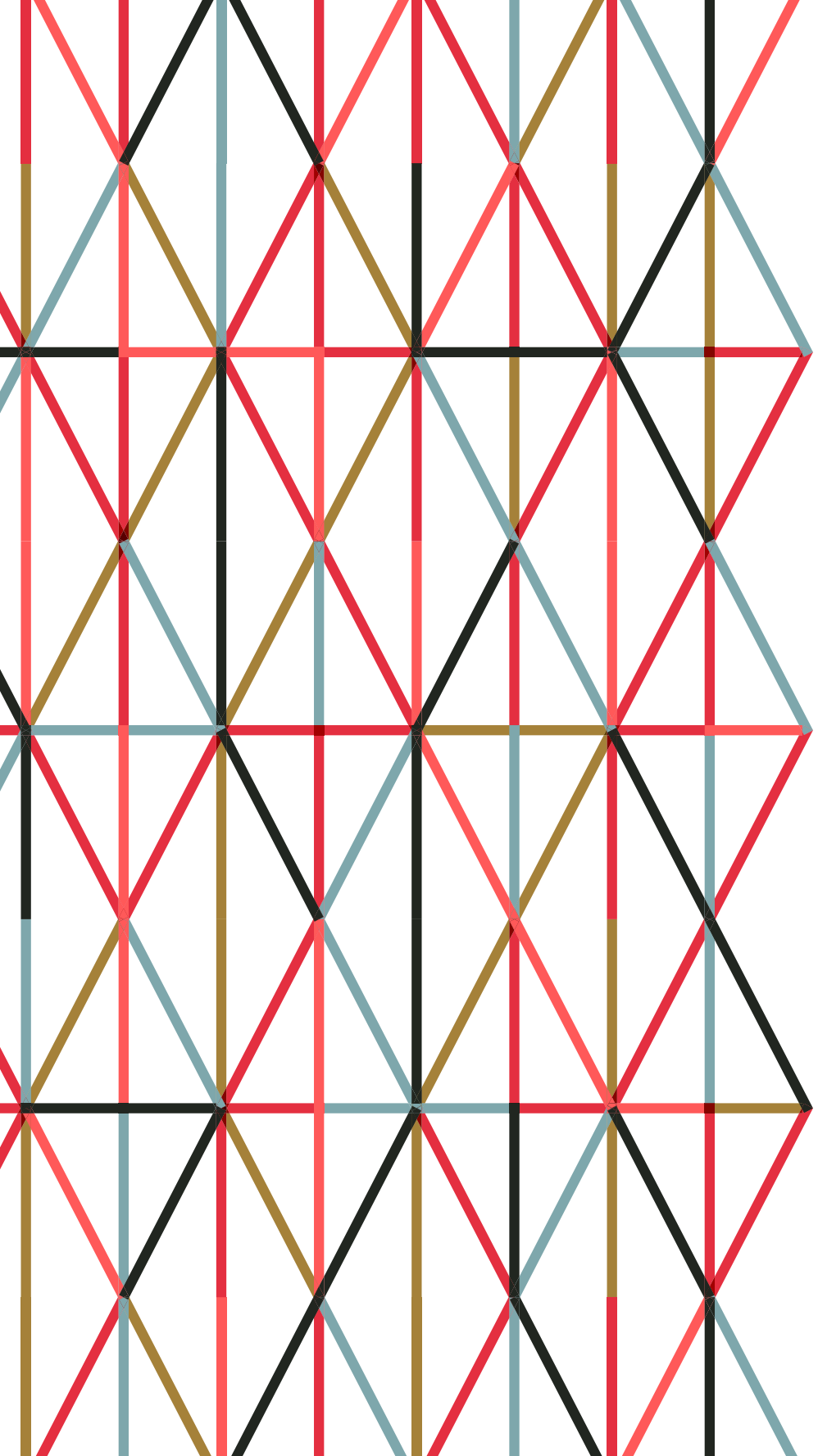




home
comple-
ments

vitra.



home comple- ments

vitra.

introduction

Within the first second of entering a room, we are exposed to a variety of details. We can't perceive all of them consciously, but we feel them. Various colors, shapes and objects ideally add up to a composition that entices us to stay for a longer period of time. Vitra Home Complements is a collection of design objects, accessories and textiles that creates that special ambiance.

This is about private living spaces, not a uniform design world. Alexander Girard, for example, was an architect, a designer and a graphic artist – all rolled into one. The spaces and textiles that he created came out of that unified under-

standing of design. Inspired by different cultures, his colorful patterns and objects can be combined and arranged as you like.

In addition to the classics of Alexander Girard, George Nelson and Charles & Ray Eames, you will also find inspiring objects by contemporary designers. All have timeless design, clear shapes and original patterns in common. Vitra Home Complements presents objects made to accompany you for a lifetime and to bring joy into your everyday life.

Dès le premier instant où l'on pénètre dans une pièce, nous sommes exposés à une grande variété de détails. Nous ne pouvons pas les apercevoir consciemment mais nous remarquons leur présence. Ce mélange de couleurs, de formes et d'objets crée une composition idéale qui nous invite à rester. Vitra Home Complements est une collection d'objets de design, d'accessoires et de textiles qui réussit à créer une atmosphère toute particulière.

Il est bien question d'espaces privés et non de lieux de design uniformes. Alexander Girard était en même temps architecte, designer et graphiste. Que ce soit pour la création d'espaces ou de textiles, Alexander Girard utilisait toujours la même compréhension du design. Trouvant son inspiration dans de multiples cultures, il créa des graphismes et des objets hauts en couleurs, ce qui donne la possibilité à chacun de les combiner suivant leur gout.

