

THE 100 "BEST DESIGNED" PRODUCTS

Last year Jay Doblin, director of the Institute of Design of the Illinois Institute of Technology, embarked on a fascinating—and brash—project. Finding it no trouble to pick out 100 “leading” designers, architects, and design teachers of the world, he figured that they in turn should find it no trouble to select the “best designed mass-produced products of modern times.” Each member of the outsize “jury” was to name his top ten choices.

About eighty ballots were returned. Some well-known designers declined to participate, saying they thought the assignment was impossible. Some complied under protest: the selections, they said, would “merely reflect individual prejudices”; “assorted objects cannot be compared.”

After the ballots came in, the institute found that only sixty-two products had been mentioned often enough to warrant their inclusion in a final list. The list of all products mentioned was sent back to the members of the jury for a second ballot. The final votes were tabulated and the products listed from 1 to 100 according to the number of votes they received. The selections led off with Olivetti's Lettera 22 portable typewriter (fifty-five votes) and ran through to the Gilbert Erector set (fourteen votes). They are shown on this and the following pages as a group for the first time, with captions (keyed to their ranking) giving the name of the product, the date of design, the designer, and the manufacturer.

Some of the selections obviously were chosen for purely aesthetic reasons, others because they were trend setters, still others out of sentiment or nostalgia. A few (the Talon zipper, for instance) are surely more invention than design. And motivational-research men might find it fruitful to speculate why automobiles are the objects most frequently cited (fourteen times), with chairs runner-up (thirteen).

The selection as a whole is certainly provocative. It comprises many of the “classics” on which designers seem to agree. This may bewilder the layman, who will be surprised to find the Franklin stove, the Model T, and the Victor talking machine next to the slickest modern design. A single judge would undoubtedly have come up with a more homogeneous selection. But it would hardly have been as interesting.



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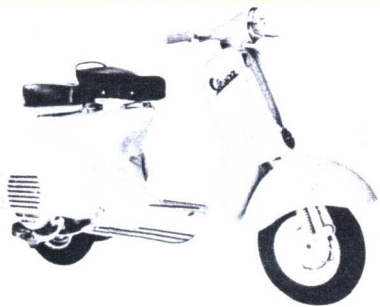
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1 Olivetti Lettera 22 portable typewriter, 1950. Designer: Marcello Nizzoli. Olivetti Co., Ivrea, Italy.

2 Eames side chair, 1947. Designer: Charles Eames. Herman Miller Furniture Co., Zeeland, Michigan.

3 Barcelona chair, 1929. Designer: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Knoll Associates, Inc., New York.

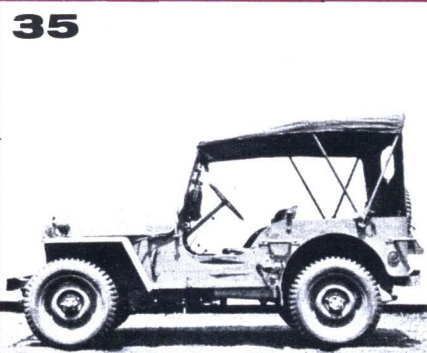
4 Studebaker hard-top coupe, 1953. Designer: Raymond Loewy Associates. Studebaker Corp., South Bend, Indiana.



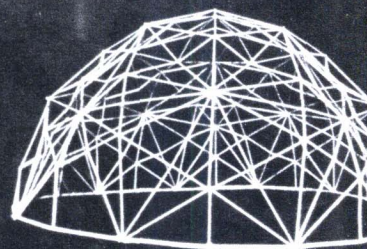
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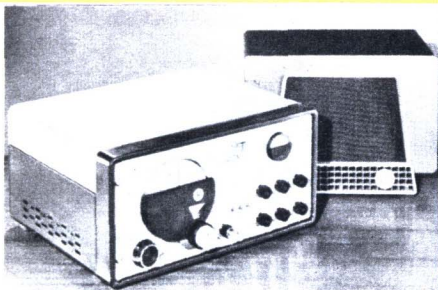
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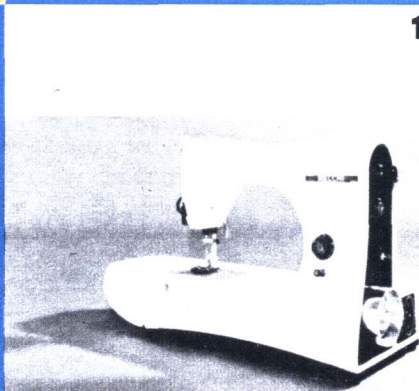
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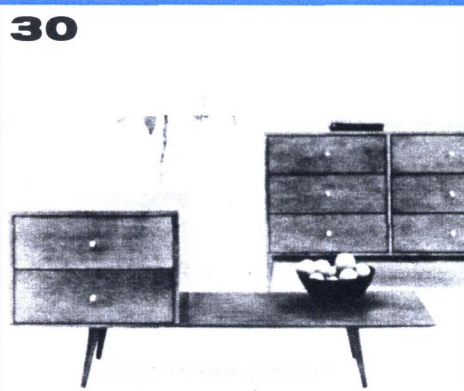
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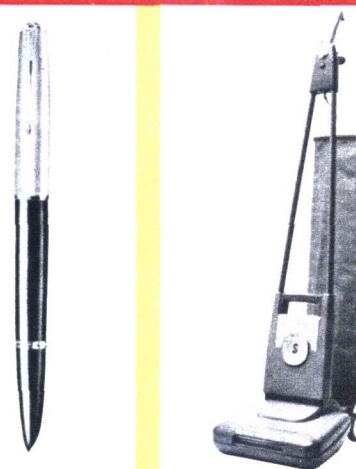
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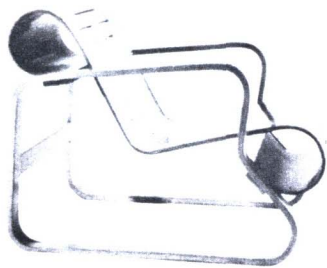
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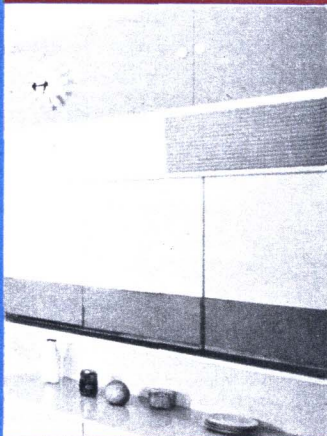
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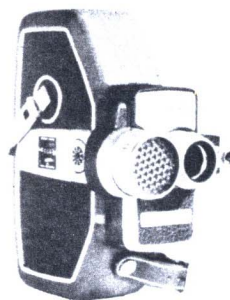
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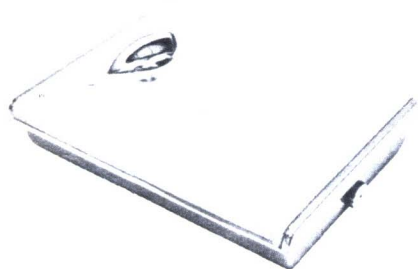
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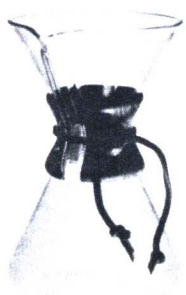
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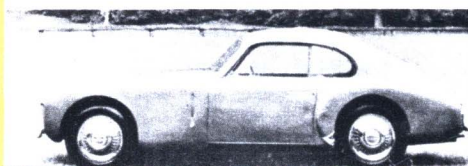
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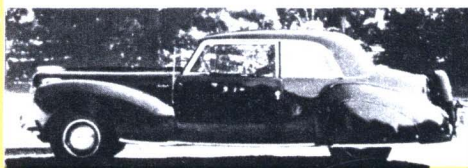


