

Design Practice in Support of Capitalism
Industrial Design and Cold War Consumer Politics

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my father who shares my interest in Cold War history and supports my future endeavors in design academia.

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INTRODUCTION

The United States and the Soviet Union emerged as international political powers after the Allies declared victory in World War II. Both nations strove to assert their global power and influence on countries with evolving political systems and economic policies. In the 1950-1960s, political systems in developing countries were transformed by uprisings and revolutions in regions such as Central America, Asia, and north Africa. While the United States and the Soviet Union never entered armed conflict with each other during this period, they formed political alliances with movements of the countries in these regions and fought proxy wars. The struggle for the world dominance of U.S. capitalism versus Soviet communism thus began the era of geopolitical tension known as the Cold War.¹

This thesis will study the role of industrial designers who were commissioned by the U.S. government to design international exhibitions during the Cold War. Industrial designers were tasked with depicting a positive image of capitalism and were granted the freedom to decide how they felt the U.S. should be represented abroad. I will focus on U.S. involvement in three propaganda initiatives: the Marshall Plan exhibits in the 1950s, the Brussels World's Fair in 1958, and the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM) in 1959. I will argue that designers played a pivotal role in Cold War consumer politics because they made crucial decisions on how to represent

¹ The term "Cold War" was coined by writer George Orwell in "You and the Atomic Bomb," *Tribune* (London), October 1945.

the U.S. to draw support for capitalism during a period of international struggle between U.S. capitalist and Soviet communist ideologies.

With the spread of communism accompanying the Soviet Union's pervasive influence, U.S. government officials became wary of the threat of global communism that challenged their capitalist ideology. The U.S. maintained the political strategy outlined in President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, which stated that nations would achieve prosperity if they held the right to self-determination, free trade, and freedom through democracy.² Conversely, communist ideology advocated for equal distribution of resources and of the consumer market via a centrally planned economy. These contrasting ideologies engendered a bitter hostility between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and prompted each country to take actions to counter each other's influence on developing nations.

Cold War historiography describes two areas of conflict between the U.S. and the Soviet Union: the Cold War as an armament, space race, and battle for territorial supremacy; and secondarily, the Cold War as a battle of cultural conflict. The cultural conflicts of the Cold War were battles fought with campaigns of propaganda rather than military force. In the 1980s, political science scholar Joseph Nye named this type of force "soft power," and elaborated on its meaning in his 2004 political manifesto, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*.³ Soft power, as described by Nye, is the ability to influence and persuade other nations towards cultural beliefs, political

² Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, January 8, 1918. (New York: Woodrow Wilson Foundation, 1943).

³ Joseph Nye. *Soft Power: Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009).

ideals, and policies. In contrast, hard power refers to coercion in the form of direct commands and orders. Even though the Cold War excluded actual military campaigns, the Cold War was fought on both fronts with hard powers and soft powers. Hard power was enacted through military and technological intimidation in the form of weaponry and advancements in the space race. The U.S. enacted soft power initiatives through propaganda that was motivated by its competition with the Soviet Union.

Historiography of Cold War Consumer Politics

Cold War historians focus their writings on one of three central themes: the actions of political actors, those of appointed government officials in charge of directing soft power initiatives, or the designers themselves. This thesis will examine Cold War history through the lens of industrial designers and analyze their role in soft power initiatives in relation to the political figures and exhibition organizers.

U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower played a major political role in the cultural battle of the Cold War. Historian Shane Hamilton describes how President Eisenhower valued soft power in politics because of its ability to shape the preferences of other nations.⁴ Lizabeth Cohen, a historian of trends in American consumption, looks to President Eisenhower as directing economic progress in the 1950s: “[Eisenhower] praised that ‘an American working man can own his own comfortable home and a car and send his children to well-equipped elementary and high schools and to colleges as well.’” Cohen also cites Eisenhower's political rhetoric that counters communism: “[The

⁴ Shane Hamilton and Sarah Phillips. *The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics: A Brief History with Documents*. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2014).

Soviets] fail to realize that [the American] is not the downtrodden, impoverished vassal of whom Karl Marx wrote. He is a self-sustaining, thriving individual, living in dignity and in freedom.”⁵ While President Eisenhower held political power by enacting formal foreign policy initiatives, he delegated power to industrial designers to carry out those policies at international exhibitions. Design historian Stanley Abercrombie, writing about George Nelson’s professional projects, includes a statement on how the President delegated important responsibility to Nelson for ANEM: “The order the exhibition organizers received from President Eisenhower was short, but clear: ‘Open the door of the Iron Curtain in a crack.’”⁶ While Hamilton and Cohen give President Eisenhower political responsibility for soft power initiatives, Abercrombie states how the President delegated political power to Nelson in choosing how to represent the United States in Moscow.

Hamilton continues the legacy of the U.S. executive office in the Cold War cultural history by highlighting its role at ANEM. As Vice President, Richard Nixon made several appearances in and around the event and is famously noted for his role in the “Kitchen Debate” with Soviet Secretary Nikita Khrushchev. The Kitchen Debate’s publicity from a historical standpoint, as shown by Hamilton’s portrayal of the event, gave Nixon and Khrushchev credit for waging the ideological battle between U.S. capitalism and Soviet communism. However, designers also played a significant role in

⁵ Elisabeth Cohen. *A Consumer’s Republic*. (New York: Vintage Books, 2003).

⁶ Stanley Abercrombie. *George Nelson: the Design of Modern Design*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995), 186.

the Kitchen Debate because the well-designed appliances in the model home associated with this event were used to support Nixon's argument for capitalism.

Historian James Wulf understands U.S. government officials and exhibition organizers to be important figures of study in examining the cultural history of the Cold War. Wulf offers primary and secondary accounts of Jack Masey who served as the USIA Chief of Design at several of the exhibitions including ANEM.⁷ Historian Susan Reid gives primary accounts of Soviet women who criticized the exhibition and blamed the exhibition organizers, not the designers themselves. In an advertisement running the day after the premiere of ANEM, the Russian "everywoman," Zinaida, boasted that "our kitchen is just as good as the American one shown in the exhibition in Sokolniki."⁸ Reid's account of the Soviet critique emphasizes the role of the exhibition's organizers and what they chose to present at the exhibition, not necessarily on the designs of the kitchens themselves.

Wulf gives the USIA organizers credit in playing a role in Cold War soft power initiatives, but he also makes another argument regarding Cold War historiography: industrial designers can also be understood to have a prominent voice at the international exhibitions. Wulf mentions Harrison McClung, appointed head of the Office of International Trade Fairs, who presented industrial designers with the opportunity to have a powerful voice at these exhibitions:

⁷ Jack Masey and Conway Lloyd Morgan. *Cold War Confrontations: US Exhibitions and their Role in the Cultural Cold War*. (Baden: Lars Muller Publishers, 2008).

⁸ Susan Reid's article mentioned by David Crowley, Jane Pavitt. *Cold War: Modern Design 1945-1970*. (London: V & A Publishing. 2008).

It was McClung's mostly unilateral decision, in the end, to hand over to the industrial design profession. [President Eisenhower]'s directive of pushing economic policies through cultural means...Designer Beverly Payeff-Masey also offers: 'we ended up showing what the designers wanted to show, because of the urgency of the Cold War.' In other words...designers actually began to make decisions about the content.⁹

In emphasizing the role of designers in the cultural exhibitions, Wulf presents a new area of study within the realm of Cold War history. The designers can be understood to have had great influence in Cold War history because they emphasized the value of U.S. consumer culture to international audiences.

International Exhibitions and the USIA

In the 1950s, Soviet propaganda at international trade fairs threatened to influence wide audiences and push the Soviet Union ahead of the U.S. in the cultural battle of the Cold War. President Eisenhower realized that Soviet participation in the fairs was a global force of influence towards the spread of communism, and he instigated policies for U.S. participation in international fairs in 1954.¹⁰ In 1955, the Office of International Trade Fairs (OITF) was established as a collaboration between government and industry to represent the U.S. at international trade fairs and exhibitions such as the Marshall Plan exhibits in Berlin. By 1956, the responsibilities of the OITF were assumed by the newly formed United States Information Agency (USIA), a formal

⁹ James Wulf. *U.S. Exhibitions During the Cold War: Winning Hearts and Minds through Cultural Diplomacy*. (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), p.66.

¹⁰ Ibid.

government agency that was funded by Congress to spread information about the U.S. at international exhibitions and fairs.

The U.S. government faced the challenge of presenting a compelling image of the U.S. at international exhibitions and fairs and turned to industry leaders for advice. According to historian Robert Haddow, President Eisenhower had established the OITF as a “relationship between the American government and private industry that was mutually dependent and mutually beneficial.”¹¹ Specifically, the challenge of representing the U.S. abroad was directed towards industrial designers, who were designated the power to curate the messaging of the exhibitions in support of capitalism. In an article entitled “Design as a Political Force” published in *Industrial Design* magazine, Jane Mitarachi highlights the contributions of industrial designers, stating:

An industrial designer is, by training and experience, a problem-solver -- whether the problems he tackles are in the area of products, manufacturing, marketing or communication. An exhibition designer, though working in a more specialized medium, is a problem solver in visual communications.¹²

The designers were valued as propagandists at these international exhibitions because they were masters of visual communication equipped with the knowledge and skills to present designed artifacts at these events.

The commissioned industrial designers proudly assumed their role as communicators and curators at the international fairs and exhibitions. U.S. government

¹¹ Robert Haddow. *Pavilions of Plenty: Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in the 1950s*. (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1997).

¹² Jane Mitarachi. “Design as a Political Force.” *Industrial Design*, February 1957. 54-55.

official and exhibition organizer Jack Masey elaborated on the designers' feelings towards their duties:

It was a patriotic activity, these men and women had no doubt that they were fighting for democracy and against Communism, it was thoroughly cutting edge, the newest technologies were being used; and it was fabulously glamorous, allowing them to travel to the ends of the earth and participate in the new global market.¹³

The designers understood that their role at the exhibitions was crucial to combating communism in the cultural battle of the Cold War. Industrial designer George Nelson, in considering the prospect of his office taking on central duties for ANEM, wrote in his notes that he thought of the “glamour plus realization that the exhibition could have an important effect on U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations.”¹⁴ The designers were well-aware that their contributions towards the international fairs and exhibitions would have a significant impact on how the U.S. would be perceived by international audiences abroad in promoting capitalism over communism.

Industrial designers were allowed the freedom to display what they wished at these international events because the government had requested their assistance, themselves having found little success in trying to communicate an image of the U.S. at previous events. According to Mitarachi, the designers succeeded at their task in attracting wide audiences to attend these shows. The designers were progressive in their understanding of how to represent the U.S.: “[government entities] had begun to tap a

¹³ Jack Masey, interview by Cristina Marie Carbone. *University of California Santa Barbara*. July 23, 1999.