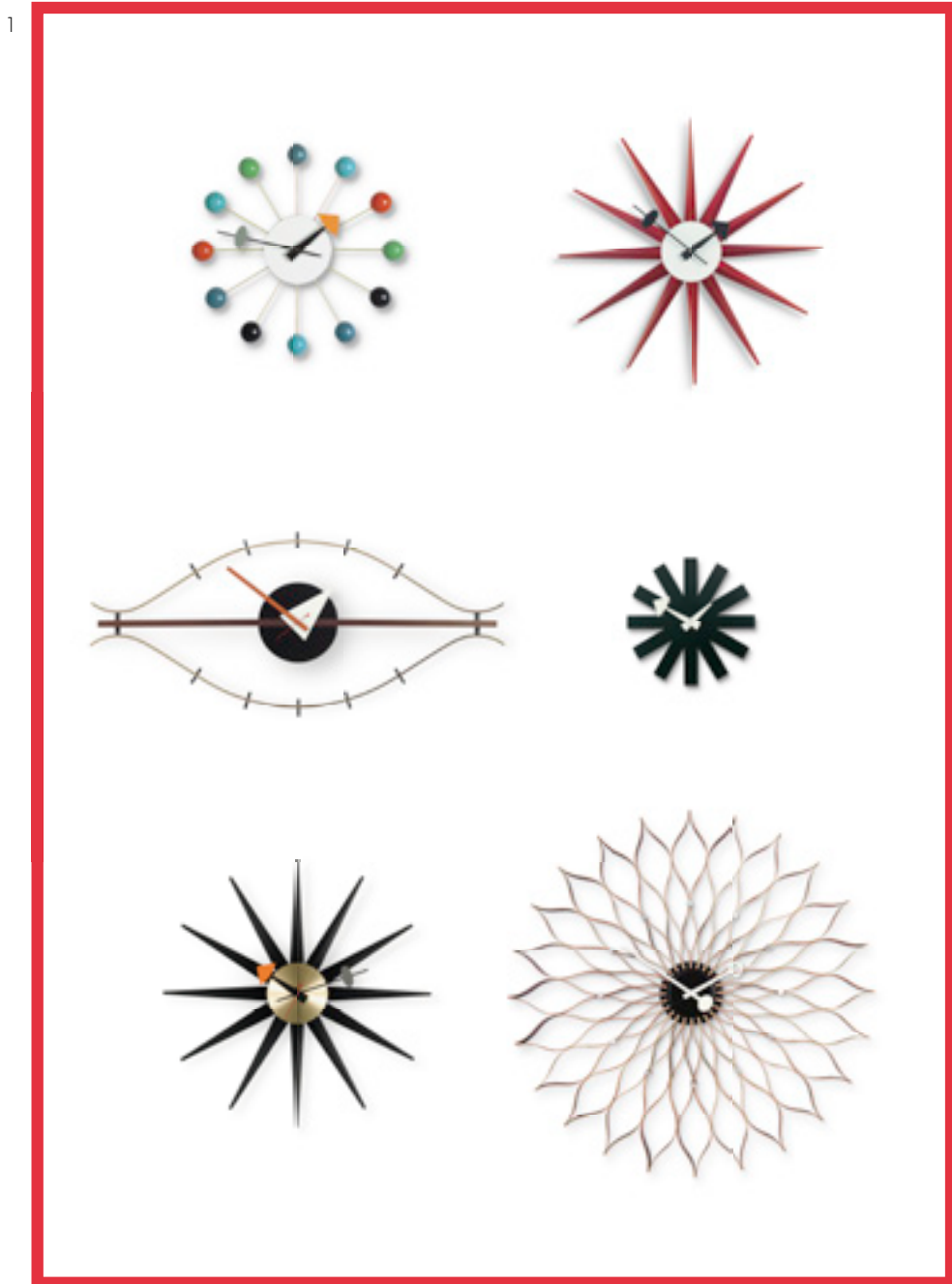
En plus des classiques créés par Alexander Girard, George Nelson et Charles et Ray Eames, vous découvrirez également des objets et des accessoires de designers contemporains. Ils ont tous en commun le même objectif : le design intemporel, la forme pure et des graphismes originaux. Vitra Home Complements vous propose des objets qui vous apporteront satisfaction et plaisir de longues années durant.

In der ersten Sekunde, in der wir einen Raum betreten, treffen wir auf viele Details. Wir können nicht alle bewusst wahrnehmen, aber unbewusst spüren. Verschiedene Farben, Formen und Objekte ergeben idealerweise eine Komposition, die uns auf geheimnisvolle Art einlädt, zu bleiben. Vitra Home Complements ist eine Kollektion von Designobjekten, Accessoires und Textilien, denen es gelingt, diese besondere Atmosphäre zu schaffen.

Es geht dabei nicht um uniforme Designwelten, sondern um private Wohnräume. Alexander Girard zum Beispiel war Architekt, Designer und Grafiker in einer Person. Er gestaltete Räume und Textilien mit einem einheitlichen Designverständnis. Inspiriert von unterschiedlichen Kulturen entstanden farbenfrohe Muster und Objekte, die Sie ganz nach Ihren Vorlieben kombinieren können.

Neben Klassikern von Girard, Nelson und Eames finden Sie auch Entwürfe zeitgenössischer Designer. Alle verbindet dasselbe Ziel: Zeitloses Design, klare Formen und originelle Muster. Vitra Home Complements präsentiert Ihnen Objekte, die Sie ein Leben lang begleiten und dabei täglich Freude bereiten.



