

english

# retro topia

design  
for  
socialist  
spaces



Kunstgewerbemuseum  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

# exhibition



## introduction

In the summer of 1967, the German philosopher and sociologist Herbert Marcuse gave a lecture at West Berlin's Free University, later republished in English as *The End of Utopia*. In this lecture, he spoke of the 'new possibilities for a human society and its environment'. According to Marcuse, 'all the material and intellectual forces which could be put to work for the realization of a free society are at hand. That they are not used for that purpose is to be attributed to the total mobilization of existing society against its own potential for liberation'. Since in Marcuse's definition the concept of utopia signified 'projects for social change that are considered impossible', society now (theoretically) found itself in the unprecedented historical situation of the end of all utopias. Here, the underlying obstacle to liberation was the manipulation of society through the inculcation of 'false' material and intellectual needs aimed at preserving old power structures and interests. In this view, the freedom of modern society was a negative one.

The social responsibility of designers was hotly debated in the 1960s and 70s, as was the meaning of 'design' in the space between economic market concerns and political state control. The Swiss sociologist and economist Lucius Burckhardt, author of the influential *Design is Invisible*, pointed out that the environment was not so much a result of design as it was based on institutional and organizational factors. Thus the necessary transformation was quite obviously a political task. The relationship between design and the state was also the focus of the ninth congress of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) in 1975, held in Moscow — and thus for the first time in a socialist country — under the subtitle 'Design for Man and Society'. The host was the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics (VNIITE), whose founding director Yuri Soloviev explained: 'Without the intentional use of the possibilities of design at the state level, social progress will be considerably more difficult.'

So what did the design of living (environmental) worlds look like in the socialist countries that existed between Tallinn and Zagreb? What role did 'design' play in these discourses and practices, located between the optimism of progress and the desire for humane environmental design? What social challenges confronted the designers, and what visions did they put forward?

Housing is one of the most basic human needs, and the achievements of both capitalism and socialism were measured first of all in terms of reconstruction success and the provision of homes. In both the West and the former Soviet Bloc, along with Yugoslavia, the development of new settlements and urban districts was accompanied by exhibitions that showcased model dream homes, new kinds of furniture, and new household technologies.

Such exhibitions not only acted as experimental laboratories, but were also deliberately used for propaganda purposes, which was nowhere more evident than in Berlin. In this city on the front lines of the Cold War, the Americans mounted *We Build a Better Life*, an ambitious 1952 exhibition at Marshall House, a venue built especially for events like this and just one of the various signature buildings they donated to the city, including the Congress Hall (today the Haus der Kulturen der Welt), the Steglitz Hospital (today the Charité Campus Benjamin Franklin), and the Henry Ford Building at Berlin's Free University. A highly emblematic result of this ideological confrontation was the architectural development of a 'double' Berlin. Prominent projects included the construction of Stalinallee (beginning in 1951, renamed Karl-Marx-Allee in 1961) in the eastern city, and the Hansaviertel (a new district built for the 1957 Interbau exhibition) in the western city, as well as

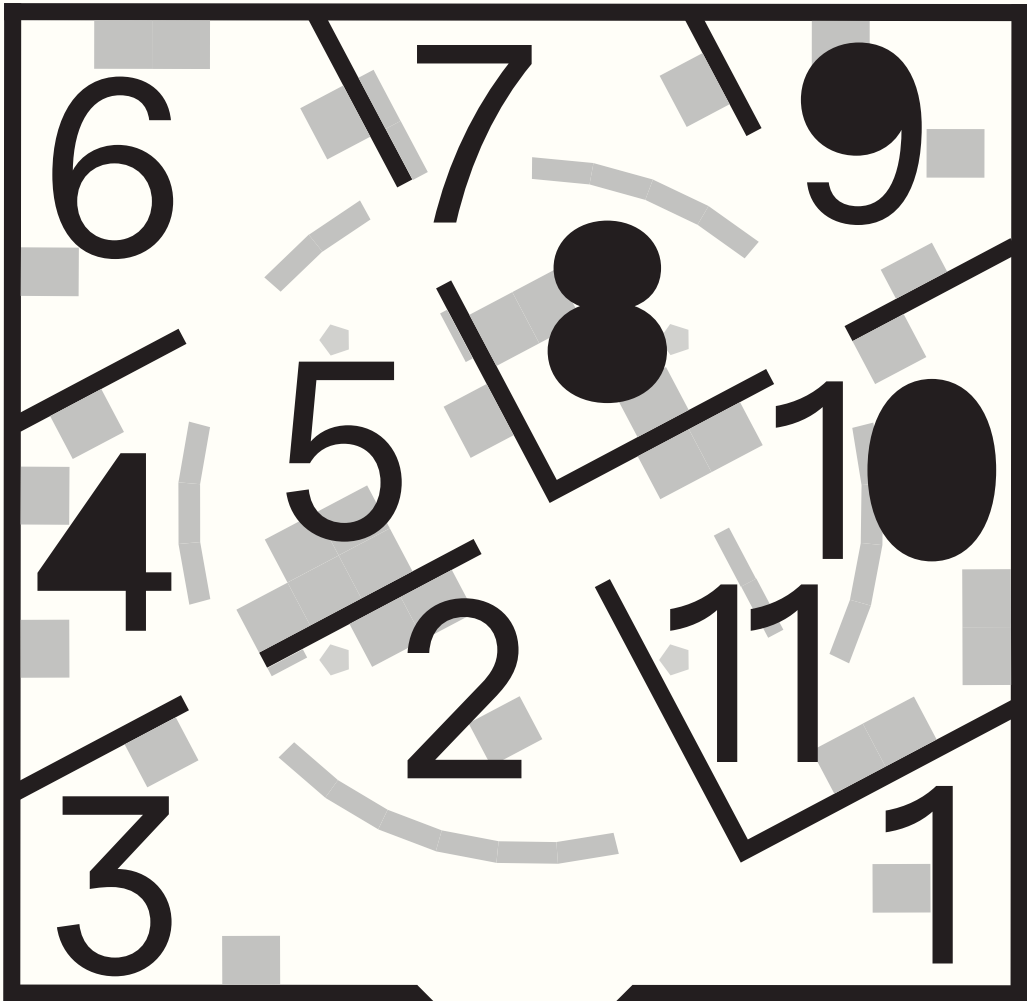
the 1976 Palace of the Republic in East Berlin and the 1979 International Congress Centre in West Berlin.

For observers in the West, the Berlin Wall obstructed the view — both figuratively and literally — of the public and private design practices that developed in the socialist countries, which sometimes paralleled those of the West. This means that even today, over thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, there remains much that is unknown and waiting to be discovered, and many new things to learn.

*Retrotopia. Design for Socialist Spaces* is thus a search for the traces of this parallel evolution, turning the spotlight on the countries of the former Soviet Bloc and Yugoslavia. On the initiative of Berlin's Kunstgewerbemuseum (Museum of Decorative Arts), eleven co-curatorial teams based in Tallinn, Vilnius, Warsaw, Budapest, Prague, Brno, Bratislava, Kyiv, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Eisenhüttenstadt, and Berlin were invited to collaborate on this wide-ranging exhibition project. Eleven design capsules were created, each highlighting two projects selected by the relevant co-curatorial team: one representing public space, and one private. Designs for the future need to be concretized in spatial/visual terms if they are to have a social impact. In this respect, these eleven design capsules can also be seen as a kind of yardstick for the realization of the visionary promises made back then.

The *Retrotopia* Archive acts as a kind of research guidebook, helping contextualize the exhibition by highlighting the different institutions and frameworks in which the designers operated, communicated with each other, and published their work and projects. The *Retrotopia* Archive vividly shows us that the design practices of eastern Europe during the socialist period were characterized by a lively networking, both between themselves and across what Hungarian historian György Péteri called the 'Nylon Curtain'.

Claudia Banz



1	pages	6 – 15
2	pages	16 – 22
3	pages	23 – 26
4	pages	27 – 30
5	pages	31 – 34
6	pages	35 – 40
7	pages	41 – 43
8	pages	44 – 47
9	pages	48 – 51
10	pages	52 – 54
11	pages	55 – 57

# through the magnifying glass, and what we lost there

The multitude of enchanting (hi)stories — from Pliny’s description of the river Belus in Syrian Phoenicia to contemporary glass studies — conjure up glass and design as a sometimes tremulous yet long-enduring companionship traversing centuries and geopolitical divisions. In these corpora, Ukrainian stained-glass windows of the Soviet period are certainly not objects to be effortlessly summoned up from the inventory of researchers, though they offer a variety of illuminating accounts. As elements of the spatial design of public dwellings, they inextricably carry the visitor’s temporal awareness into the sites of their embeddedness, rendering time-place-body reciprocity and distending daily life practices beyond the architectural demarcation installed by walls. As historical artefacts, they reflect the striving for creative freedom under the imposed primacy of socialist realism and evidence the room’s existence for its outlet, shaped not merely into accord with the medium’s technical constraints but through uncharted forms of human togetherness (to overcome the scarcity of payments, materials, and instruments, the artists relied on their professional communities).

The curatorial gesture towards stained-glass windows, performed amidst the genocidal incandescent vortices set by russia’s retrotopian sentiment, wears many anticipated associations. Fragility, reflection, transparency, hope, and shattered vitrines of the looted museums in de-occupied regions might commence the list. Without negating those robes (and addressing the sites of the war atrocities in the exhibition), I would like to delineate further inflexions in engagement with Zygmunt Bauman’s admonitory works. Retrotopias draw upon the past, wherein selective forgetting and remembering enable the groups’ entitlement to territorial political sovereignty, while heritage may amplify the divisions between ‘us’ and ‘them’. When composing an exhibition on socialist legacies — many of which, most notably, ‘the friendship of peoples’, mutated to endorse russia’s war — one of the ways of working through the past is to follow Bauman’s empathetic ‘form of history that is constituted not by the greats but by little persons’ (as put by Leonidas Donskis). Even in Ukraine, the artists presented here are known only to a limited group of specialists. Complex histories of their work, in accord with Bauman’s thought, bear the potential to challenge the loss of sensitivity and counteract indifference. In the world of liquid fears, love, and attenuated solidarity practices, I suggest thinking about the increasing viscosity — meaning both resistance and resilience — that precedes the formation of glass, and the reconstitution of spaces of human togetherness, invoked by the in-between position of stained-glass windows, embracing both interior and exterior. Polina Baitsym

Stained-glass window in the *Olimpiia* Hotel’s restaurant  
Unknown artist

Kamianske, Dnipropetrovsk Region, Ukrainian SSR, 1976  
Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov

An industrial centre since imperial times, Kamianske epitomizes the complexity of the Soviet past in Ukrainian urban design. From 1936 to 2016, the city bore the formidable name of Dniprodzerzhynsk (after state-security head Feliks Dzierżyński) and gained particular repute in the 1970s as the birthplace of Brezhnev, where ‘he was brought up as an exemplary communist’. While the most blatant Soviet designators (e.g. the city’s name and the Brezhnev monument) have recently been removed, Kamianske is still living with the ramifications of the residential, recreational, and industrial construction programmes of the 1970s.

# 1a

# 1.1a

1.2a Stained-glass window in the administrative building of the *Promenystyi* children’s sanatorium

Unknown artist

Bucha, Kyiv Region, Ukrainian SSR, 1960s to 1980s

Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov

The *Promenystyi* sanatorium and Young Pioneers’ camp in Bucha most likely corresponded to the standards of children’s summer camps built during the times of Soviet prefab architecture. From early to late March 2022, russian troops occupied this town in order to secure the route to Kyiv and systematically murdered over four hundred of its residents, including women and children (this atrocity became internationally known as the Bucha Massacre). Several victims were found in the basement of the sanatorium, where the invaders had presumably organized a ‘torture chamber’.

1.3a Sketch of *Carnival*, a stained-glass window at the *Voskhod* Resort

Oleksandr Dubovyk <sup>(b. 1931)</sup>

gouache on paper

Kefe (aka Caffa, Theodosia, or Feodosiia), Crimea, Ukrainian SSR, 1987

Stedley Art Foundation

Oleksandr Dubovyk is a Kyiv-born artist who pioneered the conceptual art movement in Ukraine. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, having left behind the socialist realism of his formal training, Dubovyk explored the intersection of abstractionism and conceptualism, engaging in a dialogue with the avant-garde artists of the 1920s (particularly Kazymyr Malevych) and twentieth-century philosophers (especially Henri Bergson). His stained-glass windows were a late articulation of his ruminations on time and the intuitive and affective dimensions of knowledge, and were visual manifestations of ‘image-signs’ (his own term). The fate of this piece — located in Crimea, which was invaded in 2014 and has been occupied by russian troops since then — remains unknown.

1.4a Stained-glass window at the Mariupol Chamber Philharmonic

Anatolii Manokhin <sup>(1952–2020)</sup>,

with the participation of Volodymyr Miski-Ohlu <sup>(1948–2019?)</sup>

Mariupol, Donetsk Region, Ukrainian SSR, late 1980s

Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov

The acoustic properties of the former Palace of Culture, constructed during Soviet times for the workers of the *Markokhim* metallurgical coking plant, made it suitable for repurposing as a chamber philharmonic in 2017, to substitute for the Donetsk Regional Philharmonic that was lost with russia’s 2014 occupation. The site’s stained-glass windows were designed by artists from the *Mariupol-87* Alternative Art Group (established 1987). After the bombardment of the Mariupol Drama Theatre on 16 March 2022 (with a death toll of over three hundred, including many children and women), the Mariupol Chamber Philharmonic remained as the only cultural building still sheltering civilians. Upon the occupation of Mariupol by russian troops, the stained-glass windows were removed by the occupiers and presumably destroyed in June–July 2022.

<p>Sketches for <i>Seasons</i>, stained-glass windows for a children's café  Oleksandr Dubovyk <sup>(b. 1931)</sup>  gouache on paper</p> <p>Sortavala, Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, 1986  Stedley Art Foundation</p> <p>During Soviet times, Dubovyk was kept from exhibiting his non-figurative artworks and so he often resorted to monumental and decorative projects instead, where the materials' specificity allowed him to pursue conceptual experiments. The fate of these stained-glass windows — executed in a territory annexed twice from Finland by the Soviet Union in 1940 and 1944, after the Winter War and Continuation War — remains unknown.</p>	1.5a	<p>1.10a Stained-glass window at children's art school  Liudmyla Korzh-Radko <sup>(b. 1956)</sup>,  handcrafted by Volodymyr Kuznietsov <sup>(b. 1946)</sup></p> <p>Uzhhorod, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, late 1980s  Photo by Robert Dovhanych, courtesy of NGO Imago of Culture</p>
<p><i>Sun</i> stained-glass window at Chernihiv registry office, with design sketch  Tetiana Fedorytenko <sup>(b. 1953)</sup>  stained glass, gouache on paper</p> <p>Chernihiv, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1988  Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov, sketch courtesy of Tetiana Fedorytenko</p>	1.6a	<p>1.11a + 1.15a Stained-glass window at regional workers' recreational facility  Volodymyr Kuznietsov <sup>(b. 1946)</sup></p> <p>Uzhhorod, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, late 1980s  Photo by Robert Dovhanych, courtesy of NGO Imago of Culture</p> <p>Born in Lviv and educated as a physicist in the late 1960s, Volodymyr Kuznietsov later put his knowledge towards the pursuit of new materials as he pioneered stained-glass production in the region and promoted it among his peers. Meanwhile, Liudmyla Korzh-Radko, who graduated from the art glass faculty at the Lviv University of Applied and Decorative Arts in 1980, adopted a painterly approach to glass design, recognizable by her refined colour combinations. Today, the city of Uzhhorod is suffering from regular blackouts caused by Russia's air strikes, with residents receiving only four hours of electricity per day.</p>
<p>Stained-glass window at Chernihiv registry office  Vitalii Vasylevskyi <sup>(b. 1950)</sup></p> <p>Chernihiv, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1988  Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov</p>	1.7a	<p>1.12a Stained-glass window at the Art Fund's workshop building  Unknown designer</p> <p>Dnipro, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic  Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov</p> <p>This stained-glass window epitomizes the current reality of researching the art history of the Soviet period in Ukraine for this exhibition. In the present state of war, Ukraine's state art archives, which are crucial for attribution research and preliminary study, are inaccessible. Even as this exhibition was being prepared, a nine-storey residential tower in Dnipro was bombed by Russia on 14 January 2023, leaving more than four hundred homeless. The rescue operation lasted three days, and more than forty civilians were found dead under the rubble.</p>
<p>Stained-glass window at Chernihiv registry office  Tetiana Diedova <sup>(b. 1959)</sup></p> <p>Chernihiv, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1988  Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov</p> <p>After visiting Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, the Ukrainian architect Viacheslav Pavliukov was keen on the idea of combining white limestone with dark stained-glass windows, which he eventually did with the Chernihiv registry office. The primary material (known as 'Inkerman stone') originated from Crimea, the interiors were designed by Ferdynand Taishev (an ethnic Tatar), and the stained-glass windows were created by three Chernihiv-based artists. One, Tetiana Fedorytenko, is locally known not only as an artist but also as a dedicated art educator. Another, Vitalii Vasylevskyi, is a designer born in Kharkiv: after graduating from the Kharkiv Art Industrial Institute (KHAII) in 1978, he lived and worked in the Moldovan ASSR until 1985. The third, Tetiana Diedova, is another KHAII graduate and an artist working in murals and oil painting. The registry office remains intact today, but of the sixteen cultural sites damaged in the Chernihiv Region (as verified by UNESCO), more than half are in the city itself. Along with the significant losses of its cultural heritage, the city has been experiencing dreadful bombardment of its residential areas.</p>	1.8a	<p>1.13a Stained-glass window at the Kyiv Hippodrome  Volodymyr Lobanov <sup>(b. 1931)</sup></p> <p>Kyiv, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1987  Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov</p> <p>Volodymyr Lobanov is a Kharkiv-born designer with remarkable skill in the use of ceramics in applied and decorative arts pieces as well as monumental projects. These stained-glass windows were late creations, hidden gems of Kyiv's urban architecture.</p>
<p><i>Movement Towards the Light</i>, stained-glass window  at the Hungarian Embassy in Kyiv  Mykola Shkaraputa <sup>(b. 1941)</sup></p> <p>Kyiv, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1978  Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov</p> <p>In contrast to his well-known stained-glass embellishments in the ceiling of the lower station of the Kyiv Funicular, this piece by Mykola Shkaraputa remains obscure, as it is hardly accessible to the general public. In the current state of war, diplomatic relations between the Hungarian and Ukrainian governments have become strained, particularly with Viktor Orbán's 26 January 2023 description of Ukraine as a 'no man's land'.</p>	1.9a	<p>1.14a Sketch of <i>Holiday</i>, stained-glass window at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the USSR  Oleksandr Dubovyk <sup>(b. 1931)</sup>  gouache on paper</p> <p>Kyiv, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1988  Stedley Art Foundation</p>

