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EDITOR'S NOTE

Lilian Froger is the third recipient of the grant for the writing and publication of a critical essay that was created in 2016 by the collaboration between the Institut français, the Institut national d'histoire de l'art and *Critique d'art*. The two previous years, the grant enabled Julie Crenn to travel to South Africa in order to write about the country's women artists¹, and gave Clélia Zernik the opportunity to explore the form and status of art festivals in Japan.² Each journey results in the publication of a long article in French and English. After three years, it is safe to say that this grant – whose goal it is to support the mobility of art critics, as well as the circulation of their ideas and the translation of their essays – offers contemporary authors a unique space for thought and visibility. As this essay is published, a call for applications has been opened for 2019, which will allow a critic to receive this grant created in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Direction générale de la création artistique. We hope to receive many applications!

The ideas Lilian Froger develops in the following essay were prompted by the coincidence of three exhibitions that were held respectively in Helsinki, San Francisco and Los Angeles, and which all “[explore] the relationship between design, California and the imaginaries it evokes”. Far from being only a way of manufacturing objects and creating spaces for living and working, design also shapes behaviours, imaginaries, and ultimately societies themselves. Through the close attention he pays to the museographic devices of each one of the exhibitions, Lilian Froger highlights the discrepancies between the different narratives they produce. Some operate by subdivisions and specialisations (“modernist” Southern California vs. geek Northern California), others, on the contrary examine junctions, quotations, the presence of

others (between California and Mexico). The essay you are about to read is erudite and tinged with humour, as well as being a *critical* text that appeals to the responsibility of museums as places of engaged thought that should maintain their independence from the logics of the corporations whose history they exhibit. We hope you enjoy it!

Elitza Dulguerova, Research adviser in the field of 18th to 21st Century Art History, INHA and Vincent Gonzalvez, Head of the Visual Arts and Architecture Department, Institut français.

Installation photograph, *Designed in California*, SFMOMA, January 27–May 27, 2018, photo: Don Ross

- 1 For the past few years, Apple has been adding *Designed in California* to all its packaging, in addition to the legal obligation of mentioning the site of production (namely, China). Why this specification? Firstly, to emphasise the place where the product was created and designed, rather than where the assembly lines are located, thus pushing the latter into the background. Secondly, to signify that this state of the American West Coast matters more than the rest of the country. Contrary to what might be expected, no *Made in USA* or *Designed in USA* here. However, Apple is not referring to California as an administrative district, but to the very idea of California, in other words to the representation of a gigantic state constantly bathed in sunshine. A landscape of beaches, deserts and wide-open spaces; a scenery of palm trees, cacti, and swimming pools; a culture of surf, suntans, and multi-coloured cocktails. A geography of coolness and chill, where IT start-ups blossom whatever the season. These visions merge with the representations of present-day Silicon Valley, South of the San Francisco Bay, where the geek employees of Google, Yahoo and Facebook work, with great enthusiasm it would seem, tieless and even short-clad all year round, contributing to the image of a lifestyle that is relaxed in all circumstances.
- 2 Several recent exhibitions have been exploring the relationship between design, California and the imaginaries it evokes. *California: Designing Freedom*³ at the Helsinki Designmuseum (following a first showing at the London Design Museum) and *Designed in*

*California*⁴ at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) considered local productions from the 1960s onwards. *Found in Translation: Design in California and Mexico, 1915-1985*⁵ at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) focused on the connections formed with neighbouring Mexico, questioned through the prism of representations and imaginaries. The starting point of all three exhibitions was what could be termed the “Californian Dream”, summed up in three points: a sunny atmosphere, a flourishing economy and Hollywood glamour. The relationship of the Los Angeles art scene to imaginary and fiction has already been explored by several exhibitions⁶ that went beyond references to Hollywood and Disney, but Californian design has been given less attention. As the two fundamental principles of design are the taking into consideration of context and the integration into reality, is it not contradictory to want to reconcile the contextual practice of design and a certain imaginary dimension in an exhibition? For that matter, where exactly should one situate this imaginary dimension? In the discourse of curators or of designers? In the design projects themselves? These three recent exhibitions, through the objects they brought together and the discourses that accompanied them, succeeded in questioning some of the stereotypes concerning the relationship between design and California (as a physical as well as a mythical territory), and help understand the role the Californian Dream played for design. To different degrees, they help reconsider the question on everyone’s lips: is the Californian *climate* truly as favourable to design as it is to oranges?