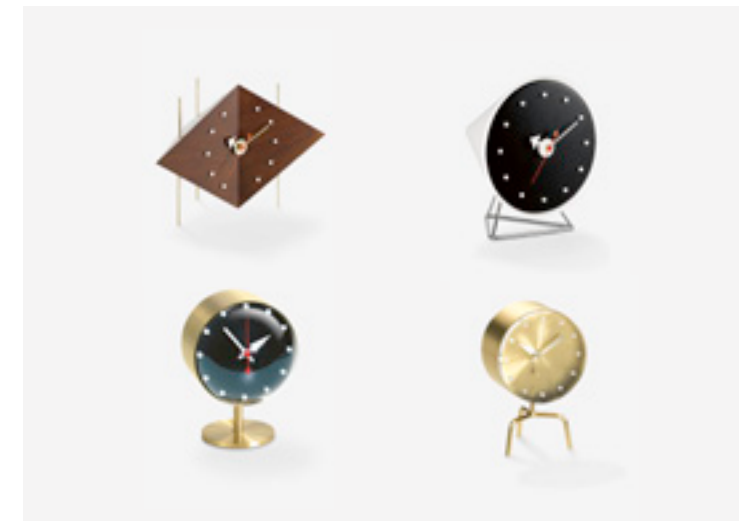


George Nelson
1 Wall Clocks 1948-1960

More models available on vitra.com



2

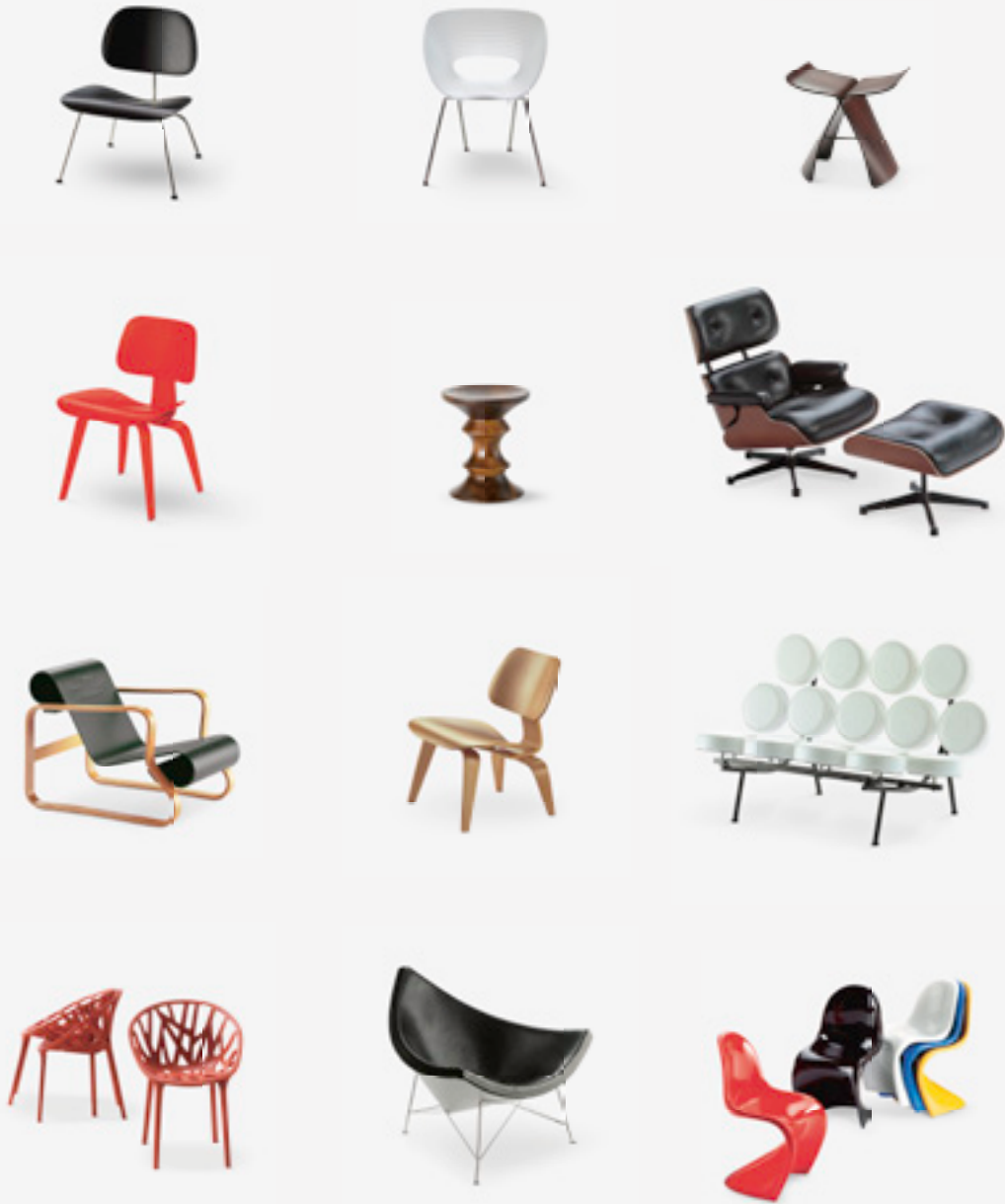


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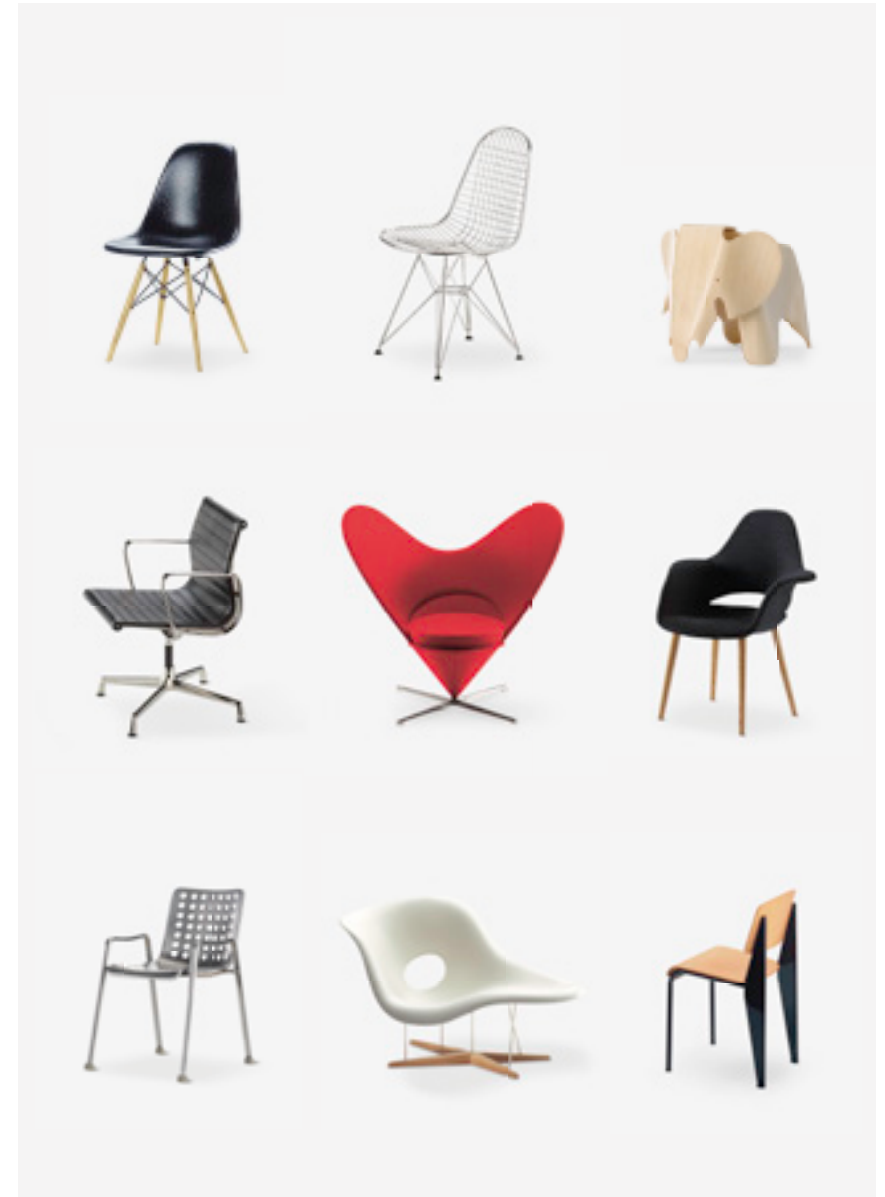
George Nelson
2 Zoo Timers 1965
3 Desk Clocks 1947/53