<p><i>Farewells, Watch, Songs of the Motherland, Sports, Return</i>, stained-glass windows at <i>Chaika</i> Palace of Culture Tymofii Syvukhin and V. Avdieienko Mariupol, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1981–82 Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov</p> <p>These stained-glass windows, remembered by many local residents as an emblem of Mariupol, were designed by the mysterious duo of Syvukhin and Avdieienko, who left us no trace other than signing these works with a tiny image of two people embracing each other. These glass artworks were destroyed during russia's bombardment.</p>	1.16a	1.20a + 1.21a	<p>Sketches for stained-glass windows at <i>Romantik</i> Young Pioneers' camp Oleksandr Milovzorov<sup>(b. 1938)</sup> Gouache on paper Karkaraly, Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic, 1978 Courtesy of Oleksandr Milovzorov</p> <p>Oleksandr Milovzorov is an artist who mastered numerous materials ranging from ceramics to metal, and with artworks scattered all over Kyiv, he had a huge impact on the city's contemporary urban design. Like many artists at the Art Fund's workshops in Kyiv, he also created works for the Kazakh SSR. These stained-glass pieces were originally executed for a children's recreational space in the town of Karkaraly, and their subsequent fate remains unknown.</p>
<p><i>Natural Healer</i>, stained-glass windows at Kyiv Hospital No. 4, with design sketches Olha Vorona<sup>(b. 1961)</sup> Kyiv, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1988–89 Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov, sketches courtesy of Olha Vorona</p> <p>For her first Art Fund commission, Olha Vorona created these artworks for a hospital (today classified as critical infrastructure in regards to wartime electricity prioritization). Her willingness to work with abstraction in her glass design was not well received among her colleagues. As she recalls now, Vorona was fortunate that her sketches were favoured by the hospital head back then. Of the four stained-glass windows originally created, only two remain intact today. The present exhibition includes sketches of the pieces lost apparently due to negligence in the early 2000s.</p>	1.17a	1.22a	<p>Stained-glass windows at <i>Yuventus</i> Students' Club Ivan Ilko<sup>(b. 1938)</sup>, handcrafted by Volodymyr Kuznietsov<sup>(b. 1946)</sup> Uzhhorod, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1984 Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov</p> <p>During Soviet times, Ivan Ilko was a leading artist in Uzhhorod's monumental and decorative arts. In 1973, he became a Main Artist of the Transcarpathian Art Fund Workshop, and his occupation of this largely bureaucratic position facilitated the advancement of experimental design in the region.</p>
<p>Stained-glass windows at the Ternopil Regional Local History Museum Iryna Hrechka<sup>(b. 1937)</sup> Ternopil, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1983 Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov</p> <p>Graduating from the Lviv University of Applied and Decorative arts in 1967, Iryna Hrechka worked for more than two decades at the Art Fund workshops in Lviv. She designed stained-glass windows for many museums in the region, becoming a true expert in the field.</p>	1.18a	1.23a	<p>Stained-glass windows at Kyiv National University's Faculties of Biology and Geology (after air strike by russia) Larysa Mishchenko<sup>(b. 1941)</sup> Kyiv, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1986 Photo by Oleksandr Bogomaz</p> <p>These stained-glass windows by Larysa Mishchenko, one of Kyiv's most prolific artists, were destroyed in an air strike by russia on 31 December 2022. Out of ten artworks originally installed at Kyiv National University, there are reportedly only three still intact. Today, activists and researchers are gathering the remaining shards and organizing the restoration of the artworks.</p>
<p>Stained-glass windows at <i>Café Prypiat</i> Viktor Blinov<sup>(b. 1946)</sup> Prypiat, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, late 1970s to early 1980s Photo by Yevgen Nikiforov</p> <p>In the 1970s, Prypiat — now deep inside a nuclear exclusion zone — was envisioned as an exemplary industrial settlement serving Europe's biggest nuclear power plant. As the head of Prypiat's urban decoration for around a decade, Ivan Lytovchenko (1921–1996), created and supervised the city's complex visual design. His mosaics and sculptural reliefs, along with these stained-glass windows by his colleague Viktor Blinov, have been gradually destroyed by radiation. From February to April 2022, the Chornobyl Exclusion Zone was occupied by invading russian troops who terrorized the few remaining residents as well as the Chornobyl plant employees, underlining the threat by russia's leaders to spread nuclear disaster across Europe.</p>	1.19a		

# the karakis architectural dynasty

During the twentieth century, Ukrainian architecture underwent several cataclysms and radical shifts in trajectory. This was not only about the style of architecture but the status of the profession itself. After 1955, the role of the architectural creator gradually transformed into that of the dutiful draughtsman. The lion's share of architectural activity was concentrated on the further development and multiplication of standard designs for housing estates. A much smaller but more prestigious share was focused on the creation of individual public projects. Besides these two paths, there was also a third one known as 'paper architecture', a realm of creativity and utopian ideas where the possibilities were almost limitless.

One architect whose biography perfectly exemplifies the history of Ukrainian architecture in the twentieth century is Iosif Karakis. The 1920s and 30s were the era of constructivist architecture, and it was in this period that he became highly sought after. But in 1951, after another ideological 'cleansing', he was fired from all his practices. Later on, with the help of his friends, he managed to land positions at major design and research institutes. In 1977, he started working on his visionary 'Housing of the Near Future' project for Kyiv. His philosophy was based on the idea that the human, as a biological being, should not just live close to nature, but be a full part of the environment.

His daughter Irma followed in his footsteps, but in her own way. She became well known as an interior and furniture designer. During the final decades of the USSR, interior design became another field allowing some space for individuality and the creation of unique objects. One of the most iconic projects in her portfolio was the interior design of the *Ukraina* Palace concert hall in Kyiv. The interior concept was based on combinations contrasting various rare types of stone against golden walnut wood. The ceremonial atmosphere was further heightened by customized lighting, including fixtures made of cast glass resembling melted ice in texture and colour.

While architectural dynasties are not uncommon, examples like this, where a father and daughter both come to symbolize a whole profession, are very rare. This is why a look at both components of this one creative family, with projects reflecting the search for individualism and for freedom from restrictions, is particularly important and worthwhile even today.

Alex Bykov

# 1b

Portrait of Iosif Karakis, February 1982, Kyiv  
Viktor Marushchenko (1946–2020)  
35 mm black and white photo

Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1982

Archive of Viktor Marushchenko, courtesy of Alex Bykov, Kyiv

Viktor Marushchenko was a well-known Ukrainian photographer, shown in more than sixty solo and group exhibitions in Switzerland, Germany, France, the USA, Canada, Brazil, Chile, Slovakia, and Ukraine. He participated in the 2001 Venice Biennale and the 2004 São Paulo Biennale, and his work is in the collections of museums, galleries, and private collectors worldwide. In 2004, he founded the Viktor Marushchenko School of Photography in Kyiv as well as 5.6, an independent photo magazine.

# 1.1b

1.2b  
– 1.4b Troieshchyna Neighbourhood Development Project, Kyiv  
Iosif Karakis (1902–1988)  
mixed technique (oil, watercolour, pencil, pen, pastel, etc.)

Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1980s

Archive of Iosif Karakis, courtesy of Oleg Yunakov, New York

Formerly a separate village, Troieshchyna is a residential area in Kyiv with a population of 267,000 people, located on the left bank of the Dnipro River. Its planned development began in 1981, with the first estates inhabited in 1983. Within the architectural community, Troieshchyna is also known for its extensive and effective use of large-scale graphics on the facades of standard residential blocks, curated by Volodymyr Pryadko's artist group.

1.5b  
– 1.9b Obolon development project, Kyiv  
Iosif Karakis (1902–1988)  
mixed technique (watercolour, gouache, pencil, pen, pastel, etc.)

Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1977

Archive of Iosif Karakis, courtesy of Oleg Yunakov, New York

Obolon is a historical locality on the right bank of the Dnipro, with both residential and industrial zones. In 1967, the newly approved Kyiv development plan specified the construction of residential areas on the wetlands alongside the Dnipro. Hydraulic fill was used to cover the Obolon flood meadows with a sand layer some four to five metres deep. Under construction from 1972 to 1980 (with further development in the late 90s), Obolon included Kyiv's biggest housing estate, unsurpassed until the early 1980s.

1.10b  
– 1.20b  
1.22b  
+ 1.25b Batyieva Hora development project, Kyiv  
Iosif Karakis (1902–1988)  
mixed technique (oil, watercolour, gouache,  
pencil, pen, marker, pastel, etc.)

Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1977

Archive of Iosif Karakis, courtesy of Oleg Yunakov, New York

V.G. Zabolotny State Scientific Architectural and Construction Library, Kyiv

Formerly a village, Batyieva Hora is now a historical neighbourhood in Kyiv, located on a hillside above the small Lybid River. Previously mapped as a burial ground, the village was founded around 1900 and settled by railroad workers. This project illustration was published in 1977 by Iosif Karakis as part of his *Housing of the Near Future* concept during his time at the Kyiv Research Institute of History, Theory, and Prospective Problems of Soviet Architecture.

1.21b  
+ 1.23b  
+ 1.24b  
+ 1.26b  
– 1.31b Interior design of the *Ukraina* Palace concert hall, Kyiv  
Irma Karakis (1930–2022)  
black and white photo

Gyprograzdanprombud Institute and Gyproemel Institute

Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1970

V. G. Zabolotny State Scientific Architectural and Construction Library, Kyiv

The *Ukraina* Palace is one of Kyiv's chief cultural venues, with a capacity of 3,714 people in the main concert hall. Opened in April 1970, it was primarily intended as a site for Communist Party congresses and events and only secondarily as a concert hall. The building was designed by a group of architects led by Yevhenia Marychenko (1916–1999). In 1971, the architectural and engineering team, including interior designer Irma Karakis, were all awarded the Shevchenko National Prize, the highest state award for culture and art.

Interior design of Hotel Kyiv, Kyiv Irma Karakis (1930–2022) black and white photo KyivZDNIIEP Institute, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1973 Archive of Irma Karakis, courtesy of Oleg Yunakov, New York Designed by a group of architects led by Viktor Elizarov (1911–1995) and Igor Ivanov (1928–1980), the Hotel Kyiv was the first high-rise in the Ukrainian SSR built entirely with steel-frame construction. This type of construction stopped after that, due to the demand for metals in military production. Long the tallest building in the Soviet Ukraine, the hotel is located on Mariinskyi Park in the heart of Kyiv, opposite the parliament building. Due to the hotel's high-ranking guests, particular attention was paid to the interiors. Having previously established herself as a talented interior designer, Irma Karakis was also assigned to the hotel project.	1.32b – 1.34b + 1.37b
Interior design for a pharmacy, Kyiv, 1970s	1.35b
Interior design for a ticket office, Kyiv, 1979	1.36b
Experimental furniture for kindergartens, Kyiv, 1970s	1.38b
Reception of the Theatre Hotel, Kyiv, 1970s	1.39b
Comlect mass-produced furniture, Kyiv, 1980s Irma Karakis (1930–2022) black and white photos KyivZDNIIEP Institute, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic Archive of Irma Karakis, courtesy of Oleg Yunakov, New York During the 1970s and 80s, Irma Karakis worked at the KyivZDNIIEP experimental design institute, devoting herself to interiors and furniture technologies. Her wide-ranging projects included custom work for individual projects, mass-produced furniture for residential use, and experimental projects.	1.40b
Portrait of Irma Karakis, 2000s, New York Archive of Irma Karakis, courtesy of Oleg Yunakov, New York	1.41b

1.42b <i>Housing of the Near Future (model)</i> Iosif Karakis (1902–1988) wood Model produced in cooperation with Alex Bykov, Rostyslav Bakhtiarov, and the Museum of Contemporary Art NGO, Kyiv, Ukraine, 2023 As an integral part of architectural design and presentation, scale models are among the field's most expressive artifacts. They can be used both as a working tool and as the final form of project presentation. In his practice, Iosif Karakis used models extensively and productively. The range of materials he utilised was very diverse: paper, cardboard, plywood, clay, plasticine, and even matchboxes. One of the most distinctive features of his approach was the photo documenting of his completed models in natural surroundings. For Karakis, this final image was a manifestation of his basic conviction that humans should not live alongside nature, exploiting it, but be embedded in the environment. During the last years of his life, Karakis lived at his country house and spent most of his time in close contact with nature. That was where he developed his projects and photographed the resulting models amidst grass, stones, flowers, and trees. But after his death, his daughter's move to the USA, and the sale of the country house, none of his models survived. For the Retrotopia exhibition, we decided to bring Karakis' vision back to life with a new model based on his utopian proposals. It captures the spirit of his approach to modelling as well as the essence of his visionary ideas.
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# the city as stage

Purple, red, yellow, green, blue: even today, the colours of the rainbow represent diversity, internationalism, and peace, just like they did fifty years ago at the 10th World Festival of Youth and Students, held in East Berlin in 1973.

The festival's colourful design stood in stark contrast to East Germany's showcase events of the past, which had relied on red banners, the national flag, and big portraits.

This new visual language was created by a design collective from the Weissensee School of Art and Design Berlin. This included Axel Bertram, the graphic designer who laid out the festival's design guidelines. He updated the traditional festival logo and based his colour palette on it. This can be found in the 'W' and 'B' logos created by Bertram (standing for 'World Festival' and 'Berlin') as well as in posters, programme booklets, stage designs, textile items, and temporary architecture. Beyond the 280 participating artists, the festival also called upon the assistance of state enterprises and the general public. An overwhelming number of people responded to the call. The festival's visual expression proved popular. Across nine summer days, the festival welcomed eight million domestic and international guests to its various political, sporting, and cultural events.

In the early 1970s, the GDR saw various shifts in political culture. New social policies, along with announced plans to open up society and culture, ignited hopes for change. East Germany's new government used the 1973 World Festival as a political showcase both domestically and internationally. But among the young, the festival developed a momentum of its own, breaking away from the official political rhetoric. During those nine days, many believed that an open and international socialism was really possible — as also promised by the inclusive visual language of the World Festival. But the experience of the World Festival was a utopian promise, one that instead of being fulfilled in subsequent years, the East German government broke.

Florentine Nadolni

# 2a

Standard graphic 'Festival Flower' logo  
Poster for the 10th World Festival of Youth and Students,  
East Berlin  
Axel Bertram (1936–2019)  
printed paper

East Germany, 1973  
Museum of Utopia and Daily Life, Eisenhüttenstadt

With extended colour discs, a more stylized globe, and a change in colour tones, Axel Bertram succeeded in creating a more contemporary version of the festival logo, whose basic form went back to 1957. He also derived the World Festival's standard colour palette from this logo, although he specified a different linear order for the five colours due to 'psychological reasons of perception'.

# 2.1a

2.2a Standard graphic 'W' icon  
Poster for the 10th World Festival of Youth and Students,  
East Berlin  
Axel Bertram (1936–2019)  
printed paper

East Germany, 1973  
Museum of Utopia and Daily Life, Eisenhüttenstadt

For the festival's letter icons, Axel Bertram built upon the sans-serif font Futura, originally created in 1927 by graphic artist and typeface designer Paul Renner (1878–1956) as part of the New Frankfurt project.

