Designing for Consumption
Design Issues of the 1950s and 60s

“Full Automation” became realized in factories and other workplaces. Industrial robots came to use. The first “mainframe computers” appeared in the late 1940s.

The postwar “baby boomer” generation: ideal of suburban living; a house of one’s own; tight nuclear family.


The emergence of youth subcultures creates a need for “mobile design”: transistor radios, portable TV sets, mopeds and scooters. Taming the youth rebellion into a consumer lifestyle also becomes a design challenge.
Video example:
Eddie Cochran performing “Twenty Flight Rock” in Frank Tashlin’s film
The Girl Can’t Help It (1956, starring Jayne Mansfield)
The scooter: a hit design among young people. It was an Italian innovation. Postwar Italian design was surging in popularity.

Lambretta LD 150, Italy 1957. First Lambrettas were built in 1947. Main competing brand: Vespa.
In England the scooter became a symbol of the ‘mod’ (modern boys and girls) subculture. The Who was seen as a ‘mod’ band. Their song “My Generation” (1965) became the “anthem” of the mod generation. It also announced the liberated “Swinging Sixties.” England became an international source of youth fashion trends.
The Moped was also popular for short range commutes.

**Look carefully:** do you know the location of this Honda advertisement?

Surfboards were invented in Ancient Hawaii, but California became a major center for their development, using new materials like fiberglass as coating.

Polystyrene, polyester and other synthetic materials were also used.
The Skateboard was born in Southern California in the 1940s-1950s. It was a spin-off of the surfboard.

The first manufactured skateboards were ordered by a Los Angeles-based surf shop owned by Bill Richard, and used skate wheels made by the Chicago Roller Skate Company.
Lockheed F-104 Starfighter, introduced in 1958. Features of the fighter jet became a symbolic model for the tailfins of the 1950s "dream cars"
Cadillac Cyclone, 1959
The **Batmobile** of the “campy” Batman television series (20th Century Fox Television, 1966-1968)

Adam West as Batman
The Batmobile was based on one of the numerous ‘concept cars’ proposed by the US car industry in the 1950s. It was based on the “Lincoln Futura” prototype, built by George Barris (died Nov. 2015).

Lincoln Futura never made it to mass production. Can you suggest the reasons why it may have happened?
Personal aerogyro - the 1950s design revolution that did not happen...
... or could it still be possible? The Aeromobil 2.5. prototype, 2014
“California Modern”: The Californian Ideal of Modern Living:
Richard Neutra’s Kaufmann House, Palm Springs, 1946
Carlos Diniz & Ladd & Kelsey Architects, Monarch Bay Homes, Laguna Niguel, 1961
Charles and Ray Eames: The Eames House (Case Study House #8), Santa Monica (1949).
Stylish living with cheap and light prefabricated construction materials. “Off-the-shelf” steel parts used for skeleton.
The Eames House (1949), Santa Monica, interior

Charles (1907-78) & Ray Eames (1912-1988)
- Designers as Brand
Charles and Ray Eames,
ESU (Eames Storage Unit, c. 1949)

Two versions - why the different legs?
Charles and Ray Eames, 1945-46, LCW (Lounge Chair Wood) for Herman Miller.
Plywood leg splints by Eames were mass-produced for military purposes.
Charles and Ray Eames, Body Litter (1943).

Made of molded plywood, and meant to drag wounded soldiers or bodies in World War II. Never went to mass production, but technic and material used for civilian purposes after the war.
Pop Art Begins a Dialogue with Consumerism

Richard Hamilton: “What is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?,” collage, UK, 1956

An ambiguous comment on the new American consumer culture - is it admiration or satire or both?

This collage is one of the early classics of pop art
Pop Art and Design

Pop art emerged in the late 1950s, first in Britain and then in the USA. It was a reaction to the post-World War II consumer culture, associated with the USA.

Leading artists: Richard Hamilton, Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenburg, Roy Lichtenstein... Term “pop art” was coined by the British art critic Lawrence Alloway.

Ambiguous relationship to consumer culture and product design: complex combination of irony and reverence.