¹⁴ Abercrombie, *George Nelson: The Design of Modern Design*, 161.

resourceful new pool of design professionals who were years ahead...in their ability to draw people into an exhibit and make them feel as if they were participating in an authentic cultural experience, not just a propaganda event.”¹⁵ The designers also took care to cater the messaging of their exhibits to the local attitudes and culture where the exhibitions took place.¹⁶ Designers, having been granted the freedom to represent the U.S. as they wished, used their unique talents in visual messaging and communication to effectively portray the benefits of capitalism to each international audience.

Modernism, a midcentury design trend that featured sleek and unembellished forms, became the preferred style for U.S. propaganda and a symbol for democracy and progressive idealization at the height of the Cold War. According to Haddow, “modernism’s so-called democratic spirit and progressive, anti-traditional aesthetic made it a favorite at international exhibitions during the Cold War.”¹⁷ Industrial designers chose modernist style furnishings and goods for the international exhibitions because the style presented a new, progressive aesthetic. Modernism became associated with democratic ideals and the widespread benefits of a capitalist economic system that the U.S. wished to communicate abroad.

Chapter Outline

The three chapters of this thesis focus on U.S. participation in three international exhibitions: the Marshall Plan exhibits of the 1950s, the Brussels World’s Fair of 1958,

¹⁵ Mitarachi, “Design as a Political Force,” 55.

¹⁶ Ibid., 53.

¹⁷ Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 5.

and the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM) of 1959. In each chapter, I will explain each exhibition's significance to U.S. international relations during the Cold War. I will also demonstrate how the industrial designers involved on each project conveyed a pro-capitalist message that was directed towards the audience of each specific setting.

In Chapter One, I consider the Marshall Plan exhibits held in Berlin during the 1950s. The U.S. government planned the exhibits as propaganda opportunities to support Marshall Plan economic reform in Western Europe. The "We're Building a Better Life" exhibit featured a full-scale model home and live cast of a working family, showing an optimistic image of a "better life" that Marshall Plan initiatives could help the visitors afford in their near futures. Designers furnished the home with beautiful, comfortable goods that were regionally manufactured in Europe to demonstrate that a high standard of living was achievable outside the U.S. with the help of capitalist economic reform.

Chapter Two focuses on the Brussels World's Fair of 1958, an opportunity for nations to show their postwar achievements in economic prosperity and progress. Unlike the Marshall Plan exhibits in Berlin, the U.S. pavilion would be viewed in comparison with other nations' pavilions in Brussels. In anticipation of a strong showing of Soviet communism at the fair, the U.S. State Department commissioned industrial designers to represent the U.S. by showing examples of social progress, rich consumer lifestyles, and the arts.

Chapter Three examines the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM) of 1959, a major U.S. exhibition held in the Soviet Union and a product of diplomatic cultural exchange. Since the U.S. was the only nation represented at ANEM, the event was planned to showcase the appeal of American consumer culture to the Soviet visitors. A model home was the site of the Kitchen Debate, a famous political discussion between Nixon and Khrushchev. The industrial designers who fashioned the model kitchen for ANEM set the stage for Nixon's argument in support of capitalism.

This thesis examines three instances in which industrial designers worked as propagandists and took part in Cold War consumer politics. In each example, I will demonstrate how industrial design was inextricably linked to the geopolitical conflict between U.S. capitalism and Soviet communism. I will argue that industrial designers were highly influenced by consumer politics and additionally served as agents of influence in U.S. international relations. The designers were motivated by modern political movements in favor of capitalism, and by involving designers as curators of international exhibitions, the U.S. government granted designers the freedom to express their own propagandistic messages in support of capitalism. Industrial designers sought to prove that capitalism, as an alternative to communism, offered superior living conditions for populations under its economic system, and their significant creative contributions to international exhibitions made designers a force of political influence during the Cold War. Revisiting this history today reveals the profound impact that industrial designers have on consumer culture and gives us an understanding of how industrial design can be shaped to emphasize political ideals in contemporary society.

I. THE MARSHALL PLAN EXHIBITS

On March 12, 1947, U.S. President Harry Truman delivered a speech to a joint session of Congress and initiated an American foreign policy that would define U.S. politics for the coming decades. The Truman Doctrine established a mission to protect democracy in nations that were subject to totalitarian regimes. Since the U.S. government could not wage direct military action in the political systems of countries that had adopted communism, U.S. foreign policy followed the Truman Doctrine by instigating a policy of containment and restricted the spread of communist regimes into developing countries. The Marshall Plan was issued in 1948 to stabilize Europe's postwar economy, and under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the U.S. propaganda initiatives that followed were important steps to contain communism and establish national economies under a capitalist system.

In the early 1950s, Soviet communist propaganda infiltrated the politics of Western European countries with economies that had been devastated from World War II and undermined the success of the Marshall Plan. For the U.S. government, painting a persuasive image of the U.S. abroad became a political priority in the containment of communism. Truman signed the Smith-Mundt Act into law in 1948, which would lead to the creation of "an information service to disseminate abroad information about the U.S.," as well as an "educational exchange service to cooperate with other nations" through cultural initiatives.¹⁸ These political initiatives, such as the creation of the

¹⁸ "Smith-Mundt Act: US Information and Exchange Act of 1948." (Congressional Law 80-402. 62 Stat. 6, 1948).

Office of International Trade Affairs (OITF) and United States Information Agency (USIA), tethered the U.S. government to its role in the post-war economic recovery of Europe, and U.S. information programs and cultural initiatives became a crucial means of enacting the Marshall Plan.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower understood the value of propaganda and saw its potential in winning the ideological battle against communism. Historian Rhodri Jeffrys-Jones argues that the President, a former U.S. general, preferred propaganda on “practical, political, and moral grounds” over the alternative of “bloody and expensive conventional warfare.”¹⁹ As a political strategy, President Eisenhower chose to utilize propaganda as a soft power during the Cold War. Propaganda had the potential to serve an important U.S. foreign policy objective in the containment of communism. Historian Kenneth Osgood explains: “If politically activated segments of society could be captured by ideas, symbols, images, rhetoric, and propaganda, they could be harnessed and mobilized for foreign policy advantage.”²⁰ The populace held a fascination for mass-cultural themes and simultaneously maintained an interest in political affairs. Cultural messages and politics could therefore intertwine and serve a functional purpose for the U.S. government in the form of political propaganda.

¹⁹ Rhodri Jeffrys-Jones as quoted by Shawn J. Parry-Giles in “The Eisenhower Administration’s Conceptualization of the USIA: The Development of Overt and Covert Propaganda Strategies.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 25 No. 2 (1994).

²⁰ Kenneth Osgood as quoted by Myra D. Stowe, “Foreign policy propaganda during the Eisenhower administration: Shaping public opinion and the Cold War” (master’s thesis, Western Illinois University, 2009), 22.

The propaganda initiatives created under President Eisenhower took a positivist approach by promoting “a good life” under capitalism, rather than a negativist approach that sought to discredit communism itself. The positivist approach sought to use people's cultural aspirations as a means of achieving political objectives. Capitalist propaganda was designed to appeal to the hearts and minds of consumers, whose homes, belongings, and living conditions were a result of the type of economic system under which they lived. The central planning of the economy under communism severely restricted individual choice and competition in industry, and people living in the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union conducted their lives based on limited consumer options and necessity. In this context, the U.S. government understood the value of consumer products as a form of propaganda to promote a better life under capitalism that afforded them market luxuries that were unattainable under communist rule. As a Marshall Plan strategy, U.S. propaganda initiatives exploited a cultural fascination with material goods, such as the latest electronics, toys, kitchen appliances, and furniture, to promote an ideal for better living standards that were possible under capitalist economic policies.

The U.S. State Department created touring exhibitions to spread propaganda in support of the Marshall Plan by utilizing canal barges in Holland, the Europa Zug train in Germany, caravan-style tents, and large trucks that could be unpacked.²¹ Exhibition organizers were inventive in finding ways to transport and set up the shows because of the lack of exhibition spaces in the places that they visited. The touring exhibitions were held in each European venue only once and were then carried on to the next location.

²¹ Masey, *Cold War Confrontations*, 32-33.

Designers Peter Harnden, Phillip George, and Lanfranco Bombelli were involved in the project and supervised the exhibits on their tours. These exhibitions spread the news of the Marshall Plan and its efforts to rebuild Europe's economy along capitalist lines.

Marshall Plan efforts were also carried out in Berlin, Germany, a city that was devastated during World War II and reconstructed into capitalist-side West Berlin and socialist-side East Berlin. Before the infamous Berlin Wall separated its geography in 1961, West and East Berliners enjoyed relatively open border crossings. Consumer items from the Western sector were readily available for purchase by all. To best illustrate the setting of a postwar Berlin, historian Greg Castillo quotes Soviet Secretary Nikita Khrushchev: "There, the borders are simply open [and] the comparison is made: which order creates better material conditions, that in West Germany or that in East Germany?"²² In a battle to attract Berlin consumers, U.S. State Department officials sought to enact initiatives in favor of the Marshall Plan. Exhibition organizers took advantage of opportunities for popular border crossings, such as Soviet holidays and rally days, to attract Berliners to come and marvel at the sights of consumer items at the exhibits on display in West Berlin.²³ Planned with the intention of attracting these audiences, these exhibitions served a crucial role in convincing West and East Berliners of the consumer and cultural benefits of the Marshall Plan.

²² Greg Castillo, "Marshall Plan Modernism in Divided Germany," in *Cold War Modern: Design 1945-1970*, David Crowley, Jane Pavitt (London: V & A Publishing. 2008).

²³ Greg Castillo. *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), p.263.

The Marshall House

The exhibitions in West Berlin were held in the George C. Marshall House, a building designed by architect Bruno Gimmek that opened in Exposition Park on October 1, 1950 (Figure 1). The Marshall House became a symbol of U.S. efforts to reconstruct a divided Germany, and it was home to a series of exhibitions in the 1950s that attracted wide audiences from East and West Berlin. Texas architect L.W. Skeet imagined the impressions of these visitors in an article about inter-European travel: “Gratifying is the impression that they have of our country. The U.S. is the land of their fondest dreams.”²⁴ The Marshall House exhibitions were wildly popular; each event drew hundreds of thousands of visitors. The “Amerika Baut” (America Builds) exhibition of 1957 showed stunning and dramatic displays of skyscrapers from across the U.S. Its exhibition designers emphasized effective U.S. building techniques and how they differed from those in Europe (Figure 2).²⁵ In 1959, the “Medicine-USA” exhibition featured live demonstrations and included real medical equipment and procedures in seeking to prove that advancements in medical science, research, and treatment resulted from the collaborations of government, private corporations, and the medical industry’s workforce in the U.S (Figure 3). Visitors from Berlin and other parts of Europe marveled at these examples of U.S. architecture and industrial design that were products of innovation in U.S. manufacturing, building techniques, and technology.