2.3a Standard graphic 'B' icon  
Poster for the 10th World Festival of Youth and Students  
Axel Bertram (1936–2019)  
printed paper

East Germany, 1973  
Museum of Utopia and Daily Life, Eisenhüttenstadt

For the internal contour of the 'B' for Berlin, Axel Bertram used the silhouette of the city's famous TV tower. The TV tower was an obvious choice, with its iconic form dominating the skyline of the rebuilt city and marking the modern socialist city centre. With this design, Bertram also saw an opportunity to launch a striking new emblem for East Berlin. But despite its architectural prominence, the TV tower has yet to find its way into any of the city's official iconography.

2.4a Applications of the standard colour palette  
Pages 5 to 14 from the catalogue for the artistic design  
of the 10th World Festival, East-Berlin  
Axel Bertram (1936–2019)  
printed paper

Published by the Organizing Committee of the 10th World Festival of Youth and Students, East Germany, 1972  
Stiftung Plakat OST, Berlin

To facilitate varied applications of the standard colour palette, a set of usage guidelines were laid out and summarized in a catalogue. Printed in a small format on the most economical paper, this booklet was the guide for everyone involved in designing for the 10th World Youth and Student Festival.

2.5a Programme booklets  
International Festival of Songs, Dances, and Folk Customs  
at Volkspark Friedrichshain, East Berlin  
Unknown designers  
printed paper, privately drafted and assembled

East Germany, 1973  
Museum of Utopia and Daily Life, Eisenhüttenstadt

The rainbow colours were a central part of the mandatory design standards, and were also seen in the printed materials for the festival's 1,500 events.

2.6a Festival scarf  
Unknown designer  
textile, with signatures

East Germany, 1973  
Museum of Utopia and Everyday Life, Eisenhüttenstadt

Festival-related textile products, including shirts and scarves in the official colours, became popular and saw widespread use, making them an important part of the visual impact.

<p>Amateur photos of the 10th World Festival of Youth and Students various amateur photographers photos (reproductions)</p> <p>East Germany, 1973 Museum of Utopia and Everyday Life, Eisenhüttenstadt The festival scarves developed into a popular means of communication, with people using them to collect other participants' signatures and to pass on their own.</p>	2.7a	<p>2.12a Poster for the 10th World Festival of Youth and Students Núria Quevedo (b. 1938) printed paper</p> <p>East Germany, 1973 Museum of Utopia and Daily Life, Eisenhüttenstadt, ©Núria Quevedo/VG Bild-Kunst Besides the festival's official posters, souvenir posters were also produced. These were designed by various visual artists, including the Spanish painter and graphic artist Núria Quevedo, who had been living in East Berlin since 1952.</p>
<p>Urban design proposal for Karl-Marx-Allee 10th World Festival of Youth and Students, East Berlin Lutz Brandt (b. 1938) photo, paper</p> <p>East Germany, 1972–73 Archive of Lutz Brandt, Berlin, ©Lutz Brandt/VG Bild-Kunst The streets and squares of East Berlin formed the festival's experiential backdrop. Stages, flags, and installations in the festival colours formed the central elements of the urban design proposal, which Lutz Brandt helped create.</p>	2.8a	<p>2.13a Poster for the 10th World Festival of Youth and Students Ingo Arnold (b. 1931) printed paper</p> <p>East Germany, 1973 Museum of Utopia and Daily Life, Eisenhüttenstadt</p>
<p>Designs for grandstands on Marx-Engels-Platz 10th World Festival of Youth and Students, East Berlin Lutz Brandt (b. 1938) photo, paper</p> <p>East Germany, 1972–73 Archive of Lutz Brandt, Berlin, ©Lutz Brandt/VG Bild-Kunst To design the festival's official routes and sites, Lutz Brandt used large-format photos of East Berlin's streets, which he acquired from the state's official advertising bureau. Using pieces of coloured paper, he adorned them with flags, stages, and grandstands.</p>	2.9a	<p>2.14a Design for a mobile stage 10th World Festival of Youth and Students, East Berlin Unknown designer, Weissensee School of Art and Design Berlin cardboard</p> <p>East Germany, 1972–73 Archive of the Weissensee School of Art and Design Berlin Students and teachers from all disciplines at the Weissensee School of Art and Design Berlin decorated trailers to be used as mobile stages throughout the city, including for the 'Youth Dance Street' on Unter den Linden.</p>
<p>Festival poster 'For Anti-imperialist Solidarity, Peace, and Friendship' Ingo Arnold (b. 1931) printed paper</p> <p>East Germany, 1973 Museum of Utopia and Daily Life, Eisenhüttenstadt Among the many artistic and graphic works seen across the city during the festival, it was the brightly coloured festival posters designed by Berlin graphic artist Ingo Arnold that took centre stage. One of the festival's main graphic works was Ingo Arnold's poster proclaiming the 1973 festival slogan: 'For anti-imperialist solidarity, peace, and friendship'.</p>	2.10a	<p>2.15a Mobile stages 10th World Festival of Youth and Students, East Berlin Students and teachers of the Weissensee School of Art Berlin, led by Klaus Wittkugel (1910–1985) and Dietmar Kuntzsch (b. 1936) photos (reproductions)</p> <p>East Germany, 1973 Archive of the Weissensee School of Art and Design Berlin For their highly visible mobile stages, the designers took inspiration from the bold avant-garde artwork painted onto the agit-trains of the Soviet Union.</p>
<p>Poster for the 10th World Festival of Youth and Students Ronald Paris (1933–2021) printed paper</p> <p>East Germany, 1973 Museum of Utopia and Daily Life, Eisenhüttenstadt, ©Ronald Paris/VG Bild-Kunst There was a poster series featuring the work of both prominent and emerging artists, reflecting their diverse artistic takes on the festival's themes. This expressive example was designed by Ronald Paris.</p>	2.11a	<p>2.16a Model for a flag tower 10th World Festival of Youth and Students, East Berlin Lutz Brandt (b. 1938) wood, paper, textile</p> <p>East Germany, 1972–73 Archive of Lutz Brandt, Berlin, ©Lutz Brandt/VG Bild-Kunst For the city centre, the architect and designer Lutz Brandt created flag towers made of latticework and adorned with flags, which were not only colourful, but also offered an elevated orientation marker.</p>

# domestic dreams and everyday realities

Like a kind of 'Where's Wally' picture, the ink drawings and watercolours of Lutz Brandt give us an imaginary look inside 'our own four walls'. The architect and graphic artist produced these images in large numbers from the mid 1970s to 1983 for *Neue Berliner Illustrierte*, *Das Magazin*, and other publications. Today I read these interior studies as the private side of East Germany's 1973 Housing Construction Programme, intended to greatly improve the country's housing conditions not only through the erection of new housing estates, but also through the preservation and modernization of existing building stock.

Brandt's suggestions appeared in columns like 'Tips for the Apartment', with readers submitting questions and ideas on how to design multi-purpose furniture, how to repurpose a wall unit, how to best use an old building's sloped ceiling space, how to convert and separate a galley kitchen, and how to set up a solidarity bazaar in a building estate lobby. In these pages, domestic dreams and everyday realities are brought back to life.

So how does design come into the picture? Designer objects are not the centre of attention here, but instead fit into an interplay of heirloom pieces, found objects, DIY solutions, and pre-existing furnishings. Only insiders knew the names of the designers. Trained by old hands of the Deutscher Werkbund and Bauhaus movements, East Germany's designers did their best under limited production conditions to achieve maximum functionality and aesthetic appeal, combined with durability and up-to-date styles. This meant no auteur design, no worshipping of distinction. And yet there are things on every page that are seen as design icons today, such as the k20 speaker ball from *Heliradio*, the *Kontrast* table lamp, and the plastic furniture of the *Variopur* collection. With the present selection, we put a few highlights under the magnifying glass.

What is retrotopia? For me, it's the feeling of private spaces where people can live the way they want, where everyone has a home and a livelihood. Dwellings where devices aren't collecting data, and the smart home is still far away. Or is that just nostalgia?  
Silke Ihden - Rothkirch

## 2b

*Praktikus* do-it-yourself manual (11th edition)

Multiple authors

Published by VEB Fachbuchverlag Leipzig, East Germany, 1975

Museum of Utopia and Everyday Life, Eisenhüttenstadt

Whether glass installation, upholstery, bricklaying, or wallpapering, the *Praktikus* manual offered comprehensive, detailed, illustrated advice on how to do home repairs by yourself. First published in 1963, it was revised again and again until the 1980s, and reprinted almost every year.

2.1b

Modern decor for the new flat: practical furnishing options for the *WBS 70*

Kurt Lembcke and Ines Rautenberg

with photos by Monika Mayer-Günther

Published by VEB Fachbuchverlag Leipzig, East Germany, 1983

Museum of Utopia and Everyday Life, Eisenhüttenstadt

The *WBS 70*, or 'housing construction series 70', was a central component of East Germany's housing construction programme, which aimed to end the housing shortage through standardized construction. The first residential block was ready for occupancy in 1973. With plenty of illustrations and diagrams, this guide gave new tenants advice on how to best furnish a *WBS 70* home.

2.2b

2.3b Better living in old buildings: renovation and furnishing ideas

Ines Rautenberg and Jürgen Schulz

Published by VEB Verlag für Bauwesen Berlin, East Germany, 1975

Museum of Utopia and Everyday Life, Eisenhüttenstadt

The preservation, renovation, and modernization of existing building stock was also part of East Germany's housing programme. For residents of older homes, this guide offered concrete advice and suggestions for modern living and greater comfort in historical building stock.

2.4b *Balcony dreams*

Lutz Brandt (b. 1938)

watercolour drawings

Published in *Das Magazin*, 3/1983

Archive of Lutz Brandt, Berlin, ©Lutz Brandt/VG Bild-Kunst

In a humorous piece for the popular monthly *Das Magazin*, the architect and graphic designer Lutz Brandt presented fictitious DIY ideas for design, greenery, and energy production — all on the balconies of the prefab housing block.

2.5b *Tips for the apartment*

Lutz Brandt (b. 1938)

ink drawings

Published in *Neue Berliner Illustrierte* and others

East Germany, 1970s until 1983

Archive of Lutz Brandt, Berlin, ©Lutz Brandt/VG Bild-Kunst

Old buildings and new, second-hand furniture and store-bought, self-built and standard issue, complemented by striking professionally designed objects: the detailed and stylish interiors drawn by architect and graphic designer Lutz Brandt were not just tips for great decor: they reflected the diversity of homes in East Germany, combining heart's desires with everyday reality.

2.6b Table from the *Variopur* furniture series

In-house factory design

polyurethane

Manufactured by VEB Petrochemisches Kombinat Schwedt,

East Germany, starting 1971

Museum of Utopia and Everyday Life, Eisenhüttenstadt

The 1970s saw experimentation with new plastics like polyurethane, which enabled new shapes, bright colours, and rounded contours — as exemplified by the *vario-pur* furniture series. With its 1958 Chemicals Programme, East Germany had resolved to increase plastics production (on the basis of Soviet petroleum) in order to support modern mass manufacturing.

2.7b *Top-Sit* chair

Winfried Staeb (1940–2018)

polyurethane

Manufactured by Reuter Produkt Design/Elastogran GmbH, Lemförde,

West Germany, starting 1969, and by VEB Synthesewerk Schwarzheide,

East Germany, starting 1971

Museum of Utopia and Everyday Life, Eisenhüttenstadt

Like the *Z-Chair* and the *Garden Egg*, the popular *Top-Sit* was a licenced design from outside East Germany. It exemplified the close links between East and West German furniture production — and the similar consumer desires on both sides of the border.

<p><b>k24 Sensit compact speaker</b>          Karl Clauss Dietel<sup>(1934–2022)</sup>, Lutz Rudolph<sup>(1936–2011)</sup>,          Dieter von Amende<sup>(1939–2021)</sup>          polyurethane, metal, cotton wool</p> <p>Manufactured by <i>Heliradio</i> (Gerätebau Hempel KG), East Germany, 1974          Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Berlin          Combining four identical loudspeakers in a faceted case, this eye-catching compact speaker was particularly popular among tech-savvy fans of rock, pop, and the sound of the 70s.</p>	<p>2.8b</p>
<p><b>Kontrast table lamp</b>          Lutz Rudolph<sup>(1936–2011)</sup>          plastic (Decelith), metal</p> <p>Manufactured by VEB Leuchtenbau Lengefeld, East Germany, starting 1961          Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Berlin          The <i>Kontrast</i> floor and table lamps were produced in great quantities over the years, also for export to the West. The minimalist reduction to elementary forms — in this case a cylinder on a tubular rod — convey a sense of objectivity and rationality.</p>	<p>2.9b</p>
<p><b>Combi-Vision 310 TV with radio</b>          Jochen Ziska<sup>(b.1941)</sup> and Klaus Ebermann<sup>(b.1943)</sup>          plastic, glass, metal</p> <p>Manufactured by VEB Robotron-Elektronik Radeberg, East Germany, 1975          Museum of Utopia and Everyday Life, Eisenhüttenstadt          First presented at the 1975 Leipzig Spring Fair, this device gets its modern feel from the coloured plastic housing and lack of dials on the front. Available in red, yellow, or white, it came with or without a built-in radio. In West Germany, it was sold as <i>Bruns Funny S</i>.</p>	<p>2.10b</p>
<p><b>k20 sensit spherical speaker</b>          Karl Clauss Dietel<sup>(1934–2022)</sup> and Lutz Rudolph<sup>(1936–2011)</sup>          cardboard, metal, wire cloth, plastic</p> <p>Heliradio (Gerätebau Hempel KG) and VEB Statron, East Germany, 1969          Museum of Utopia and Everyday Life, Eisenhüttenstadt          The designers chose the spherical shape not only for acoustic reasons, but also for flexibility: the speakers could be used singly or hung at different heights, matching the period's decor perfectly. By the early 1960s, the <i>Heliradio</i> modular series was already following what Dietel later called the 'open-ended principle'.</p>	<p>2.11b</p>
<p><b>Stern Contura 2510 portable radio</b>          Michael Stender<sup>(1941–2005)</sup> and Alfred Bernau<sup>(b.1939)</sup>          plastic, metal</p> <p>Manufactured by VEB Stern Radio Berlin, East Germany, 1975–1976          Museum of Utopia and Everyday Life, Eisenhüttenstadt          The <i>Stern Contura 2510</i> portable radio was part of a new line of leisure and camping products. The compact form of its durable plastic housing featured an integrated handle. It also had a built-in torch that ran on battery power.</p>	<p>2.12 b</p>

# cosmic visions in public spaces

## 3a

Lithuanian utopian visions in public spaces are represented here by two figures: the stained glass artist Algimantas Stoškus (1925–1998) and the sculptor Teodoras Kazimieras Valaitis (1934–1974).

In the 1960s and 70s, Lithuanian public interior spaces were invigorated by various modernist projects. These were partially motivated by a requirement that one to three per cent of the overall budget be spent on the creation of unique art and design objects.

Stoškus' *Cosmic Fantasy* (1965) addressed one of the main themes of Soviet propaganda: the conquest of space. This paean to Soviet ideals allowed him to create an abstract composition that answered the problem of how to arrange stained glass within an undefined architectural space. Stoškus was one of the first artists in Lithuania to use thick glass. He was inspired by the famous Czech glass artists Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, whom he had met in 1957. It was at the *Neman* glass factory in Belarus that he mastered new techniques and did his experiments with slab glass.

Active in the 1960s and 70s, Valaitis was a visionary Lithuanian sculptor whose sketches and metal decorative compositions were contemplations of space and sky, endless perspectives in which lines intersect from the past and future, from dreams and fantasies. Valaitis created two decorative partitions for *Žirmūnai*, a restaurant in Vilnius (1969). Here, he integrated the metal hulls of the *Saturnas*, a popular Lithuanian vacuum cleaner, making their circular shapes an essential visual element.

In 1966, Valaitis was invited to show a decorative panel at the Leipzig Spring Fair. Projects by Stoškus and Valaitis were part of the USSR pavilion at both Expo '67 and Expo '70 (although the biomorphic wall planned by Valaitis for the 1970 Osaka Expo remained unimplemented). Stoškus' contribution to the Lithuanian section of the 1968 Soviet Union Industry and Trade Exhibition in London, an eight-meter-high kinetic stained-glass piece entitled *Vilnius: The Capital of Lithuania* (not preserved), can be considered one of the most utopian design projects realized at the time.

Karolina Jakaitė

## 3.1a Design for decorative composition with moon and zodiac motifs

Teodoras Kazimieras Valaitis<sup>(1934–1974)</sup>  
 paper, pencil, watercolour, collage

Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic, ca. 1965

Lithuanian National Museum of Art, Vilnius

Valaitis designed a decorative wall (unrealized) by combining images of the moon and starry sky with symbols of the zodiac. His very first sketches with celestial motifs were inspired by illustrations in the Swiss design journal *Graphis* and his own impressions from visiting Crimea.