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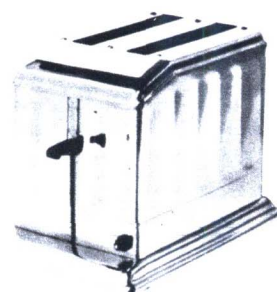
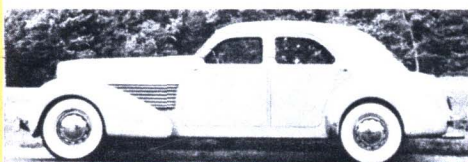
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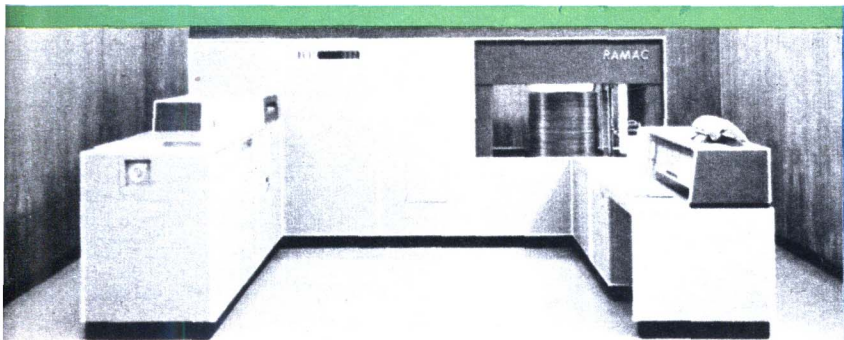
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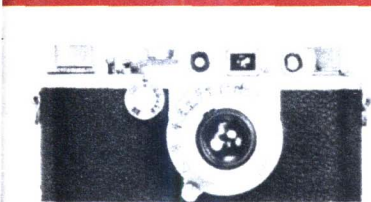
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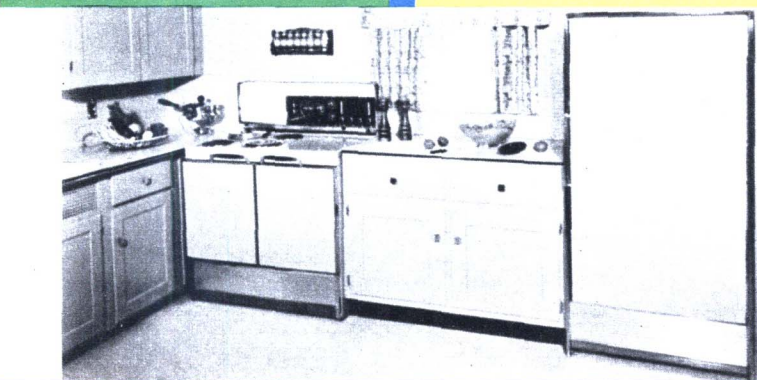
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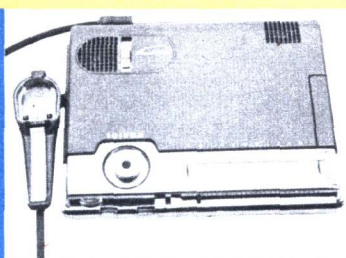
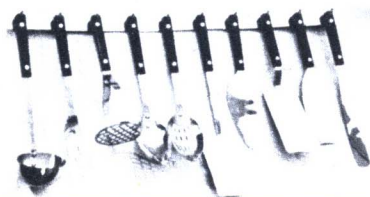


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5 Parker "51" fountain pen, 1939. Designers: Kenneth Parker, Marlin Baker, Joseph Platt, Ivan D. Tefft. Parker Pen Co., Janesville, Wisconsin.