3 Relaxed Modernism

- 4 At the end of World War II and during the 1950s, a new, cool, approach to design was developed in California. It has recently been examined in two major exhibitions, *Birth of Cool: California Art, Design and Culture at Midcentury* at the Orange County Museum of Art in 2007 and *California Design, 1930-1965: “Living in a Modern Way”* at the LACMA in 2011. New York and Chicago had long been the leading towns in the field of design, but in the 1950s creators flocked to California, contributing to the definition of a Californian version of modernism, considered as more laid-back than on the East coast. Everything was devised to create a simple and informal lifestyle, or in appearance at least. In the field of architecture, the clear delimitation between the inside and the outside was blurred by the use of large glass surfaces and by the choice of free plans with no upper levels. Sociability spaces were oriented towards the garden. The latter became essential in the design of detached houses and villas, which included terraces, patios, swimming pools and barbecues. Furniture was often usable inside and out. Colours were warm and brilliant, evoking the all-year round sunshine. As if to illustrate this very idea, in the middle of the stairs leading up to the exhibition, a large backlit panel showing a stylised sunset welcomed visitors to *California: Designing Freedom*.
- 5 The work of Charles and Ray Eames is emblematic of this relaxed modernism and widely contributed to putting California on the map of international design. “It is impossible to think of Charles and Ray Eames without thinking of mid-century California. Equally, it is hard to imagine California without the Eameses. [...] California was the Eameses’s geographic location and an idea absolutely central to their design project.”⁷ The house overlooking the ocean they built for themselves in 1949 in Pacific Palisades is just as crucial for the history of design as their famous coloured chairs made from a metal base and a coloured plastic shell. Their house, number 8 in the “Case Study Houses” programme, has large picture windows that let the light shine in and

open the house onto the garden and surrounding trees. It is furnished with a mix of furniture they designed, objects they gathered from around the world and a myriad plants, and it was photographed by mainstream and specialised press as soon as the couple moved in. Pictures like those by Julius Schulman were massively reproduced and contributed to the construction and propagation of the modern, relaxed and warm representation of the Eameses's production, and by extension, of California in general.