Partition walls at *Žirmūnai* restaurant in Vilnius  
Teodoras Kazimieras Valaitis (1934–1974)

3.2a

Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1969  
Photo by Marius Baranauskas, 1971  
Lithuanian National Museum, Vilnius

For the *Žirmūnai* restaurant (1969) by architect Aleksandras Aronas, Valaitis created two decorative partitions integrating the metal cases of the *Saturnas*, a popular Lithuanian vacuum cleaner. These were cleverly covered in copper plating at the Vilnius Art Factory (the restaurant and partitions have unfortunately not survived).

*Cosmic Fantasy*

Algimantas Stoškus (1925–1998)  
coloured cast glass, plastic cement

3.3a

Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1965  
M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art, Kaunas

This is one of the very first experimental three-dimensional compositions by Lithuanian stained-glass artist Algimantas Stoškus. It was first exhibited at the National Jubilee Exhibition of Applied and Decorative Arts (1965) and at the Art Exhibition of the Baltic Republics in Moscow (1965). It was then exhibited in Kaunas at a former church that had been repurposed during the Soviet occupation period as a gallery for stained glass and sculpture. After the restoration of Lithuanian independence, the Church of St Michael the Archangel was reopened and the artworks were moved into storage. This is one of Stoškus' smallest stained-glass compositions, now exhibited publicly for the first time in thirty-two years and restored here in Berlin by stained-glass restorers from the Vilnius Academy of Arts: Žydrūnas Mirinavičius, Algimantas Kensminas, and Ignas Meidus.

# from utopian promises to constant shortages

# 3b

Probably the most famous example of 1960s Lithuanian technology and modernity was the iconic *Saturnas* vacuum cleaner, created by Lithuanian designers and engineers who were inspired by space-age aesthetics. Production began in 1962 at the Vilnius Electric Welding Equipment Factory. The stylish spherical appliance was brightly colored and ergonomically shaped. It weighed almost seven kilograms but had three small wheels to make everyday housework easier, aiming to realize Khrushchev's promise in the famous 1959 'Kitchen Debate' to 'overtake and surpass America'. Alas, in Soviet reality, the design found in private spaces was more depressing than promising, and the acquisition of new, well-functioning, appealing, useful products like this was a utopian pipedream.

The Soviet economy's poverty and constant shortages are also reflected in the transformation of vacuum cleaners into modernist lamps, in a design created by the architect Edmundas Čekanauskas when he adapted the hulls of the aforementioned *Saturnas* for the Composers' Union House in Vilnius. While this was a public space, what the architect tried to convey was the home comforts he perceived in Finnish architecture, something so lacking in Soviet everyday life.

The story of the artificial aorta also exemplifies the paradoxical nature of Soviet design, in which the most innovative design projects remained unfulfilled or were realized in only limited editions. First manufactured at the Kaunas *Kaspinas* factory in 1960, this artificial aorta was a prosthesis for the human body's largest blood vessel. It was woven using a ribbon-weaving machine from pre-war Germany, which was remodelled to solve the problem of the blood vessel's branching. These woven blood vessels were an innovation that proved very useful for surgical applications. However, their production ended after just four years, when Moscow perceived a threat to production from factories in Leningrad and Ukraine. The artificial blood vessels were sold at such low prices (actually set by the cost of sock production at the time) that it was simply not worth producing them.

Karolina Jakaitė

3.1b  
– 3.3b

*Saturnas* vacuum cleaners

Vytautas Didžiulis (engineered by Almantas Laužadis and Arkadijus Šapiro, with technician

Algirdas Griškevičius and production manager Ivan Makmak)  
plastic, metal

Manufactured by Vilnius Electric Welding Equipment Factory  
Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1962 to ca. 1975

The portable electric vacuum cleaner perfectly reflected the space-age aesthetics of the era. It is one of the most popular Soviet design objects of the 1960s. However, the names of the Lithuanian design team behind this legendary product only became known in 2018, during research for the National Gallery of Art exhibition *Stories of Things: Lithuanian Design 1918–2018*, marking the centennial of Lithuania's restored independence.

<i>Saturnas</i> vacuum cleaner, 1965 Energy and Technology Museum, Vilnius	3.1b
<i>Saturnas</i> vacuum cleaner, ca. 1968 Lithuanian National Museum of Art, Vilnius The <i>Saturnas</i> was designed at a factory that had already produced two models of vacuum cleaners, the <i>Venta</i> and the <i>Neris</i> . According to the engineers, they were unaware of the American-made <i>Hoover Constellation</i> at the time. However, they do admit to the reality of Soviet industrial espionage. This particular vacuum cleaner was the factory's gift to the production manager Ivan Makmak on his fortieth anniversary (now gifted by him to the Lithuanian National Museum of Art).	3.2b
<i>Saturnas</i> vacuum cleaner, 1975 Energy and Technology Museum, Vilnius The <i>Saturnas</i> was not just for vacuuming: like most Soviet-produced items, it was meant to perform several functions as another way to justify its necessity. 'With the new <i>Saturnas</i> vacuum cleaner, it's easy to clean, paint, and water', according to a promotional blurb from 1963.	3.3b
Wall lamp for Composers' Union House Vytautas Edmundas Čekanauskas (1930–2010) metal case of <i>Saturnas</i> vacuum cleaner covered in copper plating Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1966 Lithuanian Composers' Union House, Vilnius Čekanauskas, who designed the entire Composers' Union House Complex (1959–66), was inspired by his trip to Finland in 1959. For the interior design, he created minimalistic modern bubble lamps from the cases of <i>Saturnas</i> vacuum cleaners, a popular icon of the time.	3.4b
Artificial aorta Venifrida Stasė Račkaiytė (1927–2022) cotton, synthetic fibre Manufactured by <i>Kaspinas</i> textile factory, Kaunas, Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1960–64 M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art, Kaunas Designed in 1960, this was the first vascular prosthesis, woven using modified German weaving machines from the interwar period and here preserved in the textile designer's original packaging.	3.5b
Men's ties Venifrida Stasė Račkaiytė (1927–2022) cotton, synthetic fibre Manufactured by <i>Kaspinas</i> textile factory, Kaunas, Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1960–70 M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art, Kaunas The design of these ties was inspired by the same factory's artificial blood vessels. The designer continued to improve the innovative warping technique using the 'rounded' weaving principle.	3.6b
Short film <i>Did you know?</i> Camera work: Antanas Blyža, Lithuanian Film Studios Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1962 Lithuanian Central State Archives, Vilnius	3.7b

# designing the urban environment

## 4a

In 1978, in preparation for the Tallinn sailing events to be held as part of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games, an urban design group was established under the leadership of designer Matti Öunapuu. He brought several colleagues into the group, including Tiit Jürna, who had just defended his dissertation on Olympic urban design, and Taimi Soo, who had graduated in 1973. For them, it was the first project of this scope and type, dealing with the design of the urban environment. They were all graduates of the Estonian State Art Institute's faculty of industrial art, which was founded in 1966 to stand alongside the older department of applied art focusing on materials. Until then, the concept of 'design' (Est. *dísain*) had not yet been accepted or used in the context of education or practice. The curriculum created under the departmental leadership of Bruno Tomberg paid greater attention to the environment, its holistic design, and the corresponding methods, as opposed to the object-oriented nature of product design. This significantly expanded the existing understanding of design possibilities. Preparations were made throughout the years prior to the Games: the cityscape was observed and analysed from the design perspective, with design ideas tested out at the 1979 Baltic Regatta. In the summer of 1980, Tallinn's city centre and Pirita district received a new appearance, using previously unseen techniques. The aim was to fill the city's empty spaces with voluminous but transparent elements, strongly contrasting earlier strategies for decorating the city on special occasions. Decorative architectural forms in light sailcloth gave the city a festive appearance. A new visual solution was also created for sales kiosks and transport signs, and a signage system was produced for the Pirita Olympic Sports Centre.

K a i L o b j a k a s

- 4.1a Urban design element for the Olympic Regatta, model 1:4  
Urban Design Group — Tiit Jürna (b. 1953),  
Matti Öunapuu (b. 1945), Taimi Soo (b. 1947)  
metal, synthetic fabric  
Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1978, reconstruction 2022  
Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, Tallinn  
(The object is exhibited in the stairwell in front of the exhibition hall.)

## 4b

*Ruum ja Vorm* (space and form) was an exhibition of experimental work first held at the Tallinn Art Hall in 1969, with subsequent editions in later years. The exhibition was initiated and organized by the designers' section of the Artists' Association of the Estonian SSR, with the aim of introducing the public to the latest explorations in environmental design. Each exhibition revolved around a central theme developed by the exhibition's designers. Visitors were treated to spectacular total environments that transformed the Art Hall's light-filled spaces unrecognizably. The first edition's keywords were experimentation, standardization, and the combination of these towards a sense of individuality. The concept of using standard elements to create non-standard solutions was presented as an open-ended invitation to both designers and exhibition visitors, showcasing the designer's research process and highlighting new ideas in form, materials, and colours, along with the potential for individuality within the standard toolbox. The first edition focused on the use of modular structural units as a way of creating complex articulated spaces.

The second edition focused on abstract object/space solutions. What was presented was mostly the intermediate analysis phase, often before the stage of material realization, with an emphasis on the associations that arise while experiencing the work and on the desire to avoid stereotypes, while also highlighting the work's experimental value. The exhibition featured a maze of plywood partitions punctuated by openings, with different perspectives offering layered views into the various spaces; according to the responsible designer, this helped avoid the static nature of the previous edition.

'Inimene ja puhkus' or 'person and holiday' was the theme of the third edition, which had the clearest focus compared to the previous ones. This time, specific functional solutions were presented, and although it still offered an unconventional look at the future, the exhibition was perceived as having lost its innovative charm. There was a lot of interest in the *Ruum ja Vorm* exhibition series, in terms of visitor numbers, media reporting, and critical response. For a long time, the *Ruum ja Vorm* exhibition series remained the only one of its kind in the Soviet Union, receiving widespread coverage both locally and further afield. These exhibitions helped highlight the importance of the analysis phase, which is key to the design process. Despite the generally experimental focus, several proposed solutions actually reached practical implementation in the following years.

K a i L o b j a k a s

- 4.1b Lighting object with mirror  
 Helle Gans (b. 1940)  
 wood, plastic, glass  
 Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1976  
 Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, Tallinn  
 This object was designed for the third edition of *Ruum ja Vorm* (space and form) in 1976–77.

Technical plan of urban design element for 1979 Baltic Regatta  
 Urban Design Group — Matti Öunapuu (b. 1945),  
 Tiit Jürna (b. 1953), and Taimi Soo (b. 1947)  
 ink on paper

Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1979

Tallinn City Archive

Taking place in Tallinn, the Baltic Regatta was held a year before the 1980 Olympic sailing competition. It was an important opportunity to test out ideas for the next year's event, involving many still empty sites across Tallinn that were selected after a comprehensive design research process.

Urban design elements for the 1979 Baltic Regatta  
 photos

Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1979

Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, Tallinn

Urban design elements for the 1980 Olympic Regatta  
 photos

Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1980

Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, Tallinn

## 5a

The 1970s saw a significant boom in the field of interior design in Slovakia. Architects sought inspiration in technological progress, which led to the so-called 'high-tech' style. These tendencies were expressed most clearly by Vojtech Vilhan and Ján Bahna in the interior design of the Government Lounge at Bratislava Airport, built from 1972 to 1974. Its form was particularly influenced by the fact that this prominent interior, intended for receiving official visitors, had to be integrated into an older building. The architects had to work with an inconvenient layout and cramped spaces, into which they had to instill a modern image and a feeling of spaciousness. The solution turned out to be a completely new system of walls that blended smoothly with the ceiling and floors, resulting in a unified space evoking a sense of boundless volumes. The choice of materials, with Vilhan selecting modern materials such as the stainless steel that covered the interior walls, is a special focus of the work. The wooden relief walls by sculptor Vladimír Kompánek then created a contrast to the technological quality of the interior. But the problems faced by Vilhan and Bahna during the realization of the Government Lounge project also need to be mentioned. The early 1970s saw a shortage of building materials and design architectural elements, which led to a paradoxical situation at the Government Lounge: nearly all the high-tech details and atypical elements of this futuristic interior were, in fact, made by hand at the Center for Arts and Crafts in Bratislava. Despite the Government Lounge being highly admired in professional circles, at the end of 2014 a decision was made to liquidate it. A campaign to save this unique interior was then taken up by the Slovak Design Center, where it is now deposited. As a result, the Government Lounge, unlike many other interiors now lost for good, has been preserved in all its complexity for future generations.

K l á r a P r e š n a j d e r o v á

**5.1a** Interior of Government Lounge at Bratislava Airport  
Vojtech Vilhan<sup>(1925–1988)</sup> in collaboration with Ján Bahna<sup>(b. 1944)</sup>  
Black and white photo  
Czechoslovakia, 1974  
Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava

**5.2a** Segments of round table from Government Lounge at Bratislava Airport  
Vojtech Vilhan<sup>(1925–1988)</sup> in collaboration with Ján Bahna<sup>(b. 1944)</sup>  
wood  
Produced by the Center for Arts and Crafts, Bratislava, Slovakia,  
Czechoslovakia, 1972–73  
Slovak Design Center/Slovak Design Museum, Bratislava  
With its minimalist shape and glossy white surface, this custom-made round table echoed the treatment of the armchair backs, thus completing the overall look of the Government Lounge's interior design.

View of the first <i>Ruum ja Vorm</i> (space and form) exhibition Exhibition concept and design by Eha Reitel, Maia Laul, Kärt Voogre, and Saima Veidenberg Elements designed by Bruno Tomberg <sup>(1926–2021)</sup> Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1969 Photo by Boris Mäemets Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, Tallinn	4.2b
Views of the second <i>Ruum ja Vorm</i> (space and form) exhibition Exhibition concept, design, and furniture by Bruno Tomberg <sup>(1926–2021)</sup> Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1972 Photo by Boris Mäemets Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, Tallinn	4.3b
Chair Y Bruno Tomberg <sup>(1926–2021)</sup> wood, textile Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1972 Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, Tallinn This chair was designed for the second <i>Ruum ja Vorm</i> (space and form) exhibition in 1972. Launched in 1969, this exhibition series focused on the experimental potential of design.	4.4b
Modular seat Bruno Tomberg <sup>(1926–2021)</sup> wood, leather	4.5b
Modular table Bruno Tomberg <sup>(1926–2021)</sup> wood Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1969 Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, Tallinn The modular seat and table elements were designed for the first edition of the <i>Ruum ja Vorm</i> (space and form) exhibition. The exhibition series continued until 1989.	4.6b
Short film <i>Ruum ja Vorm</i> (space and form) exhibition, 1969 duration: 1 minute Ministry of Culture, Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1969 Estonian Film Archive	4.7b



Armchair from Government Lounge at Bratislava Airport  
 Vojtech Vilhan (1925–1988) in collaboration with Ján Bahna (b. 1944) **5.3a**  
 leather, wood, metal  
 Produced by the Centre for Arts and Crafts, Bratislava, Slovakia,  
 Czechoslovakia, 1972–73  
 Slovak Design Center/Slovak Design Museum, Bratislava  
 An exclusive series of round leather armchairs of various heights, featuring backs  
 made of bent wood, was custom-made for the showcase interior of the Govern-  
 ment Lounge at Bratislava airport.

Partition walls from Government Lounge at Bratislava Airport  
 Vladimír Kompánek (1927–2011) **5.4a**  
 wood, *Umakart* (known as *Sprelacart* in East Germany)  
 Produced by the Centre for Arts and Crafts, Bratislava, Slovakia,  
 Czechoslovakia, 1972–73  
 Slovak Design Center/Slovak Design Museum, Bratislava  
 White relief walls with abstracted folk motifs served a practical dividing function  
 in the Government Lounge while also creating a poetic contrast to the interior's  
 overall technological impression.

Interior of Government Lounge at Bratislava Airport  
 Vojtech Vilhan (1925–1988) in collaboration with Ján Bahna (b. 1944) **5.5a**  
 Black and white photos, 1974  
 Colour photos by Gabriel Kuchta, 2014  
 Slovak Design Center/Slovak Design Museum, Bratislava  
 Courtesy of SME and Gabriel Kuchta

# slovak design and craft in privat spaces

## 5b

During the socialist period in Slovakia, especially the 'normalization' period that began after 1968, design and applied art were regarded as a space where — with the regime's tacit approval — one could work with more freedom and openness. But we should add that in the cumbersome machinery of the planned socialist economy, a designer was often perceived as an element that 'complicated' the production process unnecessarily. While the designer's importance was officially endorsed, in reality, there was only sporadic and limited cooperation with the industrial sphere. And so the prevailing alternative strategy for many designers was to do individual production within the limits of official professional structures, resulting in single pieces and limited editions.