6 Lincoln Continental, 1940 (1941 model shown). Designers: Edsel Ford and E. T. Gregorie. Ford Motor Co., Dearborn, Michigan.

7 Edison Voicewriter, VP Dictating Model, 1952. Designer: Carl Otto. Thomas A. Edison Industries, McGraw-Edison Co., Voicewriter Division, West Orange, New Jersey.

8 Frigidaire Sheer Look appliances, 1957. Designer: General Motors Styling Section. Frigidaire Division, General Motors Corp., Dayton, Ohio.

9 Hallicrafters Communications-Receiver, Model SX-42, 1946. Designer: Raymond Loewy Associates. Hallicrafters Co., Chicago.

10 Bell "500" telephone, 1951. Designer: Henry Dreyfuss. Western Electric Co., New York, for Bell Telephone System.

11 Geodesic dome, patented 1954. Designer: R. Buckminster Fuller.

12 Necchi "Mirella" sewing machine, 1956. Designer: Marcello Nizzoli. Vittorio Necchi, Pavia, Italy.

13 Saarinen "womb" chair, 1948. Designer: Eero Saarinen. Knoll Associates, Inc., New York.

14 Cord 810, 1936. Designer: Gordon Buehrig. Auburn-Duesenberg-Cord, Auburn, Indiana.

15 Vespa 125 c.c. motor scooter, 1956 (1958 model shown). Designers: Corradino D'Ascanio and Enrico Piaggio. Piaggio & Co., Genoa, Italy.

16 Borg "Flight" bathroom scale, 1954. Designer: Raymond Loewy Associates. Borg-Erickson Corp., Chicago.

17 VW-Karmann-Ghia coupe, 1955 (1959 model shown). Designer: Ghia, Turin, Italy. Body builder: Karmann, Osnabruck, Germany. Chassis: Volkswagen, Wolfsburg, Germany.

18 Singer vacuum cleaner, 1948. Designer: Raymond Loewy Associates. Singer Sewing Machine Co., New York.

19 G.E. wall refrigerator, 1954. Designers: Robert E. Munz and Arthur N. BecVar (G.E. Co.). General Electric Co., Louisville, Kentucky.

20 Leica IIIc camera, 1940. Designer: Oskar Barnack. Ernst Leitz, Wetzlar, Germany.

21 "American Modern" dinnerware, 1937. Designer: Russel Wright. Steubenville Pottery Co., Steubenville, Ohio.

22 Revere Ware cooking utensils, 1939. Designer: W. Archibald Weldon. Rome Manufacturing Co. Division, Revere Copper & Brass, Inc., Rome, New York.

23 Flint stainless-steel kitchen tools, 1946. Company design. Ekco Products Co., Chicago.

24 Breuer chair, 1928. Designer: Marcel Breuer. Gebrüder Thonet, Vienna, Austria.

25 Raleigh bicycle, sports model #22, 1925 (1957-58 model shown). Designer: A. P. Oakley & Co. Raleigh Industries, Ltd., Nottingham, England.

26 Bissell Sweepmaster carpet sweeper, 1954. Designer: Harley J. Earl. Bissell Carpet Sweeper Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

27 IBM 305 RAMAC computer, 1955. Designers: Sundberg-Ferar and Eliot Noyes. International Business Machines Corp., New York.

28 Cisitalia "Gran Sport," 1946 (1949 model shown). Designer: Pinin Farina. Automobile Cisitalia, Turin, Italy.

29 Toastmaster automatic toaster, Model 1B2, 1930. Designer: Everett Worthington. Waters-Genter Co., subsidiary of McGraw Electric (now McGraw-Edison) Co., Elgin, Illinois.

30 Planner Group furniture, 1947. Designer: Paul McCobb. Winchendon Furniture Co., Winchendon, Mass.

31 Studebaker Starlight coupe, 1947. Designer: Raymond Loewy Associates. Studebaker Corp., South Bend, Indiana.

32 Eames fiberglass chair, 1951. Designer: Charles Eames. Herman Miller Furniture Co., Zeeland, Mich.

33 Aalto chair, about 1934. Designer: Alvar Aalto. Artek OY, Helsinki, Finland.

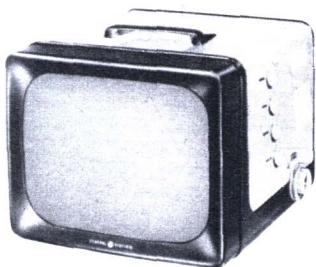
34 Bell & Howell 16 mm movie camera, Model 240 EE, 1957. Designer: Peter Müller-Munk Associates. Bell & Howell Co., Chicago.

35 Willys Jeep, 1941 (1945 model shown). Designers: Willys Motors and Army Ordnance Dept. Willys Motors, Inc., Toledo, Ohio.

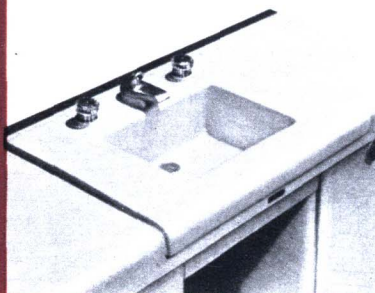
36 Chemex Coffeemaker, 1941. Inventor and designer: Dr. Peter Schlumbohm. Chemex Corp., New York.



