
050	TECOCHA		3	4	[illegible]	3	[illegible]
056	RITUAL GARDENS		4	4	[illegible]	1	[illegible]
001	ACATLAN	3	4	4	[illegible]	10	[illegible]
001	ACATLAN		3	4	[illegible]		
017	LAST SUPPER		4	3	[illegible]		
015	DAY OF THE DEAD		3	4	[illegible]	3	[illegible]
016	WAKE		4	2	[illegible]		
009	HELL	3	4	4	[illegible]		
008	PARADISE		3	4	[illegible]	4	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]				[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]				17,700		
[illegible]	[illegible]				[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]				[illegible]		

magic dialogue exhibition

Figure 267
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, 4909

Figure 268
Central Mermaid Figure
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04653_0008

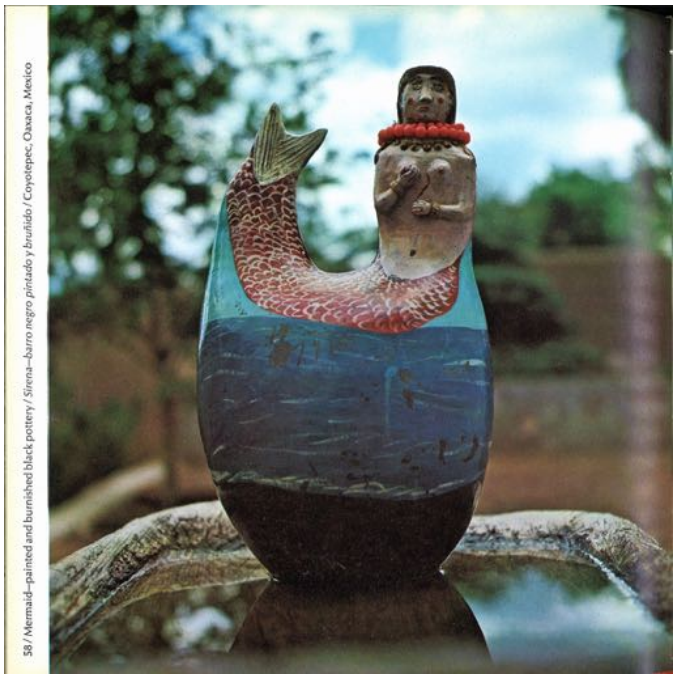

Figure 269
Mermaid Figure in the Exhibition Catalog, photographed by Charles Eames
The Magic of a People

Figure 270
Café de las Palomas
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04654_0010

Figure 271
Day of the Dead
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR04656_0028

Figure 272
Detail of “Day of the Dead” visualization
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04656_0027

VII. CONCLUSION

Although his most prolific period was during the postwar years of the late 1940s through the 1960s, Alexander Girard continued designing into the 1970s. He was considered a talented interior designer because he used color and folk art in exciting new ways, and, according to George Nelson, he possessed his own style that did not "resemble modern interiors of the time."[769] Girard's legacy includes his enormous contribution to the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, but the Girard wing at the Museum and its collection of international folk art do not neatly correlate to the idea of Girard as modern designer.[770] Girard's work is less well known today, than that of his friends and contemporaries Charles and Ray Eames, George Nelson, and others. Many of his projects did not survive the test of time, partly because they were ephemeral in nature, including the restaurant La Fonda del Sol, which, despite being an ersatz historical recreation, Girard believed to be "of our time."[771]

Throughout the chapters I have demonstrated how Girard's artistic practices were informed by ideas of layering and accumulation, which contributed to an accumulative vision in all of his projects—museum exhibitions, domestic interiors, retail settings, corporate ventures, and a world's fair—a visual richness of multiple layers and textures existed. During the period Girard's dense and layered grouping of selected folk art

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[769] Notes made by George Nelson on a museum catalog about Girard include stating that he is " a brilliant interior designer; use(s) color with skill and freedom; had his own style that didn't resemble modern interiors of the time," Box 32, Folder 11, Alexander Girard Correspondence and Printed Matter 1983-85, Charles Eames and Ray Eames papers, 1850-1989 (bulk 1950-1988), Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington D.C.

[770] This is quite unlike the Eameses' legacy as manifested through the Eames House.

[771] "Interior Designed by Alexander Girard for the Inn of the Sun," *Architectural Record* 129 (June 1961), 158.

objects was part of an emerging aesthetic, about which *Life Magazine* proclaimed, "Empty the attic again and fill your home with things."[772] For this feature Milton Greene photographed several interiors, including Girard's colorful, folk art-filled Santa Fe home, and such articles contributed to a reintroduction of things (and Girard's folk-inspired aesthetic) into the US home during the postwar period. He believed that the greatest compliment he could receive as a designer was when a visitor did not have the opportunity to absorb the entirety of a project in one viewing. For him, "this means there is enough color, detail, and quality to make it almost incomprehensible, to see beyond the initial shot, the initial look. You can go back and see a whole new aspect of it; you feel differently, you might look at it differently."[773] Girard's viewpoint suggests the mechanics of his display—a more is better design approach—could elicit an emotional or psychological response, particularly when considering the folk art that he utilized.

