



Cold War Modern: Design 1945-70

25 September 2008 – 11 January 2009

www.vam.ac.uk/coldwarmodern

The V&A's autumn exhibition, *Cold War Modern: Design 1945-70*, is the first to examine contemporary design, architecture, film and popular culture on both sides of the Iron Curtain during the Cold War era. Over 300 exhibits are on display from a Sputnik and an Apollo Mission space suit to films by Stanley Kubrick, paintings by Robert Rauschenberg and Gerhard Richter, fashion by Paco Rabanne, designs by Charles and Ray Eames and Dieter Rams, architecture by Le Corbusier, Richard Buckminster Fuller and Archigram, and vehicles including a Messerschmidt micro-car.

The period after the Second World War was one of anxiety and tension but also one of great optimism and unprecedented technological development. The exhibition examines how design was shaped by the Cold War period against the backdrop of the battle between communism and capitalism, the advances of the space race, and the international competition to be modern.

Concentrating on the years from 1945 to 1970, the exhibition displays objects from around the world including the USA, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Italy, France, East and West Germany, Cuba and the UK.

Highlights include:

- Classic Eames designs made of 'modern' materials such as fibreglass;
- Furniture inspired by space such as Eero Aarnio's *Globe Chair* and the *Garden Egg Chair* by Peter Ghyczy;
- Dieter Ram's designs for Braun including his *T1000 Radio world receiver*;
- Previously unseen Eastern bloc architecture, furniture, textiles, graphics and glass;
- Futuristic fashion by designers including Paco Rabanne and Pierre Cardin;
- New post-war forms of transport including the *P70 Coupé* (an early version of the plastic Trabant), the micro car *Messerschmitt Kabinenroller* and the *Vespa* motorscooter;

- Films which shaped the popular imagination such as *Goldfinger*, *The Ipcress File*, *Dr. Strangelove* and *2001: A Space Odyssey* as well as original set design drawings by Kenneth Adam;
- Works by Pablo Picasso, Richard Hamilton, Gerhard Richter, Lucio Fontana and Robert Rauschenberg illustrating the way artists responded to the dominant political and social ideas of the time;
- Propaganda and anti-nuclear posters, photography and sculpture from both East and West;
- Imagined futuristic architecture schemes for cities and dwellings by Hans Hollein, Archigram and Superstudio;
- Experimental designs for inflatable buildings, including a full-scale reconstruction of a key work by Haus-Rucker-Co.

Mark Jones, Director of the V&A, said: “*This is the first exhibition to explore how the development of Modernism after 1945 was shaped by the Cold War. It was a tremendously exciting period in the history of design, a period we have defined as Cold War Modern*”.

The exhibition starts in the immediate post-war period showing differing visions for rebuilding devastated cities and competing ideas of modern life. It looks at new industrial products and building methods from the West as well as socialist realist art and architecture from the USSR. It focuses on rival architectural visions in East and West Berlin: the monumental ‘Stalinallee’ in the Eastern Sector, and the Modernist housing schemes of ‘Interbau’ in the West designed by architects including Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Oskar Niemeyer.

Cold War Modern examines how the competition to be modern entered the domestic sphere, exemplified by the famous 1959 ‘Kitchen Debate’ between Nixon and Khrushchev which took place at the American National Exhibition staged in Moscow, amid displays of the latest American household goods.

During this period, images of destruction haunted the collective imagination. The nuclear threat, and the response to it, are seen through graphics, art, film and imaginary schemes such as Buckminster Fuller’s 1962 geodesic *Dome over Manhattan*.

A section on the space race and hi-tech triumphs highlights the first space mission by Yuri Gagarin aboard a Vostok space capsule. On display are designs of interiors for NASA space craft by Raymond Loewy, experimental spacesuits as well as many examples of furniture, architecture, art and fashion inspired by the space race. Amongst the many technological achievements of the period, a new and distinctive form of architecture emerged, the telecommunications tower, including the Post Office Tower in London and Moscow's Ostankino Tower.

Under the theme of 'Revolution', the exhibition considers forms of protest and rebellion, including the tumultuous events of 1968 in Paris and Prague, looking at them through posters, film, photography and art.

The final section looks at how Cold War technologies were used by architects and designers to create imagined utopias, a world of inflatable, mobile and expendable habitats by groups such as Superstudio and Archigram. There is a full scale reconstruction of *Oasis No. 7*, a giant inflatable environment containing a small 'beach' with palm tree, designed by Viennese architects Haus-Rucker-Co. Other critical views of the future such as Arata Isozaki's photomontage *Re-Ruined Hiroshima* are also on display.

The exhibition ends with the first photograph of Earth taken from space, which inspired artists and designers in their utopian imaginings and acted as a catalyst to a new environmental awareness of the fragility of the planet.

After the V&A, *Cold War Modern: Design 1945-70* will tour to MART, Rovereto, Italy from 28 March to 26 July 2009 and to the National Gallery of Art, Vilnius, Lithuania from October to December 2009.

(Ends)

Notes to Editors:

- *Cold War Modern: Design 1945-70* is at the V&A from 25 September 2008 to 11 January 2009.
- The exhibition curators are Jane Pavitt from the V&A's research department and the University of Brighton in association with David Crowley from the Royal College of Art.
- The exhibition designers are Universal Design Studio with graphics by Bibliothèque.

- An accompanying book of the same title has been produced by V&A Publishing. For further press information about the book contact Julie Chan on 020 7942 2701 or 07747 607 822 or email j.chan@vam.ac.uk
- For press information on merchandise accompanying the exhibition, including furniture by Eero Saarinen, Eero Aarnio and Roman Modzelewski please contact Lee Kendall on 020 7942 2681 or email l.kendall@vam.ac.uk
- Public V&A enquiries call 020 7942 2000 or visit www.vam.ac.uk

Ticket Information

- Tickets: £9 (concessions: senior citizens £7; students, 12-17 year olds, ES-40 holders £5) Family tickets available.
- For advance telephone and online bookings (booking fee applies) call 0870 906 3883 or visit www.vam.ac.uk

For further PRESS information please contact Alex Bratt in the V&A press office on 0207 942 2503 or email a.bratt@vam.ac.uk

Related exhibitions

Dan Dare and the Birth of Hi-tech Britain

30 April 2008 – 25 October 2009

The Science Museum is exploring the period 1945-1970 by looking at the extraordinary British innovation in design and technology at that time. *Dan Dare and the Birth of Hi-tech Britain* shows how wartime research boosted industries such as aviation and electronics, while the home was transformed by consumer products designed in the UK. Dan Dare, hero of *Eagle* comic, reflects the spirit of optimism and faith in technology of the time.

For more information please contact Andrew Marcus in the Science Museum press office on 020 7942 4357 or email andrew.marcus@sciencemuseum.org.uk (not for publication).

Post-War plastics: Dieter Rams's innovations in design, 1956 to 1971

11 September – 18 October 2008

Vitsoe, 72 Wigmore Street, London is exhibiting the pioneering plastic furniture and electrical products of the legendary German designer Dieter Rams. Best known for his work for Braun and Vitsoe, Rams was responsible for some of our most treasured and influential modernist designs. A selection of Rams's classic designs in plastic for both Braun and Vitsoe are on display.

For more information please contact Daniel Nelson at Vitsoe on 020 7935 4968 or email daniel.nelson@vitsoe.com (not for publication).