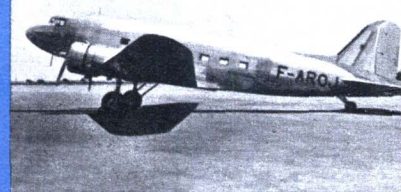
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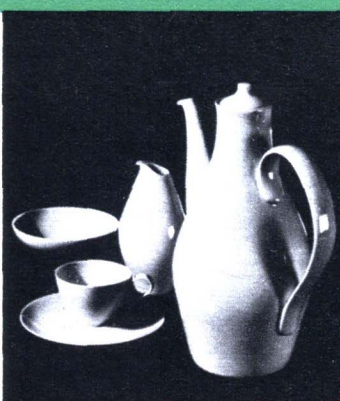


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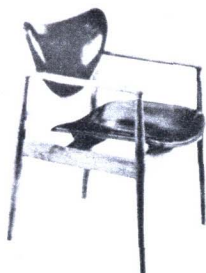
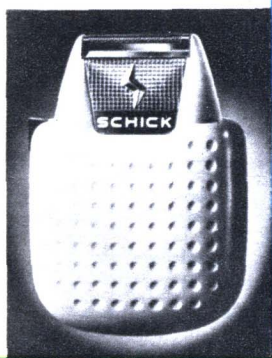
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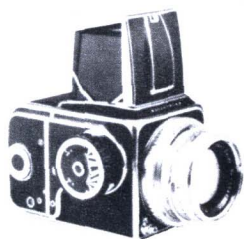


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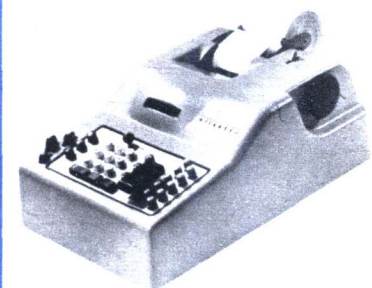


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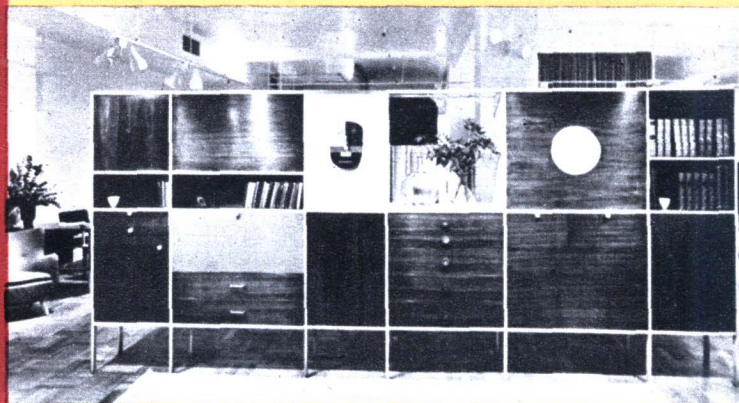
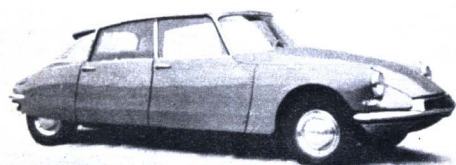
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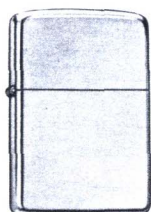


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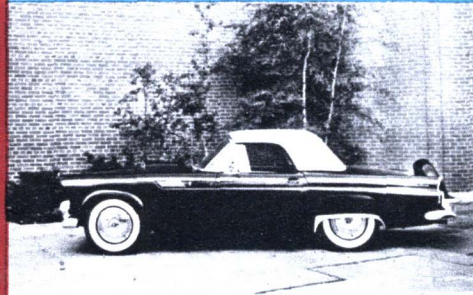


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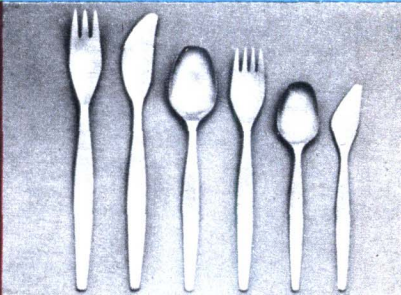
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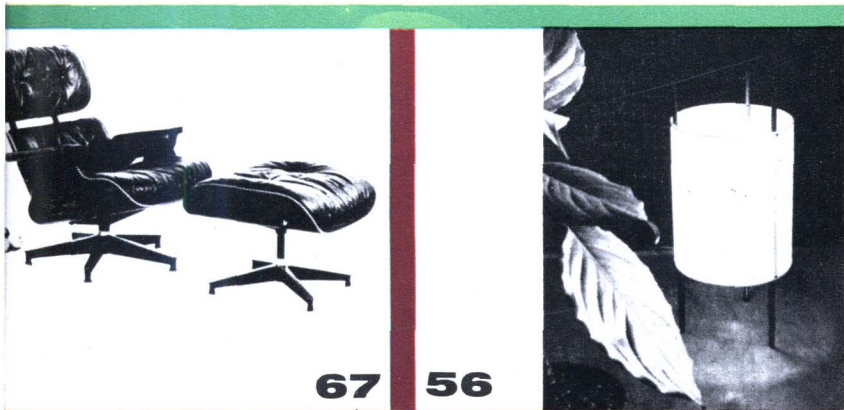
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37 Schick "20" electric razor, 1950. Designer: Carl Otto Schick Inc., Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

53 Museum White dinnerware, 1946. Designer: Eva Zeisel. Castleton China, Inc., New Castle, Pennsylvania.

38 Crane "Criterion" lavatory, 1951. Designer: Henry Dreyfuss. Crane Co., Chicago.

54 Nelson storage wall (modular group furniture), 1949. Designer: George Nelson. Herman Miller Furniture Co., Zeeland, Michigan.