6 Building a New Society

- 7 Supported by an abundant selection of objects and projects, the exhibitions *California: Designing Freedom* and *Designed in California* tried to define an “essence” of Californian design beyond the modernist period. Both associated the emergence of American countercultures with the development of technological and digital design in the Silicon Valley. The 1960s stand as a prelude to this demonstration, by focusing the visitors' attention to the—mostly hippy—communes that were especially active in California and the discourses they supported. These communities sought to escape post-war industrial society by moving away from the city to self-built camps and hamlets. The media's representation of hippies shows people deliberately cut off from all things modern, living in touch with nature, far away from the civilised world. Exhibitions like *Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia* which was held at the Walker Art Center in 2015 deeply contributed to set this image right, by clearly showing how these communities were at the same time extensively attracted to new technologies: for instance video, inflatable structures, electronic sounds, computers, and so forth. Through his research which particularly focused on Stewart Brand, the founder of the *Whole Earth Catalog* in 1968, Fred Turner had already reached the same conclusion.⁸
- 8 Incidentally, the *Whole Earth Catalog*⁹ figures prominently in *California: Designing Freedom* and *Designed in California*. A practical as well as conceptual handbook, it provided information to its readers on everything that was likely to interest them: self-build, agriculture, biology, ecology as well as more generally scientific subjects, such as psychology, cybernetics and computer science. All at once a catalogue and a directory, it compiled information on these subjects, presented tools, materials and books to deepen one's knowledge, as well as the contact details for the people producing and selling these goods. Other publications affiliated to, or influent within, hippie communities were shown in the Helsinki and San Francisco exhibitions: both volumes of *Domebook* (1970 and 1971) by Lloyd Khan, which teaches how to build one's own geodesic dome, *Inflatocookbook* (1970) by Ant Farm, devoted to creating inflatable structures; as well as designers Victor Papanek and James Hennessey's guide, *Nomadic Furniture* (1973-1974), which included blueprints for easily assembled furniture. These different handbooks were in fact one of the major contributions of the communes to the field of design, and in this sense the space they were given in the aforementioned exhibition is fully justified.
- 9 Hippies were not the only community to be under particular scrutiny in these exhibitions, as in the 1960s and 1970s other “groups” also appeared that were trying to satisfy their need for nomadism and mobility. At the Designmuseum of Helsinki, the emphasis was placed on skateboarding and the skateboarding community that emerged in California in the 1960s. The exhibition displayed skater magazines and the objects that were created by the development of this new practice: different kinds of boards, wheels, trucks, and a pair of shoes designed especially for skating, the Vans “Era” model of 1975. The SFMOMA exhibition, on the other hand, chose to document the

attraction held by wide-open spaces such as mountains and forests, through the example of outdoors activities. The exhibition showed climbing carabiners and hexes designed by Chouinard Equipment, a hiking backpack and a tent, *Oval Intention* (1976) designed by The North Face. As one of the centrepieces of the exhibition, the tent was displayed on a podium. The fact these objects were exhibited was an attempt to extract them from the category of hobby equipment, turning them into the elements of an ode to freedom and non-conformism. Skateboarding, climbing and hiking are all experiences of the environment and landscape removed from normal urban infrastructures, and that seek to stretch one's own limits. The exhibited objects demonstrated this through the common denominator of new technologies.

PROMOTIONAL PHOTOGRAPH FOR THE OCULUS RIFT VIRTUAL REALITY HEADSET, 2016 © OCULUS VR, LLC

10 Connected Collectives

- 11 The technological aspect of Californian design was central in the Helsinki and SFMOMA exhibitions, from the creation of personal computers to more and more sophisticated and connected objects. The rise of the Silicon Valley in the 1970s was represented by the first (desktop and later laptop) computers by Apple, Osborne, Xerox and Hewlett-Packard, mouse prototypes from the 1980s, Susan Kare's sketches for the Macintosh icons, etcetera. Next came iPod music players (Apple), iPhones (from prototypes to the currently commercialised smartphones), wrist pedometers, miniature cameras, self-driving cars, and *Snoo* (2016)—a smart cradle by Fuseproject that detects crying and analyses babies' sleeping patterns. *California: Designing Freedom* not only presented a particularly broad selection of projects, it also showed applications designed by the major tech companies over the past ten years: Google, Google Maps, Facebook, Twitter. In this case, utopia is no longer social or political as it was in the 1960s and 70s communities, but technological. Acting as updated versions of the American frontier culture, online research browsers are now called Explorer (Microsoft) and Safari (Mac). A new world is supposed to open up to the user, recast as a 20th or 21st century pioneer. A geographical shift also took place: cool modernism from the 1950s was predominantly a Southern-California phenomenon, whereas computer development happened in the Northern part of the state (Intel in Santa Clara, Apple in Cupertino, Facebook in Menlo Park, Google in Mountain View, Stanford University).