If a Slovak consumer wanted to avoid mass-produced items and get something exclusive in home decor, there were two options during the socialist period (besides making it yourself). There was the Dielo chain of stores managed by the Slovak Fine Arts Foundation, which sold artworks and handicrafts. And there were the shops run by the Centre for Folk Art Production, which offered modern designs based on traditional crafts. Beyond that, residents of the capital could also enjoy opulent national exhibitions of applied art and industrial design held every few years, where the spotlight was on innovative and beautiful objects for the home. In the story of Slovak housing culture from the 1950s to the 1980s, the strategy of individualized unique creation is well represented by the candlesticks and furniture of Viktor Holešťák-Holubár, who often realized his ideas in cooperation with the Center for Arts and Crafts in Bratislava, a state organization dedicated to creative design for public interiors. The Center also participated in realizing the Government Lounge at Bratislava Airport.

V i e r a K l e i n o v á

**5.1b** Three candle holders  
 Viktor Holešťák-Holubár (1926–1989)  
 walnut wood, mahogany wood, brass  
 Manufactured by Center for Arts and Crafts, Bratislava  
 Czechoslovakia, 1964–65  
 Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava

Holubár's candlesticks are an associative creative expression, a sculptural message, a symbol of home. They are sculptural, anthropometric as well as strictly geometric, they communicate by rhythmic movement as well as in the symbolic language of the ornament. They served as a testing platform for his artistic and technological invention.

Chair  
 Viktor Holešák-Holubár (1926–1989)  
 wood  
 Slovakia, Czechoslovakia, 1961  
 Slovak Design Center/Slovak Design Museum, Bratislava  
 Probably the designer's original, this model of a simply constructed solid wood chair passed through several iterations in terms of folk-motif ornamentation, which Holešák-Holubár gradually reduced until only the dowel carpentry joint detail remained as the chair's last decorative element.

5.2b

Viktor Holešák-Holubár  
 photo by Magdaléna Robinsonová (1924–2006)  
 Slovakia, Czechoslovakia, 1966–67  
 Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava

5.3b

# designing atmospheres

## 6a

The architecture and interiors of the Spa Hotel *Thermal* in Carlsbad (1964/67–77), which includes a large festival cinema, are unique in terms of structure, materials, and artworks. The complex, designed in 1964 in the style of early brutalism, was completed by 1977. The architects Věra Machoninová and Vladimír Machonin, a prominent husband-and-wife team, were extremely successful in the 1960s, but as they refused to support the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, they were subsequently banned from official architectural competitions and publications.

The hotel complex conforms to the site's natural setting in a bend of the Teplá River, with its tower on a horizontal pedestal standing apart as a counterpoint to the Old Town of what was formerly Carlsbad. The three-storey base is articulated with expansive semi-open terraces that enable a free horizontal flow through public passages. Housing the cinema and conference halls, the pedestal's three cylindrical forms emphasize the river's meander and add dynamic energy to the composition's orthogonality. The hotel tower, a slender volume with 280 rooms, was intended to organically complement the town's silhouette. The thermal spa, swimming pool, and café are set into the hillside above the hotel, providing unique views of the town.

The interior's artificial environments create various atmospheric and sensory effects through different colours, forms, and materials. The interior partitions feature typically exterior materials such as washed concrete panels, along with red-coloured wood panels, glass walls, and hydroponic plant vitrines. The main cinema for 1,200 spectators is clad with slate acoustic panels that recall the country's mountain ranges. Artistic glass installations by René Roubíček (1922–2018) and the duo of Stanislav Libenský (1921–2002) and Jaroslava Brychtová (1924–2020) add delicacy to the concept, with glass columnar fountains forming a 'glass forest', as well as a sparkling chandelier of glass tendrils and Roubíček's 'mushroom lamps' in the restaurant. The architects installed custom furniture in rich colours (orange, red, blue, white, green), such as a tall swivelling armchair for the hotel reception and a low upholstered chair without armrests for café, restaurant, and foyer usage.

Helena Huber-Doudová

6.1a Competition design drawings, Hotel *Thermal*  
 Hotel Thermal, main auditorium, mezzanine, floorplans  
 Věra Machoninová (b. 1920), Vladimír Machonin (1920–1990)  
 print on paper

Czechoslovakia, 1964  
 National Gallery in Prague

The open competition for the design of a Spa and festival hotel in Carlsbad was won by the Machonins as one of a splendid early brutalist designs with cantilevered volume of the cinema auditorium.

6.2a Guest bedroom, Hotel *Thermal*  
 Věra Machoninová (b. 1920), Vladimír Machonin (1920–1990)  
 print on paper

Czechoslovakia, 1970's  
 Spa Hotel Thermal, Karlovy Vary

The plan of a hotel room in the slender tower shows the setting and the placement of furniture sets, designed by the architects. Special focus is the red wing chair.

# the birth of prefab-block culture



The 'normalization' period in Czechoslovakia — when the non-reformist wing of the Communist Party worked to consolidate power and 'normalize the situation' after the Warsaw Pact invasion by purging reformists, restoring censorship, and abolishing numerous interest groups and political organizations — can be characterized as a time of resignation in society, further deepened by a large wave of emigration. Part of the communist regime's strategy to calm the escalated political situation and distract the public from political events was to promote consumerism, also in terms of better housing availability. The acquisition of one's own flat came with the unspoken assumption that the new occupant would remain loyal to the Communist Party and refrain from any criticism.

Housing construction underwent exponential growth, also enabled by technological advances in the production of prefabricated components. In a very short period of time, new residential buildings were constructed for about one third of Czechoslovakia's population. Prefab housing estates were so different from anything seen before that specialists, architects, urban planners, manufacturers, sociologists, psychologists, and — above all — the estate inhabitants themselves all began searching for ways to make these new housing blocks into pleasant places to live.

The huge number of new flats also required the cooperation of other industries in order to equip these homes with furniture, textiles, and kitchen utensils. The combination of the new architecture and the mass occupation of new flats gave rise to a specific phenomenon known as 'prefab-block culture', a lifestyle resulting from all the positive and negative aspects associated with living in a prefab housing block.

The living room became the space receiving the most aesthetic care in the prefab home, not least because of its social function and its representing of the proud owners. At its heart was the TV set, an item owned by 98% of Czechoslovak households in 1976. Apart from the television and the car, the wall unit — which dominated the living room — was an equally important status symbol and proof of social respectability.

Rostislav Koryčánek

Furniture exhibition posters from the late 1950s and early 1960s <sup>[6.1b – 6.5b]</sup>

Part of the solution to post-war housing policy was the standardization and typification of building production. This process also involved the serial production of furniture. Unit furniture best suited the requirements of mass production and the demands for progressive design of storage furniture for small, medium and large apartments as this system allowed for variability and individual arrangements according to a particular space.

The first pieces of unit furniture were produced at *Uměleckoprůmyslové závody* (Arts and Crafts Plants) in Brno established in 1921 by the architect Jan Vaněk (1891–1962). Large-scale furniture production was not common at that time, everything was made to order. The Brno factory was the first to produce on a mass scale, and before the Second World War was the largest furniture company in Central Europe. After the communist coup in February 1948, furniture production was nationalized. *Uměleckoprůmyslové závody* formed the core of the Association of Furniture Industry Companies which included other specialized companies such as *Jitona Soběslav*, *UP závody Rousínov*, *Interiér Praha*, *Tusculum Bučovice*, *Thonet* in Bystřice pod Hostýnem, *Kovona* in Lysá nad Labem and others.

<p>Wing armchair, <i>Hotel Thermal</i> Věra Machoninová <sup>(b. 1920)</sup>, Vladimír Machonin <sup>(1920–1990)</sup> patent leather, metal</p> <p>Czechoslovakia, ca. 1977 Spa Hotel Thermal, Karlovy Vary</p> <p>A sculpturally designed armchair on a rotating central metal leg was conceived for the hotel lobby. It came in red and blue upholstery, with gondola-shaped backrest with armrests.</p>	6.3a
<p>Restaurant chair, <i>Hotel Thermal</i> Věra Machoninová <sup>(b. 1920)</sup>, Vladimír Machonin <sup>(1920–1990)</sup> Patent leather, textile, metal</p> <p>Czechoslovakia, ca. 1977 Spa Hotel Thermal, Karlovy Vary</p> <p>The low rotating upholstered chair without armrests was designed in a number of colours and heights. The orange low chair was intended for the interior of the look-out café, the beige one for the restaurant and hotel rooms.</p>	6.4a
<p>Table lamps ('mushroom lamps') for the dining room, <i>Hotel Thermal</i> René Roubíček <sup>(1922–2018)</sup> glass</p> <p>Czechoslovakia, ca. 1977 Spa Hotel Thermal, Karlovy Vary</p>	6.5a
<p><i>Hotel Thermal</i>, 1977 Jaroslav Franta <sup>(1934–2020)</sup> photos, Czechoslovakia, 1977 Private Collection, courtesy of Ondrej Franta</p> <p>The photography of the original design after its finalisation gives an impression of dense atmospheres in the public interior — through bright colours and spectacular glass objects of the foyer, restaurant and red conference hall.</p>	6.6a
<p><i>Rendezvous in Carlsbad</i>, Film Directed by Ivo Paukert <sup>(1931–2013)</sup> Česká televize, Czechoslovakia, 1980</p>	6.7a
<p>Glass columns ('glass forrest') in the <i>Hotel Thermal</i> René Roubíček <sup>(1922–2018)</sup> glass, steel</p> <p>Czechoslovakia, ca. 1977 Spa Hotel Thermal, Karlovy Vary</p> <p>The spectacular glass fountain was first time exhibited at the Expo '67 in Montreal. A variation of the installation was produced for <i>Hotel Thermal</i> by the author.</p>	6.8a

This period is illustrated by a selection of promotional posters from the late 1950s and early 1960s which advertise contemporary exhibitions of new developments in seating, unit and plastic furniture.

Exhibition poster *Plastic Materials and Their Use*  
Jaroslav Šusta (b. 1927)  
paper  
Museum of Applied Arts in Brno, 23.11.1958–1.1.1959, Czechoslovakia, 1958  
Moravian Gallery in Brno

6.1b

*Housing Culture* — 8th Exhibition of Industrial Design  
Jan Rajlich Sr. (1920–2016)  
paper  
Zlín Regional Art Gallery Gottwaldov, Czechoslovakia, 1982  
Moravian Gallery in Brno

6.2b

From the 1930s, the town of Zlín was the cradle of Czech industrial design. The School of Art was founded there in 1939 on the basis of a well-thought-out system of education, using progressive forms of teaching modelled on the Bauhaus. The School of Art was established on the initiative and needs of the *Baťa* company and operated with its support. In 1947, the concept of *Baťa's* School of Art was continued by the designer Zdeněk Kovář who founded a branch of machine and tool design in Zlín. In 1959, the discipline was upgraded to a university specialization when a studio of machine and tool design within the Academy of Arts and Crafts in Prague was established in the then Gottwaldov (Zlín). In 1968, the Zlín Regional Art Gallery hosted a biennial of industrial design entitled The Exhibition of Industrial Design. The visual style of these shows in the 1970s and 1980s was created by the Brno painter and graphic designer Jan Rajlich, the founder and organiser of the Brno Biennial of Graphic Design, who in his graphic designs sought a uniform visual style for posters, exhibition catalogues and accompanying printed materials. This poster invites you to the 8th Exhibition of Industrial Design in Zlín held in May-June 1982 and dedicated to housing culture.

Exhibition poster of assembly furniture for good living  
Duňa Böhmová-Civínová (b. 1919)  
paper  
Julius Fučík Park of Culture and Leisure, Prague, 7.6.–29.6.1960,  
Czechoslovakia, 1960  
Moravian Gallery in Brno

6.3b

Exhibition poster *New Materials — New Products*  
Jan Moravec (b. 1923)  
paper  
Brno, Exhibition Centre, H Pavilion, 23.5.–12.6.1959  
Organised by the Ministry of Consumer Industry, Czechoslovakia, 1959  
Moravian Gallery in Brno

6.4b

Exhibition poster *Furniture and Flat* with 1960 production programme  
Jan Moravec (b. 1923)  
paper  
Julius Fučík Park of Culture and Leisure, Prague, 28.8.–27.9.1959,  
Czechoslovakia, 1959  
Moravian Gallery in Brno

6.5b

6.6b Table lamp  
Štěpán Tabery (b. 1929)  
colour glass  
Manufactured by *Osvětlovací sklo*, Košťany u Teplic, Czechoslovakia, 1970s  
Moravian Gallery in Brno  
Štěpán Tabery's lifelong work was connected with the *Osvětlovací sklo* (Illumination Glass) national enterprise and the glassworks in Košťany, specializing in the production of colour glass using the *Triplex Opál* technology. This production method is based on the application a middle layer of translucent glass onto a base layer of opaline glass, followed by a top layer of colour glass. The result is a unique pearly effect created by the combined layers. Tabery's lamps became a highly sought-after items thanks to their elegant shapes and impressive illumination effect. The most common colours for the top layer were deep red and orange, yet lamps in yellow or purple were produced as well.

6.7b Table lamp *L 194*  
Josef Hůrka (1920–1993)  
metal  
Manufactured by *Napako*, Lidokov, Czechoslovakia, 1960s  
Moravian Gallery in Brno

6.8b Stand lamp  
Josef Hůrka (1920–1993)  
metal  
Manufactured by *Napako*, Lidokov, Czechoslovakia, 1970s  
Moravian Gallery in Brno  
Josef Hůrka's professional career is predominantly connected with the metalwork production cooperative *Napako* founded in 1919. Josef Hůrka designed for *Napako* mainly electrical appliances. After their removal from the production programme, Hůrka switched to lighting fixtures, the designs of which he adapted to the production possibilities of the cooperative. He moved from organic shapes to basic ones in the form of cylinders, cones, hemispheres, etc. The metal shades, as well as the metal frames, were finished with baked-on paint — most often bright red, white or yellow. Although the new collection of lightings was based on the technological potential of the cooperative, it also corresponded to the new trends gaining ground in the world. The lights to Hůrka's designs were also produced in Lidokov in Boskovice. Hůrka's lighting fixtures were popular not only in Czechoslovakia and were exported abroad with great success.

6.9b Table lamp  
Karel Volf  
opal glass  
Manufactured by *Osvětlovací sklo*, Valažské Meziříčí  
Czechoslovakia, 1970s  
Moravian Gallery in Brno

## 7 a+b

Our focus is on two emblematic phenomena of the Hungarian People's Republic: the spatial partitions of the 1960s and the interdisciplinary *Standardised Kitchen Project* of the 1970s. These examples will help make palpable the atmosphere that arose from the shortage economy and from the isolation of the first decades of Soviet hegemony.

After the Soviet Union's repression of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the retaliations that followed, the newly installed Kádár dictatorship set upon the formation of a more permissive regime, with the Hungarian standard of living improving at a slow tempo. The regime, however, prohibited every form of community organizing. The building of communities could only occur under the control of state authorities. As a result, society gradually began to atomize, with its members having learned that standing up together was not worthwhile, and that everything outside the private sphere belonged solely to the sphere of state jurisdiction.

With the establishment of the Iron Curtain, free movement to the West was closed off. The governing party carved the fabric of society into disparate realities, reflected in the concrete housing blocks that marred the cityscape. Mass construction of housing estates took place primarily in the capital and the larger industrial cities. Guaranteed housing produced a feeling of satisfaction for a large part of society. One of the most talented opposition poets of the era, György Petri, with characteristic irony, called the housing estate a 'ten-storey launch-funicular, and workforce rocket-launcher'.

The idealistic vision was for housing estates to eliminate social differences, and for an identical standard of living to be ensured to all citizens. The theory, however, did not work very well in practice. The housing estates increasingly atomized the lives of their inhabitants. This cutting off of horizons was so successful that people began to put up walls and build fences around their own private realities. In the Hungary of the 1960s, the curtain became an emblematic element. From the late 1950s to early 60s, spatial partitions multiplied like mushrooms in both private and public spaces.

Designating borders, the wall motif became a typical element of the visual world. The patterns of claustrophobia appeared not only in the spatial partitions but were also there in two-dimensional artworks. In the textile works presented here, some sort of spatial division can be found, be it as walls, grilles, or separated realities. In the majority of them, a palette of dark tones dominates.

Our research has unequivocally shown how the era's social politics made a clear impact on the design of various public and private living spaces. It was not only the central authorities that projected the claustrophobia of the 1960s onto these spaces: such conceptual walls were also reproduced by members of society through the choice of spatial partitions and certain household textiles. Obviously not immune to the influence of 1968's 'Prague Spring' and Paris student rebellions, the grid structure of two-dimensional imagery began to relax, and organic forms along with a brighter colour palette began to appear.

The organizers of the *Standardised Kitchen Project* wanted to make the kitchens of prefabricated housing units more liveable by comprehensively reforming the built-in furnishings, appliances, and kitchen objects. The developmental process involved representatives from industry and commerce. It was not the fault of the designers that their undertaking ultimately fell through, ascending to the level of a utopian dream for posterity.

