

# SPACES

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CALIFORNIA COOL  
LONDON DESIGN

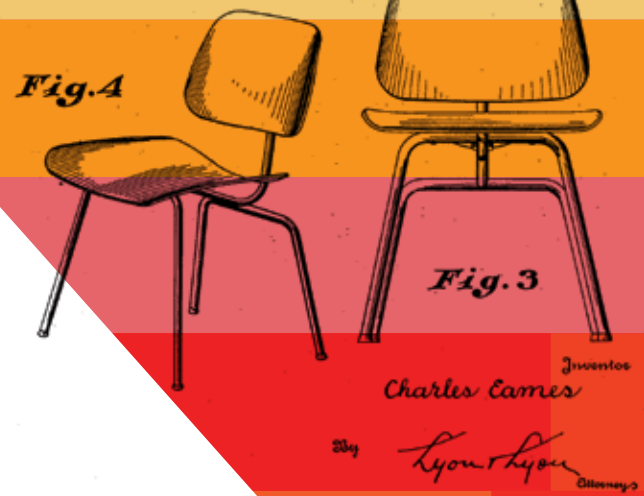
Spacestor<sup>®</sup>





Aug. 24, 1948. C. EAMES Des. 150,685

CHAIR  
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A castle built for the kings and queens of tech





ing wall of the upper level bedroom both open and closed. The track for the sliding wall is by Grant Pulley & Hardware Company. The built-in seating arrangement is covered in imported Belgian linen and was upholstered by C. W. Hennell & Son. Below: The record storage cabinet and control system containing Webster record changer and Newcomb amplifier from Kierulff & Company. The house is equipped with a Talk-O inter-communication system installed by Jewell-Summer Company. Sliding panels in the record cabinets are Plyon by Swedlow Plastics Company.



# Modernism and the heritage of...



Opposite page: View showing carpeted area in relation to the fireplace level. Large chair by Eero Saarinen for Hans Knoll. The ceiling which is continuous throughout the house is of habillo from Penberthy Lumber Company and lighting enclosures contain equipment from Century Lighting Company. The patterned draperies are of "The Squared Circle" by Laverne Originals. The plain draperies are of

# CALIFORNIA COOL



CALIFORNIA COOL is one of the most inspiring design movements of the last hundred years and has been influencing designers since the 1950s.

Many of our own furniture products here at Spacestor are inspired by the heritage of California design, so we wanted to take a deeper look at the history and present-day interpretations of California Cool.

## Mid-century California design: Living in a modern way



If you are looking for an image that defines California Cool, then a glance at the cover of the *Los Angeles Times Home* magazine from October 21st 1951 is the perfect starting point. Writing about this picture in the introductory essay for her exhibition *California Design 1930-1965: Living in a Modern Way* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, curator Wendy Kaplan posed the question, "What makes the California Look?"

The answers immediately leap from the page: an abstract arrangement of beautifully simple furniture. Originality. The vibrant colours associated with a sunny climate – yellows, oranges and vivid greens. And perhaps the most famous aspect of Californian life of all; the seamless flow between indoor and outdoor living. This flow is perfectly captured as many objects for outdoor use can be seen inside – a Hawk House garden lamp, an Architectural Pottery plant pot, a metal lounge chair by Van Keppel-Green – along with a mix of handcrafted objects and furniture made from new industrial materials, including a chair by Charles and Ray Eames, the stars of the movement.

What emerges from a study of California Cool is not only a style, but a spirit and an ethos that is modern and easy going. California Cool is laid back yet clearly structured, it is strict yet colourful, wild and free.



# Making California modern

## The roots of the California Cool movement



Where did the California Cool look come from?

During World War II California dominated the industrial production of defence and aerospace materials in the US. After the war its factories were put to a new use – the production of consumer goods – and many of the new materials and manufacturing techniques developed in the 1940s were used to create products that were functional, elegant and simple.

For instance Los Angeles designers Charles and Ray Eames developed techniques for moulding plywood, while making lightweight leg splints for the U.S. Navy, that they would later use to make their Eames chairs out of moulded plywood and fiberglass, writing design history in the process. Their innovative use of materials has inspired some of Spacestor's most recognised designs, from the light plywood frame of the Railway Carriage meeting pods to the Palisades modular system combining plywood boxes with a wire grid system.

In the 1950s designers took advantage of these new materials not only to make new forms, but to create a movement that was truly democratic. This was cutting-edge design for everyone. In the words of the Eameses, it was about "getting the most of the best to the greatest number of people for the least amount of money."

Of course California Cool also transcended industrial design. In Los Angeles at the time there were artists like a young Ed Ruscha, making paintings of gas stations, and jazz musicians like Charles Mingus, and even avant-garde composers such as Arnold Schoenberg. A short drive away in Palm Springs many of the world's greatest mid-century modern architects – Richard Neutra, Albert Frey, Donald Wexler – were designing futuristic buildings that still seem futuristic today. This was a movement that crossed over into every creative field, all linked by a shared ideal of "cool".

Curator Wendy Kaplan, writing in the catalogue for her exhibition *California Design 1930–1965: Living in a Modern Way*, captured the essence of the time perfectly when she explained, "the California of our collective imagination – a democratic utopia where an amazing climate promoted an informal indoor/outdoor lifestyle – was translated into a material culture that defined an era." 🏠



Delve deeper

*Birth of the Cool*, by Elizabeth Armstrong, Prestel, 2007

*Sunshine Muse: Art on the West Coast, 1945–1970*, by Peter Plagens, U.C. Press, 1974

*Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, by Reyner Banham, U.C. Press, 2009

*Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses*, by Elizabeth A.T. Smith, MOCA, 1999

Photos: (clockwise from left) Birch and mahogany splint, Grant Young; Carved splint, Grant Young; George Nelson wall clock, Brooklyn Museum; (opposite page) Eames House Interior, ©Eames Office LLC, Antonia Mulas.





Spacestor have followed the changing trends over the years and the Californian heritage of modern, simple, democratic furniture from the 1950s and 1960s has informed much of our thinking, as have great American designers like George Nelson, Muriel Coleman, and Charles and Ray Eames.