- 12 In the SFMOMA exhibition, there was no clear division between North and South California. Rather than rigidity, *Designed in California* showed real flexibility, spatially and theoretically: set in one large room, the layout was less compartmentalised than in Helsinki, and it refrained from establishing a direct influence between 1960s counterculture and today's culture of screens. Instead, it outlined a state of mind that pervades California and influences designers all over California, not just in the Bay Area. To emphasise this idea, the exhibition included a reconstitution of Charles and Ray Eames's conference room, presented as the link between North and South California, the connection between furniture and interaction design. The conference room as it was shown at the SFMOMA¹⁰ was made up of chairs and a table for meetings, on which various objects were placed (such as pencil and candle holders), others were arranged on a shelf (spinning-tops, shells, masks). Posters and photographs were hung on the walls, creating a heterogeneous mix of pictures which was typical of the Eameses's visual approach, using an associative method that is also noticeable in the editing of their films and multi-screen projections they developed for exhibitions from the end of the 1950s.¹¹
- 13 One of these films was in fact shown in the conference room: *View From the People* (1966), a reworked version of *Think*, the projection they designed for the IBM pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1964. The film's message is based on a simple idea: by multiplying information and diversifying points of view, it is possible to find clear solutions to seemingly complex problems, for instance organising a city's urban planning, or, in a more futile way, working out seating arrangements for a dinner party. The film was shown halfway through the exhibition itinerary and was particularly important as it suggested a shift in the role of design within society. According to Zoë Ryan, the curator for design and architecture at the Art Institute Chicago, "[Design, they believed,] was no longer about creating independent objects based solely on formal or functional imperatives but about generating design solutions based on an understanding of how these objects fit in an entire system of human interactions and relationships."¹² In this slightly didactic projection-reduced, for the SFMOMA exhibition to a single split screen instead of the dozen of screens facing the viewers in the original screening—the Eameses also emphasised the growing weight of media and the future omnipresence of digital technologies in a connected world where everything is linked.
- 14 **Liberty, Liberation, Liberalism**
- 15 Charles and Ray Eames were trying, with *View From the People*, to convince their viewers of the potential of technology in creating a more egalitarian society. In order to accomplish this, however, they relied on the exhibition programme initiated by a multinational company, IBM, whose social and egalitarian aims are far from obvious. The same ambivalence permeated the discourse of *California: Designing Freedom*, in which the values of the major technology companies (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon) were shown as the fulfilment of those advocated by hippie communities: creativity, personal development, the quest for happiness, and above all, *liberation*, whose aim is not so much to create freedom from oppression (be it economic, political, social or environmental) as to, at long last, "become oneself", to be freed from oneself. The DNA of California, and by extension its design, supposedly lies in this desire for freedom. Indeed, Brendan McGetrick, one of the curators, writes: "In various ways, this exhibition asserts that the distinguishing feature of California design is its emphasis on

personal liberation”¹³. In this sense, the Helsinki exhibition is questionable. Although these companies’ public relations departments have relied on the celebration of freedom and the liberation of consumers for years, it does not follow that the role of a museum is to support this discourse, which is but the neoliberal manifestation of the capitalist model, glossed over by progressive ideals.