²⁴ L.W. “Skeet” Pitts. “The President’s Letter.” *Texas Architect* 7, Vol 12 (September 1961).

²⁵ John Entenza. “U.S. Architecture in West Berlin.” *Arts & Architecture* 75, No.1 (1958).

In 1958, another Marshall House exhibition focused on the U.S. midwestern city of Kalamazoo, an industrial city home to a paper manufacturing facility and chosen to serve as an example of friendly multi-racial relations and cultural progress in a growing American society (Figure 4). The Kalamazoo exhibition was designed by Will Burtin, a former Berliner who fled to the U.S. during World War II after refusing to comply with Adolf Hitler's request to design for the Nazis. In Masey's account, "[Kalamazoo] most appropriately illustrated a changing American community of many races and nations. Burtin's design brought together--through the metaphor of a roll of paper--the lives of everyday people and their relationship to their city and in its industries in a way many could understand."²⁶ The Marshall House's Kalamazoo exhibition was presented as a model for the reconstruction of industrial cities in Western Europe.

"We're Building a Better Life"

In 1952, U.S. exhibition organizers, in conjunction with Marshall Plan initiatives, created "We're Building a Better Life," a full-scale model home exhibit built within West Berlin's Marshall House pavilion. The exhibition was curated by designer and U.S. official Peter Harnden, originally a California architect who later served as a wartime U.S. Army Intelligence Officer. He spent his postwar career in exhibition design and production in divided Europe, working on notable projects including the U.S. Pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair in 1958.²⁷ For each exhibition that he

²⁶ Masey, *Cold War Confrontations*, 104-105.

²⁷ Greg Castillo. "Domesticating the Cold War: Household Consumption as Propaganda in the Marshall Plan economy." (Sage Publications: 2005).

designed and curated, Harnden made an effort to show visitors how modern technological innovations could benefit the average consumer. Harnden's work at the Better Life Exhibition paved the way for his successors, such as architect Edward Durrell Stone and industrial designer George Nelson, who took inspiration from Harnden's work to effectively showcase consumer technology at larger-scale exhibitions such as the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM).

"We're Building a Better Life" was created with the intention of promoting the production of consumer goods to revitalize divided Germany's economy and reshape its economic future. According to a State Department telegraph, instructions were given to display exemplary products born from U.S. economics but manufactured in Europe: "emphasis [is] to be placed upon [the] fortunate outcomes of American economic philosophy when combined with European skills and resources."²⁸ To prove the exhibit's relevance to its European audience, German designer Herwin Shaefer was commissioned to find, wherever possible, European-made household goods to display in the model home (Figure 5). In the final exhibit, the six thousand modern products on display were all manufactured in Marshall Plan partner countries, and the house contained a wide range of objects from children's toys to automobiles. Beside the front door, a wall text conveyed: "The objects in this house are industrial products from many countries in the Atlantic community. Thanks to technology, rising productivity, economic cooperation and free enterprise, these objects are available to our Western civilization." The Better Life exhibition demonstrated to its visitors that high quality

²⁸ "Hicog Bonn to the U.S. Department State of the Bureau of German Affairs." (U.S. National Archives:1952).

modernist European furnishings and goods were not only an exclusive luxury of the U.S. but could be regionally manufactured and offered for a quality standard of living in Europe as well.

A visitor to the model home would witness an orchestrated, live snapshot of a man playing the role of both worker and consumer, paired with the living conditions of his middle-class family. A live cast of family members was present in the home and went through the motions of everyday life to demonstrate the spectacle of living in the home (Figures 6 and 7). The model kitchen drew the most attention because of its array of innovative gadgets that were designed to satisfy the needs of the modern housewife. Kitchen appliances such as the refrigerator and dishwasher offered new ways for women to benefit from innovative industrial design in the 1950s. The “Building a Better Life” home presented, in its fullest effort, an ideal of the opulence in everyday living that the exhibition claimed would be possible under Marshall Plan economic reform.

Despite the exhibition’s meticulous curation of goods that were all manufactured in Marshall Plan countries, the “We’re Building a Better Life” exhibition presented a furnished home with goods that were far out-of-reach for most of the visitors from East or West Berlin. The spacious environment of the model home far exceeded the size of the average urban German residence, and most of the cutting-edge modern furniture and objects were too expensive for Germans to afford. Even though most visitors found the opulent displays too unrealistic to obtain in their near futures, the house attracted an enormous audience that exceeded half a million people. Many visitors admired objects such as the kitchen appliances with awe, and they imagined the ease and convenience

that these items could offer in their daily lives. The exhibit inspired visitors who wanted to achieve the model home's standard of living because they felt that such an achievement might be possible within their lifetime.²⁹

The Marshall Plan exhibits sought to show visitors from the Eastern Bloc the rewards of a Westernized economy that were not achievable to them under communism. One exhibit sign declared "This man is a worker and a consumer," with the latter role as a consumer placing an emphasis on the material rewards that were offered to him under a system of capitalism.³⁰ Castillo describes the exhibit's messaging:

Attached to every item was a tag indicating the country of origin, retail price, and the number of hours--as measured by a skilled worker's wage--needed to purchase the object. This seemingly guileless calculation of purchasing power entailed a fundamental repudiation of Marxist ideology, which used the concept of labor value to define capitalist production and distribution as exploitation.³¹

The depiction of the household male as a worker-consumer and as a beneficiary of modernism defied Marxist philosophy and anti-capitalist notions by arguing that a capitalist system offered rewards that a communist system could not.

Many visitors and German critics understood the Marshall Plan exhibits to be a propagandistic effort to support a U.S. political and economic agenda. In a review of the "We're Building a Better Life" exhibition, architect and editor Alfons Leidl shared

²⁹ Castillo, *Soft Power of Midcentury Design*, 74.

³⁰ "We're building a Better Life," Stuttgart, 1952.

³¹ Greg Castillo's essay "Marshall Plan Modernism in Divided Germany," cited by David Crowley, Jane Pavitt in *Cold War Modern Design*, 66-71.

a remark he heard at the exhibition: “You have to understand that this whole thing isn’t put together just from a professional point of view...but with political intent.”³² As many visitors and critics observed, the Marshall Plan exhibits were designed with a political motivation to advance American foreign policy objectives as means of enacting the Truman Doctrine. In a 1946 telegram, state diplomat George Kennan famously commented on the state of political affairs with the Soviet Union and emphasized the importance of conveying a positive message to the war-weary European population.³³ The Marshall Plan propaganda sought to give the people an uplifting view of what the future could hold and sought to prove to European consumers that society could benefit from Marshall Plan economic reform to achieve a better standard of living for themselves and their families. Efforts to prove the benefits of capitalism at the Marshall Plan exhibits led U.S. government officials and designers to undertake more extensive efforts at promoting U.S. consumer culture at larger venues such as the Brussels World’s Fair in 1958 and the American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959.

³² Alfons Leidl. “Die Wohnkultur der Westlichen Völker,” cited by Greg Castillo on *Cold War on the Home Front*.

³³ Kennan, George. “The Long Telegram.” (National Security Archive, 1946).

II. THE AMERICAN PAVILION AT THE BRUSSELS WORLD'S FAIR

The Brussels World's Fair of 1958 (also referred to as Expo '58) was the first major world's fair after World War II and served as an opportunity for nations to show their economic recovery, reform, and progress in the postwar era.³⁴ The theme of the fair was "A new world, a new humanism," and participating countries were expected to address social and cultural themes of progress and world unity.³⁵ "New humanism" was defined as the expansion of opportunities for individuals to improve their socioeconomic conditions in a postwar society, a theme relevant to economic reconstruction in Europe under the Marshall Plan. In the context of U.S. influence, new humanism carried the idea of political alignment between the U.S. and other nations through the extension of democratic freedoms. Gathering international recognition at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair, the U.S. presented itself as a proponent of new humanism by upholding its reputation as an influential international superpower committed to democracy while placing itself as a political-ideological rival to communism.

Soviet participation in international trade fairs predated U.S. involvement and representation at these global events. Under the leadership of Soviet Secretary Nikita Khrushchev, the U.S.S.R. had participated in international trade fairs since the early 1950s. The Soviet Union sought to appeal to international audiences using enticing

³⁴World's Fairs were international exhibitions that invited different nations of the world to participate and represent their countries through national pavilions.

³⁵ Haddow, Robert Hamilton. *Material Culture and the Cold War: International Trade Fairs and the American Pavilion at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair*. (Volumes I and II). p.1.

rhetoric that championed the benefits of industrial innovation and production under a centralized economic system. President Eisenhower witnessed Soviet influence at these fairs from a distance and quickly realized that the Soviet Union was gaining political influence over countries with developing political and economic systems. At a moment when the U.S. was pressured to participate in fairs to compete with the Soviet Union, the Brussels World's Fair presented itself as an ideal venue for the U.S. to make a statement on the cultural benefits of a capitalist economic system.

The Cold War rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union was an implicit theme of the Brussels World's Fair, and the Belgian organizers in charge of the fair exploited this rivalry to pressure each superpower nation's efforts to participate. Historian Lewis Siegelbaum offers:

‘The Belgian organizers kept the American government abreast of Soviet plans as one of the several stratagems intended to lure the United States to attend the exhibition.’ It turns out that the organizers played the same game in reverse. During his visit to Moscow in June 1956, the Fair's General Commissar, Baron Moens de Fernig, ‘underscored the tremendous interest in the project throughout the world and especially in the United States.’³⁶

The Belgian organizers fed discrete information to each superpower nation about its rival, which contributed to the mutual fears and suspicions that existed between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The United States' and Soviet Union's efforts at the fair were a

³⁶ Lewis Siegelbaum. “Sputnik Goes to Brussels: The Exhibition of a Soviet Technological Wonder,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 47, No.1 (2012):122.

direct effect of their Cold War rivalry, and the U.S. pavilion and U.S.S.R. pavilion were products of the competition that existed between the two nations.

The Brussels World's Fair distinguished itself from other international trade fairs and exhibitions whose primary purpose had been to display commercial goods from various nations. As historian Robert Haddow notes, "[The Belgians] wanted an exhibition of culture, not just commercial products, and they asked the United States to respond accordingly."³⁷ Government officials and designers were forced to pivot from the commercial approach that exhibition organizers and designers had taken for the Marshall Plan exhibits. At the Brussels World's Fair, the U.S. pavilion was expected to express a compelling statement about American culture rather than presenting a mere curation of goods available under a capitalist system.

