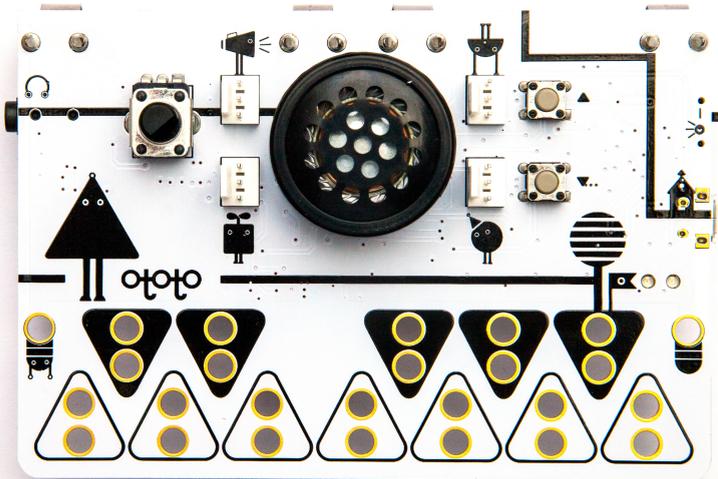


# Looking Ahead with Optimism and Caution



## MOMA'S MOSTLY HOPEFUL FUTURE

Technology, which often provides unprecedented access and ease at the expense of privacy, individuality, and health, has been glorified and vilified in equal measure. More than a year into *Design and Violence*, a web project that considers design “an act of creative destruction and a double-edged sword,” Paola Antonelli, senior curator at the Museum of Modern Art, knows this better than anyone. With that in mind, the title of her latest exhibition, *This Is for Everyone: Design Experiments for the Common Good* (on view to January 31, 2016), can be read with optimism or irony. Those wishing to emphasize a positive attitude can look to Yuri Suzuki’s playful and surely incorruptible *Colour Chaser*, a small white box that follows a black line, trilling, beeping and changing tone as it crosses scribbled patches of color. Other designs are empowering. The Arduino Diecimila microcontroller and MaKey MaKey are the kind of user-friendly electronic components that, combined with open-source software, are foundational to the maker movement. Even more inspiring is EyeWriter, a pair of glasses that tracks eye movements and enables a young artist suffering from paralysis to write digital graffiti.

The Medusa 2 helmet suggests the more sinister potential of design. It may be 3D printed in inorganic materials, but the undulating dome of rigid and precise folds and wrinkles evokes cartilage and bone, and implies nightmarish possibilities. [moma.org](http://moma.org)

— Jenny Florence

## IN LA: PHOTOS OF OUR RISING SEAS

The coastal regions of planet Earth have been hit by a series of natural disasters ranging from the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami to Hurricane Sandy slamming into the northeastern United States in 2012. *Sink or Swim: Designing for a Sea Change* tells the story through photographs of how people are responding to changes in their landscapes due to rising sea levels around the world. It is a timely examination of resiliency strategies in both architecture and design. *Sink or Swim* is on view at the Annenberg Space for Photography in Los Angeles through May 3.

Images featured include views of the extensive Delta Works sea defenses in the Netherlands by Dutch photographer Iwan Baan; newly built houses intended to withstand flooding in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans by fine art photographer Stephen Wilkes; the immense sea walls now being built on the tsunami-hit coast of Japan shot by photojournalist Paula Bronstein; and documentation of innovative low-tech structures and farming communities in Bangladesh photographed by Norwegian Jonas Bendiksen. Los Angeles-based photographer Monica Nouwens has focused her lens closer to home, capturing a local example of wetlands restoration as well as an image of human denial with her photograph of a California woman walking her dog, oblivious to a sign warning of tsunamis. [annenbergphotospace.org](http://annenbergphotospace.org)

— Cynthia Drayton



# A Reprise: Modernism in Latin America



## TWO NEW SHOWS EXAMINE A PRODIGIOUS PAST

In October 1954 the Museum of Modern Art deployed a two-person team—architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock and photographer Rosalie Thorn McKenna—to document modernism in Latin America. The culmination of their six-week, eleven-country tour was *Latin American Architecture since 1945*, an exhibition that glossed over regional and cultural differences and promoted modern design as a cohesive international movement. Some sixty years later two exhibitions celebrate the diversity and ingenuity of modern design in Latin America by assembling a range of material, much of which has rarely or never been exhibited. *Latin America in Construction: Architecture 1955–1980* (March 29–July 19) at MoMA uses architectural models and drawings, vintage photographs and film clips, and a suite of photographs and models commissioned for the show, to consider the network of forces that stimulated an unprecedented period of creative and economic development in the region and led to the emergence of unique architectural expressions.