Judit Horváth, Melinda Farkasdy, Rita Komporday

Set of pictograms from the orientation system of the civic amenity centre of the Brno-Kohoutovice housing estate

Unidentified artist  
illuminated signs

Czechoslovakia, early 1980s

Moravian Gallery in Brno

In addition to nurseries, kindergartens, schools, health centres, post offices, restaurants and community centres, the basic civic amenities on the prefabricated housing estates also included shopping and service centres. These institutions which catered for the basic needs of the inhabitants of prefabricated housing estates were sometimes concentrated in multi-purpose one-floor buildings called civic amenity centres. The public life of the housing estate then centred around them as they became not only the commercial centres of the area but also natural landmarks. The visual form of amenity centres was created to a standardized design, yet we can find many examples of well-conceived design approaches produced in collaboration between architects and artists. The illuminated buttons on display were made for a grocery store on the Kohoutovice housing estate in Brno in the early 1980s and are the work of an as yet unidentified Brno designer.

6.10b

*Radikál* wall unit

Gerald Neusser (b. 1929)

solid wood, veneer, chipboard, glass

Manufactured by *Interiér Praha*, Czechoslovakia, 1971

Moravian Gallery in Brno

The architect Gerald Neusser was a prominent furniture designer who worked mainly for the *Interiér Praha* national enterprise. In his designs he was able to take into account both the technological aspects of furniture production and the findings of research teams regarding the sociology and psychology of living. His designs were always characterized by a strong artistic expression and innovative shapes. This is evidenced by the design of the *Radikál* wall unit in which he abandoned the natural materials used previously and based the aesthetic effect of the unit on the contrast of the veneer frame and the clean white surfaces of laminated panels. In the product catalogue that accompanied the launch of *Radikál*, Neusser wrote: "The solution of universal living spaces and their necessary equipment is emerging in the light of social and cultural needs. All the more so when living takes place among powerful conventions that lead us to traditional patterns of style, representation and hygiene, between the time economy of those employment and those going to school and the necessary work to maintain the personal and the household. If the apartment is to be our workplace, workshop and a social space, a 'cinema', an 'ironing room', a discussion club and yet still a cell attached to the heart, then all of us who influence its spatial layout, furnishing and all that we need to store in it must be instrumental."

6.11b

<p><i>Socialist Hungary</i> Károly Plesnivý (1930–1984) woven wool tapestry</p> <p>Manufactured by the Gobelin workshop of the <i>Iparművészeti Vállalat</i> (state design company), Hungary, 1960 Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest</p> <p>In the 1960s, Hungary saw a huge wave of residential construction. This tapestry depicts a typical motif of the period, with workers on a scaffolding.</p>	7.1a	<p>piece designed by Sándor Mikó combines the charm of homemade cobbled-together furniture with the geometric character of a coherent, well-planned design. The chair's formal language itself expresses a doubleness, offering both stable support and solid separation.</p>
<p>Wall covering László Pécsi (1929–1986) wool on cotton using Ghiordes knots</p> <p>Hungary, 1965 Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest</p> <p>During the 1960s in Hungary, the younger generation generally favoured non-figurative and abstract styles in wall coverings. Geometric forms were more popular than organic ones. These industrially produced wall coverings were conceived by industrial designers and applied artists, or at least by relevant professionals.</p>	7.2a	<p>7.6a <i>Bar Te + Én eszpresszó</i>, Bem rakpart 30 Ecke Csalogány utca photo Budapest, Ungarn, 1972 FORTEPAN <a href="https://fortepan.hu/">https://fortepan.hu/</a> No. #15896, Donor of the photo: Tamás Urbán</p>
<p>Tapestry Gizella Solti (1931–2015) woven wool</p> <p>Hungary, 1960 Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest</p> <p>Mass construction of housing estates took place primarily in the capital and the larger industrial cities. This tapestry's visual elements include the working man as the hero of the age, the red flag as the icon of communism, and the factory in the background as a symbol of the future. The image contains a subtle irony: if the depicted situation were to come to life, then the result would be a massive wall built between the viewer and the builders.</p>	7.3a	<p>7.1b Cora cooking pot from the <i>Standardised Kitchen Project</i></p>
<p>Curtain Irén Bódy (1925–2011) printed canvas</p> <p>Hungary, 1959 Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest</p> <p>In the furnishings of the modern apartment, the role of textiles, whether painted or printed, was continually growing. When planning the building, the modern architect was already thinking about how textiles, curtains, carpets, pillows, and throws can provide character, homey ambiance, and personal charm in small apartments equipped with easily variable furniture. The new needs of the home's inhabitants led to the partitioning of the dining area, the screening of the small den for the working father, and the sequestering of the playing child. The most suitable solution was often the patterned curtain, both painted and printed.</p>	7.4a	<p>7.2b Cora cooking pot with lid from the <i>Standardised Kitchen Project</i></p>
<p>Armchair Sándor Mikó (1927–2014) walnut wood, plush upholstery</p> <p>Hungary, 1969 Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest</p> <p>This armchair was among the furnishings of <i>Te + Én</i> (you + me), an espresso bar that operated in the 1970s on Bem rakpart, a riverside street in Budapest. Assembled from four square panels of walnut and standing on four walnut cubes, this</p>	7.5a	<p>7.3b Small dish from the <i>Standardised Kitchen Project</i></p>
		<p>7.4b Saucepan from the <i>Standardised Kitchen Project</i></p>
		<p>7.5b Saucepan from the <i>Standardised Kitchen Project</i> Csaba Ásztaj (b. 1948) and György Soltész (1939–2006) enamelled steel</p> <p>Manufactured by <i>Lampart Enamel Industry Works</i>, Budapest, Hungary, 1975 Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest</p> <p>Featuring steam-releasing holes in the lids, this cookware was suitable for both cooking and serving, and was thicker than the manufacturer's earlier products while also being easier to clean.</p>
		<p>7.6b Lemon juicer from the <i>Standardised Kitchen Project</i></p>
		<p>7.7b Apple grater from the <i>Standardised Kitchen Project</i> Júlia Kovács (b. 1947) pressed natron glass</p> <p>Manufactured by <i>Salgótarján Glass Factory</i>, Hungary, 1973–75/76 Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest</p> <p>As practical tools and attractive showpieces, such utensils remain indispensable fixtures of Hungarian households today.</p>
		<p>7.8b Termover egg-cooker from the <i>Standardised Kitchen Project</i> Katalin Suháné Somkúti (b. 1944) pressed heatproof glass</p> <p>Produced by <i>Karcag Glass Factory</i>, Hungary, 1974–75 Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest</p> <p>The form of this piece strongly evokes the iconic egg-cooker designed by Wilhelm Wagenfeld in the 1930s for the <i>Schott Glass Factory</i>.</p>
		<p>7.9b Schematic drawings for a basic series of ceramic tools for the <i>Standardised Kitchen Project</i>, 1974 reproduction</p> <p>Source: Mihály Pohárnok, From the Documentation of a Design Experiment. Four Years of the Standardised Kitchen Project, in: <i>Művészet [Art]</i>, no. 8 (1977), p. 5., Hungary, 1977 National Széchényi Library General Collection</p>

# openness: dangerous for authorities, loved by artists

The hypocritical pretenses of so-called 'real socialism' led many people, especially those with professional or vocational aspirations, to try to improve society, in the belief that their seemingly utopian projects could become a reality. In spite of setbacks, their faith deepened and persisted because of their experiences that useful ideas could sometimes be successfully implemented. A centrally controlled system, in theory, had the potential to implement great ideas, even those difficult to achieve but beneficial to society. However, the reality of socialism often fell short of the ideal. Despite this, some artists were able to create enduring works through their genius and perseverance, and the innovative approaches used in these projects have kept them relevant and remembered, even if they were not fully realized. Oskar Hansen and Teresa Kruszevska shared a commitment to their ideals, a refusal to compromise, and a determination to see their ideas through to fruition. This may have been influenced by their time at Warsaw's Academy of Fine Arts, a place that encouraged creative experimentation. Even the constraints of the socialist system did not stifle the emergence of unconventional ideas. The relaxation of censorship and control following Stalin's death also allowed more modern trends to enter Polish society. Abstract painting as well as freeform sculpture and design became popular, reflecting a wider desire for freedom and openness in both form and society.

The openness of form in the work of Oskar Hansen and Teresa Kruszevska went beyond aesthetics, further enhancing the value of their creations. They embraced openness — a rejection of closure and a preference for modular systems that could be continually expanded — in Hansen's architectural concepts and Kruszevska's 'furniture toys'. Hansen's teaching methods included exercises with 'apparatuses' that helped students cultivate the imagination needed for creating multi-element open systems. Kruszevska gave children toys as tools to stimulate their creativity and encourage the exploration of shapes.



*Apparatus for Exercise II-2*  
Oskar Hansen <sup>(1922-2005)</sup>  
wood, plywood

8.1a

Poland, n.d.  
Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw

To encourage his students' spatial imagination and independent thinking, Hansen developed various exercise tools. With this *Apparatus*, the task was to arrange a composition on a plane using identical cubes, first from a minimum number of elements and then from a maximum number of elements, so that the positioning of the individual elements was clearly differentiated.

Students doing the assignment with *Apparatus for Exercise II-2* during Hansen's workshop at the Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw  
Unknown photographer  
Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts

8.2a

8.3a Oskar Hansen's *Linear Continuous System (LCS)*  
Living structure belt, Transport structure belt  
Oskar Hansen <sup>(1922-2005)</sup>  
drawings

Poland, 1966  
Hansen Family Archives

Hansen's *Linear Continuous System (LCS)* on a country scale was planned as four multifunctional settlement belts stretching across Poland. Each of them would consist of 'sub-belts' intended for residential areas, public space, transport, industry etc. These were supposed to provide an alternative to traditional centric cities allowing equal access to culture and nature for everyone and in consequence create the environment for a more egalitarian society. Hansen was aware of the utopic quality of the LCS but he saw utopic ideas as an opportunity to raise awareness about the problems in the society and set the direction for the future.

8.4a Juliusz Słowacki Housing Estate  
The Juliusz Słowacki Housing Estate is a realised example of LCS on a smaller scale.  
Oskar Hansen <sup>(1922-2005)</sup>  
drawing

Poland, 1961  
Hansen Family Archives

8.5a *Conversation About Oskar Hansen and Teresa Kruszevska, February 2023*  
Film featuring Tomasz Fudala, Anna Maga, Kaja Muszyńska, Jędrzej Zakrzewski  
Edited by Justyna Borowska  
National Museum in Warsaw

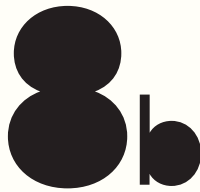
# shaping the human imagination

Oskar Hansen (1922–2005) was an architect, while Teresa Kruszezwska (1927–2014) was an interior and furniture designer. Although they worked in different fields and never created a project together, we decided to show their works side by side, as juxtaposed they highlight each other's most salient features.

*Apparatus for Exercise II-2* is one of the tools Hansen developed for working with students. The task at hand was to arrange a composition on a plane using identical cubes, first with a minimum number and then a maximum number of elements, so that the positioning of the individual elements was clearly differentiated. In this way, Hansen exercised the spatial imagination of his students. The photographs and designs show residential developments containing green spaces, playgrounds, and outdoor common spaces all planned in accordance with Hansen's concepts of Open Form and the Linear Continuous System. According to Hansen's principles, they were to be based on flexible structures, forever undefined. In doing so, the architect left room for decision-making not only for the users of the time, but also for those in the future whose needs may have changed in line with changes in society.

Kruszezwska's work combines the educational aspect of the *Apparatus* and the utilitarian aspect of Hansen's architectural realizations. They enable the child to learn about space using basic solids through an open and variable arrangement of elements. They also allow various configurations to be created depending on the user's needs — stools and tables for mealtimes and drawing sessions, or tunnels and towers for physical play. Neither the furniture-toys nor the Sphere have a permanently defined function; everything depends on the child's current needs and inventiveness.

Both Hansen and Kruszezwska were interested in shaping the human imagination through actions that used simple solids in space. Both employed an open form that left users free to decide their own surroundings. K a j a M u s z y ń s k a



Child playing with Kruszezwska's ball  
Unknown photographer  
Private collection of Grzegorz Czubak

8.1b

Children testing Kruszezwska's furniture-toys  
Institute of Industrial Design, Warsaw, 1975  
National Museum in Warsaw

8.2b

8.3b Multifunctional 'ball' toy (reproduction)  
Teresa Kruszezwska (1927–2014)  
polystyrene

Poland, 1975 (reproduction from 2011)  
National Museum, Warsaw

A multipurpose toy consisting of three elements: if assembled, they form a ball that the child can play with, but if disassembled, the separate parts can serve as seats, barricades, etc.

8.4b Building blocks and boxes from Nesting Dolls system of multifunctional toys  
Teresa Kruszezwska (1927–2014)  
plywood, veneer

Poland, 1975  
National Museum in Warsaw

This set of eight blocks with a wheeled box was used as equipment for day rooms at the Children's Health Institute in Warsaw. The system could be used by young children as seats, tables, mazes, walls, game boards, etc. It was showcased at the 1975 *World of Children* exhibition in Jablonec, Czechoslovakia.

8.5b Brochure for *Teresa Kruszezwska: Furniture and Toys*  
Exhibition at the *Forma* Gallery of Applied Art, Warsaw

Poland, 1981  
National Museum in Warsaw



# utopia in plastic and paper

Can design be confined to the realm of theory? Can a paper project go beyond its fragile temporality? Can design fully exist when there is no free market? Is it possible for design to thrive behind the Iron Curtain, in isolation from international trends, and was there any such isolation to speak of? How can we approach the diverse national landscape of Soviet design and reframe it through a decolonial lens? I hope that this exhibit will provide an alternative reading of the history of Soviet design and encourage you to seek your own answers to these unsettling questions.

Soviet design was utopian in nature. The very term 'design' was replaced by two separate notions: 'artistic engineering' and 'technical aesthetics', standing in for design practice and design theory. This gap between theory and practice was conditioned by the specifics of the Soviet Union's economy. The country's enterprises were far more interested in meeting production targets (skewed toward military output and heavy industry) rather than researching the needs of consumers. In a monopolistic market, the citizens had no other choice but to purchase whatever was available. Any proposals for new designs were met with resentment as they could prevent the state's enterprises from meeting their targets.

Established in 1962, the All-Union Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics (VNIITE) became a utopian refuge for brilliant designers who wanted to change the world. However, these had very little influence over Soviet industry, so less than a third of the projects they created made it into production. It was under these circumstances that a 'futurodesign' thrived, a realm where designers felt free to explore their visions of a comfortable, technology-driven future awaiting the builders of communism. I have selected two 'smart home' projects developed at VNIITE to show that many ideas of the past are still strikingly relevant, even though they couldn't actually be implemented within the Soviet system.

While the idea of total state control was itself dangerously utopian, the (failed) colonial attempt to merge diverse peoples into a monolithic 'Soviet' nation through the instilling of Russian SFSR culture throughout the Soviet Union's other republics was even more dangerous. Though the projects presented here came from the VNIITE main office in Moscow, they boast quite a diverse geography of contributors. Exploring their personal histories and career paths will help us to better grasp the scope and nature of cultural transfer in the Soviet Union and understand how the Russian SFSR exploited the natural and intellectual resources of the subject regions.

An alternative (though equally utopian) concept of Soviet design was presented by the Central Educational and Experimental Studio of the Union of Artists of the USSR (the *Senezh* Studio, 1964–91) founded by architect Yevgeny Rosenblum and philosopher Karl Kantor, later joined by artist Mark Konik. 'Artistic projecteering', a term introduced by the studio, implied the primacy of artistic and cultural principles in design. Proceeding from the concept of an 'open form', the *Senezh* designers believed that any object is defined not by its function, but rather by the cultural context of its use.

While architecture and industrial design were the domain of state-controlled specialist organizations, environmental design remained a grey area where artists could unleash their creative potential. A total of more than 1,500 artists and architects from over fifty cities in the Soviet Union, Poland, Germany, and Bulgaria were trained at *Senezh* using state funding. The studio organized multiple field trips to various cities across the Russian SFSR and other Soviet republics, such as Azer-



baijan, Armenia, Belarus, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, as well as the Mongolian People's Republic.

In multiple educational workshops organized by *Senezh*, participants learned to work in small groups and integrate their unique visions into collective projects. This was how the studio came up with numerous design proposals for socialist cities, factories, and museums. Sadly, most of these never went beyond the paper stage. Nonetheless, the drawings and the paper models were seen as artworks in their own right, and the first steps in a never-ending creative process.