Government official and exhibition organizer Jack Masey also notes that "the pavilion would be seen by a considerable number of visitors, both tourists and servicemen based in Europe."³⁸ The U.S. pavilion thus had to appeal to an international audience including that of U.S. visitors. Masey also notes that Brussels would be a setting "unlike Berlin, where visitors could compare the American effort with that of the Soviets and other countries."³⁹ A multitude of countries would be represented in each of their own pavilions at the Brussels World's Fair and the U.S. pavilion would be viewed among other nations' achievements. The organizers and designers in charge of

³⁷ Haddow, *Material Culture and the Cold War*, p. 89.

³⁸ Masey, *Cold War Confrontations*, 112.

³⁹ Ibid.

the U.S. pavilion were tasked with crafting and curating a unique message about American culture and presenting it to the fair's international audience.

U.S. government officials were particularly concerned to counter the influence that the U.S.S.R. pavilion would have on visitors. The Soviets were planning the most expensive pavilion at the fair and were expected to present a strong showing of their nation's achievements. The Soviets chose to feature replicas of Sputnik I and II, the first space satellites and symbols of the Soviet Union's advancements in technology that outpaced that of the U.S. at the time. Reflecting upon the Soviet pavilion, British design expert Catherine Cooke recalls, "[it was] straightforwardly factual, showing concrete technological and scientific achievements... with photographs of Soviet people doing their work and enjoying the new amenities of their socialist environment."⁴⁰ The Soviet pavilion endeavored to show its superiority in the fields of science and technology and presented a pictorial message of its benefits of a communist society to complement it.

U.S. government officials were also concerned about the global expansion and recognition of Soviet-allied communist countries such as China. To their dismay, a confidential telegram dated July 24, 1956, sent to the U.S. embassy in Brussels expressed a speculation that communist China would be chosen to represent itself at the Brussels World's Fair (Figure 8). Masey states that the message threatened "the possibility of American withdrawal if the Chinese were to take part, as well as denying that Chinese participation in various European trade fairs forms any sort of precedent, and citing a recent Congressional vote against Communist China joining the United

⁴⁰ Siegelbaum, "Sputnik goes to Brussels," p.124.

Nations or its agencies.”⁴¹ The U.S. State Department was concerned that a formal invitation to participate in the Brussels World’s Fair would grant China prominent international recognition along with its status as a communist nation. The suspicions of the U.S. State Department officials never materialized because the Belgians had later denied offering an official invitation to China, but the unrest and concern among the U.S. officials spurred initiatives for U.S. participation at the fair.

A month earlier in June 1954, the U.S. State Department initially received the official invitation to participate and assumed the responsibility of appointing government officials and industry partners to plan the U.S. pavilion. The State Department appointed Howard Cullman as Commissioner General and art director James Plaut as Deputy Commissioner. A team of expert designers was established to work on designing the U.S. pavilion: American architect Edward Durrell Stone to lead the pavilion’s architectural planning; American designer, architect, and government official Peter Harnden to work on the pavilion’s interiors; and industrial designers Walter Paepcke and Walter Rostow to serve on the advisory board. The assembled team of appointed officials, architects, and designers embodied the collaboration between U.S. government and industry that was necessary to design and implement U.S. representation at the Brussels World’s Fair.

Harrison T. McClung, Head of the Office of International Trade Fairs (OITF) and advisor to the United States Information Agency (USIA), paved the way for collaboration between government and industry. He set the stage for industrial designers

⁴¹ Masey, *Cold War Confrontations*, 113.

to be critically involved in how the U.S. would be represented abroad. Government officials, with the exceptions of McClung and Masey, had little knowledge of how to exhibit the U.S. internationally. McClung made designers directly involved in making decisions on how the U.S. would be shown to the rest of the world because of the urgency of the Cold War and international pressure for the U.S. to participate in exhibitions. McClung's decision to involve industrial designers proved to be a tremendously successful move in the U.S. government's role in the exhibitions' portrayal of the U.S. The designers employed on the projects had complex understandings of political and social issues of the era and were inventive in the ways that they used creative mediums to communicate cultural messages.

Despite its governmental role in choosing how to depict the U.S. abroad, the USIA had limited involvement in the design of the U.S. pavilion. Under State Department-directed authority, Commissioner General Cullman could approach the exhibition design with “a fresh outlook” and not be tethered to the USIA, which “had made productivity themes, supermarkets, fashion shows, and model homes into popular international exhibit formulas.”⁴² In doing so, however, Cullman faced the difficult task of choosing how to represent the U.S. while essentially starting from scratch. Industry leaders, government officials, and academics had different, and sometimes vastly contradictory, conceptualizations on how the U.S. should be represented abroad. Cullman interviewed prominent American industrialists such as Walt Disney, Nelson Rockefeller, and Walter Paepcke, but was finally drawn to some direction when he met

⁴² Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 129.

for a roundtable discussion with the “Cambridge study group” at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where the group established the central themes of the exhibits. The pavilion would incorporate five categories: the land and the people; life and work; science and technology; culture and American idealism in action. Exhibition planners and designers assigned themselves to one of five subcommittees based on each respective category. The subcommittees looked to address these five themes by choosing subjects that embodied American culture: recreation, education, labor relations, the lives of women, and the home living environment. According to Haddow, the committee intended to convey to international audiences that they did not have to rely on the glorification of American materialism to represent the strengths of the U.S. Instead, they sought to communicate throughout the pavilion that “productivity and abundance are the cornerstones and democratization of culture; and the United States has a rightful place in the hierarchy of nations traditionally considered to be the guardians of ‘world culture.’”⁴³

Visiting the American Pavilion

The overall theme of the pavilion emphasized evidence of American culture and incorporated the five categories designated by the Cambridge Study Group. To highlight American culture, the pavilion featured art exhibits of U.S. styles, such as folk art, Native American art, modern painting, and sculpture. Exhibition organizers and designers included the “Atoms for Peace” interactive exhibit that allowed visitors to

⁴³ Ibid., 148.

stand behind a glass shield and manipulate radioactive material with protective steel gloves, which demonstrated how nuclear science could be manipulated for energy generation and space research. Innovations in technology were also represented at the fair, such as a timeline featuring product displays of modern computers, as well as live demonstrations of color television and radio broadcasting (Figure 9). These displays of U.S. achievements ranging from art to technology showed visitors the richness of American culture and its tangible benefits to society.

On the second floor, the “Streetscape” showed visitors a mockup of a U.S. main street complete with pavement, signs, and stores that sold Coke, Pepsi, and ice cream. Haddow describes the nearby displays of “1000 objects of daily life” each arranged under different themes ... “which revealed the delights of consumer culture and the talents of craftsmen and industrial designers.”⁴⁴ The exhibition designers strategically placed the objects on various “islands” where “toasters, cameras, dishwashers, and lawn mowers...[expressed] mobility, portability, and flexibility.”⁴⁵ On walkways over the pavilion’s centerpiece fountain, famously popular fashion shows were hosted by *Vogue* and influenced by style icons such as Jacqueline Kennedy’s sister (Figure 10). When the fashion models were not featured on the center stage, they interacted with the furniture and objects on the various islands. According to Haddow, the exhibition designers specifically curated these interactions and hoped to “generate an even more powerful

⁴⁴ Ibid., 132.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 153.

sense of how the dynamic free-market economy was propelled by dreams, dissatisfaction, novelty, and invention.”⁴⁶

Walt Disney also contributed to the pavilion by presenting the 360-degree round Circarama theater that played the film *America the Beautiful*. Visitors to the theater immersed themselves in a circular film environment that showed them spectacular sights such as New York harbor, the Grand Canyon, and the Golden Gate Bridge.⁴⁷ In choosing excellent examples of art, technology, consumer objects, and American landscapes, the designers and exhibition planners involved in the U.S. pavilion sought to prove that a show about the U.S. could express more than just a fascination in material culture. In a review of the U.S. pavilion, a Belgian trade journalist gave a positive review of the exhibition: “America [has shown] itself...as an essentially humane country,” giving some evidence of success in the exhibition planners’ attempt to prove to an international audience that the U.S. flourished in culture.

“Unfinished Business”

Addressing one of five themes created in the Cambridge Study Group, the “American idealism in action” subcommittee was responsible for the “Unfinished Business” exhibit that openly acknowledged American shortcomings, such as race relations, segregation, and environmental impact. Mrs. Eugenie Anderson, a former ambassador to Denmark, thought critically about European impressions of the U.S. and

⁴⁶ Ibid., 153.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 110.

suggested that the exhibit address these issues but emphasize social change and improvement. Haddow explains,

Her experience taught her to confront the segregation issue head-on and so she advised Cullman to give a short history lesson that emphasized the progress which had been made in America since the 1860s and which expressed a ‘deep feeling of moral obligation’ towards other peoples. Progress, in other words, should be the keynote in any attempt to put a brave face on racism.⁴⁸

The “American idealism in action” subcommittee was also aware that defamatory issues in the U.S. impacted its public perception abroad and most significantly in its Cold War competition with the Soviet Union. Soviet leaders blamed U.S. officials of hypocrisy when the Soviet Union was accused of brutally suppressing the Hungarian uprising, and the Soviets cited the ugly repercussions of American racial segregation in bitter response.⁴⁹ The planning subcommittee was convinced that they could not evade the fact that their audience would consider the nation’s obvious shortcomings in a show about American culture. In response, the subcommittee created the “Unfinished Business” exhibit to reshape the American narrative and fit in the theme of progress and social change.

The “Unfinished Business” exhibit was designed as a three-part sequential experience of the past, present, and future. The exteriors of the three sections also symbolized progress: a chaotic crystal representing the past, a simpler polyhedron for the present, and a smooth and bright exterior for the future (Figures 11 and 12). Visitors

⁴⁸ Ibid., 140-141.

⁴⁹ Masey, *Cold War Confrontations*. 128.

could walk through the exhibit and ask questions to guides who would unequivocally address issues of race relations in the United States. This candid approach received some favorable reviews from European visitors and the Brussels press, but Unfinished Business was highly controversial among American visitors. After news of the exhibit spread, U.S. legislators from the southern states openly decried the exhibit, arguing that the exhibit did not show the rights and prerogatives (perceived benefits of segregation) in the south. Yet even in reflection of the controversy surrounding Unfinished Business, Masey stood by the opinion that international exhibitions should be designed to address political issues. However, lessons learned from the Unfinished Business exhibit dictated the need to answer political questions in a different medium for future exhibitions.⁵⁰

The American Pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair tested a new approach to representing the U.S. at a major worldwide venue, and the evaluation of its success would serve as a critical reference for the designers and exhibition organizers of the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM), a major cultural exchange event that would take place in the following year. Instead of hosting a display of material goods, the Cambridge Study Group aimed to show visitors proof of American culture, and their mission was carried on by designers such as George Nelson and the Eameses for ANEM. However, for this next major event, U.S. government officials, organizers, and designers were forced to consider the impressions of Soviet visitors in Moscow. With the American Pavilion in Brussels serving as its precedent, ANEM presented a

⁵⁰ Wulf. *U.S. International Exhibitions*.

new challenge for designers to demonstrate American culture in a way that directly confronted communist ideologies to Soviets in their home nation.