Everyday objects became “second nature” for artists. Art became an essentially semiotic activity (artists depicted pre-existing “signs”, rather than

A founding moment - “This is Tomorrow” exhibition, London, 1956 by the Independent Group
Blurring of the Boundary Between Art and Design

Pop art began blurring the traditional boundary between art and design (art was transformed from unique objects to ‘multiples’ by Andy Warhol and others).

Pop art claimed to have no “message” - it said it was just recycling the ‘surface’ imagery and gadgets of the time (but not so simple!). These had become a “second nature.”

Influenced by commercial graphic design and product design. Soon became itself a powerful influence for design (posters, furniture, textiles...)

Andy Warhol: *Campbell’s Soup Can*, Painting, 1964
Andy Warhol's hand-made Brillo, Campbell's, Heinz, etc. Boxes. Pop Art from the 1960s.

Is this art or design? Obviously it is art *inspired* by product, package and graphic design.

Pop art *inspired* design in return.
Andy Warhol’s multiplication of popular media ‘icons’ and consumer objects can be seen as a comment on mass production based on design.
Andy Warhol, *Ten Marilyns*, 1967
Art and Design: where is - or was - the difference?

An artwork is an expression of the creative freedom of an individual, a design object is determined by industrial and commercial concerns.

An artwork is unique, a design object is mass-produced.

An artwork does not have a practical purpose, a design object serves a concrete function.

An artwork has a spiritual "surplus" value, while the design object is more down-to-earth.

An artwork is a goal in itself, while a design object serves a goal.
Roy Lichtenstein, Takka takka
Roy Lichtenstein: I’d Rather Sink
The Batman television series (1966) - the credit sequence
Roy Lichtenstein: Girl with a Ball (and its source image, right), early 1960s.
Pop art’s appropriation of the comic strip: Roy Lichtenstein: The Engagement Ring, 1963
The comic strip *Winnie Winkle* was the Source of Roy Lichtenstein’s *The Engagement Ring*, 1963.

He did not just copy one of the frames, but modified it according to classical rules of composition.
Cover of the New York magazine, March 5, 1990. Roy Lichtenstein’s artwork serves as a model for discussing some troubles in Donald Trump’s family.

Yes, this is the same Donald Trump...
Claes Oldenburg
Claes Oldenburg's public monuments were inspired by everyday objects, made huge.

Unrealized proposal (Giant rear view mirror for Trafalgar Square, London, 1966)

Clothespin, 1976, in Philadelphia
Anticipation of Lichtenstein’s use of giant everyday objects:
Walter Dorwin Teague: National Cash Register Building, New York
World’s Fair, 1939
The Record Cover as a Design Object


Sleeve design David King and Roger Law, photography David Montgomery
The Beatles, Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967)

Possibly the most famous LP record cover of all time.

Created in collaboration with the band who were asked for suggestion of figure to the cover.

Art design by Robert Frazer, Peter Blake, Michael Cooper.
The original rejected fold-out cover for The Beatles, Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967).

Designed by The Fool.
Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band, Cut-out insert, designed by pop artist Peter Blake
Parody of Sgt. Pepper by the LA-based underground band Franz Zappa and the Mothers of Invention: *We Are Only in it For the Money*, 1968.

Song: Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention: “Flower punk”
The Simpsons, “Bart after Dark” episode

The “Spraying cop” image macro meme greets the Beatles
Sgt. Pepper's centerfold design and the “spraying cop” meme
The source of the Spraying Cop meme:
“Occupy” protest on the UC Davis campus, 2011

Source image: *Man’s Life*, Sept. 1956
Dan Collins [RRRREZKOI], 2008

Pop art as an Influence for Design
Archizoom - Safari Modular Livingscape for Poltronova, 1968 (Italy, Andrea Branzi, etc.)
Inflatables were typical 1960s Design
Archigram [Michael Webb and David Greene]: Cushicle, 1966
Quasar Khanh, *Suspension Aéropace* inflatable lamp, 1967
Theo Botschuiwer and Jeffrey Shaw, Waterwalk Tube (1970)
One of the origins of inflatable design: the military camouflage and make-believe technology during World War II, 1940s.
A Design Icon of the 1960s - Ericsson’s Ericofon (Sweden, 1954)

http://www.ericofon.com
Ericofon was originally successful in hospitals. Meant for institutional use. Produced in multiple bright colors, and associated with women, it became a sexy cult object.
Another Design Icon of the 1960s - Verner Panton's Stacking Chair, Denmark, 1960-67
Verner Panton’s Room design (Visiona 2) shown at the Cologne Furniture Fair, 1970.