George Nelson was an industrial designer – many think of him as the father of industrial design – an architect, a teacher and an author who introduced many of the great European modernists to American audiences for the first time. He was interested in the utility of buildings and objects, and how design could help us to solve our problems – rather appropriately,

built-in bookcases or shelving making use of the space otherwise lost between walls. Over the years Spacestor continued to develop this idea and went on to become the first UK manufacturers of the storage wall. We now offer the world's simplest, most adaptable and flexible wall system to suit our fast-changing world where space is always decreasing.

Another of our inspirations was Muriel Coleman, an American designer working in California in the period following World War II. During this time there was a shortage of traditional materials to work from, and her major innovation was turning metal rods and bars into minimalist designs using much less wood. Her masterpieces were the shelving units she made in the early 1950s, which were architectural features in their own right that could also be used as room dividers – and these were an important influence on our Palisades line of modular shelving and room dividers.

Finally, husband and wife team Charles and Ray Eames embraced new forms and new materials to create design pieces that came to define mid-century modernism. The furnishings and architecture of their home in Pacific Palisades, Los Angeles, are still maintained as a museum of airy, open living, and remain an enduring source of inspiration for anyone with an interest in California Cool.

The style the Eameses, Coleman and Nelson dreamt up has been a big influence on Spacestor, particularly on our Palisades range of customizable modular systems, developed to create neighbourhoods and workzones inside spaces and are made from metal rods, copper and natural woods. They're influenced by the greats – but each creation is uniquely yours. 🍷

# INSIDE SPACESTOR'S MIND



Bleachers by Spacestor



Palisades by Spacestor

he only became interested in studying architecture after ducking into the architecture school at Yale in order to solve the problem of finding himself caught in a rainstorm.

When he was writing his book about the future of the modern home, *Tomorrow's House*, Nelson was struggling to think of new ideas for storage until – under pressure from his publisher – he asked himself, "What's inside the wall?" And so the idea of the "storage wall" was born: recessed,



Photos: (opposite page) top left, Design by Studios Architecture, ©Bruce Damonte; all others, Spacestor; (this page) design by Studios Architecture, ©Bruce Damonte.





# HEADSPACE



HEADSPACE, the makers of a popular meditation app based in California, are on a mission to help humanity cope better with the stresses of life. With over 11 million downloads, and a company valued at around \$250M, things are going well; however founders

Andy Puddicombe and Rich Pierson say they're not motivated by financial success but are on "a social mission, to help create a healthier, happier world."

This ethos can be seen throughout the company's new head office, praised in *Forbes* magazine as a "hip Santa Monica, Calif. headquarters complete with meditation pods, an indoor magnolia tree and swings." The brief was to create an environment where employees could be the healthiest, happiest versions of themselves so Spacestor provided acoustically enhanced, quiet Railway Carriage working pods customised for the company in an array of vibrant colours. This has extended HeadSpace's mood of calm and enlightenment right into the workspaces its valuable employees are using every day.

The chosen designer for the project, Kelly Robinson, works with a Californian aesthetic and a holistic approach that is evident throughout the 18,000 square feet of HeadSpace office: including a combined café and auditorium allowing for large events and meetings, meditation pods to enable employees to take short breaks to relieve stress, and of course Spacestor's quiet working pods. ■



## About the designer

Kelly Robinson is passionate about the importance of health and happiness at work, with a deep understanding of the importance of utilizing space. She creates an office environment that improves health and wellness for all, and shares our belief that people who feel good do better. We were very happy to work with Kelly and provide HeadSpace with customised working pods from our Railway Carriage range.

A re-energising office design for Californian meditation app HeadSpace

Featuring Railway Carriage by Spacestor

Photos: Wundr Studio.





Design comes from all directions, and we are inspired by California. For this issue we spoke with three designers who embody the spirit of California Cool. Our first interview is with Merry Edwards, an award-winning winemaker in Russian River Valley, Sonoma County.

# Merry Edwards

Making your own space



**M**erry Edwards began her career at Mount Eden Vineyards in the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1974, and in 1977 became the founding winemaker at Matanzas Creek where she remained until 1984. After a decade as a consultant, family and friends joined Merry to found her eponymous label in 1997. Merry and husband Ken completed their state-of-the-art winery in 2008. In 2013, her 40th year as a winemaker, she was inducted into the Vintners Hall of Fame by the Culinary Institute of America, and she also received the coveted James Beard Foundation Award for Outstanding Wine, Beer or Spirits Professional.

Interview by Dean Kissick

Photos: Ben Miller.





#### When you're designing, how do you consider light and space?

I'm very vineyard focused. I would call myself a wine grower, which is the combination of vineyard and winemaking. I very much think about, first of all, the vineyard, and I think about light in terms of the orientation to the sunlight and which way I want the rows to be directed. Typically I'm looking at how the sun hits the vines during the hottest part of the day, around 2 o'clock. This means that most of our vineyards are oriented with the rows 20 degrees off magnetic north; that way we don't ever have bright afternoon light hitting the grapes directly, nor very early morning light. As far as space goes, I'm looking at the space between the rows of vines and the space between the vines themselves within the rows. So that's what I think about in terms of space and light.

#### What are your favourite colour combinations?

The first thing I think about is our label art and, interestingly enough, the colours on our labels tend to be colours that I wear and like. For instance, the pinot noir labels have all different shades of burgundy and there are shades of green with the detail of the leaves. People make a joke of it, but I tend to wear a lot of burgundy. I love colour. Around the winery things are colour-coded, and different wines have different colours, and so we can walk through and look at the barrels and know immediately what vineyard the wine is from.

#### How does California influence what you do?

I've chosen this place, Russian River Valley, which is my home now, and what drew me to this area was the quality of the wines that could be made here. That is defined by the environment. Not only are we surrounded by the ocean very close to us, between seven and nine miles from all of my vineyards, but in the west we have San Francisco Bay which has a large influence on the area. Everything together makes it very foggy here a lot of the time and cool. In the wine business we farm the climate, and we choose to be, hopefully, in a place where we've made a good match between the varieties we're producing and the climate.

#### What's your favourite California design period?

I've been a winemaker for almost 45 years now and in every period, if you asked me this question I would have given the same answer: the answer is now, of course, because wherever we are today, things are always moving forward in terms of knowledge. People ask me, 'What is the best wine you've ever made?' I say, 'Well, I hope I haven't made it yet.'

