

PERMANENT GALLERY

INTRODUCTION

Designer Maker User presents a sample of the museum's own permanent collection to connect the dots across modern design history.

The exhibition aims to take you on a journey through the design process, focusing on one perspective at a time: Designer, then User, then Maker. It is built on the idea that every design is ultimately a product of these three actors in conversation.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Designer Maker User features hundreds of examples of 20th and 21st century design, from architecture and engineering through to fashion, the digital world and graphics, and indeed the colourful exhibition design itself by Studio Myerscough. We aim to facilitate an understanding of how the same design processes and relationships underpin all these different disciplines, and continue to drive innovation.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EXHIBITION

CROWD SOURCED WALL

Before re-opening in its current building in 2016, the Design Museum asked the public to nominate their favourite designs. Here are some of the thousands of nominations received: from a bucket and a plastic garden chair to an Oyster Card and Singer sewing machine.

TIMELINE OF DESIGN

Where does the VW Beetle feature in the history of design, and was it before or after Bauhaus? As you enter the Designer Maker User exhibition, follow a chronology of the last 100 years or so to help your students contextualise their knowledge of design and wider history.



image: Crowd Sourced Wall



image: British road sign by Margaret Calvert and Jock Kinneir

DESIGNER

Our 'Designer' section is based on a phrase by Italian architect Ernesto Rogers, "from the spoon to the city". It explores how designers conceptualise projects at every scale. Look out for a 1:1 scale prototype for the 2014 London tube train designed by PriestmanGoode!

TUBE MAP BY HARRY BECK (1931)

This schematic map showcases graphic design used to rapidly communicate with huge publics (see also in this exhibition: Kinneir and Calvert's British road signage system). Electrical engineer Harry Beck was a London Underground employee who realised that because the railway ran mostly underground, physical locations of the stations - as in a traditional 'bird's-eye' map - were largely irrelevant to the traveller wanting to know how to get from one station to another. His map foregrounds the topology e.g. links between routes.

FRANKFURT KITCHEN BY MARGARETE SCHÜTTE-LIHOTZKY (1926)

Considered the forerunner to modern fitted kitchens, the Frankfurt kitchen was designed by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky for architect Ernst May's social housing project 'New Frankfurt'.

After WWI the German economy was at a low and affordable housing was needed. Ernst May wanted to create homes that used space efficiently and could have mass produced layouts and fittings in order to cut down costs. The Frankfurt Kitchen combines these ideas with principles from factory management model 'Taylorism' to ensure that the kitchen's user could access everything, quickly, in the sequence they would most likely need.

S'UP SPOON BY 4C DESIGN (2015)

Grant Douglas's cerebral palsy made standard-issue cutlery inaccessible to him, so he often needed to be fed by others. One day the phone rang and his mother left the room to answer it. As Grant watched his soup going cold he considered he could feed himself with the right utensil, and ultimately contacted design company 4C Design. The S'up spoon, like most designs, is born of a specific user need, but it has become a solution for users beyond its original target demographic including people with other mobility problems such as Parkinson's. Several prototypes are on display to showcase the iterative process of design, including a mixture of carved foam handles and 3D printed heads along with adapted existing products.



image: original Frankfurt Kitchen
[\[link to higher res image\]](#)



image: iterative design, as demonstrated by the S'up Spoon
[\[link to full image and article from 4C Design about the design process\]](#)

USER

The 'User' - often thought of as the target market, consumer, or buyer - sits at the interaction between people and brands that have come to define the modern world. A vinyl player from Dieter Rams, landmark pieces from Sony including the Walkman and the Minidisc, the Apple iPhone and the Olivetti Valentine typewriter, all changed how we engage with media and each other. Objects listed below can be found in the middle section of the gallery.

'BLIAR' PLACARD BY DAVID GENTLEMAN (2003)

In response to the UK's declaration of war against Iraq in 2003, illustrator David Gentleman designed posters featuring the word 'No' with the 'o' made from a drop of blood. Gentleman offered the poster to the Stop the War Coalition, who began reprinting it as placards; the partnership continued with 'No more lies' and 'Bluar'. The blood splat seen on all of these was created with red watercolour, dripped from shoulder height on to high grade, hand-made watercolour paper. The motif was later computerised for reproduction, and used to powerful effect when prints of 100,000 blood splats were laid out on the grass on Parliament Square.

Before going to press with the 'Bluar' image David Gentleman considered the impact this could have on him professionally. "It took me a while to dare to use it," he said, "because Blair was still prime minister at the time, and I thought: 'is this really a good career move?'"

OLIVETTI, BRAUN, SONY AND APPLE PRODUCTS (1960s - 2010s)

Focusing on domestic appliance companies popularly known for their iconic design, this section highlights Olivetti's strong visual language carried through from marketing graphics to product designs; Braun's minimalism, right down to their user manuals; Sony's technology rich products; and Apple's futuristic marriage of the aesthetic and the technological. These four companies remain some of the biggest players of the industrial design world, since the 1960s.