1



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More models available on vitra.com



1

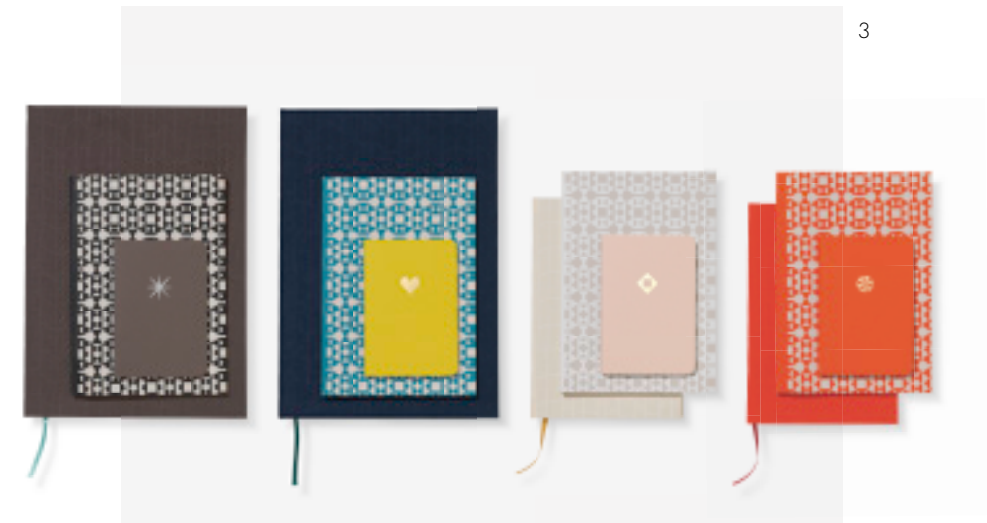


Alexander Girard
1 Greeting Cards 1965–1971

Available Colors: ● ● ○ ○



2



3

Hella Jongerius
2 Elephant Pad 2010
Alexander Girard
3 Notebooks 1952

1



2



Alexander Girard
1-2 Coffee Mugs 1971

3



Alexander Girard
3 Paper Napkins 1953-1961

1

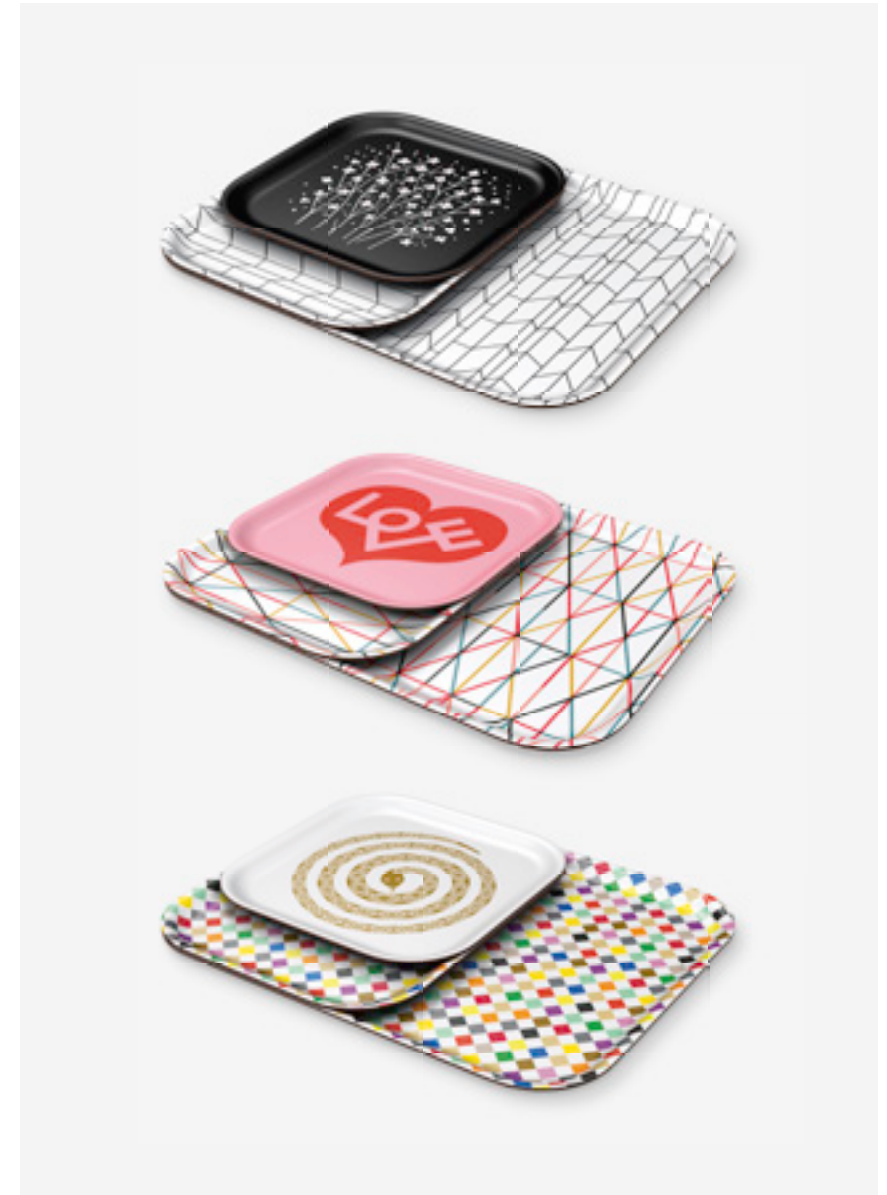


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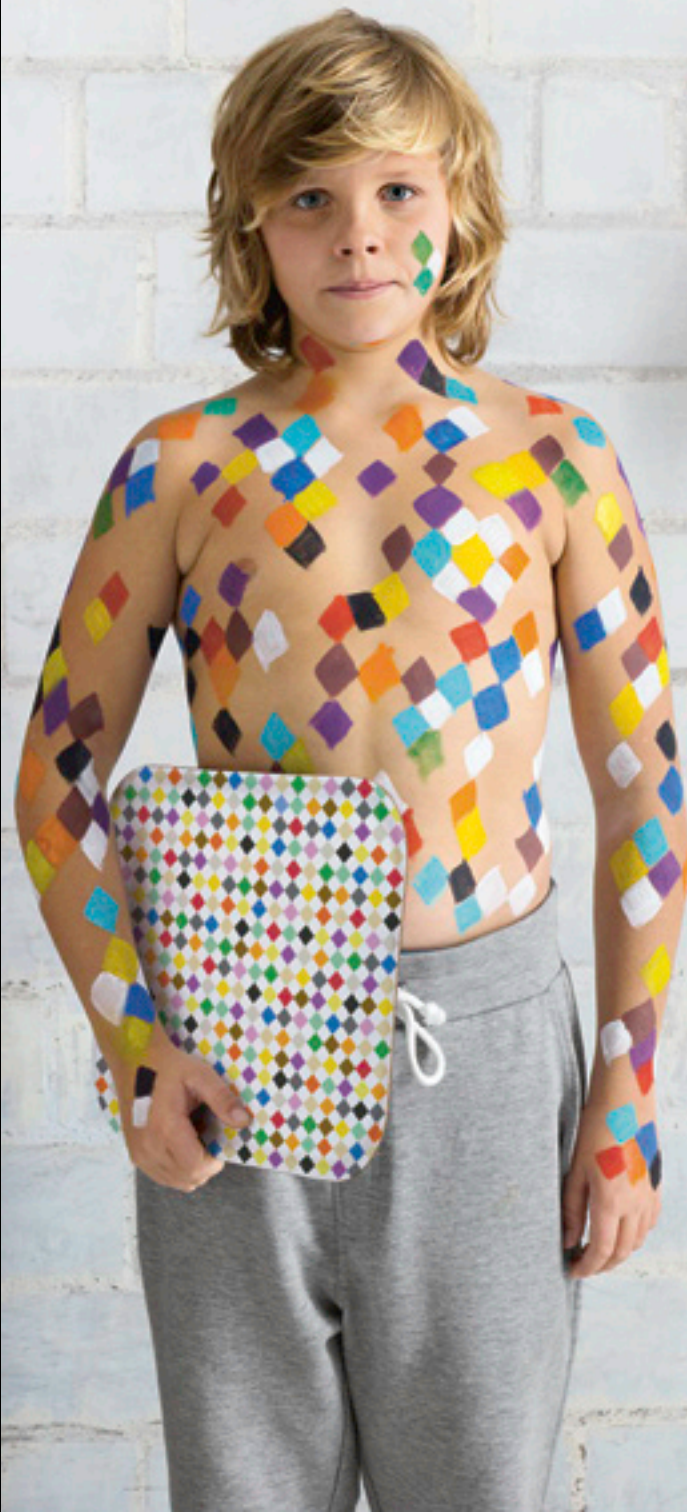


Jasper Morrison
1-2 Rotary Tray 2014

3



Alexander Girard
3 Classic Trays 1952-1974



1



Alexander Girard
1 Wooden Dolls 1953

2



Alexander Girard
Wooden Dolls
2 Cat and Dog 1953

textiles

p. 26–47 textiles designed by
Alexander Girard
 Hella Jongerius



Alexander Girard

1 Girard Wool Blankets 1961/1971

1



2



» The hope for good design lies in those designers who believe in what they do, and who will only do what they believe.«

Alexander Girard

Alexander Girard

1-2 Graphic Print Pillows 1961

Alexander Girard

Talented in many disciplines, Alexander Girard was a gifted architect as well as furniture and textile designer, interior designer, graphic, exhibition and industrial designer. Across many mediums, Girard's ideas built steadily upon themselves, creating a body of work that progressed like one long conversation on favorite topics. At first