39 "Hardoy" chair, 1938. Designers: Antonio Bonet, Juan Kurchan, Jorge Ferrari-Hardoy. Knoll Associates, Inc., New York.

55 Winchester Model 73 lever action rifle, 1873. Designer: Thomas G. Bennett. Winchester Repeating Arms Co., New Haven, Connecticut.

40 Porsche 1500 Super, 1952. Coachwork: Karosserie Reutter, Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen. Dr.-Ing.h.c. F. Porsche K. G., Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen, Germany.

56 Noguchi lamp, 1947. Designer: Isamu Noguchi. Knoll Associates, Inc., New York.

41 Ford "Thunderbird," 1955 (1956 model shown). Designers: George Walker, Robert H. Maguire, and Elwood P. Engel. Ford Motor Co., Dearborn, Michigan.

57 "Vienna" café chair, 1876. Company design. Gebrüder Thonet, Vienna, Austria.

42 Douglas DC-3, 1935. Company design. Douglas Aircraft Co., Santa Monica, California.

58 NuTone built-in mixer, 1955. Designer: Waltman Associates. NuTone, Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio.

43 Thermador "Bilt-In" range and oven components, 1946. Company design. Thermador Electrical Manufacturing Co., division of Norris-Thermador Corp., Los Angeles.

59 American Tourister "Tri-Taper" luggage, 1953. Designer: Jon W. Hauser. American Luggage Works, Inc., West Warwick, Rhode Island.

44 IBM electric typewriter, 1948. Designer: Eliot Noyes. International Business Machines Corp., New York.

60 Gense "Focus" stainless-steel flatware, 1955. Designer: Folke Arstrom. A. B. Gense, Eskilstuna, Sweden.

45 Olivetti printing calculator, 1948. Designer: Marcello Nizzoli. Olivetti Co., Ivrea, Italy.

61 Steinway grand piano, Model B, basic design about 1910. Company design. Steinway & Sons, Long Island City, New York.

46 Director's chair. Traditional design. This model manufactured by Telescope Folding Furniture Co., Inc., Granville, New York.

62 Finn Juhl chair, 1949. Designer: Finn Juhl. Baker Furniture, Inc., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

47 Wegner chair, 1949. Designer: Hans Wegner. Johannes Hansen, Copenhagen, Denmark.

63 Pyrex chemical flask. Traditional design, before 1934. Corning Glass Works, Corning, New York.

48 Arzberg White china, 1931. Designer: Hermann Gretsche. Porzellanfabrik Arzberg, Arzberg (Bavaria), Germany.

64 Hasselblad 500C camera, 1947. Designer: Victor Hasselblad. Victor Hasselblad Aktiebolag, Göteborg, Sweden.

49 Brunswick classroom furniture, 1953. Designer: Dave Chapman. Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co., School Equipment Division, Chicago.

65 Ponti toilet, 1954. Designer: Gio Ponti. Ideal-Standard, Milan, Italy.

50 G.E. Kitchen Center, 1956. Designers: Robert W. Blee and Arthur N. BecVar (G. E. Co.). General Electric Co., Louisville, Kentucky.