Keep an eye out for:

Olivetti — poster collection, showcasing the visual aplomb that made Olivetti the fashionable choice.

Braun — SK5 (1958) record player, an updated version of the SK4 (1956) record player that revolutionised home sound systems with its use of a metal body and a plexiglass lid (allowing the workings to be seen when the lid was down. The record player was no longer a piece of furniture to be hidden away when not in use.

Sony — My First Sony (mid 1980s) was a range that brought technology to a new audience, giving the company a new market and helping to build lifelong customers. The range uses Memphis styling (a colourful and very fashionable aesthetic at the time) to make the devices attractive to younger users.

Apple — iMac G3 computer (1998) was Apple's first consumer product released after Steve Jobs's return as CEO. Designed by Sir Jonathan Ive, this was the first computer to drop the floppy disk drive and Apple's own 'Desktop Bus' connector in favour of rewritable CDs and USB ports. Its handle gave the iMac G3 portability, twin headphone inputs gave it sociability, and the CD player and built in modem gave it protection against imminent format obsolescence.

MAKER

In the 'Maker' section, we trace the evolution of manufacturing, from industrialised textiles and shoe manufacturing methods and Model T Ford cars to robotic arms, mass customisation and 3D printing. Everyday objects as well as notable designs, including the London 2012 Olympic Torch and Philippe Starck's Juicy Salif, can be seen at different stages of production.

BIGREP ONE BY BIGREP (2014)

German company BigRep wanted make an affordable 3D printer capable of printing large objects. The BigRep One was their solution. It was unique in filling the market gap between desktop 3D printers and larger, pricier industrial printers, and remains one of the lowest price-per-volume machines available. This particular printer runs on semi-biodegradable polylactic acid (PLA), typically made from plant starches such as corn or cassava.

MOULD FOR THE NO. 14 CHAIR BY GEBRÜDER THONET (1850s)

'Bentwood' is a surprisingly simple (though difficult to master) and ancient manufacturing method which is still practiced by hand in First Nations groups across Alaska and Canada. It involves a process of wetting (soaking or steaming) wood to make it pliable before bending and leaving it to dry and harden into shape.

Thonet was the first to develop an industrial-scale production method for this process, and the Thonet No. 14 became the world's first mass-produced item of furniture. This meant it could be sold much more cheaply; this coupled with its simple, appealing design has resulted in it becoming one of the best-selling chairs ever made, with some 50 million No. 14s sold between 1859-1930, and millions more since. It is iconic, often referred to simply as the 'bistro chair'.

TECHNOLOGY WALL

The technology wall shows the progression of technology from items that fulfil a single function through to modern multiple use items such as smartphones.



image: BigRep One 3D printer
[\[video of BigRep One in use\]](#)



image: image of the bentwood process, 1929
[\[video showing Thonet's manufacturing methods\]](#)

WORK IN PROGRESS TABLE

Attempt some of the design briefs at the work in progress table while sitting in recreations of famous chairs from design history. Visitors are invited to sit at the Work in Progress table, select a brief they like from the 8 provided on the table, and create their own design solutions. Please browse the books available for inspiration as well.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

Sketchbooks and pencils are welcomed in the gallery, and will support all of the suggested activities listed below. Students are also encouraged to take photographs (without flash).

These activities are just starting points. We encourage you to come up with your own based on the exhibition; feel free to share them with us at learning@designmuseum.org!

DESIGN YOUR OWN

Create your own class/form Crowd Sourced wall. Get every student to nominate two objects: one up to the cost of five pounds and the other with a no limit. The objects must be items that the students already own.

Get students to draw 3D pictures of the objects and annotate their sketches if possible. They should say why they nominated the objects. These objects can then be curated into your own crowdsourced wall in the classroom. Alternatively, you could use this as an opportunity to practice some CAD with the students and have them each make 3D models of their objects to then assemble into a virtual 'wall'!

ONLINE RESOURCES

Designer Maker User education resources <https://designmuseum.org/discover-design/useful-stuff-for-teachers/designer-maker-user-education-resources>

Lesson Plans <https://designmuseum.org/the-design-museum-campus/young-design-museum/lesson-plans>



image: entrance to final, 'Maker' section of the exhibition

EXHIBITION GUIDANCE

Many objects in the exhibition are on open display rather than in cases. Care should be taken when moving around the exhibition and most objects should not be touched. Any objects that can be touched will be clearly signed. We would be grateful if you could brief your students accordingly.

Depending on your group and your itinerary for the visit, we would recommend that you set aside approximately 40 minutes to explore this exhibition.

Photography is permitted without flash; however filming is strictly prohibited in the exhibition.

Please ensure that you read our Learning Groups Terms and Conditions document before making your visit. <https://designmuseum.org/schools-colleges-and-universities/learning-groups-terms-and-conditions>

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Daily 10am-5pm (subject to some fluctuation - check website for details)

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