#### How would you describe the environment of your favourite workspace?

Since I've talked a lot about the vineyard, I thought I should talk about our winery. People are always surprised when they come here because I really like the most modern equipment and I like a lot of space inside the winery. I like high ceilings and a lot of light. I feel that you make your own beautiful surroundings. You make your own space, right? ■



Photos: Ben Miller.



Design comes from all directions, and we are inspired by California. For this issue we spoke with three designers who embody the spirit of California Cool. Our second interview is with Michael Maltzan, a renowned Los Angeles architect and winner of the international competition to design the city's new Sixth Street Viaduct.



Michael Maltzan founded Michael Maltzan Architecture, Inc. in 1995. Through a deep belief in architecture's role in our cities and landscapes, he has succeeded in creating new formal, cultural, and social connections across a range of scales and programs. Michael received an M.Arch from the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, and BFA and B.Arch degrees from the Rhode Island School of Design. His award-winning projects have been published and exhibited internationally. Michael is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, a recipient of the American Academy of Arts and Letters Architecture Award, and the 2016 AIA Los Angeles Gold Medal Honoree.

Interview by Dean Kissick

Photos: Portrait, Ron Eshel; aerial, Iwan Baan.



# Michael Maltzan

Feeling that almost anything is possible

One Santa Fe, a mixed-use development in downtown Los Angeles. The project echoes the strong, linear forms of the surrounding regional infrastructure, including the Los Angeles River and adjacent rail lines.



**When you're designing, how do you consider light and space?**

I use three-dimensional physical models as the primary design tool here in the studio. The reason for this is that in contrast to using digital models, which are also useful, the physical models provide very real, physical feedback on the elements and show space in its full three dimensions. For me, that is an important way of connecting to the physical realities of the way light hits an object, or fills a space, and the way the qualities of space are involved in the design; including scale, form, character. It also helps to begin to understand the relationships between form and space, the ways that they change and evolve, and especially the way the light in a space changes over the course of a day.

**What are your favourite colour combinations?**

I found this question to be very difficult, but I gravitate towards colours that have white in them, as opposed to grey or black. I think the combinations that I gravitate towards the most are those that relate to both pink and orange.

**How does California influence what you do?**

Whether it's real, or only a part of the myth of California, there is an ongoing sense of extraordinary openness here. That cultural sensibility gives you the feeling that almost anything is possible and, as challenging as many of the problems in the State continue to be, especially in a city setting, there is still absolutely the feeling that creative solutions are necessary. A creative approach is not only accepted here, it's expected, and that gives a designer a great deal of latitude, not only in the things that they make but literally in the way that they approach design problems.

**What's your favourite California design period?**

I would say tomorrow. California has always been about what's next, what the future might bring to California and its design culture, and about dreaming of possibilities for tomorrow. I'm constantly interested in where design here is going to go as opposed to where it's been.

Photos: Iwan Baan.



**How would you describe the environment of your favourite workspace?**

I've always been interested in spaces that you might describe more as an ecosystem, as opposed to a workspace. By ecosystem, I don't necessarily mean that the space is filled with plants – although there are quite a few of them here in the studio today – but rather that it is a territory of past design attempts, current design work, drawings, models. Really that there is an overlapping of ideas that have been tried and failed, and ideas that we're trying out now, and ideas that have been successful in the past. That sense of the place as an ecosystem that provides you with bits and pieces of possible ideas for the next thing you're working on is absolutely my goal, not only in the physical environment but also in the culture of the studio as well. ■



# Kassia Meador

Sleeping on the sand, dreaming of the beach

Southern California native Kassia Meador is best known for her uniquely graceful and free-spirited surf style. Crowned the "queen of noseriding" by the *New York Times*, Kassia's talents expand to photography, film and creative design.

In 2015, Kassia combined her passion for design and aquatic sustainability and launched KASSIA+SURF, a women's surf and lifestyle brand. With a foundation in performance functionality and environmentally conscious production, KASSIA+SURF is about freedom, empowerment, and superior quality, all while remaining aesthetically pleasing.

Interview by Dean Kissick



Design comes from all directions, and we are inspired by California. For this issue we spoke with three designers who embody the spirit of California Cool. Our third interview is with Kassia Meador, a professional longboarder and women's surf apparel designer who comes from the Valley and now lives and works in Topanga Canyon.







**When you're designing, how do you consider light and space?**

Light and space have made me dream differently, and think differently, and feel differently. Through the actual experience of paddling back out after catching a good wave and seeing the light and somebody's silhouette; and the way that the light's coming through the wave; and having that whole moment when you get a good wave and the spray hits you and it's like this light and water bath. Our natural environment in California has really just, since I was a little kid, been embedded in my head and given me an opportunity to see things in a different way.

**What are your favourite colour combinations?**

I'm really excited about our newest collection because I love the natural colours. I love when there's that space with the colours of the dirt and the mountains, and how the blue in the sky looks so different out there in the mountains than it does in the city. Our new collection references colours found in nature that I really love, like the gradients of mountains in Sedona and the Grand Canyon, or the different colours of the rocks that are around me.

**How does California influence what you do?**

I was born and raised in California but I didn't grow up at the beach; I grew up in the Valley and the beach was always this romantic fantasy. So, being a kid from the Valley, it's hot and filled with concrete, and my whole dream was to be at the beach. By the time I finally started going, once I got there I would just stay there: I'd sleep on the sand. I'd just stay down there, and that community of everybody hanging out all day long surfing, barbecuing, playing music is what I found. It was actually still happening. It wasn't just in a movie. California is a place of opportunity and possibility. I think that there's a lot of room to dream.

**What's your favourite California design period?**

The late 1960s and the 1970s really, when there was the whole Land Art movement and everything had a lot to do with light and the outdoors, and using natural elements and working in that sort of space; I love how they were looking at all the natural elements and working with them to create.