Girard worked in several design fields—graphics, industrial design, interiors—but it was his voracious collecting of folk art that became his trademark, and for which he is best known today. Girard participated as an arbiter of taste through magazine columns, retail ventures, and museum exhibitions during an era in which some people in the US believed that there existed good and bad taste.[774] He noted that, "there was a fixed tradition of what was good taste in architecture, furniture, and everything else……in those days a brilliant pink or magenta carried a connotation of double-barreled horror."[775]

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[772] "Clutter is Back in Style," *Life Magazine* 82 (September 6, 1963), 50-58.
[773] Alexander Girard, Interview by Virginia Stith. Transcription from Charles Eames Oral History Project. October 7, 1977. Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
[774] Russell Lynes, "The Tastemakers," *Industrial Design* (October 1954), 74.
[775] Ralph Caplan, *The Design of Herman Miller* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1976).

Girard also referenced the period trepidation toward color, but by the end of the second World War, designers (among others) began to harness and control color to serve their purposes, which was part of the larger discourse of "good taste" during the mid-twentieth century.[776]

For Girard objects mattered, and therefore this analysis of his work has integrated his love of things because the two parts are integral in his approach to postwar design. The link between Girard's collecting of folk art and his designs seems explicit, but he rejected this connection, stating that there is not much of a relationship, except "as a spiritual support."[777] He was careful not to overstate the significance of the collection with regard to his design work because he believed once something was copied, then the design was dead; he thought folk art inspiring, but "in a most abstract way [because] as soon as it starts looking like something, you're in trouble."[778] I believe that he wanted to preserve ideas of authenticity within the handcrafted original, and that this association and a belief in the object to narrate larger tales of humanity enhanced his design work, whether it was designing textile patterns or installing a museum exhibition.

This dissertation concludes that the folk art that Girard collected intersected with new contemporary ways of living, which included ideas of whimsy, the handcrafted, and the theatrical (Figure 273). For example, Girard referred to the T & O Shop as a "sort of

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[776] Elizabeth Burris-Meyer, "Significance of Color," *Furniture Forum* 2 (1950-51), np.
[777] Alexander Girard, Interview by Paul Winkler and Charlene Cerny. Transcription. January 25, 1979. Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
[778] Ibid.

the window of Herman Miller on the world of fantasy."[779] To this end, historian T. J. Jackson Lears has written that, "only by detaching ideas of abundance from material goods and by looking to satisfy demand through play and self-cultivation as much as through accumulation, will human beings alter long-standing frustrations with a consumer society that eternally promises but never fulfills."[780] The accumulation of goods was possible in an affluent postwar US society, and Girard contributed with a playful agenda of folk art collecting alongside his contemporary design work; these whimsical interludes are revealed in his storage walls, artistic arrangements, and exhibitions.

Girard engaged traditional, handcrafted folk art in modern ways. He made assembling global folk art part of his artistic practice by amassing a personal collection, and using the material in museum exhibitions and varied domestic and contract commissions. These were not merely meretricious souvenirs; for Girard they were full of value for their design; storytelling; and keeping culture alive. Folk art offered a way to remain relevant within mainstream modernism (that is, employing these things within his high profile design commissions—Herman Miller, Miller House, Braniff Airlines, for example) by doing something different. The folk art not only complemented the rigidity

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[779] Alexander Girard, Interview by Virginia Stith. Transcription from Charles Eames Oral History Project. October 7, 1977. Institutional Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

[780] Jackson Lears, "Reconsidering Abundance: A Plea for Ambiguity," *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Susan Strasser, Charles McGovern, and Matthias Judt (Washington D.C.: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 411.

of modernism by softening or domesticating it, but perhaps even acted as an agent of subversion or distinction. Folk art was the indelible mark on the personal brand of Alexander Girard—the modern designer who could not function without his collection.

At a moment when the world was looking toward the United States for its architecture and design, Girard embodied the designer who engaged with the major postwar discourses, but also forged his own path because of his folk art collection. For him, a catholic, chaotic type of collecting took precedence over a nineteenth century taxonomic variety. Girard practiced a rapid consumerist collecting of objects that he coupled with design elements in his projects, which translated into a creative freshness in his work. Girard's contribution to the larger US postwar design world was as an idiosyncratic architect-designer, accumulator, and selector who relentlessly pursued collecting things in order to narrate his design projects and to forge new identities for himself, his clients, and the American public who followed his work. Girard used images and objects to communicate his "accumulative vision," an exuberant alternative to the colder variation of modernism.

Figure 273
Girard Family "Mask" Picture, October 1952, Photographed by Ezra Stoller
Vitra Design Museum Archive, Estate of Alexander Girard, MAR-04796_02

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	Research Associate, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, 2007-2010
	Assistant Curator of American Decorative Arts, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, 2011-2014
	Curator of 20th and 21st Century Design, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2015-present
AWARDS:	Wolfsonian-FIU Fellowship, Miami Beach, Florida, 2011
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