» The hope for good design lies in those designers who believe in what they do, and who will only do what they believe... Contrary to hearsay, it is possible to make a living that way. «

glance, these topics include recognizable signatures like vibrant colors and a special playfulness, but his deeper themes orbit around common-alities between cultures and succinct visual languages.

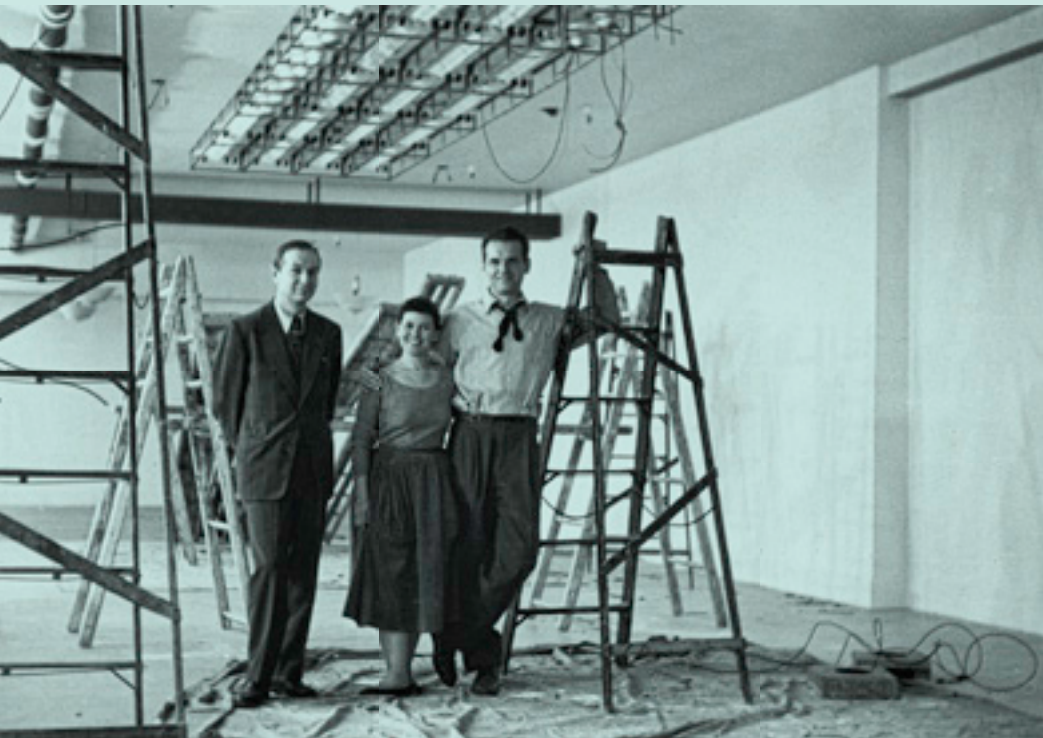
Alexander Girard was born in 1907. He grew up in Florence, Italy, raised by an American mother and an Italian father. His father, Carlo Matteo Girard, was an art collector and antiquarian, a talented maker of objects who passed his interests on to his children (all three artistically gifted). In the Girard household there was great imagination as well as awareness of the past, clearly sparked by Carlo's fine collecting but also by the ancient architecture and art in Florence, and by the city itself, which like so many European cities is an amalgam of old and new. As a young man, Alexander Girard acquired three architecture degrees (in Italy, England and the U.S.). He was perhaps born an avid observer and eager traveler, and by the time he moved to the United States as a young architect (in the 1930s) Girard's designs possessed a dialogue between past and present. This was an unusual style in America, where identity often hinged on a departure from