A few blocks uptown from MoMA, the Americas Society pres-



ents *Moderno: Design for Living in Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, 1940–1978* (on view to May 16). Where *Latin America in Construction* concentrates on large-scale public works—hospitals, museums, housing projects, entire cities, even—*Moderno* focuses on the design objects—both hand-crafted and mass-produced—that furnished Latin America's rapidly modernizing domestic interiors. “[D]esigners in the region were producing a modern interior that was at the same time local and global,” says the exhibition’s co-curator, Jorge Rivas Pérez. Pieces such as Sérgio Rodrigues’s Mole chair—its ample leather seat and protruding stiles giving it the aspect of a lolling bull—and Geraldo de Barros’s 1960s telephone bench—which pairs plywood and plastic—broadcast the ease and comfort familiar from American mid-century design, but reveal an unmistakably distinct approach.

[moma.org](http://moma.org) [as-coa.org](http://as-coa.org)

— Jenny Florence



## MADE IN MEXICO: LUTECA DEBUTS NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN FURNITURE

Luteca, a new furniture brand whose first line focuses on Latin American design, launched with its own small show at the HotelAmericano in New York in February. For its inaugural collection, Luteca realized previously unproduced designs by important Mexican architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez. The pieces, including a series of coffee tables made from single sheets of metal that are laser-cut and bent into various shapes, are produced in Mexico City. [luteca.com](http://luteca.com)

— Jenny Florence

LUTECA  
R & COMPANY/SÉRGIO RODRIGUES

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART/COLORINDO TESTA © ARCHIVO MANUEL GOMEZ PIÑEIRO, COURTESY OF FABIO GREMENTIERI

# New Work Inspired by History and Culture



## ROBERT STADLER'S EVOCATIVE AND PROVOCATIVE FURNITURE

Robert Stadler's designs often begin with a strong concept, but their material qualities can hardly be called secondary. For his latest show, *Airspace*, a solo exhibition at Carpenters Workshop Gallery in Paris (on through April 4), the designer presents two series of furniture—PdT and cut\_paste—inspired by the effects of time and the elements on architecture. PdT consists of three pieces that resemble fragments of ruined buildings: slabs of pale ashlar, their surfaces and edges are polished and rounded as if by erosion, and scored here and there with lines that suggest mortar. A bench looks like a column tipped on its side and left to weather, the remains of an ancient Greek temple or a neoclassical French façade. Indeed, "PdT" refers to *Pierre de taille*, the white stone masonry favored in Baron Haussmann's Paris.

Stadler implies contemporary construction in the cut\_paste series with works that are reminiscent of building—or perhaps demolition—sites. Each piece is a seemingly haphazard composition of planes in varying shades of marble. Stadler emphasizes the industrial quality of the work by sandwiching sheets of aluminum honeycomb between marble veneer. [carpentersworkshopgallery.com](http://carpentersworkshopgallery.com)

— Jenny Florence

## FASHIONING THE '70S

The luxe, louche, and languid looks that have come to define fashion of the 1970s can largely be credited to two designers, Yves Saint Laurent and Halston. An exhibition at the Museum at FIT, *Yves Saint Laurent + Halston: Fashioning the '70s* (on view through April 18), explores the array of sources that inspired the two men and considers the period as a moment of profound change in the fashion industry, when the couture atelier gave way to the ready-to-wear corporation. Through approximately a hundred pieces drawn from the museum's collection, the exhibition compares ensembles by each designer—Saint Laurent's rakish interpretations of menswear and striking saturated colors against Halston's neutral-toned minimalist glamour—to highlight the designers' distinctive styles while teasing out common themes. [fitnyc.edu/museum.asp](http://fitnyc.edu/museum.asp)

— Jenny Florence



## GRAINS OF PARADISE: NEW DESIGN FROM AFRICA AT R & COMPANY

Only in recent years have we come to notice the work being done by contemporary African designers, and much of our awareness is owed to Trevyn and Julian McGowan of Southern Guild Gallery in Cape Town. Starting March 24 and running through the month of April, the New York gallery R & Company will mount an exhibition focusing on work from designers in South Africa and Senegal.

The exhibition is entitled *Grains of Paradise*, a translation of "Aframomu—melegueta," a member of the ginger family that is used for both cooking and medicinal purposes, as well as divination and voodoo. The name was chosen for its metaphorical role in spreading African culture; it was taken by caravan through the Sahara to Italy and eventually the rest of the world—a more arduous journey no doubt than the shipping of furniture and objects today.

On view at R & Company will be works by Porky Hefer, the husband-and-wife team known as Dokter and Misses, and the design collective Ardmore—all of South Africa. Also featured is the Senegalese designer Babacar Niang. Altogether the show suggests the wide scope of work coming from South and West Africa and is, to R & Company principal Zesty Meyers, "creatively stimulating for us in incredible new ways."

[r-and-company.com](http://r-and-company.com)

— Beth Dunlop