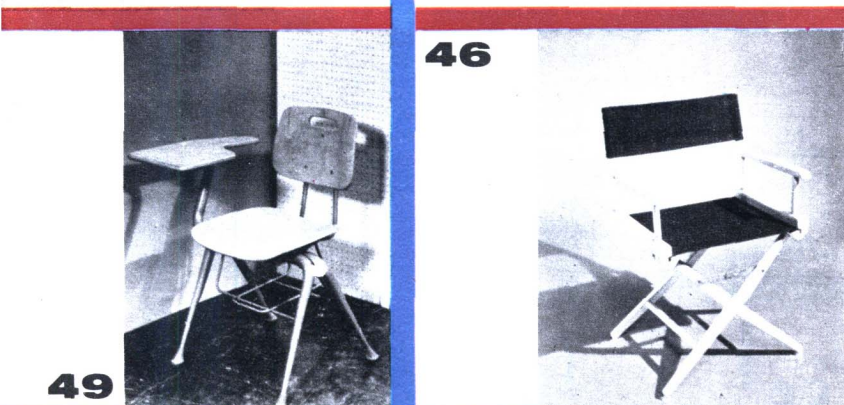
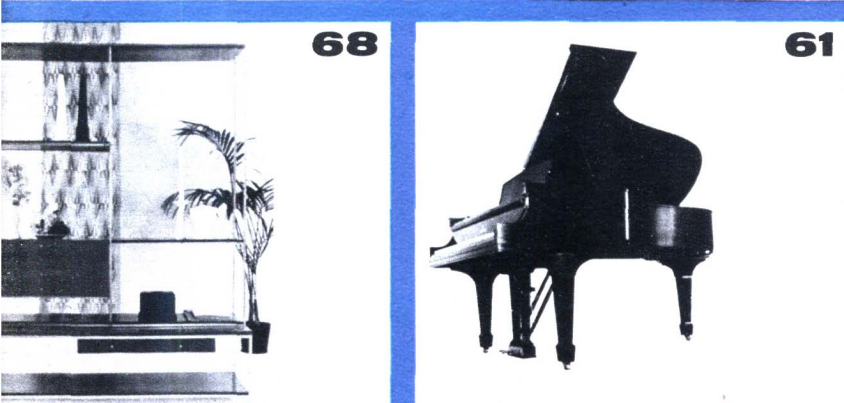
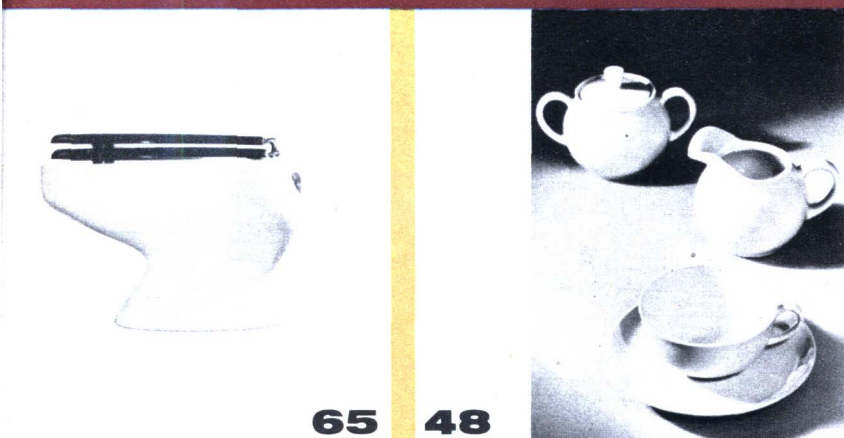
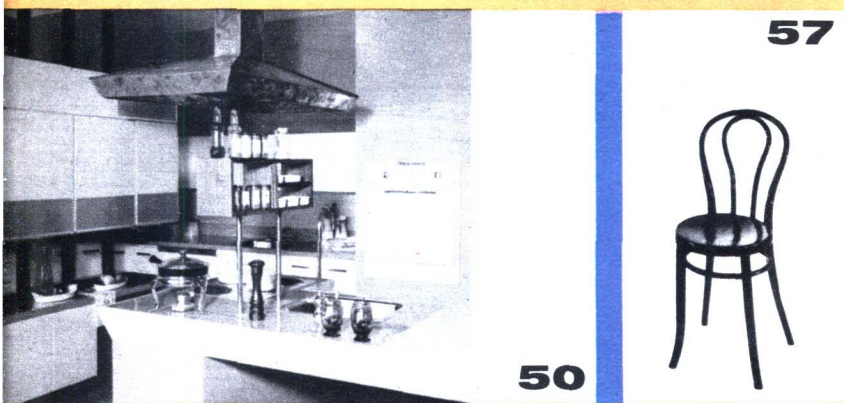
66 Citroën DS-19, 1955. Designer: G. Bertone. S. A. André Citroën, Paris, France.

51 G.E. portable television receiver, 1955. Designer: G-E Industrial Design Staff. General Electric Co., Syracuse, New York.

67 Eames lounge chair and ottoman, 1957. Designer: Charles Eames. Herman Miller Furniture Co., Zeeland, Michigan.

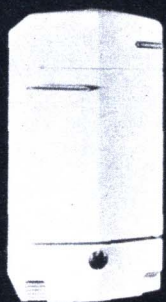
52 Zippo lighter, 1932. Designer: George G. Blaisdell. Zippo Manufacturing Co., Bradford, Pennsylvania.

68 "Linear" room divider, 1956. Designer: Paul McCobb. Calvin Furniture Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