**How would you describe the environment of your favourite workspace?**

Now that I live in Topanga Canyon, I just moved my whole studio to my home. I actually work outside and it's really nice because I have a whole hillside to my left, and I've got this whole giant ceiling space built of outdoor tarps. I'm really working within and inspired by the elements, in a very natural setting. I'm surrounded by trees. There are coyotes running through my yard, and deer all the time. I'm really grateful to be working here outside. ■

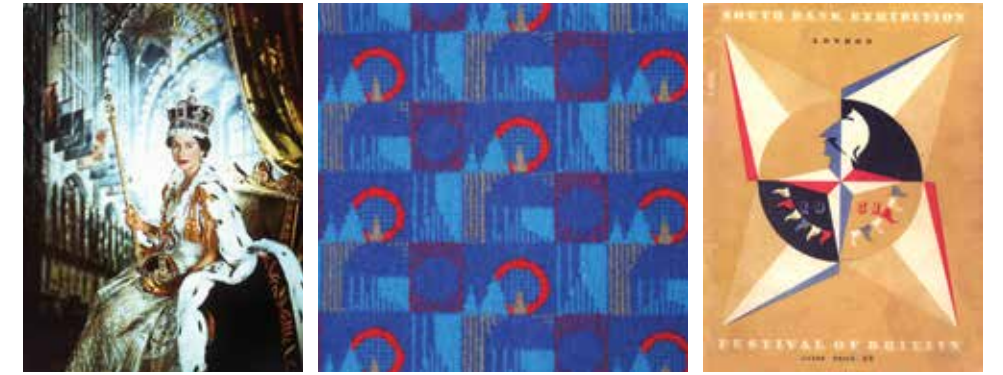


Photos: Kassia Meador.



After the war the mood in London was one of change. Postwar homes were smaller so furniture needed to be more compact and practical, and more straightforward to produce, in order to keep up with the demands of a rising population – all of which fitted perfectly with the simplicity of the mid-century modernist movement. The fact that modernism was a rejection of the past also made it an ideal aesthetic for a time of new beginnings.

# The mid-century design influence from 1950s London



The 1950s were a decade of reconstruction but also of celebration, with the Festival of Britain in 1951 showcasing the best in British design, science and technology, followed in 1953 by the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. And when it came to interior design, the 1950s saw the template laid for how our homes look today. According to Dr. Steven Parissien of Compton Verney Art Gallery, "It was easily the biggest revolution in domestic interiors and a time of great British pride and confidence. This was an Indian summer for British design."

Other interesting designs emerging in London were the use of primary colours and abstract, geometric patterns, some of which had a link to London underground train seat fabric design created by Marianne Straub and Misha Black.

One of the most important designers in London at the time was Robin Day, who had his breakthrough in 1948 when he and Clive Latimer won first prize in the International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture Design organised by the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Their winning design was a modular storage system consisting of units made from a single sheet of moulded plywood and suspended on aluminium tubular frames; one of the options was a drop-flap door unit which could also be used as a desk. Similarly, Spacestor have also developed a range of products to save space, such as our storage systems, lockers, and smart walls that can be adapted to your every need. ■





# The 1960s

brought us Swinging London and a flourishing of art and design and rock'n'roll that made the city the coolest place in the world. Postwar doom and gloom was gone forever, replaced with a wave of optimism from the young creatives flooding the capital. Everything was happening at once. On a Saturday afternoon, you could go down to Carnaby Street and find Jimi Hendrix shopping for clothes. Terence Conran opened the first Habitat store on the Fulham Road in 1964. Bridget Riley became the star of the op art movement with paintings of repeating patterns and optical illusions.

It was also the decade when Scandinavian mid-century modernism came to the fore, with Danish furniture designers like Verner Panton and Arne Jacobsen having a huge impact.

Furniture became multipurpose with materials such as plastic and PVC widely used. These all contributed to giving design a low level and revivalist theme that was fun and witty, as part of a more throw-away culture.

Swinging London brought many changes and there have been many more since. Spacestor have continued to evolve with them and, as we move into the 21st century, we are at the forefront of design and can see how it is changing – today, design is becoming more and more focused on the experience and how it affects the user, rather than just the product. 🍷

*LONDON FEELS THE COOL*



Photos: (this page) Bridget Riley op art, Judy Dean (flickr), Arne Jacobsen stol 7, Holger Ellgaard; Panton stuhl, Holger Ellgaard, (opposite page) Carnaby Street, H Grobe.





A portrait of Paul Brooks, a man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark jacket over a dark shirt. He is looking directly at the camera against a dark background.

**P**aul Brooks became interested in chair design as a student at Ravensbourne College of Design in England. He developed this interest through his post-graduate studies at the Royal College of Art (RCA) in London where he attained a masters degree in Furniture Design. Brooks maintained close links with Ravensbourne College where he worked as a visiting lecturer for ten years. On graduating from the RCA in 1983 he started working with Robert Heritage (CBE), Professor of Furniture Design, at his design studio in London. Two years later he joined Stephen Hall Consultancy where he worked on furniture and lighting projects. In 1990 he began working as an independent designer in the UK mainly with office furniture companies on products such as Trillipse visitor chair and Enigma and Sona task chairs. Increasingly Brooks became recognized as an experienced designer in the area of tooled seating projects for the office furniture industry. Since 2006 he has worked from his studio in Kehl, Germany and lives just across the border in Strasbourg, France. As specialists in office seating design the Paul Brooks Design studio produce a focused and informed design solution for furniture companies and suppliers in Europe and America. Products have received international design awards such as an IF award for the Yanos task chair, GIO award and C2C silver award for the A2020 task chair range, IDEX NeoCon Canada Gold award for the Mars visitor chair and Red Dot award for the Linea task chair range. In 2008 Paul Brooks was chosen as UK Designer of the Year at the MIX design awards in London.



# Paul Brooks



Photos: Profim.

Paul Brooks is an award-winning furniture designer whose speciality is office seating, and we are delighted to be the exclusive UK distributor of his designs for Profim – his modular SoftBox seating areas, his immersive Nu chairs, his MyTurn sofas, and his Zoo and Com ranges of multipurpose office chairs.

#### How did you first become interested in designing chairs?

The chair in terms of product design is unique. Because chairs relate directly to the human form they are easily understood in an intuitive way by all. We can decide whether or not we like a chair emotionally in a split second.

#### What have been your biggest influences over the years?

As a student in the 1980s Italian design was at the forefront and there was no better example than Vico Magistretti. Latterly the apparent ease with which Alberto Meda makes consistently beautiful work never ceases to amaze me. I particularly like the way in which Niels Diffrient describes the motivation and reasons for being a designer in his TED lecture. Designing a chair is a very personal activity.