- 16 Can the iPhone really be considered a “revolution in human behaviour”¹⁴ in a positive and emancipatory sense? The exhibition reintegrated, depoliticized and appropriated the legacy of the countercultural and anti-establishment history of California, and nothing was left out: hippie communities¹⁵, the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, civil and LGBT rights movements, protests against the Vietnam war, and so forth. Only the liberating and personal aspect was emphasised, cut off from any kind of desire for collective emancipation on the scale of society. The exhibition’s inclusion of social networks, of a few online collaborative tools, as well as hacker and maker projects were not enough to convince of the legitimacy of its discourse.
- 17 The “Californication” of the world by the propagation of objects designed by Silicon Valley companies is based on the same individual values as those at the heart of neoliberal corporations: the storytelling of success, fluidity, personal accomplishment, flexibility, nomadism, adaptability.¹⁶ The same kind of narrative of success is also at work in the Helsinki exhibition, through the valorisation of an apparently trivial space: suburban garages. Four photographs show the garages of Walt Disney’s uncle, Steve Jobs’s parents (Apple), David and Lucile Packard (Hewlett-Packard), and Susan Wojcicki (where Google was created). These closed, in no way exceptional, garage doors do not tell the viewer much, but the cartels reveal what should be understood here: in a mere garage, the bold can reinvent the world, because in each one of these cases, the “magic” began in a garage. Other scenography choices also draw the museum towards the commercial environment of the showroom and the corporate sphere. The space given to the presentation videos for some of the objects displayed in the Helsinki exhibition was somewhat disconcerting: they were directly supplied by the corporations that created them, such as Twitter, Snapchat, Google and Nest. What status can these videos be given? Did they provide context, were they examples of corporate communication, design or advertising? On this point, the scenography of *Designed in California* at the SFMOMA dispelled all ambiguity: the few videos included in the exhibition were clearly displayed only for their documentary value, in relation to the selection of projects. In this sense, the reconstitution of Charles and Ray Eames’s conference room, period room-style, was a way of exhibiting objects as elements to gaze at and understand in their relation to each other, rather than desirable products displayed in order to be sold.¹⁷

The North Face, *Oval Intention* tent, 1976; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, gift of Martin Zemitis / SlingFin, Inc., photo: Don Ross

18 Mexico, So Far and Yet So Near

- 19 The discourse and ambition of the LACMA *Found in Translation* exhibition were radically different, because its curators were not seeking an “essence” of Californian design—that is, a type of design that is typically and exclusively Californian. On the contrary, they chose to consider it through the prism of its relation to Mexico. Connecting the two countries is particularly meaningful: Mexico and California share a border, their climates are similar (as far as Southern California is concerned in any case), and their histories partially overlap (when Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, California was Mexican, before it was taken over by the United States in 1850). *Found in Translation* is part of the Pacific Standard Time cultural programme conducted in the South of the state by the Getty Center. The theme of the programme’s third iteration was the relations between the LA art scene and South America, and it took a political turn after the election of Donald Trump in 2016. Even though the LACMA’s programme had been initiated long before his election, it can only be seen as the celebration of the Californian/Mexican melting pot and cultural diversity, as opposed to the American president’s absurd project of building a wall between the two countries.
- 20 The exhibition demonstrated that California’s cool modernism had a perfect equivalent in Mexico. In Acapulco and Palm Springs, the same villas with patios were being built, construction plans for detached houses with swimming pools, picture windows, wood and flat roofs were conducted in both countries, and were sometimes even designed by the same architects. The catalogue emphasises the fact that ideas were also circulating in the field of furniture design, as Californian and Mexican designers were finding inspiration for new shapes and materials on either side of the border.¹⁸ Californian design drew on pre-Colombian patterns (feathered serpents, Sun stones, calendar stones, as well as elements reminiscent of Aztec, Toltec, Zapotec and Maya styles): the houses built by Frank Lloyd Wright in Los Angeles, *Hollyhock House* (1921) and *Ennis House* (1924) with their neo-Maya ornamentation and their proportions which evoke

pre-Colombian temples, are emblematic in this regard. Some creators, such as textile designer Saul Borisov, went beyond this exotic fascination and moved to Mexico City where they started reinterpreting local furniture. Clara Porset, Xavier Guerrero and Michael van Beuren reused the simple form of the Mexican *butaca* (a wooden seat used as a low chair) while also working with *ixtle*, a Mexican fabric made from woven agave fibres. The result was modern-looking chairs originating from non-industrial models and created with specifically Mexican artisanal materials. Generally speaking, through their interest in Mexican productions, Californian designers were looking for a certain spontaneity, a regional identity or even a “truth”, with all the condescension that can be implied by an interest in a so-called “naïve” production. Mexico seemed like a mine of techniques, that were reinvested on the Californian side of the border: *papier-mâché*, metalwork, weaving (Kay Sekimachi), metal wire crocheting (Ruth Awasa). One of Charles and Ray Eames’s lesser-known films, *Day of the Dead* (1957), in which all the preparations and the different trades connected to the domestic organization of the day of the dead in Mexico are recorded, was shown at the end of the exhibition.