III. THE AMERICAN NATIONAL EXHIBITION IN MOSCOW

On June 2, 1957, CBS aired a television episode of *Face the Nation* featuring an interview with Soviet Secretary Nikita Khrushchev. At the height of political tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, Khrushchev surprised audiences with his proposal “to normalize the relations between our countries...there should be an exchange of cultural delegations.”⁵¹ Khrushchev went on to explain, “the people of the world want peace and [to] bring about peaceful coexistence between countries of different systems,” an appropriate example being the Brussels World’s Fair that took place in the following year under the theme of peace and progress. Khrushchev’s proposal for “healthy competition” and “peaceful coexistence” began a series of negotiations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, including plans for a Soviet cultural exhibition that would be held in New York City in June 1959, and a U.S. exhibition to be held in Moscow in July 1959.

Jack Masey offers some thoughts in recalling an encounter with Khrushchev during the Atoms for India exhibition in 1955, his first major exhibition assignment as a USIA official: “It was the Soviets’ idea to exchange national exhibitions. It wasn’t ours. [Khrushchev] wanted to know what was going on.” At the time, radio and television broadcasts were restricted between the rival nations; the Soviet Union lacked open access to information about the U.S. and vice-versa. In the *Face the Nation* interview, Khrushchev also announced a need for all trade restrictions with the U.S. to be lifted. Khrushchev’s announcement marked a surprising turn in history when the

⁵¹ Nikita Khrushchev, interview by John Dickerson, *Face the Nation*, CBS, June 2, 1957.

Soviets seemingly made an open effort to improve international relations with the U.S. government officials. In a letter to President Eisenhower on June 2, 1958, Khrushchev wrote,

The Soviet-American agreement on exchanges in cultural, technical, and educational fields that was signed recently, was...a good practical step towards a rapprochement between our two countries...the conclusion of this agreement has met with approval of large elements of the public both in the U.S.S.R. and in the United States of America...because peoples saw in this agreement concrete proof of the fact that Soviet-American relations can really improve.⁵²

The general improvement of international relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union was met favorably among the general populations of the two countries, as well as among government officials who saw open relations with the Soviet Union to be mutually beneficial to both nations.

Historians still question the true motives behind Khrushchev's proposal, but they consider two areas of thought that might provide some reasoning. A State Department report speculates that the Soviets endeavored to learn more about American culture, trade, and ideas, which would, in turn, inform them about U.S. achievements in science and technology.⁵³ According to the report, Khrushchev aimed to maintain a competitive edge in the realm of Soviet technological innovation; a cultural and informational exchange with the U.S. would offer the Soviets a glimpse of the state of U.S. progress.

⁵² Khrushchev, Nikita. "Letter of June 2, 1958, from Premier Khrushchev to President Eisenhower" in *United States-Soviet Trade Relations*. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959) p.3.

⁵³ "Cultural Competition/Cultural Cooperation: U.S. Trade and Cultural Fair in Moscow and the Kitchen Debate." Department of State Archive, 2009.

According to this speculation, Khrushchev's proposal for cultural exchange could have been driven by the Soviets' urge to excel in the space and armaments race, a realm in which both the U.S. and Soviet Union worked to maintain a competitive edge.

Masey suggests another motivation for Khrushchev's proposal: Khrushchev wanted the Soviets to witness the excellence of American consumer culture so that "the Russian people [could] see what's ahead of them." Khrushchev wanted the Soviets to witness the luxuries afforded to U.S. consumers with the hope of adopting a more advanced consumer model in the Soviet Union. According to a State Department report analyzing the benefits of international exchange to the Russian economy, the Soviets lagged behind the U.S. in their development of "a wide range of consumer goods. The Soviet leadership has made it clear that assistance from the free world will be of considerable help in allowing the U.S.S.R. to overcome its backwardness in design and technology."⁵⁴ Informational exchange on U.S. cultural achievements would prove beneficial to the Soviet Union which lacked innovation in these areas. Simultaneously, State Department officials wished for peaceful cooperation with the Soviet Union since the development of the Russian economy was within their interests of new foreign policy initiatives and pro-capitalist agenda.

George Nelson

On September 30, 1958, industrial designer George Nelson received a call from the U.S. State Department informing him of an agreement between the U.S. and the

⁵⁴ Department of State Replies to Senator Fulbright's questions. In *United States-Soviet Trade Relations*, 15.

Soviet Union that involved an exchange of national exhibitions on “science, culture, and technology.”⁵⁵ The caller had originally reached out to Nelson about designing a nuclear energy exhibit (a previous project of Nelson’s office that had been cancelled) for ANEM, but “no one then suspected that Nelson’s role would grow to encompass the design of the whole show.” In the end, Nelson’s office took primary responsibility for the planning and design of ANEM.

Nelson had put a decent amount of thought into exhibition design in the past: in his autobiography entitled *George Nelson on Design*, Nelson theorized about what fascinates people visiting exhibitions and offers his thoughts on what they wish to see at fairs:

Modern man is no longer awed by mechanical ingenuity or scientific accomplishment...he is wondering what it all proves, what it means to him in the way of better living...What is important is whether social objectives--the live issues of the day--will be stressed, or whether the public will be expected to look at the same old mechanical displays painted a new color and go home dissatisfied...it would be a pity to spend \$50,000,000 to create a fair born dead.⁵⁶

According to Nelson, people were no longer fascinated with technological achievements of the era; they wanted to see exhibits placed within a cultural context that would teach them about the achievements of human progress. Nelson’s theory on design exhibitions

⁵⁵ Stanley Abercrombie. *George Nelson: The Design of Modern Design*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995). p.159

⁵⁶ George Nelson. *George Nelson on Design*. (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1979), p.152.

guided his decisions at ANEM, the major U.S. exhibition held in the Soviet Union in July 1959.

Nelson recounts having mixed feelings regarding his involvement with the exhibition. The project was largely unstructured with no budget or basis of a contract, and by the time of the initial call to involve Nelson, the Moscow exhibition was only nine months away. In his notes, Nelson was concerned about “the possibility of wrecking the office by taking on too large a project.” After a series of agreements and compromises, Nelson finally accepted the commission, stating: “who would turn a project like this down, whatever the risks...mixed feelings, but excitement predominates.” Despite the risks involved, Nelson and his office were thrilled at the opportunity to represent the U.S. in Moscow at the height of the Cold War.

When Nelson took the position of design lead for ANEM, President Eisenhower gave direct orders to the exhibition’s organizers: “Open the door of the Iron Curtain in a crack.”⁵⁷ The Iron Curtain, as a political divide, separated life between Western and Eastern Europe, including its consumer markets, and ANEM was an opportunity for designers to offer a glimpse of American culture and consumerism to Moscow’s curious Soviets. Harold McClellan, the general manager of ANEM, stated a similar objective: “We will endeavor to exhibit the type of things the Soviets are interested in seeing. The Soviet people are tremendously curious about America, and we hope to in part satisfy their curiosity.”⁵⁸ ANEM posed a design challenge for Nelson, but also a political one,

⁵⁷ Stanley Abercrombie. *George Nelson: Architect, Writer, Designer, and Teacher*. (Weil am Rhein: Vitra Design Museum, 2008), p.186.

⁵⁸ Harold McClellan. “Facts about the American National Exhibition in Moscow.” (Office of Public Information, 1959).

because the exhibition was expected to have a dramatic impact on international relations.

The USIA named Masey the Chief of Design and Construction, and McClellan served as the general manager of ANEM. At some point early in the negotiations, McClellan named the firm Welton Becket Architects to be responsible for the architecture of the glass pavilion, and it was decided that Nelson's office would lead the general design of the exhibition. Nelson set guidelines regarding the scope and authority of his office's involvement on the project: "Nelson's office would design the overall plan, the space allocation, and the graphics, [McClellan] would appoint other designers for specific parts of the work and would specify (but not procure) the items to be shown." Nelson doubled his staff to 70 members, and he enlisted the help of other famous designers to help him on the massive project. He called on Buckminster Fuller to recreate his famous geodesic dome after its massive success as the U.S. Pavilion at the Jeshyn International Fair in Kabul in 1956. Nelson also called his close friends Charles and Ray Eames to offer a "glimpse of the USA" through film, which became the basis of the IBM Information machine within Fuller's dome. By enlisting leading designers to create ANEM, Nelson was able to undertake the massive collaborative project and the largest endeavor Nelson's office accomplished.

At the American National Exhibition in Moscow

Charles and Ray Eames designed the "IBM Information Machine" within the Buckminster Fuller Dome to bring America to the Soviets through film. The dome was designed to be largely empty but near the ceiling, seven screens projected the show

Glimpses of the USA, a short film that gave Soviet visitors a preview of daily life in America (Figures 13-14). The Eameses arrived in Moscow the evening before the opening of the fair and successfully projected their film within the dome for the first time.⁵⁹ They had cleverly employed new techniques in film to connect the Soviet visitors with the American lifestyle, allowing them to vividly experience America without ever having to visit the U.S. in person.

The architectural firm Welton Becket Architects and Richard Barringer were responsible for the architecture of a glass pavilion that was stuffed with consumer objects, later dubbed the “Jungle Gym” (Figure 15). The Jungle Gym was comprised of two floors and designers from Nelson’s office were tasked with filling the building with “all sorts of stuff.” The exhibit also featured several model apartments designed by members of Nelson’s staff.⁶⁰ For instance, female industrial designer Lucia DeRespinis designed a model apartment for a wealthy American doctor and chose which objects should be presented to meet the modern American theme.⁶¹ For a third exhibit planned to be located outdoors, Nelson worked with MIT consultant engineer Albert Dietz to design 90 fiberglass umbrellas that rose 6 meters up in the air and covered a stage where the fashion shows would take place (Figure 16). Nelson utilized new manufacturing techniques and creative exhibit design methods to create the pavilions at ANEM.

Perhaps the most memorable exhibit of ANEM was the display of a model American home illustrating the comfort that the average World War II veteran or steel

⁵⁹ Abercrombie. *George Nelson: The Design of Modern Design*, 171.