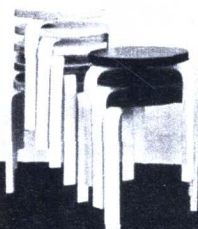




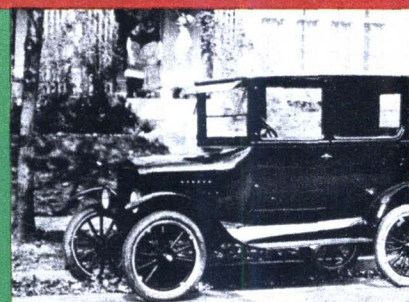
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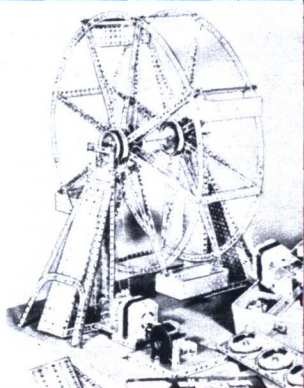
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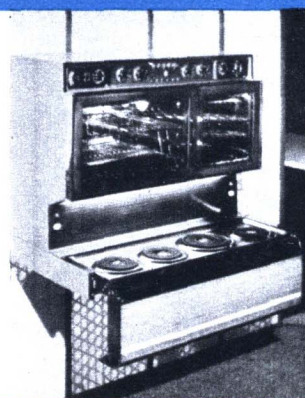
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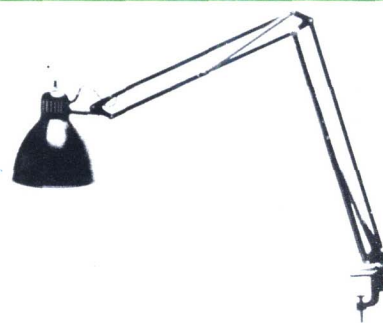
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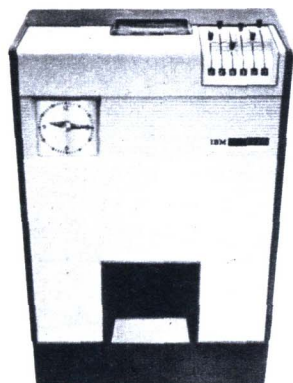
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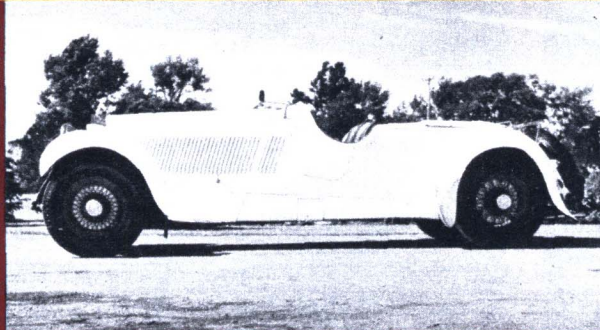
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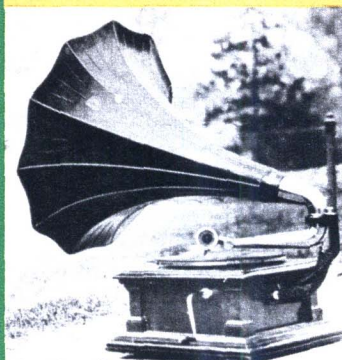
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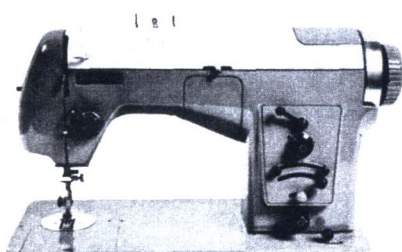
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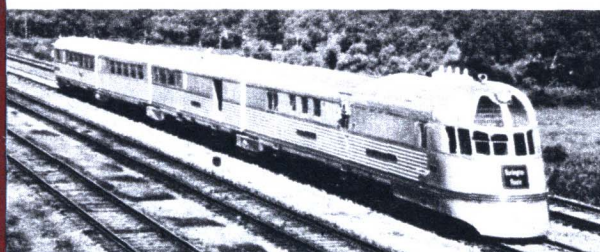
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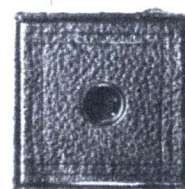
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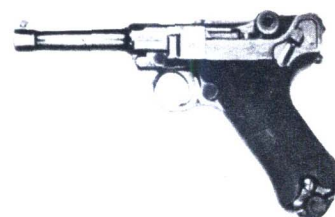
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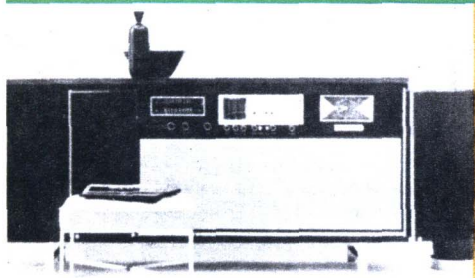
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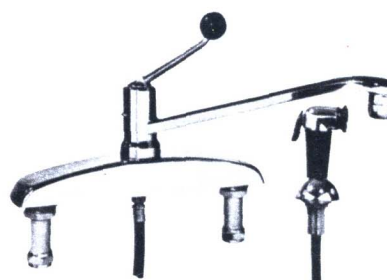


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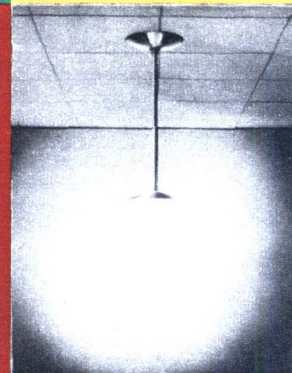


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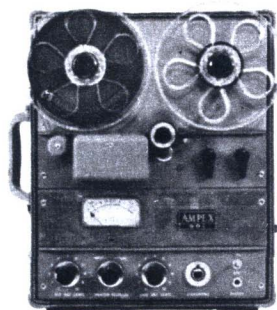
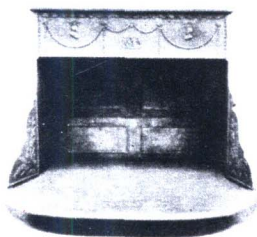


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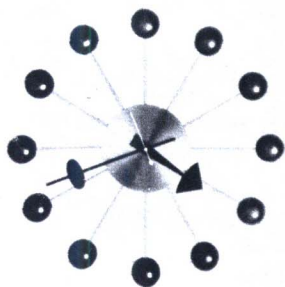


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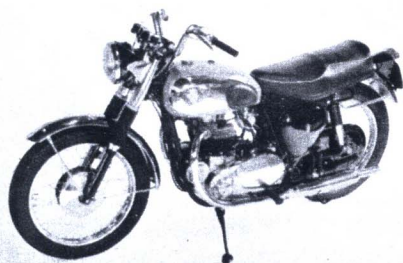
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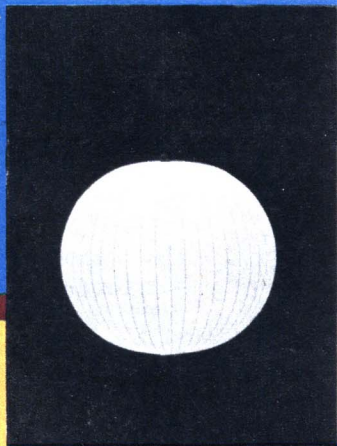
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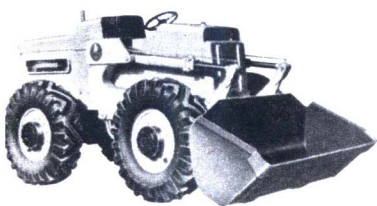