#### Can you share with us the story behind the development of the Nu chair?

The Nu range was developed with the idea of social and private spaces in mind. We started with a simple tub chair for use in social situations and then, rather than designing a standalone piece of acoustic furniture, we decided to utilise an acoustic hood accessory to create the private spaces. The name Nu came from an early concept diagram of two U shapes forming a lozenge – the first U representing a tub chair and the second U inverted and placed above to create an acoustic hood.

#### What are your predictions for the future in terms of furniture design trends?

It has never been harder to predict the future. A serious range of seating generally takes between two and four years to develop. Therefore when generating ideas, whether as a designer or as a manufacturer, one needs to be confident that one can accurately foresee the future in the coming years. Consequently it is likely that many people will be tempted to avoid taking risks in an uncertain world – ironically, because of this I think it will be the bold companies that have an even greater opportunity to stand out. ■





Nu by Paul Brooks

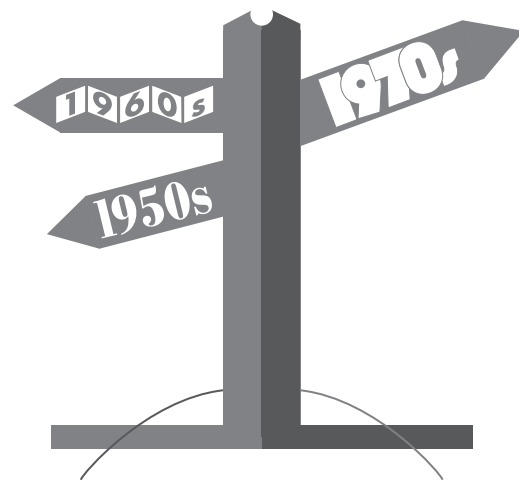


MyTurn by Paul Brooks

By Profim  
Exclusively distributed in the UK by Spacestor



# Postmodernism



By the 1970s there was a reaction against modernism. A new wave of playful, iconoclastic postmodern designers reacted against its purity by offering an alternative vision for design that was warmer, more colourful, more experimental and more fun. While modernism had been based on principles of clarity and simplicity, postmodernism was about complexity and contradiction. There were no boundaries anymore, and no more rules. From this point onwards designers could do whatever they wanted, and in the 1980s this newfound freedom would come to dominate.

While postmodern architecture was dominated by Americans, postmodern design was led by avant-garde Italians: such as Studio Alchimia, founded by Alessandro Guerriero in Milan in 1976, and particularly the Memphis Group, founded by Ettore Sottsass

in that same city in 1981. For the next four years, until Sottsass unexpectedly left the group in 1985, Northern Italians set the aesthetic tone in a way that had not been seen since the days of Renaissance Florence.

Memphis furniture, as can be seen from the image of the room below, was made in unusual ornamental shapes and decorated with outlandish patterns and vivid colours. Every surface was covered in plastic laminate so that it shone. Compared to the monotone and the minimalism of so much modern design it was shocking – and it was supposed to be shocking.

Sottsass and his cohorts were very self-aware and they loved theatricality and exaggeration. Everything was a style statement in their 1980s heyday. When Karl Lagerfeld was appointed head designer of Chanel in 1983,



journalists arriving at his apartment in Monaco were amazed to find it absolutely filled with Memphis furniture, including key pieces and also some prototypes that were never released. He had built a postmodern shrine for himself. In the middle of his living room, in place of a sofa, was a Memphis boxing ring scattered with a few cushions: Masanori Umeda's Tawaraya Party Ring.

Throughout the 1980s the postmodern style came to take over popular culture, especially in the booming United States. The Memphis influence could be seen everywhere: from MTV, on which a postmodern design sensibility was apparent in the idents and the music videos it showed; to the diner where the high school kids hung out in *Saved by the Bell*; to the interior decoration of Taco Bell restaurants and Baskin-Robbins ice cream parlours. Postmodern design had conquered everything and, like the Roman Empire, this was to prove its downfall. It was no longer avant-garde, its leader Ettore Sottsass had left a long time ago, and by the early 1990s it was collapsing under the weight of its own ubiquity.

Recently however there has been something of a revival, led by London designer Camille Walala who, as can be seen in the building mural here, finds much of her inspiration in the postmodern movement. Whether designing cladding or textiles, furnishings or ceramics, her bright patterns filled with dots and dashes bring us right back to the golden days of Memphis – but with a contemporary twist.

But as the 21st century progresses, design is becoming more and more focused on the user experience, and Spacestor continue to research and enhance this in the workspace environment. ■



Photos: (left to right) Memphis objects, Zanone (Wikipedia); Camille Walala mural, Mabacam (flickr).



# TOP 5 WORKPLACE TRENDS FOR 2017

2016 was a big year for workplace design. Many companies have redesigned their offices in response to the work of incredibly successful brands such as Google and Apple that have been creating spaces that are not only cool, collaborative and full of tech, but future-proof. The proof of the power of an innovative working space is seen in their staff's happiness and loyalty and their profit margins, which continue to boom. So, what are the biggest workspace trends of 2017 looking like?



## 1. Employees as your No.1 customer

Employees are important customers that need to be satisfied, and the most valuable asset of a company. The biggest trend to follow on from 2016 is more and more companies realising the connection between a positive employee and candidate experience and hiring the best talent.

*"As a result of a poor candidate experience, employers are missing out on an important talent pool."*

– [workplacetrends.com](#)

So not only are organisations giving current employees what they need to work effectively in their environment, they are also using the workspace as part of their recruitment process. In 2017 more companies will invest in enhancing the overall experience for their employees of the future, becoming better places to work and stronger talent magnets.