1 The Girard family, 1952



1



2

- 1 Alexander Girard, 1952
- 2 Alexander Girard, Ray, and Charles Eames during installation of the Good Design exhibition, 1950

history. In these early days Girard gained many quick fans and a few detractors. His inventive interior designs were full of masterful hand-made pieces and unusual color play. He brought new depth to the American scene but his critics felt the work to be too ornate, haphazardly colorful. In not very long however, Girard's admirers became the resounding majority and soon after Girard became a design leader who was sought after eagerly and perpetually.

Collaborations

Alexander Girard found great joy in sharing ideas and work with others. Of Girard's many prominently successful associates a few blossomed into lifelong friends, such as Georgia O'Keefe, Saul Steinberg and Alexander Calder. Talents including architect Eero Saarinen, designers George Nelson and Ray and Charles Eames also bonded quickly with Girard. These colleagues teamed up continually. Saarinen collaborated with Girard on the famous J. Irwin Miller House in Indiana (now a museum), the John Deere headquarters (where Girard assembled a vast collage of artifacts), and other remarkable projects.

Girard's friendship with Charles Eames started in the 1940s when Girard was designing radios, and Eames (also working on radio designs) was impressed with his work. The Eames' and Girard became very close, and the two families spent holidays and traveled together, conversed about design philosophies and innovations continually. From this closeness they came to partner on all manner of films, presentations, catalogues, shows. Their friendship was perhaps personified by Charles Eames photographing most of Girard's interiors as a side project, when doubtlessly Eames could have been doing other things. Luckily for us, Girard and his friends were remarkably driven and often worked without boundaries.

Environments

If Girard was hired to create something small in scope like a church mural or a company logo, he knew that importance could be instilled

in it. He said, »In general I can say I have accepted jobs where a new prototype may be developed. For my own satisfaction, I have taken jobs which allow me as much variety as possible.« As open as Girard was to accepting diverse commissions (the creation of hundreds of pieces of printed matter for an airline rebranding, the interior of a corporate cafeteria), his words relate not so much to him being choosy but to choosing to see potential in almost anything. The distinction may be subtle, but the result – of his delight in designing – is not. His attitude brought in small jobs and large ones that typically became even larger in his hands.

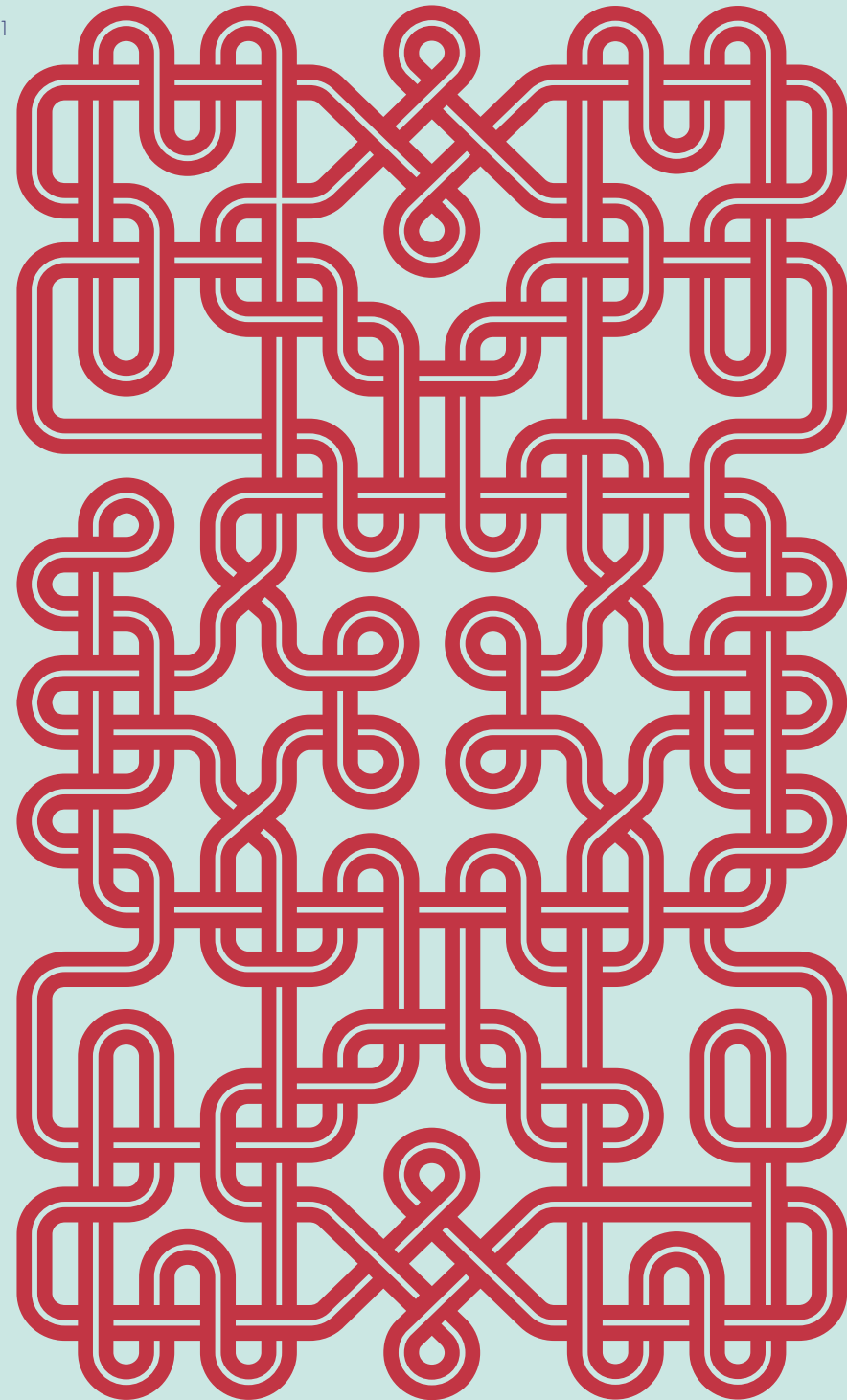
In the 1960s, Alexander Girard designed, among other things, a celebrated New York City restaurant, La Fonda Del Sol, and recreated the image of Braniff International airline. Girard's contribution to the restaurant included the design of custom furniture, textiles, menus, tableware, staff attire, and more.