Alyona Sokolnikova

- 9.1 Portable audio and visual information stand, DIM project  
VNIITE design team — Evgeny Bogdanov<sup>(1946–2021)</sup>,  
Vladimir Paperny<sup>(b. 1944)</sup>, Vladimir Rezvin<sup>(1930–2019)</sup>,  
Alexander Ryabushin<sup>(1931–2012)</sup>, A. Sergeev and *POZITRON*  
Leningrad Research and Development Association,  
*GIRIKOND* Research Institute (R. Seisyan, M. Vydevich,  
A. Krotov, V. Piskarev, V. Polikarpov, B. Smirnov)  
welded polished metal pipes and spheres, Plexiglas,  
composite materials, acrylic paint

Soviet Union, 1969–72

Half-scale reconstruction by Alyona Sokolnikova, Pavel Menyailov,  
and Raphael Kirimov, 2022

Private collection

The Domestic Information Machine (DIM) project was one of earliest Soviet attempts at building a 'smart home' ecosystem. According to the proposal, the bulky computer systems were supposed to be concealed inside modular containers resembling furniture items or cabinets. All other equipment could move inside the room on versatile rods. The project was part of the 'Domestic Theatre' experimental proposal; for more information, please visit the Archive section of this exhibition.

- 9.2 Video reconstruction of the Intellectual Workspace, DIM project  
Soviet Union, 1969–1972  
Reconstructed by Vlad Md Golam, 2023

- 9.3 Full-scale mock-up of the Intellectual Workspace, DIM project  
Exhibited at the Electronics Exhibition in Moscow,  
Soviet Union, 1971

Photo reprint, 2023

Private collection of Vladimir Paperny

<p>Series of explanatory illustrations, DIM project Evgeny Bogdanov<sup>(1946–2021)</sup> and Vladimir Paperny<sup>(b. 1944)</sup></p> <p>Soviet Union, 1969–72 Photo reprint, 2023, digitized by Sergei Petrov Private collection of Evgeny Bogdanov's family</p> <p>Text in the illustrations (top down): [9.4] Vertically assembled machine units become the centre of the interior composition. — [9.5] Elements of the domestic information machine could be disguised in cabinet furniture, in which case the control panel must be moved into the interior space. — [9.6] Information centre to which the individual DIM is connected. / The logic unit and the audio and visual data storage units can be concealed under the floor panels. In this case, their design has to factor in the construction specifications. / Quadrophonic loudspeaker system. / Transformable architecture. / Home remote-control system. — [9.7] Indoor visual experience and soundscape solution. / Projection wall. — [9.8] Portable version of the machine. The elements of the machine can be arranged in all kinds of ways to meet the household's changing needs.</p>	<p>9.4 — 9.8</p>	<p>— 9.13 9.17</p> <p>Photographs of projects by the <i>Senezh Studio</i> Central Educational and Experimental Studio of the Union of Artists of the USSR</p> <p>Soviet Union, 1973–80 Private collection of Eduard Kubensky</p> <p>Left to right, top down: [9.13] Design concept for Krasnoyarsk city centre and the Krasnoyarsk Shipyard Museum, 1973 — [9.14] The National Cultural Centre of the Republics of Central Asia, part of the design concept for the 1980 Summer Olympics cultural program, 1978 — [9.15] Design of an exhibition space for the USSR State Museum of Revolution with model of a museum object, Artistic Director Yevgeny Rosenblum<sup>(1919–2000)</sup>, 1975— [9.16] Two images of the Cosmos Cultural Centre, Artistic director Mark Konik<sup>(1938–2012)</sup>, 1980 — [9.17] Urban space reconstruction and improvement concept for Magnitogorsk city, Artistic directors Andrey Bokov<sup>(b. 1943)</sup> and Vadim Gudkov, 1980</p>
<p>Elements of the SFINX Superfunctional Information and Communication Unit VNIITE design team — Dmitriy Azrikan<sup>(b. 1934)</sup>, Igor Lysenko<sup>(b. 1961)</sup>, Marina Mikheeva<sup>(b. 1949)</sup>, Alexey Kolotushkin<sup>(b. 1956)</sup>, Maria Kolotushkina<sup>(b. 1960)</sup>, Elena Ruzova<sup>(b. 1962)</sup></p> <p>3D printing, composite materials, acrylic paint, ink, film printing</p> <p>Soviet Union, 1986–87 Full-scale reconstruction by Igor Lysenko, Marina Mikheeva, Sergey Petrov, Alyona Sokolnikova, Pavel Menyailov, Yury Naumkin, and Dmitry Protopopov, 2021 Private collection</p> <p>The idea behind the project was to meet the needs of people living in the 2000s. The project's originators actually succeeded in anticipating many trends in domestic and wearable electronics, such as centralized control of audio and video content, climate variance in different rooms, online data downloads, modular data storage systems, LCD displays (from large TV screens to miniature notebooks and smartphones), touch keyboards, and wearable technology.</p>	<p>9.9</p>	<p>9.18</p> <p>Model of the Baku Oil Museum, Azerbaijan Design team from the Central Educational and Experimental Studio of the Union of Artists of the USSR (the <i>Senezh Studio</i>), Artistic director Mark Konik<sup>(1938–2012)</sup> paper, cardboard, glue</p> <p>Azerbaijan Socialist Soviet Republic, 1976 Half-scale reconstruction by Anna Teleri and Alyona Sokolnikova, lettering by Rustam Gabbasov, 2022 Private collection</p> <p>An international seminar team of forty-one artists stayed in Baku for fifty-eight days to study its cultural heritage and the daily life of its residents. The result was a series of design proposals for the preservation of city's signature locations and their adaptation to the needs of people. According to the proposal, an Oil Museum was to be built in the vicinity of a former oilfield in Ilyich Bay. The industrial waste landfill was to be transformed into an attraction for both tourists and locals: its rainbow-shaped arches of coloured plastic would epitomize the versatile properties of oil and its numerous uses, while the viewing scopes would offer visitors breathtaking views over the old offshore oil platforms.</p>
<p>Elements of the SFINX Superfunctional Information and Communication Unit, alternative configuration</p> <p>Soviet Union, 1986–87 Photo reprint, 2023 Private collection</p>	<p>9.10</p>	
<p>Illustrations for <i>Homo Telecomus</i> smart-devices concept, ancestor of the SFINX project Dmitriy Azrikan<sup>(b. 1934)</sup>, Valery Gossen<sup>(b. 1953)</sup>, and Alexey Kolotushkin<sup>(b. 1956)</sup></p> <p>Interdesign workshop in Yerevan, Armenian Socialist Soviet Republic, 1985 Private collection</p>	<p>9.11</p>	
<p>Slideshow featuring projects by the <i>Senezh Studio</i> Slides from the private collection of Eduard Kubensky Video editing and sound design by Pavel Petrov, 2023</p>	<p>9.12</p>	

# community architecture for public good

Built in the 1950s, the Workers' Cultural Centre in Trbovlje, Slovenia, is an example of modern public architecture located in the industrialized urban environment of a mining community, the result of collaborative efforts of the town and its residents involving self-directed contributions and voluntary work. It served as a model for the construction of workers' and cultural centres throughout Yugoslavia. The centre's architectural layout consists of an entrance hall with associated rooms, a main auditorium, a side auditorium on the left, a combined cinema and concert hall with about five hundred seats, a theatre with about four hundred and fifty seats, and administrative offices. The design work and construction took place from 1952 to 1956, following a conceptual drawing by architect Marko Župančič. Measuring 57 by 53 metres per floor, the Workers' Cultural Centre is almost square in shape; the theatre stage, is a revolving disc measuring 16 metres in diameter. The building's characteristic features include a strictly framed exterior with undulating walls, a series of panels on the facade, a staircase balustrade, auditorium shells, and other details. As a cutting-edge, modernist, technologically advanced, and comprehensive work of architecture that still fulfils its functional purpose (namely the local community's cultural activities), it is an excellent example of community architecture serving the public good.

Yugoslavia's aspirations to create a better social order for all sections of the population were most apparent in the 1950s and early 60s, when the state withdrew from the managing of companies and handed this over to workers' councils who were supposed to manage capital through direct democracy and look after people's general welfare, which were the original ideas of the concept of socialist self-management. Unfortunately, technocratic and administrative political interference meant that such utopian aspirations would soon fade into insignificance.

Cvetka Požar

10  
a

10  
b

The Trbovlje Workers' Cultural Centre  
Marko Župančič (1914–2007) and Oton Gasparj (1911–1991)  
Photos by Janez Kališnik (1921–2004)  
Slovenia, Yugoslavia, 1952–56  
Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana

10.1a +  
10.3a

The Trbovlje Workers' Cultural Centre  
Marko Župančič (1914–2007) and Oton Gasparj (1911–1991)  
tracing paper, pencil, ink, photos  
Slovenia, Yugoslavia, 1952–56  
Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana

10.2a

# housing for our conditions

The making of new Yugoslavia after 1945 was marked by progress and a commitment to social change as an alternative to the country's pre-war capitalist production and especially its way of life; this alternative was reflected in the desire to raise people's living standards, regardless of their social status. Social progress was driven by industrialization and cultural development in the broadest sense, within which architecture and design played an important role. The Tito–Stalin split of 1948 abruptly severed the hitherto solid bond between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, prompting Yugoslavia to pursue its own political, economic, and cultural development in the form of socialist self-management.

Yugoslavia's subsequent rapid industrialization led to an increase in the number of people living in urban centres, making the shortage of residential units, and the topic of modern housing construction in general, a major issue of concern. *Housing for Our Conditions*, Yugoslavia's first post-war exhibition promoting new lifestyle concepts, opened in Ljubljana in 1956, and showcased model apartments, housing construction concepts, and interior furnishings. Covering the full scope of housing construction from urban planning to household equipment and decoration, the event played an important role in the development of housing construction in Yugoslavia, and in the promotion of new lifestyle concepts. Three winning proposals for a terraced house were presented as full-scale models, all fully equipped with the latest furniture and fittings, including a laboratory kitchen designed by Branka Tancig. The first prize went to the *Trata* house, a proposal designed by Janez Lajovic, Vladimir Mušič, Anton Pibernik, and Savin Sever. The 100 m<sup>2</sup> two-storey house featured a living area connected to an outdoor atrium, a dining room, and a kitchen on the ground floor, in addition to sleeping area for six people upstairs on the first floor. The exhibition thus acted as a medium through which the functional apartment, and its rationally designed, standardized furniture and fittings, became a symbol and the promoter of progress and the modern lifestyle. The exhibition was first and foremost a vehicle for the socialist society's democratic ideal of providing high-quality living conditions for all.

Cvetka Požar

10.1b *Housing for Our Conditions* poster  
Majda Dobravec (1931–2020)  
paper, letterpress printing

Commissioned by the Standing Conference of Towns of Yugoslavia, 1956  
Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana  
Majda Dobravec designed this poster for the *Housing for Our Conditions* exhibition while still an architecture student in Professor Edvard Ravnikar's seminar. The exhibition's theme was 'new living concepts', reflected in the poster by a stylized kitchen floor plan and a sanitary node.

The *Trata* apartment at the 1956 *Housing for Our Conditions* exhibition

Janez Lajovic (b. 1932), Vladimir Mušič (1930–2014),  
Anton Pibernik (b. 1932), Savin Sever (1927–2003)

10.2b

Photos by Janez Kališnik (1921–2004), Slovenia, Yugoslavia, 1956  
Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana

In preparation for the *Housing for Our Conditions* exhibition, three Yugoslav competitions were launched the year before: for a terraced house, for an economical sanitary node, and for rational mass-produced residential furniture. First prize went to the *Trata* terraced house, designed as a two-storey structure of 100 square metres with an external atrium. Presented at the exhibition as a life-sized model, the display apartment demonstrated new living concepts to the general public. Through this exhibition, the functional apartment — with its rationally designed, standardized furniture and furnishings — became a promoter of progress and a modern lifestyle. Despite its competition victory and exhibition success, the *Trata* terraced house was never built.

Kitchen

Branka Tancig (1927–2013)  
wood, cast iron, bakelite

10.3b

Commissioned by the Central Institute for the Advancement  
of Home Economics, 1953

Manufactured by Maribor Furniture Factory, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, 1954  
Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana

The first Slovenian laboratory kitchen was designed by Branka Tancig in 1953, while she was still studying at the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana. The kitchen consisted of eighteen different elements that could be freely selected and assembled into a suitable whole. The idea was to have all the furniture pieces and necessary appliances connected in a continuous line within as small a space as possible. Presented at the acclaimed exhibitions *Housing for Our Conditions* (1956) in Ljubljana and *Family and Household* (1958) in Zagreb, the kitchen was in regular series production and was installed in many newly built apartment buildings across Slovenia in the 1950s.

Rex armchair

Niko Kralj (1920–2013)  
bent plywood

10.4b

Manufactured by *Stol*, Kamnik, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, 1956  
Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana

In 1955, the competition for rational mass-produced residential furniture was won by the architect and designer Niko Kralj with a folding version of the *Rex 56* chair, which was first shown at the *Housing for Our Conditions* exhibition in 1956. The chair's design and construction are characterized by the seat and backrest panels made of perforated two-way bent plywood. The designer also obtained a patent for this invention. The *Rex* was internationally recognized as a commercial success both in Yugoslavia and abroad.

# utopia — from beginning to end

11  
a+b

The two projects presented here can be thought of as symbolic milestones marking the beginning and end of the 'utopian' movement in Croatian design.

One of the key topics of socialist ideology — the creation of mass housing projects — was embraced wholeheartedly by local architects and designers. The examples shown here belong to the late 1950s, a period that saw a huge housing push in Yugoslavia. From 1957 to 1960, the *Family and Household* exhibition was held three times on the grounds of the Zagreb Fair. These elaborate educational exhibitions covered a wide range of topics concerning the organization of family life in an urban environment, from the decoration of a modern apartment to the conceptualization of new urban settlement models, along with new forms of consumption (such as department stores and supermarkets) and public services. The exhibitions were extremely popular, with the second edition in 1958 attracting more than a million visitors. This edition covered 33,000 m<sup>2</sup> and included seven pavilions, with the most visited one featuring an 'ideal apartment' project presented by architect and designer Bernardo Bernardi. In addition to floor plans, Bernardi presented these living spaces as fully functional life-size exhibition models. He paid great attention to the functional furnishings of these small living spaces, here a two-bedroom apartment of 43.7 m<sup>2</sup> for 3–4 people and a three-bedroom apartment of 56 m<sup>2</sup> for 4–5 people. The living room of the former featured furniture by Boris Babić and Mario Antonini as well as pieces by Bernardo Bernardi and Ferdo Rosić (a newspaper holder and a floor lamp), while the living room of the latter mostly featured items presented at the 1957 Milan Triennial (including furniture, textiles, glass, and porcelain objects), where they won a silver medal.

Two decades later, the socialist utopia was experiencing the end of its halcyon days, symbolically marked in Yugoslavia by the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980. The utopian ambition to change the world, partly reflected in Yugoslavia's still leading (albeit faltering) position within the Non-Aligned Movement, was also manifested in the radical approach to designing a visual identity for the 1979 Mediterranean Games and its host city, Split. Although lacking the recognition of the Olympic Games, the 8th edition of the Mediterranean Games was presented as a strategic project that required (in addition to significant investments in urban infrastructure) a strong overall visual design. The context of this assignment gave an exceptional impetus to this ambitious project, driven by a clear desire to forever transform the standards and priorities of graphic design in Croatia, Yugoslavia, and beyond.

The foundation and starting point of the project was the event logo designed by Boris Ljubičić, who took direct inspiration from the Olympic logo. He took three of its colourful rings and transformed them into three monochrome rings symbolizing the three participating continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe), distorting them as if they were sinking into the blue of the Mediterranean, the sea that connected the continents. At the time, such a distortion could not be achieved with ordinary drawing tools, so a piece of corrugated glass was placed over a pattern of circles in order to create a photograph that formed the basis for the final graphic result. This logo ultimately transcended its original purpose (as a symbol for the 8th Games in Split) with the 10th Games in Latakia, having been officially adopted as the permanent symbol of every Mediterranean Games since then.

Manufactured through a special printing method, the official flag of the 8th Mediterranean Games in Split later became a permanent ceremonial object used at the opening of every edition. The logo's horizontal distortions were reflected in the raster-line effect seen in the poster series promoting the 1979 Games. The graph-

ics manual prepared and disseminated for that event has been internationally referenced and analyzed many times, and even today, it enjoys a legendary status as the first brand manual in what was once Yugoslavia. K o r a l j k a V l a j o

Street view photos of the 8th Mediterranean Games in Split  
unknown photographers (poster, details, and flags),  
Siniša Knaflec (poster stands), Boris Ljubičić (logo on facade)  
Croatia, Yugoslavia, 1979  
Courtesy of Boris Ljubičić

11.1a

Posters for the 8th Mediterranean Games  
Boris Ljubičić (b.1945)  
offset printing  
Croatia, Yugoslavia, 1979  
Private collection  
The posters (eighteen altogether) were made by scanning photo slides and then converting them into raster images using four specified hues. The colour palette was based on the tones of the Mediterranean climate, with two values (light and dark) defined for each hue.