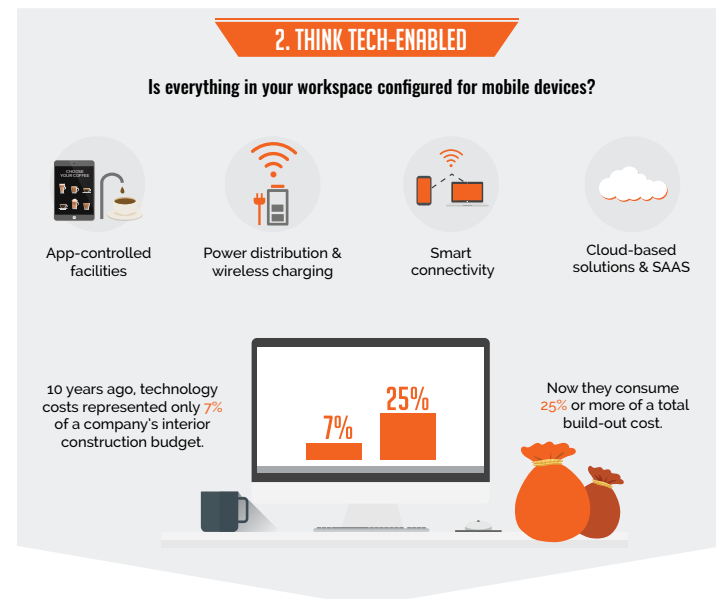
## 2. Think tech-enabled

Companies are introducing environments and systems where everything is configured for mobile devices, to cater for design and digital teams and improve productivity in the workplace.

The advances of technology are disrupting almost every market. In order to prosper, we all need to act like a Silicon Valley company. Tech-enabled spaces help to achieve this, allowing employees to work seamlessly throughout the day with the use of furniture designed to enhance project and meeting experiences: such as app-controlled facilities, power distribution and wireless charging, smart connectivity, cloud-based solutions and SAAS (software as a service).

*"With technology advancing, the future employee will be able to incorporate fitness and health monitoring into their working day and not just during breaks. We are already seeing a rise in the use of sit-stand desks, ergonomic chairs, office green spaces, standing meetings, and well-being days, which include massages, health and fitness workshops."*

– Neil Shah, founder of the nonprofit Stress Management Society



## 3. MILLENNIAL MIND APPEAL

Millennials are disrupting the workforce for the better so the workspace has to be designed to attract and facilitate the way they work



They live on their phones



They need flexibility



They thrive on collaboration



They share everything

*"The great thing about millennials is that they bring fresh ideas and fresh perspectives to your workplace. It can be beneficial to hire young employees if you are trying to attract younger customers. A new generation means a new way of thinking."*

– [Forbes.com](#)

Workspace dynamics are rapidly changing, and traditional office designs and spaces have also changed to retain this new generation of talent. Millennials are transforming the world of work as companies are encouraging collaboration through spaces designed to facilitate teamwork; and in 2017 more moves than ever will be made to appeal to this younger workforce.

## 4. Spaces for tasks, not job titles

The idea of collaborative working was taken up by Apple founder Steve Jobs, who believed that environments that promote teamwork can help companies retain their talent by introducing the thought that everyone in the office can work together – no matter what their role or authority. But there's also a need for thinking time, so today's knowledge worker needs a choice of workspaces.

*"If you want to hire great people and have them stay working for you, you have to win by ideas not hierarchy. Best ideas have to win. Otherwise good people don't stay."*

– Steve Jobs

In 2017, the spotlight will be on tech-enabled spaces as a way of retaining the new generation of talent and making their workforce more efficient.

## 3. Millennial mind appeal

Millennials are changing the workplace, and more so in 2017. They offer a new way of thinking, so offices have to be designed to attract them and facilitate the way they work.

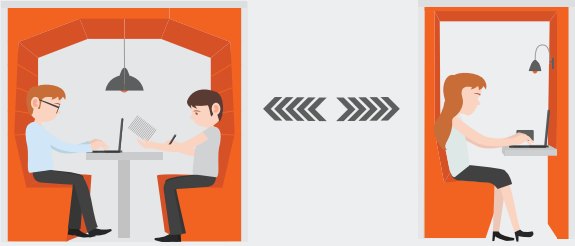


Illustrations: Letitia Clouden.  
Photo: Hotlocker by Spacestor, ©Jefferson Smith.



#### 4. SPACES FOR TASKS, NOT JOB TITLES

Spontaneous collaboration. Thinking time. Quick catch-up. Today's knowledge worker needs a choice of workspaces for maximum productivity.



As collaborative working environments increased last year, we're certain that more companies will tailor their workplace to bring together employees, nurture teamwork, and help to strike the next big idea that will change the world!

#### 5. Outside inside

Biophilic design was a term that was popularised by psychologist Edward O Wilson in the 1980s. He discovered that the increasing rate of urbanisation leads to a disconnect with the natural world, and that it was important to counter this with plants, natural light, large windows and other elements that remind us of the great outdoors.

*"With high rates of migration to urban settings in the developed world and soaring rates in developing countries – biophilia is of ever increasing importance to our health and well-being in the built environment."*

– Oliver Heath Design

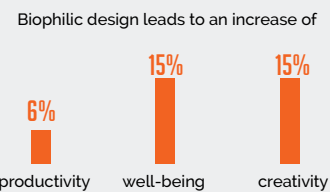
Biophilic design enhances the spaces we work and live in and comes with many health and wellbeing benefits. And, to tie in perfectly with this trend, Pantone have announced that their colour of the year is "Greenery" – a fresh and revitalising shade representing the first days of spring and symbolising a reconnection with natural settings.

Here at Spacestor we're excited to explore the workspaces of 2017 and we can't wait to observe these trends in offices around the world. 🌱



#### 5. OUTSIDE INSIDE

Informal, natural, healthy. The trend for indoor biophilia is expected to flourish in 2017 as its association with well-being and productivity is recognised.







### About the Designer

**STUDIOS**  
architecture

Studios Architecture have offices in six major cities around the world, in the US, France and India. The practice is all about enhancing the human experience in the built environment. We were delighted to work with Studios Architecture on these offices for Lyft, supplying customised storage systems and benches to help define and separate zones within the cool new warehouse-look spaces.

### Products featured

Spacestor's Palisades  
and Sustain Bench

Photos: ©Bruce Damonte.



# Lyft

LYFT, the ride-sharing app, provide a more fun and memorable service, and this spirit is reflected in their brand identity and also their new offices in Seattle and Nashville. They needed cool zone dividers to mark different work-spaces without breaking the warehouse startup look – so Spacestor provided them with our Palisades zone dividers adapted to suit their exact requirements, along with Sustain benching to add to the colourful vibe.