⁶⁰ Abercrombie. *George Nelson: Architect, Writer, Designer, and Teacher*, 186.

⁶¹ *Mark Fallows podcast*, Episode 018, “From Designing the Past to Inspiring the Future--Lucia DeRespinis,” featuring Lucia DeRespinis, aired April 22, 2019 on the Impossible Network.

worker could afford. On February 9, 1959, a press release announced that the summer exhibition in Moscow “will feature both a ‘kitchen of today’ and a ‘kitchen of the future.’”⁶² The Whirlpool kitchens would include female actors who spoke Russian and distributed samples of food that were easy to prepare (Figure 17). Upon visiting these exhibits in their formal tour of the fair, Khrushchev and then-Vice President Richard Nixon exchanged in a political discussion over whether the U.S. or the Soviet Union could provide better living conditions for each nation’s citizens in an event that became known as the “Kitchen Debate.”

“The Kitchen Debate”

Nixon was welcomed into Khrushchev’s office in the Kremlin on July 25, 1959, the opening day of the exhibition, and the two political leaders exchanged some remarks debating the ideological differences between capitalism and communism. When they arrived at the model home, Nixon halted Khrushchev saying, “You had a very nice house in your exhibition in New York...I want to show you this kitchen” (Figure 18).⁶³ Nixon pointed to the dishwasher: “This is the newest model. This is the kind which is built in thousands of units for direct installations in the houses.” The high-quality American dishwasher on display was specifically designed to be mass-manufactured and directly installed into any home.

⁶² From the Office of the American National Exhibition in Moscow press release, “Kitchens of Today and Tomorrow Slated for the Moscow Exhibition,” February 9, 1959. Document in Shane Hamilton and Sarah Phillips in *The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics*, 38.

⁶³ “The Two Worlds: A Day-Long Debate,” *New York Times*, July 25, 1959.

Nixon then introduced the American idea of planned obsolescence: “American houses last for more than 20 years, but, even so, after twenty years, many Americans want a new house or a new kitchen...The American system is designed to take advantage of new innovations and techniques.”⁶⁴ In a counter-argument, Khrushchev claimed that a Soviet kitchen would remain ageless under the Communist system, while Nixon argued that the capitalist theory allowed for constant innovation and improvements.

Khrushchev and Nixon also discussed the role of women in a capitalist society. In justifying the existence of the advanced dishwasher, Nixon continued to explain that “in America, we like to make life easier for women.” Khrushchev criticized the Vice President’s remark, claiming that the Soviet Union did not have “the capitalist attitude towards women,” implying the notion that under the capitalist system, Americans subjugated women to play a domestic role. Nixon responded, saying, “I think that this attitude toward women is universal. What we want to do is to make easier the life of our housewives.” Nixon’s statement mirrored the objectives of U.S. designers who designed new kitchen gadgets and appliances to improve the life of the American housewife. Industrial designers based their designs off the U.S. family model: the male head of the household worked a professional job, while his wife assumed a domestic role. In Moscow, the U.S. model was viewed in contrast with the Soviet system, in which both members of the couple were expected to contribute to the professional workforce.

Nixon also discussed how the U.S. maintained a competitive edge in its products by offering a diversity of choices to the modern consumer. “Diversity, the right to

⁶⁴ “The Kitchen Debate - Transcript.” Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs at Ashland University, 1959.

choose, the fact that we have 1,000 builders building 1,000 different houses is the most important thing. We don't have one decision made at the top by one government official.”⁶⁵ Nixon explained this difference between the U.S. and the Soviet Union: design is better in a society where designers have the liberty to produce freely, free from government restrictions. When design decisions are made “at the top by one government official,” designs are produced in a vacuum and only a few designers are required to produce what is deemed to be “the best of the best.”

In an essay, Nelson gives a perfect example of this comparison, writing on his encounter with a Russian designer at a UNESCO conference in 1968. The Russian designer decreed that “the U.S.S.R. [is] going to surpass the U.S. in the production of high-quality refrigerators in the near future.”⁶⁶ The man denounced the mass production of refrigerators in the United States, where 156 different refrigerator models had been produced at the time:

“Consider all the waste! Consider the tremendous cost of all of that unnecessary tooling! We have analyzed the needs of households and we know that fewer than a dozen models will take care of everyone. We are going to study these models in great depth, arriving at a degree of perfection you have never reached, and we will put them on automated production lines, and then you will see what happens to sales on the world markets!”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ “The Kitchen Debate - Transcript.” (Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs at Ashland University, 1959).

⁶⁶ George Nelson, *George Nelson on Design*, 141.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Nelson immediately compared the man's assertions to the ideology of Henry Ford at a time when the black Model T was deemed suitable for everyone. That industry had faded in favor of a more competitive one when the Model T was offered in different colors, and buyers could now choose from different models. Nelson did concede that 156 refrigerators seemed quite excessive, and the cost of tooling was quite substantial; however, he argued that fewer refrigerators would result in a reduction of "individual initiative." Under the U.S. capitalist system, many designers competed to produce the best refrigerators on the market. In contrast, Communist designers analyzed the essential needs of Russian consumers, narrowed down their refrigerator designs to less than a dozen, and perfected those. Competition under a capitalist system produced excess refrigerators that would eventually become waste under planned obsolescence, but it offered Americans the option to choose a refrigerator for their homes that was more suited to their individual lifestyles and personal tastes. As for communism, Nelson wrote that "[it] theoretically discourages waste, but observers back from Russia find the country riddled with it."⁶⁸ Refrigerators designed under a communist system were of substantial lower quality because the communist economic system eliminated the need for refrigerators to compete on the market. Nelson's example demonstrates that design quality and individual initiative were direct results of the economic system under which designers operated.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Reactions from Soviet Visitors

ANEM proved to be wildly popular, with over three million visitors in attendance over a span of six weeks. In contrast to previous exhibitions such as the American Pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair, Nelson and other designers on the project catered the design of the exhibition towards a primarily Soviet audience. Accounts of the Soviet reactions to ANEM exist and seem to vary depending on the source's affiliation with the Russian media. Vladimir Osipov, a Soviet government-sponsored journalist, presented some impressions of graduate students at ANEM:

‘Our expectations are still unsatisfied and America is ‘undiscovered.’... ‘is this the national exhibition of an immense country or the branch of a department store? ... Can we really base our judgment of it on these lawn-mowers? Where is the American culture? Ask this of the exhibition and you will get no answer.’⁶⁹

The graduate students in critique of ANEM saw the exhibition as a propagandistic effort showing plastic goods, bright fabrics, and commercial television sets; they claimed that these objects lacked substantial evidence of American culture and simply mirrored a department store. Another Soviet journalist Vladimir Zhukov presented a piece entitled “What the Facts Say” in *Pravda*, the Communist Party's official newspaper.⁷⁰ Zhukov deemed the living conditions of the average American workers presented at ANEM to be unrealistic, and he attempted to calculate the average income and spending of the

⁶⁹ V. Osipov, “First Day, First Impressions.” (*Izvestia: Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, 1959) Issue 11, No. 30: 7-8.

⁷⁰ From Vl. Zhukov, “What the Facts Say,” *Pravda*, July 28, 1959, 4. Translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 11, No. 30: 9-10.

American consumer to show that most Americans could not afford the luxuries that were presented at the exhibition. In these publications, the Soviet journalists sought to invalidate the exhibition of American culture at ANEM by claiming it to be propagandistic in nature and not grounded in the social conditions of the U.S.

Susan Reid, a contemporary historian, portrays the reactions of Russian women and cites an official U.S. report that “all four kitchens shown at the exhibition ‘were jammed with admiring Soviet women from morning until night,’” who carefully eyed the labor-saving appliances.⁷¹ Russian women who visited the exhibition also gave favorable reviews in the comment books because they saw that the advanced gadgets and appliances in the American kitchens could make their lives easier. However, critics of the kitchens at ANEM claimed that the kitchen’s implied rhetoric subjugated women to the role of a domestic housewife, an ideal that was contrary to the conceptualization of the female workforce in the Soviet Union, where it was not uncommon to find a female working professional. Reid argues that while Russian women looked in awe at the modern American kitchens and the amenities they offered, they could not attain these luxuries under a communist system that saw women as contributing to a collective society in an industrial role. Russian women lacked the independence of domestic life that was available to American women under a capitalist economic system.

⁷¹ Susan E. Reid’s essay ‘Our Kitchen is Just as Good:’ Soviet Responses to the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959, in *Cold War Modern Design*, 160.

The Guides

The guides at ANEM were links of cultural understanding between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Film producer Linda Gottlieb, who served as an American guide at ANEM, claimed, “Those of us lucky enough to have been in Moscow fifty years ago know the vivid, life-changing power of person-to-person diplomacy.”⁷² The guides toured curious Soviets about the fairgrounds, unequivocally answered any questions about the U.S., and even addressed controversial topics such as American housing inequities and racial segregation. President Eisenhower lauded their role at the exhibition, claiming, “I was particularly impressed with reports of the group of outstanding United States college students who served as guides and who day after day stood up in fluent Russian [fielding] questions of the greatest diversity about life in the United States.”⁷³ The guides perfectly supplemented the exhibition shows at ANEM by offering the Soviet visitors interactive dialogue, with each guide representing the faces of American citizens as cultural ambassadors. In reflection of the event, guides such as Gottlieb later supported the United States Information Agency (USIA) in its efforts to continue international exhibitions in the Soviet Union because the events were crucial outlets of person-to-person cultural diplomacy during the Cold War.

⁷² Linda Gottlieb interview. Masey, *Cold War Confrontations*, 412.

⁷³ President Eisenhower cited by Wulf, *U.S. International Exhibitions During the Cold War*.

Smaller Themed Exhibitions in the U.S.S.R.

ANEM marked the beginning of a series of small-scale exhibitions that toured the U.S.S.R. until 1991. By that time, Cold War hostilities had ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and dismantlement of communist regimes in Europe. Historian Tomas Tolvaisas comments, “these other exhibitions were bridge-builders between 1959 and the 21st century...Not only did this exhibition open the USSR and its citizens to ‘American’ realities, it also showed the human face behind the politically divisive, state-sponsored rhetoric.”⁷⁴ ANEM and the subsequent traveling exhibits were outlets of cultural understanding and diplomacy between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The exhibitions allowed Soviet citizens to witness snapshots of American culture and consumerism in-person, which gave them a clear view of American lifestyles beyond the information that was presented to them in the Soviet media channels.