- 21 *Found in Translation* was a rich, dense and abundantly documented exhibition, on a little-explored subject. It was all the more important because it shed light on the constant back and forth between Mexico and California in terms of design, revealing the complex political and formal relations, fed by continual new connections, between both countries. It was also a model exhibition from a curatorial point of view, as it included pre-Hispanic objects from other departments of the LACMA, while relying on numerous acquisitions made during the exhibition’s preparatory phase. It especially succeeded in changing the view of self-generating Californian design, by redefining its relationship to Mexican production. Although designing outdoors furniture and the use of fiberglass are seen as specifically Californian, numerous similarities can be noted between the benches and deckchairs designed by Douglas Deeds and Po Shun Leong (who lived in Mexico for a long time before moving to California). Their research was taking place simultaneously, without the Californian model being in any way ahead of the Mexican. The same is true of the Olympics. In 1968, Mexico City hosted the summer Olympics and it was decided that the existing sports facilities would be reused. A group of architects and designers, led by Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, was in charge of the event and designed a signage system that enabled visitors to move more easily through the city via its network of motorways.¹⁹ The logo and the reception staff’s uniforms mixed Op Art and traditional geometric patterns on which the colours of the Mexican flag appeared nowhere. For the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, designer Deborah Sussman designed a project combining signage systems and communication which was directly inspired by the Mexican precedent. She excluded the American colours (blue, white and red) from the graphic charter, and designed column-shaped modules that were destined to be used as signs in the city when visitors travelled on its motorways. Whereas Mexican influences on Californian design are often underestimated or even concealed, *Found in Translation* made them the focal point of its discourse, proving that Californian design did not appear *ex nihilo* in the 1950s, encouraged by a little sunshine and good will, but that it was fed by constant exchanges with neighbouring Mexico.

22 In the Shadow of the Californian Sun

- 23 *Found in Translation*, through its effort to reveal the cross-influences between Mexico and California, was exemplary of what a museum can offer in terms of design exhibitions. In this way, the LACMA was continuing the impulse created by *Living in a*

Modern Way, an exhibition whose catalogue was supplemented by a book that listed most of the designers that were active in California in the middle of the 20th century.²⁰ The content of the exhibition and of both publications helped understand to what extent design in California has always been a question of immigration and the assimilation of extra-American cultures—Mexico was not the only country concerned by this process of absorption. The Asian diaspora (Chinese, Korean and Japanese) though it is smaller than the Latina community, plays a role that should also be examined, especially concerning the use of flexible materials such as bamboo and rattan that were in great use for the renewal of outdoors furniture that is so typical of Californian design. The seats designed by Danny Ho Fong and his son Miller Yee Fong are representative of the fusion between Californian-style forms and Asian crafts such as wickerwork. Contrary to what has often been said or suggested, modern Californian design was not monolithic. As is often the case where creation is concerned, it was the result of the coming together of different cultures and this is an important fact to emphasise.