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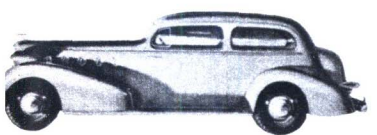


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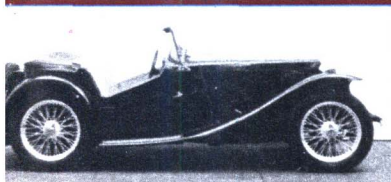
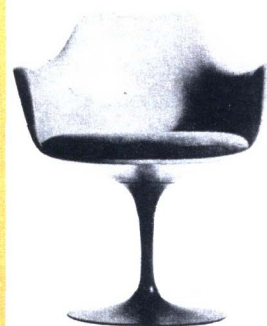
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69 Nelson wall clock, 1948. Designer: George Nelson. Howard Miller Clock Co., Zeeland, Michigan.

70 High-fidelity radio and television console, 1955. Designer: Paul McCobb. Bell & Howell Co., Chicago.

71 Beechcraft Bonanza, 1945 (1957 model shown). Company design. Beech Aircraft Corp., Wichita, Kansas.

72 Eastman Brownie camera, 1900. Company design. Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, New York.

73 Coldspot refrigerator, 1937. Designer: Raymond Loewy Associates. Sunbeam Manufacturing Corp., Evansville, Indiana (units), and Seeger Refrigerator Co., St. Paul, Minnesota (cabinets), for Sears, Roebuck & Co.

74 Luxo drafting lamp, 1937. Designers: Herbert Terry & Sons, Redditch, England, and Jac Jacobsen, Oslo, Norway. Luxo Lamp Corp., Port Chester, New York.

75 Saarinen pedestal chair, 1957. Designer: Eero Saarinen. Knoll Associates, Inc., New York.

76 BSA motorcycle, Super Rocket Model, 1955 (1959 model shown). Company design. Birmingham Small Arms Co., Birmingham, England.

77 Moen one-handle mixing faucet, 1946. Designer: A. M. Moen. Moen Faucet Division of Standard Screw Co., Elyria, Ohio.

78 Versen ceiling lamp, 1933. Designer: Kurt Versen. Kurt Versen Co., Englewood, New Jersey.

79 Rolls-Royce Phantom II Mulliner Continental Tourer, 1930. Body: Freestone and Webb, London. Rolls-Royce, Ltd., Crewe, England.

80 Frigidaire fold-back surface cooking unit, 1955. Designer: General Motors Styling Section. Frigidaire Division, General Motors Corp., Dayton, Ohio.

81 Hermes Rocket portable typewriter, 1932. Company design. Pailard S.A., Yverdon, Switzerland.

82 Ford Model T, 1923. Designers: Henry Ford, Edsel Ford, and Joseph Galamb. Ford Motor Co., Highland Park, Michigan.

83 Hamilton "turnip" pocket watch, 1892-1925. Company design. Hamilton Watch Co., Lancaster, Pa.

84 Aalto stacking stools, 1954. Designer: Alvar Aalto. Artek OY, Helsinki, Finland.

85 Luger Standard Army 9mm pistol, 1908. Designer: George Luger. DWM Aktiengesellschaft, Karlsruhe, Germany.

86 IBM Time-Data punch, 1957. Designers: IBM staff designers W. Furlani, J. W. Stringer, and W. H. Harkins. International Business Machines Corp., New York.

87 Talon zipper, 1913. Designer: Gideon Sundback. Talon, Inc., Meadville, Pennsylvania.

88 LaSalle, 1935. Company design. Cadillac Motor Car Division, General Motors Corp., Detroit.

89 MG Model TC, 1948. Designer: John Thornley. MG Car Co., Ltd., Abingdon-on-Thames, England.

90 Franklin stove, about 1750 (model shown, about 1785). Designer: Benjamin Franklin.

91 Ampex portable tape recorder, model 601, 1954. Designer: George Rehklau (Ampex Corp.). Ampex Corp., Redwood City, California.

92 Budd Pioneer Zephyr, 1934. Company design. Budd Co., Philadelphia, for Chicago, Burlington & Quincy RR.

93 Borletti sewing machine, 1956. Designer: Marco Zanuso. Fratelli Borletti, Milan, Italy.

94 Nelson bubble lamp, 1952. Designer: George Nelson. Howard Miller Clock Co., Zeeland, Michigan.

95 Hough "Payload," Model HH, 1955. Designer: Jon W. Hauser. Frank G. Hough Co., Libertyville, Illinois.

96 Scenicruiser bus, 1954. Designers: Greyhound Bus Lines, General Motors Corp., and Raymond Loewy Associates. Truck and Coach Division, General Motors Corp., Pontiac, Mich.

97 Victor talking machine with morning glory horn, 1901-06. Designer: Eldridge Johnson. Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, New Jersey.

98 Tappan "400" wall-hung electric range, 1951. Designers: Smith, Scherr & McDermott, with Truman Clark (Tappan Co.). Tappan Co., Mansfield, Ohio.

99 Futura type face, 1927. Designer: Paul Renner. Bauersche Geisserei, Frankfurt, Germany.

100 Gilbert Erector set, 1909. Designer: Alfred C. Gilbert. A. C. Gilbert Co., New Haven, Connecticut.