As dictated by USIA official Masey, the exhibitions were themed under various subjects, such as plastics, medicine, communications, graphic arts, and architecture. The Soviets willingly embraced this exchange, despite the exhibitions conveying pro-capitalist rhetoric. Masey elaborates,

It still baffles everybody as to why the Soviets agreed to thirty years of punishment, especially when we all know that the Soviet exhibitions that traveled to the US during this time were seen by comparatively few Americans. Nobody cared. While in the Soviet Union, visitors mobbed every American exhibit that traveled there. We packed ‘em in, even though we were the enemy.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Tomas Tolvaisas cited by Wulf, *U.S. International Exhibitions During the Cold War*.

⁷⁵ Masey quoted by Wulf, *U.S. International Exhibitions During the Cold War*.

The small-scale themed exhibitions attracted massive crowds and reached wide audiences as they traveled to various locations throughout the Soviet Union. As initiatives of public diplomacy, these exhibitions were particularly influential in communicating U.S. consumer culture to the Soviets and were important initiatives in continuing the legacy of ANEM.

Impact on U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations

ANEM improved international relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union amid Cold War tensions in a short period of time known as the “Cold War détente.” In *The Design of Modern Design*, Abercrombie judges the exhibition to have been largely successful: “The exhibition ended a long period of almost total cultural estrangement between the United States and the Soviet Union...it also happened to come at a time of American self-doubt and self-examination.”⁷⁶ While the cultural exchange of national exhibitions marked a period of cooperation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, international relations between the two countries later intensified in events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 that put U.S. national security at risk, and continued levels of hostility that remained until the end of the Cold War in 1991. Reflecting a brief rapprochement between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. through the mechanisms of cultural exchange, ANEM was an important event in the cultural battle between the two nations and serves as an important example of how American industrial design and consumerism played a pivotal role in Cold War history.

⁷⁶ Abercrombie in *the Design of Modern Design*, p. 173.

CONCLUSION

The United States Information Agency (USIA) participated in two major world's fairs after the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM): Expo '67 in Montreal Canada, and Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan. The exhibition organizers and designers involved in these world's fairs maintained the same strategy as previous exhibitions: to represent the U.S. in ways that appealed to each specific audience and cater the visual propaganda to achieve foreign policy objectives. Since the Brussels World's Fair in 1958, much had changed in regard to international relations and the Soviet Union: the Soviets had achieved the first human spaceflight, Fidel Castro had seized power in Cuba, national security had been tested during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and political revolutions and proxy wars ensued in Southeast Asia. Because these events forced a transition in international relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the USIA needed to communicate a new message in support of capitalism.

The USIA employed several designers under the authority of chief design official Jack Masey for the American Pavilion at Montreal's Expo '67. Masey and the designers approved a three-quarter version of the Buckminster Fuller dome to house the U.S. pavilion. Designer Ivan Chermayeff elaborates on what the pavilion would seek to communicate about the U.S.: "We tried to create the atmosphere of the times in America that people could recognize quickly...we had parachutes and space capsules, Hollywood films, and Pop Art and the kind of things that we thought would represent an atmosphere of life in America at the time" (Figures 19-20).⁷⁷ The U.S. pavilion looked to inspire

⁷⁷ Ivan Chermayeff quoted by Masey in *Cold War Confrontations*, 325.

visitors (a majority of them being U.S. citizens) of U.S. achievements and inspirations. Unlike ANEM, Montreal's Expo '67 displayed U.S. achievements in technology, informing visitors of recent developments in the space race and giving them a vision of the American future.

Osaka's Expo '70 was themed "Progress and Harmony for Mankind." Held in Japan, Expo '67 was a means of introducing a newly reformed post-World War II Japan to the world, and the U.S. participated with its own pavilion to portray the U.S. to that region.⁷⁸ Masey and his fellow designers were creative in the ways they chose to portray the U.S. to the Japanese visitors: they incorporated visual exhibits that included photography, paintings, space exploration, and sports (including baseball, an American sport that was very popular in Japan). According to Masey, the designers strove to make the exhibits as authentic as possible by showing notable artifacts such as actual space capsules, a moon rock collected from the Apollo 12 mission, and a baseball bat used by Babe Ruth (Figures 21-22).⁷⁹ The U.S. pavilion at Osaka's Expo '70 was generally understood to be a success; it served a foreign policy objective by highlighting U.S. cultural achievements to the far eastern region of the world that was rapidly evolving during the Cold War.

According to historian James Wulf, cultural exhibitions held by the USIA gradually lost influence by the late 1970s and "began to deteriorate in both quality and in creative vision, as result of mismanaged mandates for the USIA and the rise of détente

⁷⁸ Masey, *Cold War Confrontations*, 352.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 370.

with the Soviet Union.”⁸⁰ USIA lost its authority as a separate government agency after merging with the State Department in 1977. While President Jimmy Carter’s administration supported a U.S. information program, U.S. executive officials were reluctant to utilize remnants of the USIA for initiatives in direct confrontation with the Soviet Union. Finally, after years of subsequent budget cuts from Congress, the USIA was finally disbanded on October 1, 1991.

Some involved in international exhibitions understood how they played an important role in international affairs and relations and supported its continuation after major exhibitions such as ANEM. Masey refutes the notion that communication initiatives such as the USIA were no longer needed in a post-Soviet world: “the need for America to communicate with the world remained just as important...the need for feedback into Washington of foreign opinion about the U.S. and its policies was no less critical.”⁸¹ George Feifer, an American guide at ANEM, gave his support of international exhibitions while noting its importance for the future:

“Difficult as relationships had been between the United States and the Soviet Union, we made contact with other human beings. If the globe is ever to stop spending most of its energy fighting each other, and call each other evil, the only way is to have some contact. It’s got to go on.”⁸²

Feifer supported the USIA in its efforts to continue international exhibitions in the Soviet Union. During a time of geopolitical conflict between U.S. capitalism and Soviet

⁸⁰ Wulf, *U.S. International Exhibitions During the Cold War*.

⁸¹ Masey, *Cold War Confrontations*, 410.

⁸² George Feifer, American guide, quoted by Masey, *Cold War Confrontations*, 407.

communism, the events were crucial outlets of person-to-person cultural diplomacy during the Cold War.

A contributing factor that led to the demise of the USIA was the lack of communication between the U.S. government and the industrial designers involved in the exhibitions. Wulf notes that “aside from basic thematic guidance, it is questionable how much the United States itself was truly an actor in the production of these events....it was the designers who were tasked with the burden of putting “America” on display.”⁸³ The responsibility of representing the U.S. abroad fell on the industrial designers who were pressured by government restrictions. In an interview, Masey states, “policy wonks had no interest in meddling with design questions and exhibition people did not report to those responsible for pushing policies. The less you involve the government bureaucracy, the better off you are.”⁸⁴ Designers involved in the exhibitions were granted creative freedoms in choosing how to represent the U.S., but the relationship between U.S. policymakers and the designers became problematic in their effort to continue ambitiously-planned exhibitions in the 1970s.

In this thesis, I sought to prove how industrial design can be used as a political force by examining the history of three U.S. international exhibitions in which designers possessed the freedom to convey messages in support of capitalism. The industrial designers involved were heavily influenced by Cold War consumer politics, and because of their significant role as curators and visual communicators at these

⁸³ Wulf, *U.S. International Exhibitions During the Cold War*.

⁸⁴ Jack Masey, interview by James Wulf in *U.S. International Exhibitions During the Cold War*.

exhibitions, they demonstrated that industrial design can be utilized to support political ideals and values. The designers communicated the benefits of capitalism in a way that was openly tangible by creating physical displays; it is debatable as to whether contemporary information transmitted via online networks could deliver the same impact. Nevertheless, I argue that contemporary industrial design, as it operates within the U.S. capitalist economy, is still inextricably linked to politics because the discipline relies on a system of mass production and consumption. Although U.S. involvement in international exhibitions is now obsolete, designers still assume roles as visual communicators and can serve as actors to accomplish political objectives. Therefore, the current role of the industrial designer is yet to be assessed and evaluated regarding how design can be used to communicate political ideals in the present era.

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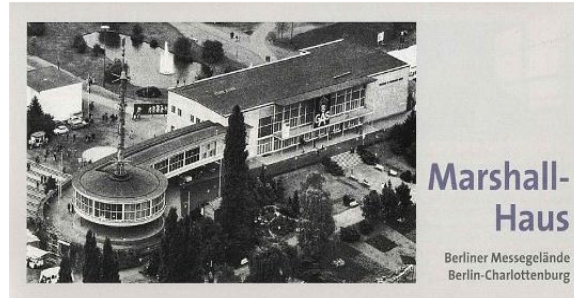


Figure 1. Marshall-Haus Pavilion opened on October 1, 1950.

Mila Hacke, *Marshall-Haus* (Berlin: State Monument Office Berlin, 2010).

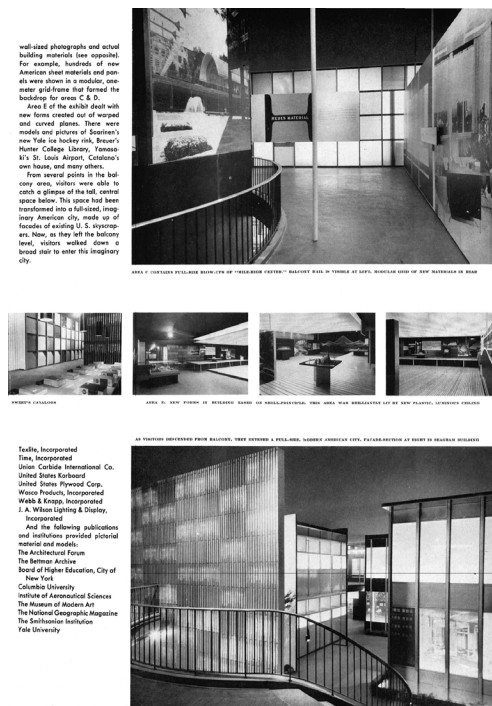


Figure 2. The “Amerika Baut” (America Builds) Exhibition.

John Entenza. “U.S. Architecture in West Berlin.” *Arts & Architecture* 75, No. 1 (1958).



Figure 3. Medicine-USA Exhibition.

United States Information Agency. *Medicine-USA*. In *Cold War Confrontations*, by Jack Masey (Baden: Lars Muller Publishers, 2008), 100.

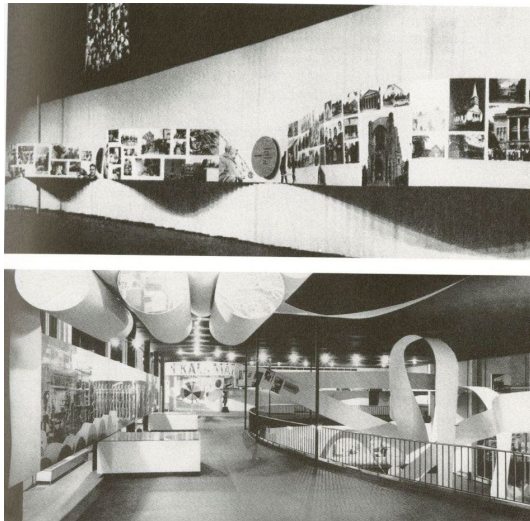


Figure 4. Exhibition on Kalamazoo, a U.S. midwestern city.