Panton (1926-98) is often considered the most influential Danish designer of the 20th century.
Yet another design icon of the 1960s - Ettore Sottsass: Valentine typewriter for Olivetti, Italy 1969
More design icons: Eero Aarnio
(Finland): Pastil (1967) and
Tomato (1971) Chairs
Eero Aarnio (Finland): Bubble Chair, 1968
Pierre Cardin: Cosmocorps
fashion collection, 1967
Braniff Airlines: flight attendants as fashion models, 1960s

Braniff flight attendants posing in Pucci II uniforms, 1966-1967
Braniff Airlines jet designed by artist Alexander Calder, early 1970s
Futuro - the House of the Future

Designed by Matti Suuronen, manufactured by Polykem, Finland, 1960-70s.

Great film about Futuro:
Sanyo Electric Corporation, Japan - Ultrasonic Bath (“human washing machine”).

A design for the future, exhibited at the Osaka Expo, Japan 1970. Fully automated pod that cleans, massages, and dries a human being during a 15-minute process.
Video:
Design and Psychedelia

Psychedelia = “relating to or denoting new or altered perceptions or sensory experiences, as through the use of hallucinogenic drugs”.

Design trend of the late 1960s, influenced by pop, underground, but also by Art Nouveau, Art Deco. Associated with lifestyle awareness, hippie culture, but also became mainstream fashion.

Prominent in graphic design: record sleeves, concert posters. Also in interior design for discotheques, ‘multimedia light shows’ for discos, concerts. Utopian projects (concept objects).

Seemed new and unprecedented, but began the “Nostalgia Movement” of the 70s. Became a stylistic formula, revived recently (Austin Powers, etc.)
A woman at the entrance of a psychedelic discotheque, late 1960s.

The ornamental clothing patterns merge with the interior.
Joshua Light Show, c. 1967
The liquid forms of the multimedia light show as a typical feature of late 1960s psychedelic design.

They were a simulations of chemically induced experiences.
Video Example:
Marc Boyle and Joan Hillis: Psychedelic Light Show for Soft Machine
John Lennon's (1940-1980) Rolls Royce, custom painted in psychedelic color. Contrast was created with the high class values Rolls Royce represented.
Psychedelic furniture demonstrating deliberately bad taste: Archizoom Associati, Italy: *Naufragio di Rose* dream bed, 1967
Bedroom design with Love motif, late 1960s

Interior architecture tries to imitate a space that might have been experienced by using hallucinogenic drugs.
Public restroom, late 1960s, compared with:

Victor Horta’s Art Nouveau staircase, early 20th century
Art Nouveau was a powerful influence on psychedelic graphic design
An LP record cover as a medium for psychedelic graphic design, showing the influence of Indian popular religious art.

Jimi Hendrix: Axis: Bold as Love LP

Jimi Hendrix (1942-1970)
Psychedelic Design Appropriated by the Advertising Industry (examples)
Sony's Walkman was a breakthrough in mobile media design when it was introduced in 1979.

What does the design of this model bring to mind? The Beatles: Yellow Submarine

An era has ended: Sony stopped manufacturing the Walkman in 2010.
The Answer: the famous animated feature film *Yellow Submarine* by George Dunning (1968), featuring the Beatles. It is one of the ultimate manifestations of psychedelic design.
Yellow Submarine (1968), the trailer
“Yellow Submarine” as inspiration for an image macro meme
Psychedelic revivalism as a parody: the Austin Powers film series, starring Mike Myers

Mike Myers in the “Got Milk?” campaign
Example:
Austin Powers, International Man of Mystery (1997), opening sequence
Psychedelic revival fashion, 2014
Psychedelic Tattoos
Psychedelic Internet Memes
Have a Nice Weekend!