» Nothing is new, but personal interpretation can often be so.«

The identity transformation for Braniff was the first of its kind for any airline, and included a plethora of bright custom textiles, signage, airport lounge furniture, playing cards for passengers, and more. In each instance, Girard impressed others with his unique use of color (both projects were especially vibrant). In each, Girard could not limit himself to designing just the layout, the furniture, the textiles ... and so he created everything. Because this happened often with Girard, it is easy to focus on his projects' magnitude. And yet the number of his gestures is not nearly as important as his success in exciting us continually. Girard produced whole environments so that he could share his interpretation of the world. Before designing La Fonda Del Sol (a Latin American restaurant) Girard traveled in South America for many months doing visual research. For Braniff International – whose flights went from North to South America regularly – Girard referenced South American art, color, iconography, and style. He used culture as a reference point and from there, managed to jump to somewhere new.



- 1 Textiles & Objects Shop designed by Alexander Girard for Herman Miller, 1961
- 2 Waiter uniform designed by Alexander Girard for La Fonda del Sol restaurant, 1960
- 3 La Fonda del Sol, situated in the Time Life building in New York, 1960



1 Knot by Alexander Girard, 1972

Textiles & Objects Store

In 1961 Alexander Girard designed a celebrated New York City shop to display his latest Herman Miller textiles. It was called Textiles & Objects. It marked the first time Girard's textiles were available to

»When you practice in all fields of design, each field benefits from your experience in the others, and all design is related, whether houses, gardens, furniture or women's clothes.«

the shopper on the street as well as professional designers. In typical Girard style, he was not satisfied to do anything less than design the exhibit itself, all of the display furniture, the invitations, posters, exit sign (in fabric), and even the light bulbs. He produced a gleaming white space and placed in it colorful folk art from his travels, striking fabric dolls, pillows with whimsical designs of his own, and geometric mirrors. For the main attraction he hung large swaths of his beautiful textiles throughout the showroom in layers that bring to mind flags or scrims or maybe ribbons. Everything was for sale. People marveled at the environment as much as his textiles. Of course Girard did not have to include objects from other designers, but being who he was, he could not resist. Girard typically did not emphasize singular prowess or ownership. This is clear from a 1986 interview for *Architectural Digest* where the writer asked Girard about his by well-known passion for folk art, »(Did he) ever encounter someone in an extremely remote place whose talents startled him? A Picasso in a tiny village in the Andes, say?« Girard answered, »Oh, yes, almost everywhere. Being startled was the rule.« Girard knew that being an enthusiast for others would not diminish his own mastery.

Product Design

As becomes clear in Girard's work, there appear conspicuous secondary designs within most of his large projects – custom furniture, textiles,

tableware, lighting, specific to each venture. Many of these immediately looked like substantial lines of their own, and some developed into exactly that, debuting as unique and elegant collections of furniture, tableware, textiles, and more. Girard's products were uniquely lyrical but not showy. He used a very stylish restraint, bursting out only in the outrageous number of color options for furniture and textiles. In addition to the Girard fabrics, blankets, and wooden dolls in production currently, new reproductions will be introduced through Vitra in 2015. These include Girard's charming Splayed-Leg table, versatile Color-Wheel Ottoman, Environmental Enrichment Panels and a series of irresistible printed cushions, and many more.

Residential Interiors

Alexander Girard designed many homes throughout his career. In these personal spaces it became evident how carefully he took into account the way people lived and moved, what they looked at and touched. He designed his own homes too, each time he moved and often when he didn't, reinventing his environment continually, despite staying put. Textile designer Jack Lenor Larsen wrote about

»I find that those of my designs which satisfy me personally are the only ones worth producing.«

Girard in the Walker Art Center's Design Quarterly, »He has never implied that everyone should live within the hallmarks of his style, but – through ample demonstrations – he has urged each of us toward a more personal and expressive way of life.« One of Girard's most memorable residential projects was the Indiana home of businessman Irwin Miller and family (designed by Eero Saarinen and completed in 1957). In this home as in many, Girard rearranged not just furniture but approaches to living. For the Miller's he created an unexpected sunken lounge in the center of the living room and a marble dining table with built in fountain. Here you can see experiments Girard



1 Girard House, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1958



1 Conversation pit, designed by Alexander Girard for the Miller House, 1953

was also conducting on himself: a use of striking colors, sunken conversation pits, folk art which he had begun avidly collecting long before. The Miller home is now a museum, and though you cannot open the cupboards and see the dishes Girard designed for the Miller family or the wrapping paper he created with their monogram, you can see his touch everywhere. When you view any of Girard's details – like a snake clock inset into his own stucco wall in New Mexico – you can understand more about him by knowing that his aim was toward an integrated whole. He would only design something as small

» Art is only art when it is
synonymous with living.«

as a clock or wrapping paper after he set out to design a whole space, which led him to reinvent the tone of every single thing: the furniture in that space, the colors and – to deliver a full environment – items as intimate as electrical sockets or a color-coded monogram for family towels (which he did for the Millers). When we touch any of Girard's objects, we hold a powerful connector to his larger thinking.