The task to extend Lyft's playful brand personality into both cities fell to international design practice Studios Architecture, and the end result was two distinct and exceptional offices highlighting each city's unique local culture. The Seattle office is located downtown in a historic warehouse building and divided into separate sections – an office, and a hub for drivers – joined together by a pink tunnel. There are a variety of places to work and relax, and a hidden doorway leading to The Secret Café: a perfect place to grab a cup and enjoy Seattle's craft coffee culture.

Meanwhile the Nashville office is in a characterful old warehouse building with exposed brickwork, arched windows, large skylights, and now a hidden doorway leading to The Dolly Room: a music room named after the iconic country singer where employees can have fun and play instruments and even dress up in blonde Dolly Parton wigs.



## Memorable Office Designs in Seattle and Nashville



# Zee by Spacestor

**Some call it smart casual or Scandinavian, others classify it as urban loft or industrial...**

This uniquely shaped and raw timber bench desk is of the new generation. A desk that still works hard, but helps you make working more fun. Offering you the perfect balance between work and home, this is the desk that makes it comfortable in any workspace, the desk that brings the outside-in, seamlessly blending nature and design.



Photos: (top right) ©2016 Thierry Cardineau Photography; (all others) Spacestor ©Leigh Simpson.



# IS THE OPEN-PLAN OFFICE TREND DESTROYING THE WORKPLACE?

If you work in architecture or design, there's little chance that you've missed the recent criticism on the open plan office movement. Does this type of workplace really make employees miserable?

Maybe all the negative talk has got you thinking, or maybe it has made you angry because you completely disagree with the critics and enjoy the way open workplaces look and function.

In this article we take a closer look at some of the problems people have with the open-plan office and some of the merits they can offer us. We argue that open-plan still has a place in the workplace of the future, but only as one component in a more balanced office set up that fits multiple business and employee needs.

This way of thinking is how we and many others see the office of the future.

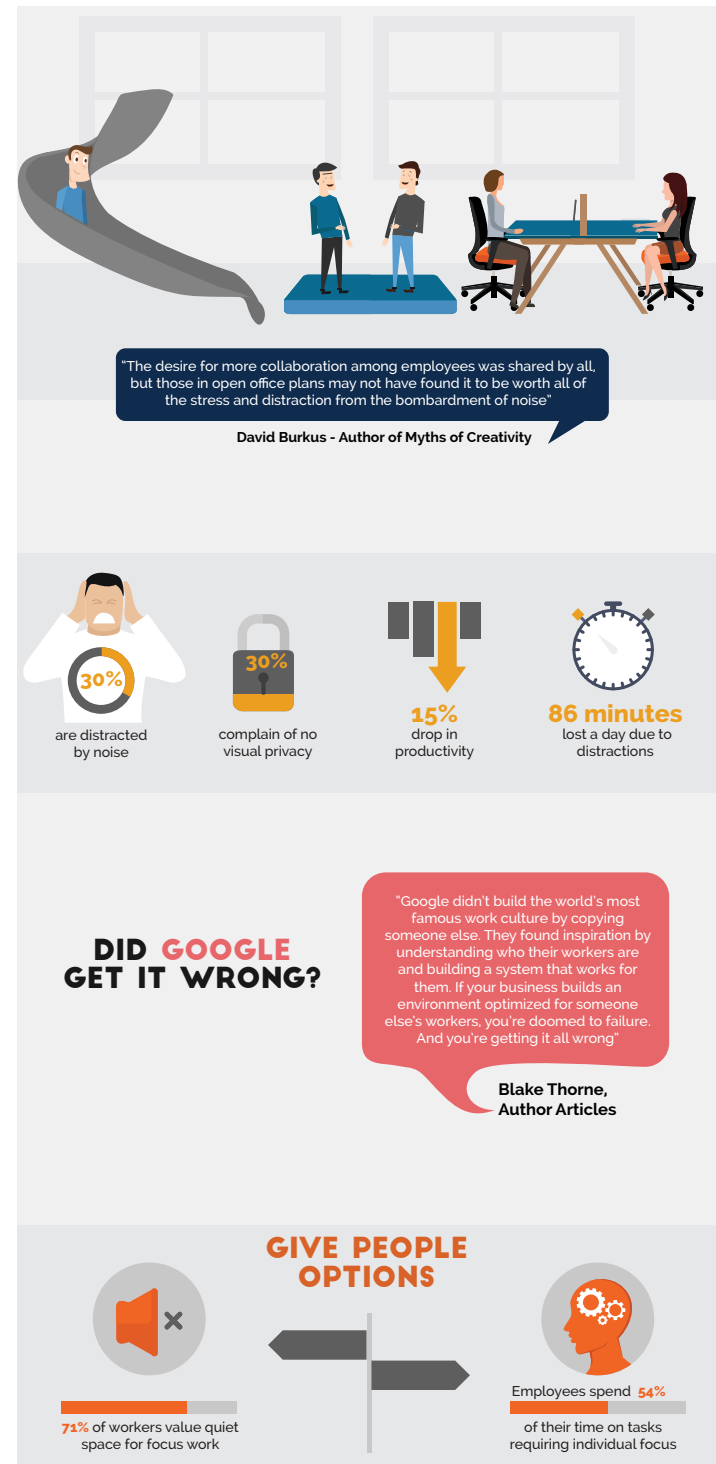
## A little background

Originally conceived in 1950s in Germany, the idea of a communal workspace was designed to be barrier-free, generate a sense of camaraderie and enhance teamwork. It was believed it would even lead to innovation and advancement thanks to the free exchange of ideas.

The idea of the open-plan office has only really caught on in the U.S. and UK within the last decade. It took root in tech start-ups like Google and other Silicon Valley firms, before quickly spreading to media, advertising, architecture, and other established industries. It's no surprise then, that arguably the most famous tech start up, Facebook, designed the largest open floor plan in the world, housing nearly 3,000 engineers.

The guiding philosophy behind these kind of office designs was that tearing down barriers would foster creativity and productivity. But there were other advantages to be considered too. The rise of the open workplace coincided with a global financial crash and businesses were forced to dramatically cut costs and reduce office space. The new workspace trend presented a perfect opportunity to do both.

The proliferation of the open office is now complete with the International Facility Management Association claiming 70 per cent of U.S. offices having no or low partitions.