United States Information Agency. *Kalamazoo...and how it grew*. In *Cold War Confrontations*, by Jack Masey, 104.

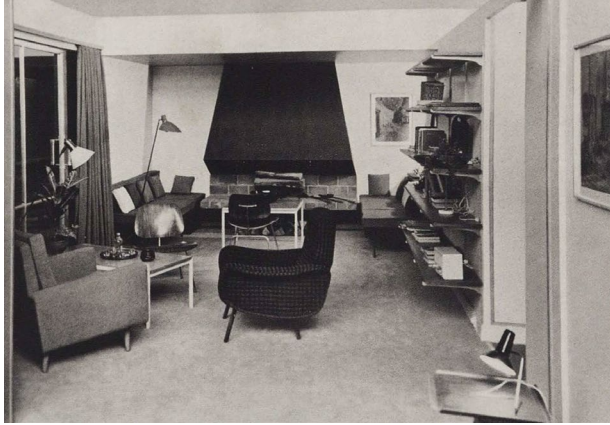


Figure 5. “We’re Building a Better Life” home furnishings.

National Archives. *“We’re Building a Better Life,” living room.* In *Cold War Modern Design: 1945-1970*, by David Crowley (London: V&A Publishing, 2008), 68.



Figure 6. Actress playing the role of a housewife in the “We’re Building a Better Life” Exhibition.

National Archives. *The traditional German house modernized with American kitchen technology.* In *Cold War Modern Design: 1945-1970*, by David Crowley, 69.



Figure 7. Child actors at play in the model home.

National Archives. *The Model Home's model family*. In *Cold War Modern Design: 1945-1970*, by David Crowley, 70.

OUTGOING TELEGRAM
INDICATE: ☐ COUNTRY ☐ CHARGE TO

Department of State 11624
CONFIDENTIAL 1226 JUL 24 PM 6 39 DC/T

SENT TO: Embassy BRUSSELS

MSGTEL 66.

Extremely disturbed reported Belgian decision Chinese Communist invitation Brussels Fair. Inform Spack our view invitation would offer major propaganda opportunity, which Chinese Communists would exploit fully through exhibits Chinese culture and QUOTE social and economic accomplishments UNQUOTE, likely distract attention brutality and aggressiveness regime and engage sympathies West.

Raise possibility Congress might limit or even delete funds US participation if Chinese Communists included.

You may wish mention as example Congressional reactions re Communist China recent resolution, which passed House 391-0 and Senate 86-0, expressing opposition entry Chinese Communists UN or specialized agency and conviction such entry would gravely injure UN.

FII: We do not repeat not consider US participation trade fairs with Chinese Communists relevant precedent Brussels Fair because 1) differing orders magnitude 2) limited aims trade fairs and 3) case European trade fairs Chinese Communists not repeat not invited by Governments. Common US-Chinese Communist participation trade fairs Paris, Lyon and several Asian cities to date; planned for near future in other Asian cities and Balkans. END FII.

Replied by: EUR:MS:SLYates:WNTyler:jlc 7/24/56
Character: F - Mr. Wilkinson H - Miss Kirlin GB - Mr. Crouch U/OP - Mr. Harrison EUR: - Mr. Jones GA - Mr. McConaughy
Robert Murphy
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Figure 8. Confidential telegram concerning the possible participation of China in the Brussels World's Fair, dated July 24, 1956.

U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. *State Department Message about the threat of China's involvement at the Fair*. In *Cold War Confrontations*, by Jack Masey, 115.



Figure 9. Displays and Demonstrations of Modern Technological Devices.

US National Archives and Records Administration. *A Guide demonstrating the IBM RAMAC computer*. In *Cold War Confrontations*, by Jack Masey, 122.

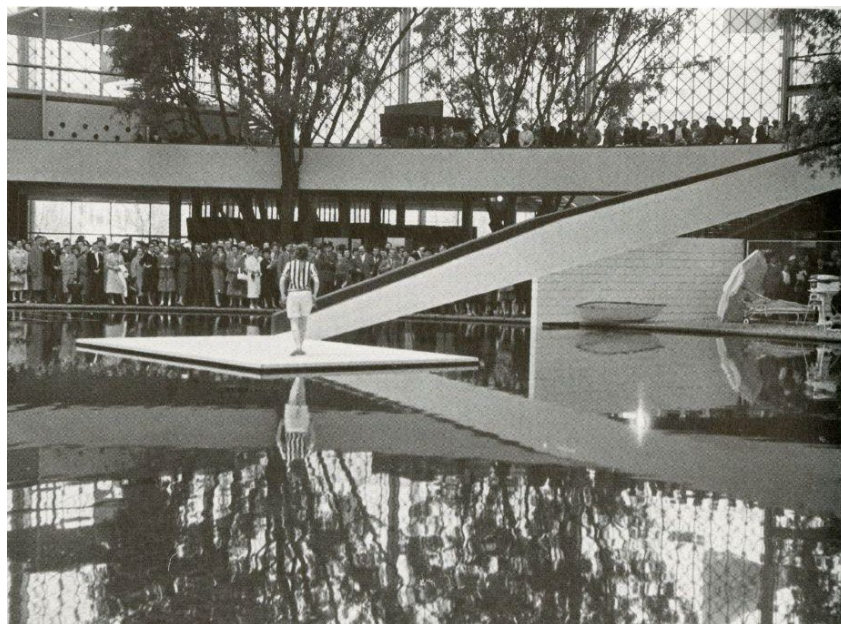


Figure 10. Fashion show at the center of the American Pavilion.

United States Information Agency. *Catwalk for the fashion show in the center of the Pavilion*. In *Cold War Confrontations*, by Jack Masey, 120.

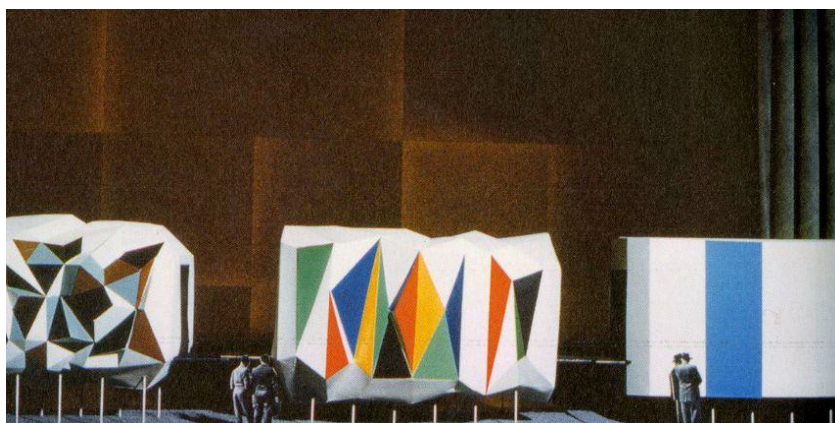


Figure 11. “Unfinished Business” exhibit.

Leo Lionni. *Model of the three sections that make up “Unfinished Business.”* In *Cold War Confrontations*, by Jack Masey, 132.



Figure 12. Interior of the “Unfinished Business” exhibit.

Leo Lionni. *“Unfinished Business” Exhibit Theme.* In *Cold War Confrontations*, by Jack Masey, 134.



Figure 13. Grand opening of ANEM.

Vitra Design Museum Archives. *Crowds of visitors in front of the Buckminster Fuller Dome.* In *George Nelson: Architect, Writer, Designer, and Teacher.* (Weil am Rhein: Vitra Design Museum, 2008), 220.



Figure 14. Film showing of the “IBM Information Machine” produced by Charles and Ray Eames in the Buckminster Fuller Dome.

US Exhibit, Moscow World’s Fair, 1959. In “Poetry of Ideas: The Films of Charles Eames,” by Paul Schrader. *Film Quarterly* 23, No. 3 (1970).

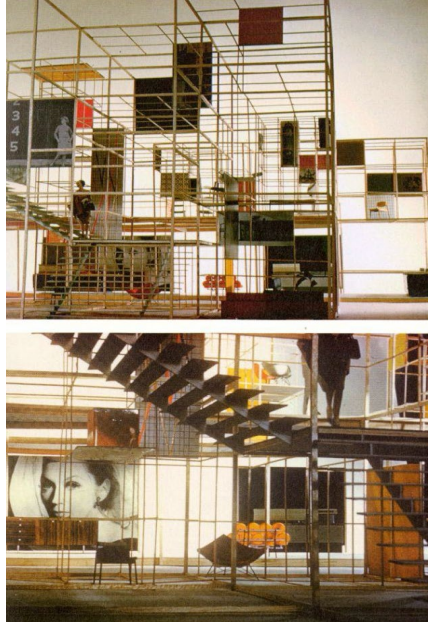


Figure 15. “The Jungle Gym.”

Lucia DeRespinis. *Scale model in Nelson’s office.* In *Cold War Confrontations*, by Jack Masey, 185.



Figure 16. The Fiberglass Umbrellas.

George Nelson Archives. *Fiberglass umbrellas at the Moscow exhibition, 1959.* In *George Nelson*, by Michael Webb (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2003), 87.



Figure 17. Live demonstration showing convenience foods.

Robert Lerner, *LOOK* Magazine Photograph Collection, Prints and Photograph Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



Figure 18. “The Kitchen Debate” between Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Secretary Nikita Khrushchev.

National Archives. Richard Nixon Foundation Collection of Audiovisual Materials, Washington, D.C.



Figure 19. Space Exploration Exhibit at Montreal's Expo '67.

Chermayeff & Geismar, LLC. *The space exploration exhibit.* In *Cold War Confrontations*, by Jack Masey, 330.



Figure 20. Exhibit Referencing American Pop Culture.

Chermayeff & Geismar, LLC. *The New York yellow cab was used in many Hollywood films.* In *Cold War Confrontations*, by Jack Masey, 333.



Figure 21. Baseball-themed Exhibit at Osaka's Expo '70.

Chermayeff & Geismar, LLC. *Historic Bats and jerseys from the Baseball Museum.* In *Cold War Confrontations*, by Jack Masey, 378.



Figure 22. Japanese visitors admire the space exploration exhibit.

Chermayeff & Geismar, LLC. *Visitors looking at a recovered moon capsule.* In *Cold War Confrontations*, by Jack Masey, 392-393.