11.2a

Flag of the 8th Mediterranean Games  
Boris Ljubičić (b.1945)  
printed textile  
Croatia, Yugoslavia, 1979  
Private collection  
Manufactured through a special printing method, the official flag of the 8th Mediterranean Games later became a permanent ceremonial object used at the opening of every edition. The logo's horizontal distortions inspired the design of the poster series.

11.3a

Brand manual for the 8th Mediterranean Games  
Boris Ljubičić (b.1945)  
offset printing  
Croatia, Yugoslavia, 1979  
Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb  
The extensive brand manual defined graphic standards for not only the main visual identity elements (logo, colours, typography, mascot), but also their application on a variety of materials ranging from accreditation cards, calendars, and merchandise, to signage, posters, and urban interventions.

11.4a

*Triennale* dining service  
bowl, soup plate, tray, small plates, cup,  
sugar bowl, small pitcher  
Marta Šribar (1924–1988)  
porcelain  
Manufactured by *Jugokeramika*, Zaprešić, Croatia, Yugoslavia, 1957  
Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb  
This black-and-white dining service was exhibited in 1957 at the 9th Milan Triennial in the Yugoslav pavilion, which won the silver medal.

11.1b

11.2b Photos of the *Family and Household* exhibition opening  
unknown photographer  
Zagreb, Croatia, Yugoslavia, 1958  
Croatian History Museum, Zagreb

11.3b Cabinet  
Boris Babić (1928–2005) and Mario Antonini (b.1929)  
cast iron, ash wood  
Manufactured by *DIP* Novoselec, Croatia, Yugoslavia, 1957–61  
Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb  
Exhibited as a prototype at the 9th Milan Triennial and the second *Family and Household* exhibition, this cabinet entered industrial production in 1961.

11.4b A2 chair  
Bernardo Bernardi (1921–1985)  
lacquered wood, plywood  
Croatia, Yugoslavia, 1955–1961  
Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb  
Designed for industrial production, this chair won the gold medal in 1955 at the First Zagreb Triennial. Production began in 1961 when 1,100 units were produced for the Workers' University in Zagreb.

11.5b Floor lamp  
Ferdo Rosić (1915–1999)  
cast iron, paper  
Croatia, Yugoslavia, 1958  
Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb  
In the late 1950s, Croatian product design was still caught somewhere between artisanal craft and industrial production: this self-produced lamp was first exhibited in 1958 at the *Family and Household* exhibition in Zagreb as part of a proposal for a modern two-bedroom apartment, but it never entered industrial production.

11.6b Model of an apartment at *Family and Household* exhibition.  
View of the sitting room in a two-room apartment  
unknown photographer  
Zagreb, Croatia, Yugoslavia, 1958  
Croatian History Museum, Zagreb

11.7b Poster for the second *Family and Household* exhibition  
Aleksandar Ljahnicky (b.1935)  
lithography  
Croatia, Yugoslavia, 1958  
Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb  
Executed in a modernist vocabulary, the poster for the 1958 *Family and Household* exhibition clearly reflected the complete turning away from socialist realism that took place in the mid 1950s.

# biographies

**Polina Baitsym** is an art historian and curator specializing in the history of Ukrainian Soviet visual arts. Currently, she is a PhD Candidate in Comparative History at the Central European University (Budapest/Vienna) and curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art NGO (MOCA) Library, Kyiv (Ukraine). In 2018, Baitsym launched a research initiative dedicated to Ukrainian children's illustration of the 1960–1990s, within which she curated two exhibitions in 2019. In 2020, she co-issued the book *Art for Architecture. Ukraine. Soviet Modernist Mosaics from 1960 to 1990*.

1a

**Alex Bykov** is an architect, architectural researcher, author and publisher exploring the legacy of Ukrainian architecture in the second half of the 20th century. Based in Kyiv (Ukraine), he worked during recent years as an architectural photographer and journalist, had his own radio show *Supervision* about urban planning and product design and became co-founder of the activists group *#Savekyivmodernism*. He curates diverse art, research and exhibition projects, among them a series on Soviet modernism in Ukraine, which began in 2015 with the exhibition *Superstructure*. He publishes many books and has been co-author of *Soviet Modernism, Brutalism, Postmodernism. Buildings and Structures in Ukraine 1955–1991* (2019).

1b

**Florentine Nadolni** is a cultural scientist and sociologist and head of the Werkbundarchiv — Museum der Dinge, Berlin (Germany), since 2023. From 2017 until 2022 she was the director of the Museum Utopie und Alltag (formerly Dokumentationszentrum Alltagskultur der DDR, Eisenhüttenstadt, and Kunstarchiv Beeskow). Nadolni curated and co-curated exhibitions in Eisenhüttenstadt und Berlin, among them *Masse und Klasse. Gebrauchsgrafik in der DDR* (2016/17), *Ohne Ende Anfang. Zur Transformation der sozialistischen Stadt* (2022) and *Alltag formen! Bauhaus-Moderne in der DDR* (2019, 2021) and edited the catalog of the last mentioned exhibition.

2a

**Silke Ihden-Rothkirch** is a Berlin (Germany) based freelancer working for social organisations in the fields of communication, editing and accessible language. As an author and lecturer, Ihden-Rothkirch focuses on design history, aesthetic education and design aspects of participation and accessibility. After studying product design and aesthetics, she was an editorial member at *form+ zweck* and co-author of *Designlehren — Wege deutscher Gestaltungsausbildung* (2008). She co-edited and co-curated the book and exhibition *Schönheit der Form. Die Designerin Christa Petroff-Bohne* (Dresden 2020, Hamburg 2021).

2b

**Karolina Jakaitė** (Dr) is a design historian, researcher at the Vilnius Academy of Arts Institute of Art Research (Lithuania), curator and co-founder of *Design Foundation*. She is interested in design history studies, design and identity, national pavilions, Lithuanian design in the 1960s–1980s. Jakaitė authored *The Cold War Capsule: Lithuanian design in London in 1968* (2019), curated and co-curated design exhibitions in the National Gallery of Art in Vilnius such as *Stories of Things. Lithuanian Design 1918–2018* (Vilnius 2018), Lithuania. London. 1968. *The Odyssey of Lithuanian Design* (Vilnius 2018) and *Antanas Kazakauskas: All is Programmed* (Vilnius 2021).

3a+b

**Kaia Lobjakas** is an art historian and curator and since 2014 head of the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design, Tallinn (Estonia). Her focus of interest lay both in the Soviet period and contemporary applied art and design practices, especially the intersections of these fields. She has initiated and curated numerous exhibitions both in Estonia and internationally, compiled and edited catalogues, lectured and written on related phenomena. Recently she curated the permanent exhibiton of Estonian design (Tallinn 2021). From 2019 to 2022 she was the chair of ICOM ICDAD, the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Decorative Arts and Design.

**Klára Prešnajderová** (PhD) works as a curator and researcher at the Slovak Design Centre in Bratislava (Slovakia). She studied German culture and language at Comenius University Bratislava, where she received her doctorate in 2019. From 2017–19 she worked as a project assistant at the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna. Prešnajderová curated the exhibitions *Bauhaus auf Slowakisch* (Dessau, 2015), *The Colourful Grey. Product Design of the 1960s–70s from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the German Democratic Republic* (Bratislava, 2016) and *Have No Fear of Modernism!* (Bratislava, 2018/19). She published an extensive monograph on *ŠUR: The School of Arts and Crafts in Bratislava 1928–1939* (2022).

**Viera Kleinová** is a design historian and curator of the Applied Art and Design Collection at the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava. She graduated from the Department of Art History in the Faculty of Philosophy at Comenius University Bratislava. Kleinová is mainly concerned with author jewellery, ceramics, glass, wood and fashion. Among the exhibitions she curated are *Anton Cepka: Kinetic Jewellery* (Bratislava 2016), *Sew Long! Fashion in Slovakia 1945–1989* (Bratislava 2017), *Out of the Circle: Modern and Contemporary Slovak Ceramics* (Bratislava 2018). She is the co-author of *Tibor Uhrín, Form Mellows Function* (2019–20), and *ŠUR: School of Arts and Crafts Bratislava 1928–1939* (2022).

**Helena Huber-Doudová** (PhD) is curator of the architecture collection at the National Gallery Prague (Czech Republic). She completed her PhD studies at the University of Zurich. Currently, she is co-director of the research project *Women in Architecture after 1945* in Czech Republic. Huber-Doudová has been awarded a number of international grants. She curated the exhibitions *No Demolitions! Forms of Brutalism in Prague* (Prague 2020) and *1956–1989: Architecture for All. Lifestyle—Everyday—Media* (Prague 2022) and published *Shared Cities Atlas. Post-Socialist Cities and Active Citizenship in Central Europe* (Rotterdam 2019), and *Modern Woman-Architect. Projection and Reality in Central Europe after 1900* (Prague 2022).

**Rostislav Koryčánek** is an art historian and curator of design and architecture in the Moravian Gallery in Brno (Czech Republic) and, since March 2023, vice-dean at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Technology in Brno. He graduated in art history from the faculty of arts and in sociology from the faculty of arts and in sociology from the faculty of social Koryčánek studies, at Masaryk University, Brno. He co-founded the *Era21* architectural magazine for which he worked as editor-in-chief until 2005. Between 2007 and 2015 he was director of the Brno House of Arts where he co-initiated the *Brno Art Open* sculptural show (2008). Koryčánek is the author of the *Brno Architectural Manual* (2011), was one of the organisers of the exhibition *Paneland — The Greatest Czechoslovak Experiment* (Brno 2017) and of the new permanent exhibition of design (Brno 2021) in the Moravian Gallery in Brno.

<p>Melinda Farkasdy is currently working as an art historian at the Contemporary Design Department of the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest (Hungary). She completed the <i>Curating Contemporary Art and Design: Theory and Practice course at the Royal College of Art</i> (London). Farkasdy received her MA in design theory from the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design and her BA in art history and aesthetics from Eötvös Loránd University (both Budapest). She co-curated the <i>In Circulation</i> exhibition series (Budapest 2018) and gave a lecture at a), with a PhD in development and theory of design. She researches design, in particular visual communications. Požar is the author of the exhibition and book <i>The Century of the Poster: Slovenian Poster Design in the 20th Century</i> (2015) and co-curated numerous exhibitions. Among the latest at MAO Ljubljana are <i>Jože Brumen: Modernist Designer and Art Connoisseur</i> (2021), <i>The World Inside: Designing Modern Interiors, 1930–Today</i> (2021), <i>Art for Everyday Life: Modernist Glass Design in Slovenia</i> (2017).</p> <p>Judit Horváth (PhD) is a curator and head of the Contemporary Design Department, which she established in 2015 at the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest (Hungary). She is also a lecturer at the Doctoral School of the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, and a member of the Professional Advisory Board of the Hungarian Fashion and Design Agency. She specializes in contemporary collecting and earned her doctorate on that subject at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. Since 1999, over 150 contemporary art and design exhibitions have been associated with her name.</p> <p>Rita Komporday worked until 2022 as a museologist in the Contemporary Design Department at the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest (Hungary). She is studying MA in Museum Studies by distance learning at the University of Leicester. Previously, she graduated with a BA in Arts Management with First Class Honours in Budapest and with a MA in Luxury Goods Management at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan. Komporday co-curated the <i>In Circulation</i> exhibition series (Budapest) and contributed to the <i>Homo Faber Guide</i>.</p>	<p>7a+b</p>
<p>Anna Maga is curator of the design collection at the National Museum in Warsaw (Poland), where she works since 1981. She is an art and design historian with a degree in art history from the University of Warsaw. Maga co-organized numerous exhibitions, such as <i>We Want to Be Modern. Polish Design 1955–68 from the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw</i> (2011/12). She is author of many publications, among others she co-authored a publication by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute to promote Polish design abroad: <i>Out of the Ordinary. Polish Designers of the 20th Century</i> (2011).</p>	<p>8a</p>
<p>Kaja Muszyńska is a curator, researcher and author on design topics. She currently works as co-curator in the gallery of Polish Design at the National Museum in Warsaw (Poland). She holds an MSc from the University of Edinburgh, collaborated with the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and various museums and auction houses in Warsaw. Her research focuses on the relationships between people and design, drawing on methods of anthropology and sociology. Her current curatorial project is a new permanent presentation of the design collection.</p>	<p>8b</p>
<p>Alyona Sokolnikova (PhD) is a Germany-based independent researcher, writer, curator and lecturer. She holds a PhD in Design Education and is the founder of the <i>Women Designers.USSR</i> research project. Sokolnikova curated several exhibitions in Moscow and other European cities, including the exhibition <i>Red Wealth: Soviet Design 1950–1980</i> (Rotterdam 2015/16, Brussels 2018). Amongst others she worked as a curatorial advisor for The Barbican Center (London 2017/18) or the Vitra Design Museum (Weil am Rhein 2021/22).</p>	<p>9</p>

<p>10a+b</p>	<p>Cvetka Požar (PhD) is an art historian and curator at the Museum of Architecture and Design (MAO), Ljubljana (Slovenia), with a PhD in development and theory of design. She researches design, in particular visual communications. Požar is the author of the exhibition and book <i>The Century of the Poster: Slovenian Poster Design in the 20th Century</i> (2015) and co-curated numerous exhibitions. Among the latest are <i>Jože Brumen: Modernist Designer and Art Connoisseur</i> (2021), <i>The World Inside: Designing Modern Interiors, 1930–Today</i> (2021), <i>Art for Everyday Life: Modernist Glass Design in Slovenia</i> (2017).</p>
<p>11a+b</p>	<p>Koraljka Vlajo is head of the design collections at the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb (Croatia). Her particular interest lies in the history of socialist Croatian design. She has curated many exhibitions on Croatian industrial design (research of <i>Jugokeramika</i> and Rade Koncar factory design departments, retrospective of industrial designer Davor Grünwald) and graphic design (retrospectives of graphic designer Marija Kalentic and Milan Vulpe). She is co-author of the book <i>Design for the New World</i> (2015) and the exhibition of the same name at the Museum of Yugoslav History (Belgrade 2016).</p>
<p>Archive</p>	<p>Mari Laanemets (Dr.) is senior researcher at the Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn (Estland). Her research focuses on 1960s and 1970s alternative art in Eastern Europe and its intersections with architecture and design practices, on post-war abstractionism and modernisation in the region. In 2019 she edited the book <i>Abstraction as Open Experiment. Sirje Runge, Dóra Maurer, Zofia Kulik, Falke Pisano</i>. She has co-curated amongst others the exhibitions <i>Our Metamorphic Futures: Design, Technical Aesthetics and Experimental Architecture in the Soviet Union</i> (Vilnius, Tallinn, 2011–12) and <i>Forecast and Fantasy: Architecture Without Borders, 1960s–1980s</i> (Tallinn, 2023).</p>
<p>Retrotopia</p>	<p>Claudia Banz (Dr.) is an art and design historian and author. Since 2017 she has been curator for design at the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin (Germany) and since 2023, an associate member of the cluster of excellence <i>Matters of Activity</i> at Humboldt University, Berlin. Previously, she headed the Art and Design Department at Museum für Kunst &amp; Gewerbe Hamburg from 2011 to 2017. Banz has realized many international exhibitions, outreach formats, and fairs at the intersection of design, fashion, craft, and art, including <i>Fast Fashion. The Dark Side of Fashion</i> (2014–18), <i>Food Revolution 5.0. Design for Tomorrow's Society</i> (2017–19), <i>Connecting Afro Futures. Fashion x Hair x Design</i> (2019) or the <i>Design Lab series</i> (2019–23). Banz is a member of numerous juries and publishes on social design, material culture, and decolonial collections.</p> <p>Agata Wozniak is currently a project assistant at the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin (Germany). She worked as a freelance designer and communication specialist at the United Nations (UNIS, IAEA) where she also published several articles. As a junior-curator she managed exhibitions such as <i>Peel Park: Heritage Uncovered</i> (Manchester 2016), <i>Beuys zum Hundertsten</i> (Berlin 2021) and introduced the first inclusive exhibition design and Website to the LWL Freilichtmuseum Detmold in the project <i>Erzähl mir was vom Pferd!</i> (2019).</p>

This booklet accompanies *Retrotopia. Design For Socialist Spaces*, an exhibition at the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin  
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Idea and concept: **Claudia Banz**

**Exhibition**

Exhibition curator: **Claudia Banz**

Project assistant: **Agata Wozniak**

Exhibition co-curators: **Polina Baitsym, Alex Bykov, Melinda Farkasdy, Judit Horváth, Helena Huber-Doudová, Silke Ihden-Rothkirch, Karolina Jakaitė, Viera Kleinová, Rita Komporday, Rostislav Koryčánek, Kai Lobjakas, Anna Maga, Kaja Muszyńska, Florentine Nadolni, Cvetka Požar, Klára Prešnajderová, Alyona Sokolnikova, Koraljka Vlajo**

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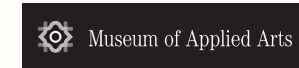
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