## Critics

In recent times there have been some high profile studies into the open workplace. The results suggest that the concept does not always work for employees or the bottom line. Critics have urged employers to build more walls, instead of tearing them all down.

Are their fears well-founded? Have Google and other tech firms got it wrong? Or has Google got the right kind of workspace for Google, even if it is not suited to every business?

In December 2014, journalist Lindsey Kaufman kicked off a protest with her *Washington Post* article "Google got it wrong, the open office trend is destroying the workplace".

Kaufman decried the lack of privacy, the endless distractions, and even the effortless spread of colds and flu that open workspaces created. Complaining that her personal productivity had hit an all-time low, she described the experience as "like being in middle school with a bunch of adults."

L.V. Anderson, writing for news portal *Slate*, was even more blunt: "Open offices may be the worst thing to happen to employee productivity since the three-martini lunch." In her article "The Open-Office Trap", *New Yorker* writer Maria Konnikova pointed out that barriers such as walls and partitions are closely tied to a sense of privacy, which boosts job performance. She concluded that constant exposure was damaging to an employee's creative thinking, ability to focus, and overall job satisfaction.

A quick internet search reveals hundreds of similar articles, survey results, and testimonials, most of which were published in the last few years. With few exceptions they depict the open office as being synonymous with distractions and according to a Bloomberg article, "being forced to listen to phone calls about the veterinary issues of your co-workers' cats."

## Research suggest 30% distracted by noise

In 2005 University of Sydney researchers carried out a study on open offices using office environment data from the Post-Occupancy Evaluation database at the University of California at Berkeley. Using 42,764 cases from 303 office buildings, they found that workers in enclosed private offices were more satisfied and productive overall while those in open office plan work environments were less happy or motivated. Between 25 and 30% of employees in open-plan workspaces reported being distracted by the level of noise in their workplace, which affected their concentration.

But is there any scientific evidence to back up those that say they are distracted in open environments?

In a research article published in 2008 and titled: "Relationships Between Indoor Environment and Stress in Health Care and Office Settings", it is shown that noise has been repeatedly tied to reduced cognitive performance.

Psychologists who study the effect of sound on how we think, say that general office noise impacts workers' ability to recall information, and even to complete basic sums.

So how about the open workspace classic, plugging in your headphones and listening to music to block out that office hustle and bustle? Psychologist Nick Perham says even that doesn't help, even music impairs our mental concentration and performance on task.

There are even more worrying studies claiming that exposure to office noise can take a toll on health. A Cornell University study by psychologists Gary Evans and Dana Johnson, found that clerical workers exposed to open-office noise for three hours had increased levels of epinephrine. This is a hormone that we often call adrenaline, and is associated with the so-called fight-or-flight response.





### The future of office design

While the open office concept clearly does not work for all employees all of the time, companies with values such as transparency, collaboration and relationships at the heart of their culture assert that it remains an important part of the flexible and modern workplace.

The problem that many companies face, is that one huge open-plan space does not provide the best environment for different kinds of business tasks, and that's why there has been a big rethink on what approach to take in office design. The open-office trend is now merging into a hybrid, mixing with ideas from offices of past decades. The result is the flexible office. There's room for private spaces, a blend of private offices, cubicles, and communal areas suited to specific tasks.

### A mix of spaces is important

Another study, this one conducted in 2013 by architecture and design firm Gensler, suggested that employees spent 54% of their time on tasks requiring individual focus. That figure is up from 48% in 2008. So it would appear obvious that private spaces are still needed for most kinds of businesses, and that is what a flexible office should try to incorporate.

Many flexible office designs even have dedicated soundproof rooms where employees can go to focus on challenging solo

tasks. The result is a fluid work environment, which features a range of spaces and gives workers the autonomy to move between them throughout the day.

### What is the best office space for you?

Ultimately the best spaces are designed for people, and take into account not only their productivity, but also their well-being.

A highly customised office space is also now seen as key in designing an environment that attracts and retains key talent.

All indicators show that millennials are more likely to regularly change jobs instead of rigidly sticking to one employer or career path. So creating enjoyable working environments is one area employers can work on in an effort to retain the most talented individuals at their company.

The consensus appears to be that flexible offices give you the best of all worlds and help people to be productive in different ways at different times. They also allow a work space to be organic and more natural, fitting to the changing needs of the people who inhabit them throughout any given day. They make your staff happier, and just might help you hang on to your key talents for much longer.

Both businesses and employees can reap the rewards in this future way of working. ■

Photo: ©Bruce Damonte.



# money.co.uk

## Cotswold-based comparison website creates a castle fit for kings and queens



### About the designers

Interaction were behind the fit out on the project, with designer Egle Barreikyte taking the lead, and Spacestor were pleased to supply them with customized Zee Bench Desks and Hot-Lockers that complement the stun-



ning renovation of the historic castle. money.co.uk also collaborated with Laurence Llewelyn Bowen, of Changing Rooms fame, on the design of six rooms for the project.

Photo: Exterior ©Chris Terry.





**MONEY.CO.UK** was ranked the second fastest growing business in the UK in 2015 and has been independently recognized as one of the best places to work in the UK. Managing Director Chris Morling believes his staff are invaluable, and the transformation of a Grade II-listed castle on the Bathurst Estate in Gloucestershire is his way of rewarding them. "You spend half your working life in the office," he says, "and I wanted to create a motivating, uplifting environment which gave my team flexibility and encouraged collaboration. Looking after your team is paramount and it's really important I give them the best of everything. Ultimately my team are my most valuable asset."

So in order to give them the best of everything, we provided Zee Bench Desks throughout the main offices, with differently coloured screens to match the bright colour schemes of the rooms and the money.co.uk logo etched onto their timber posts. We also provided HotLockers for the castle, in the offices and the shower rooms, once again with customised colour finishes.

This inspiring and creative workspace was designed by Interaction, and also Laurence Llewelyn Bowen. It features all sorts of surprises – including a library, complete with a secret passageway hidden behind a bookcase, and a *Star Wars*-themed cinema offering free popcorn. It truly is one of the world's great offices. 🍿

### Products featured

Spacestor's Zee and HotLocker

Photos: ©Chris Terry.



**Spacestor**®

Adapted from original design by William Claxton/Pauline Annon, Jazz Canto Vol. 1, World Pacific Records.





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