- 24 As could clearly be seen in all three exhibitions, Californian design was not characterised by an immediately recognisable “style”, as is the case for objects by the Memphis group or, to a certain extent, for the objects gathered by Jasper Morrison and Fukasawa Naoto under the “Super Normal” label. Rather—and such is probably its specificity—it is the result of a comprehensive approach of design, that is by definition at the crossroads of different fields: product design, graphic design, user interface design, as well as a distinct interest for technology and IT. Californian design’s relation to handcrafts has not been thoroughly examined yet, but was evoked by *Designed in California* through the example of Edith Heath’s ceramics. This is another problematic point which deserves clarification, just as much as its connection to digital technologies. The discourses that accompany these productions—as could clearly be seen in *California: Designing Freedom* and in a vaguer way in *Designed in California*—generally emphasise Californian designers’ alleged qualities: inventiveness, experimentation, collaboration, optimism and a desire to change the world. These discourses are repeated, by the institution, by corporations’ PR departments, and even by some designers, such as David Kelley, one of the founders of IDEO, a company that popularised the methodology of design thinking. He declared: “We’re in Silicon Valley, in the Bay Area, and the notion that we can change the world together is really energizing.”²¹ They all refer to great ideals which end up sounding empty once the objects are replaced in their context, which in general is exclusively commercial. In this case, the designer’s role is that of “lubricant”²² for big corporations and their investors: they facilitate uses, and consequently sales, all the while providing them with new communication and advertising assets. In 1957, while it took good care not to reveal anything about the composition of its highly toxic herbicides, the chemical company Monsanto entirely funded the House of the Future in the Disneyland amusement park of Anaheim, in the Los Angeles suburbs. This vision of the future, that was set thirty years later, in 1987, used design for positive ends, showing visitors the plastic furniture and objects that were supposed to be used in Californian homes to be.²³
- 25 It is the museum’s role to identify what falls under the category of design, and what falls under the commercial output of corporations, to question hidden ideologies in “positive” visions of the future, to reintroduce singularity, doubt, and complexity where industrialists chose the path of the standardisation of uses and behaviours. For it is impossible to forget that Californian economic success, on a whole, has not

prevented dire consequences: homeless camps developing all over the State and especially in the cities, massive pollution due to intensive agriculture, huge forest fires, etcetera. These asperities, however, are hidden, erased in the aforementioned discourses, leaving only a sunny, carefree, representation of California. Some projects, especially those connected to critical design (also known as design fiction, conceptual design or speculative design²⁴) are an invitation to question the truly emancipatory and social role of design. Such is the case, for instance, of *Borderwall as Architecture* (2009-), a project by Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello, who have (more “classic”) pieces exhibited in *Designed in California*. *Borderwall as Architecture* aims at imagining the Mexican-American border as a meeting place—rather than as the materialisation of a separation—in a concrete and serious way, through shared greenhouses, or in a more ironic manner with kitchens serving out tacos on the American side and thus fostering a spirit of kinship. Up until now, Californian design has seldom been sympathetic to critical approaches, it is therefore all the more essential that the museum should support these reflections, rid of their postcard palm-tree imaginaries, far from hollow good intentions and mirages.

NOTES

3. *California: Designing Freedom* (10 November 2017–04 March 2018), Helsinki : Designmuseum. Curators: Brendan McGetrick and Justin McGuirk. The exhibition was initially shown at the London Design Museum from 24 May to 17 October 2017.
4. *Designed in California* (27 January 2017–27 May 2018), San Francisco: SFMOMA. Curators: Jennifer Dunlop Fletcher and Robert J. Kett.
5. *Found in Translation: Design in California and Mexico, 1915–1985* (17 September 2017–01 April 2018), Los Angeles: LACMA. Curators: Wendy Kaplan and Staci Steinberger.
6. In France, for example *Los Angeles 1955–1985 : naissance d'une capitale artistique* at the Centre Pompidou in 2006, and more recently *Los Angeles : une fiction* at the Contemporary Art Museum of Lyon in 2017.
7. Jacob, Sam. “Context as Destiny: The Eameses from Californian Dreams to the Californiafication of Everywhere”, *The World of Charles and Ray Eames*, London: Barbican Center; New York: Rizzoli, 2015, p. 165. Ed. by Catherine Ince, Lotte Johnson
8. Turner, Fred. *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006. The Helsinki exhibition catalogue features a conversation between one of the curators and Fred Turner: *California: Design Freedom*, London: Design Museum; Phaidon, 2017, p. 198–199. Ed. by Brendan McGetrick, Justin McGuirk
9. Among the numerous works devoted to this publication, see *Whole Earth Field Guide*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2016. Ed. by Caroline Maniaque-Benton, Meredith Gaglio
10. Originally installed in the second building of the Eameses’s house that was used as a studio, the conference room occupied a larger space than in the *Designed in California* exhibition, and was arranged differently.