Girard Studio Archives

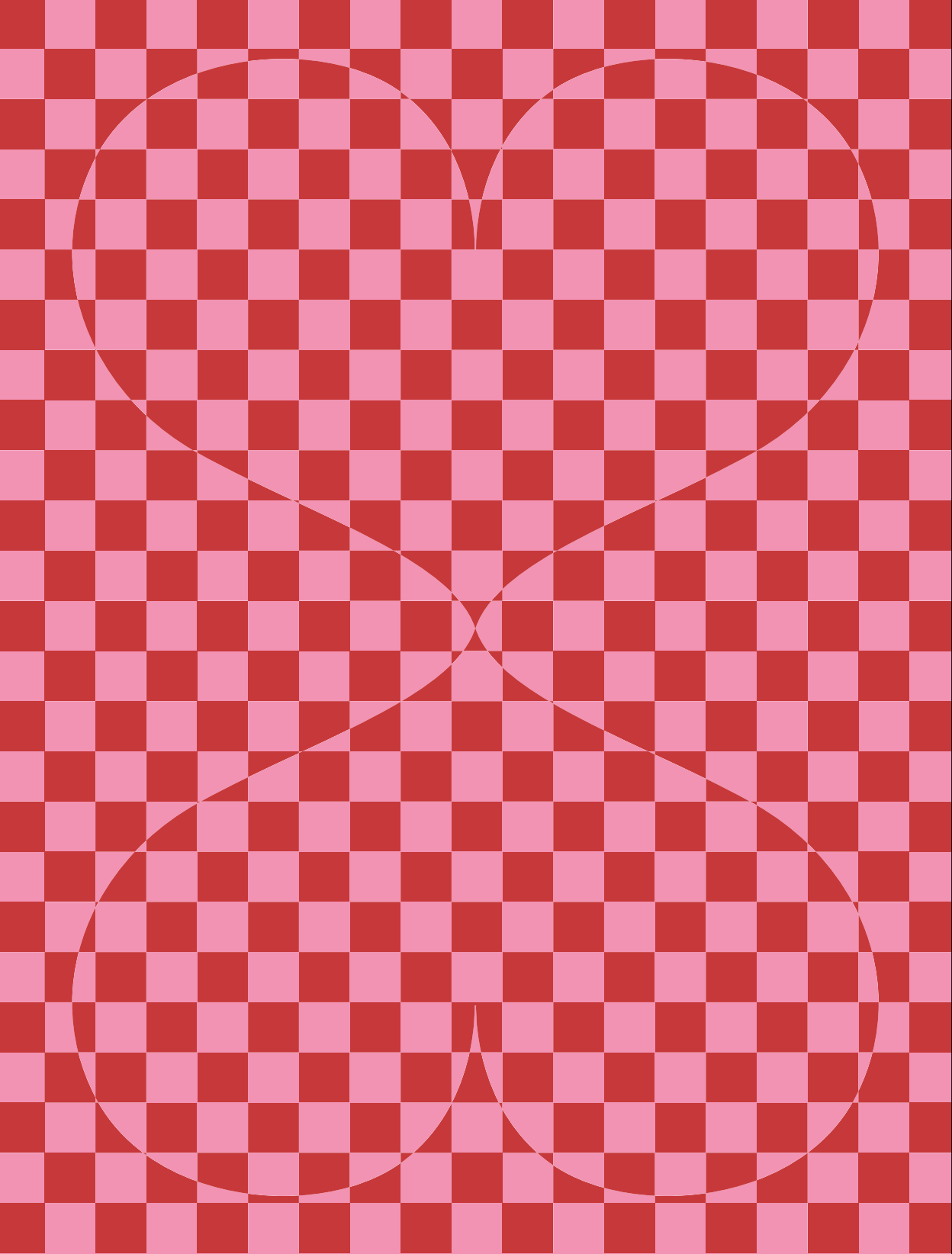
Wherever Alexander Girard lived, he worked from a studio in his home or nearby. When he moved to New Mexico in the 1950s this became a beloved studio where key assistants and collaborators worked alongside him. In this space Girard kept usual items like sketches and supplies, correspondence and prototypes of all kinds. Girard also kept unique archives of things such as perfectly organized photographs of people (to populate his layouts), boxed rubber stamps he admired the hundreds of matchboxes he collected, favorite words in methodical files – some palindromic, some multilingual, all cross referenced. Girard's studio had a magical feel to it because, like everything of his, it reflected his glee. Girard was an enthusiast of many things, and he was drawn to the items mentioned (and so much more) as one openly studying lines, graphics, color, scale, verbal and visual languages. He incorporated elements of these, and the folk art he was



1 Collection of Matchboxes from archives of Alexander Girard

enthralled by, into his understanding of design. The Santa Fe studio was Girard's last. When he passed away it held treasured artifacts too important to break apart. These in their entirety (every pencil and fabric swatch and matchbook) now live safely at Vitra Design Museum and will serve as a founding element in a major museum retrospective of Alexander Girard's work, planned for 2016.

Over the years, Girard has been an inspiration for artists and non-artists alike. This is fitting, given how few separations he saw between professions, cultures, and objects. While some artist's leave behind a footprint of their time, Girard has left a wider legacy, a reminder that all of our footprints connect.



1 Double Heart by Alexander Girard, 1971



1



2

Alexander Girard
1 Graphic Print Pillows 1961
Hella Jongerius
2 Seat Dots 2013



small furniture

p. 48–55 small furniture designed by
Charles & Ray Eames
Verner Panton
Jasper Morrison
Isamu Noguchi
Sori Yanagi
Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec



Charles & Ray Eames

¹ Eames Elephant 1945

1



2



Verner Panton

1 Panton Junior 1959/1960

Jasper Morrison

2 Cork Family 2004

3



4



Isamu Noguchi

3 Prismatic Table 1957

Sori Yanagi

4 Elephant Stool 1954

1



Available Colors: ● ● ● ○

2



Available Colors: ● ● ● ○

Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec

1 Metal Side Table – Outdoor 2004

2 Metal Side Table – Indoor 2004

3



Available Colors: ● ● ● ○

Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec

3 Leather Side Table 2014



Jasper Morrison
1 NesTable 2007



Jasper Morrison
2 Rise Table 2014

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