11. See for example the text by Beatriz Colomina devoted to the screening of *Glimpses of America*, created by Charles and Ray Eames for the 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow: *Cernés par les images : l'architecture de l'après Spoutnik*, Paris: B2, 2013.
12. Ryan, Zoë. "Taking Positions. An Incomplete History of Architecture and Design Exhibitions", in *As Seen: Exhibitions That Made Architecture and Design History*, Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2017, p. 20. Ed. by Zoë Ryan
13. *California: Design Freedom*, Op. cit., p. 201
14. *Ibid.*, p. 33
15. From a formal point of view, the aesthetics of Apple products is however closer to the smooth and sober shapes of Dieter Rams for Braun than the hand-crafted work of hippie communities.
16. Spencer, Douglas. "Architecture after California", *e-flux* [online], 12 October 2017 (<https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/positions/151749/architecture-after-california/>). See also: Lazzarato, Maurizio. "On the Californian Utopia/Ideology", in *The Whole Earth: California and the Disappearance of the Outside*, Berlin: Haus der Kulturen der Welt; Sternberg Press, 2013, p. 166-168. Ed. by Diedrich Diederichsen, Anselm Franke
17. Taking advantage of the restoration of the Eames house's floors in 2011, the LACMA created an identical reproduction of the house's layout, with all its furniture and objects for the exhibition *California Design, 1930-1965: "Living in a Modern Way"*.
18. Mallet, Ana Elena. Steinberger, Staci. "'Fertile Ground'. Design Exchanges between Mexico and California, 1920-1976", in *Found in Translation: Design in California and Mexico, 1915-1985*, Los Angeles: LACMA ; Munich: Prestel, 2017, p. 182-213. Ed. by Wendy Kaplan.
19. Among other curiosities, the LACMA exhibition showed a 1970 video in which Raquel Welch dances wearing a futuristic bikini in front of the sculptures designed for the signage system of the Mexico City Olympics, and that was used as a dance interlude in her cover of the song *California Dreamin'*. In another video, she can be seen singing at the top of the Mexican archeological site of Teotihuacan.
20. *A Handbook of California Design, 1935-1965: Craftspeople, Designers, Manufacturers*, Cambridge: The MIT Press; Los Angeles: LACMA, 2013. Ed. by Bobby Tigerman
21. In an interview published in the catalogue for *California: Designing Freedom*, David Kelley, quoted in *California: Design Freedom*, Op. cit., p. 215.
22. Doze, Pierre. "Les joies irritantes des caresses infécondes. Ambition du design et éloge du fourbi", *Azimuts*, n° 44, March 2016, p. 214
23. One type of imaginary replacing another, when the attraction was taken down in 1967, it was temporarily replaced by an Alp-themed garden. In 1995, it became the setting for the King Triton Gardens, based on the movie *The Little Mermaid*.
24. See *Strange Design : du design des objets au design des comportements*, Villeurbanne: it: éditions, 2014. Ed. by Jehanne Dautrey, Emanuele Quinz; Malpass, Matt. *Critical Design in Context. History, Theory, and Practice*, London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2017
1. Crenn, Julie. "Who Run the World? South African Female Artists' Relationship to History and Normativity", *Critique d'art*, n°47, Autumn/Winter 2016, p. 97-128
2. Zernik, Clélia. "Japanese Art after Fukushima through the Prism of Festivals", *Critique d'art*, n°49, Autumn/Winter 2017, p. 81-120

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