

## GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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By PIA CATTON



### Form Versus Function? Why Choose?

Industrial designer Marc Newson has conceived of vehicles intended for almost every form of transportation: from boats to bicycles, even spaceships. His furniture is featured in the design collection of the Museum of Modern Art. Now, a decade's worth of his work—including his recent take on the Riva, the quintessential speedboat for those who need to go from Saint-Tropez to Monaco for lunch—will be on view at Gagosian Gallery from Tuesday through Oct. 23.



Digital Image 2010 MoMA, N.Y.

Virgilio Forchiassin's 'Spazio Vivo' mobile kitchen unit

Though Mr. Newson is prolific and sought after by major brands, there's one area in which he wishes he could make a major difference for the average consumer: car design, the current state of which he calls "criminal."

"It's a virus that's taken over the whole industry," the designer said. "I could do a lot more. The problem is that a lot of large corporations just don't see the value. It costs as much to design a crap car as it does to design a good car."

But while car design stagnates in mediocrity, it is not alone. "The vast majority of products are badly designed," the Mr. Newson said.

522 WEST 21ST STREET NEW YORK NY 10011 T. 212.741.1717 F. 212.741.0006

NEWYORK@GAGOSIAN.COM WWW.GAGOSIAN.COM

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The Museum of Modern Art, New York. David Whitney Collection, Gift of David Whitney.  
Philippe Starck's 'Hot Bertaa Kettle'

You don't have to be a design snob to agree. Objects that work properly, stand the test of time, and have an agreeable shape are simply not the norm in this country. It's why innovative products by brands like Apple, Ikea and Alessi are greeted with so much more excitement than those produced by their competitors. The art of design, however, also has direct and broad implications for society and technology. And if you want to explore the interaction between human beings and material objects, there are several engaging ways to do so.

First and foremost, MoMA's design department is offering an in-depth look at a most familiar subject: the kitchen. "Counter Space: Design and the Modern Kitchen," which opens Wednesday and runs through March 14, leaves no sauce pan unconsidered. The starting point is the museum's recent acquisition of a complete "Frankfurt Kitchen." Thousands of these kitchens—designed by the first female Austrian architect, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky—were produced for public housing in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, after World War I.



Paolo Sacchi

Marc Newson works to marry form and function

Underlying the exhibit is the link between kitchens featuring new appliances and issues of health, nutrition, family life and social change. "The focus is on the context around the Frankfurt Kitchen—labor saving, time saving, the new woman, the new way of living in the late 1920s and 30s," said the exhibit's curator, Juliet Kinchin.

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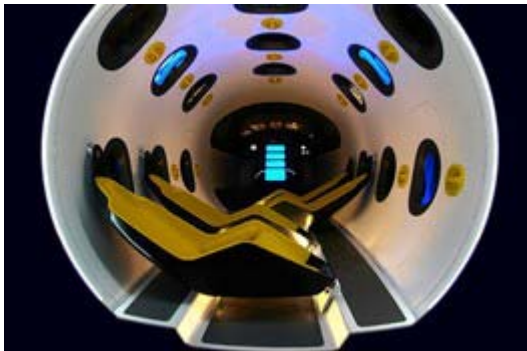
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Bright, clean spaces for food preparation and cooking heralded a modern approach to domestic life, one that continues to be relevant for working people—those who aren't buying Viking stoves or who have never cooked so much as an egg (on their Viking stove). "There is the whole language of thrift, economy and sustainable design, which was implicit in design in the 1920s and 1930s," Ms. Kinchin said.

"Counter Space" also includes pieces of popular kitchenware, including a glass double-boiler and an aluminum ice-cream scoop. "The transformation that heat-resistant glass and spun aluminum made to cost and functionality is really important," the curator said.

Kitchen design, though, has to fit within home design. And architecture—which depends on the current state of materials, technology and policy—can affect entire communities. The intersection of these concerns, at a local level, is the subject of a new documentary, "The Bungalows of Rockaway," which airs Thursday at 8 p.m. on Channel 13.



Fabrice Gousset

Marc Newson's concept for the Astrium Space Shuttle

Directed by Jennifer Callahan, the film traces how the design of these small homes, popularized in the early 20th century, impacted this seaside neighborhood in Queens. By 1933, there were more than 7,000 Bungalows in Rockaway peninsula, a booming retreat from the city for working New Yorkers. But in the 1970s, these small homes were razed in favor of high-rise housing projects.

Now there are only a few hundred bungalows left in the area. The streets where they once stood are dotted with aluminum-sided townhouses built without porches and with the expectation of air conditioning (in a neighborhood known for its constant, cooling breezes).

Interestingly, the origin of the bungalow dates from days spent in a tropical climate. When the British were setting up in India, they built their own brick dwellings that mimicked the local huts; the word derives from "bangla," meaning "in the Bengali style." The design traveled a long way before spreading to this part of the world, and before the legacy is lost, Ms. Callahan set about to document it: "Preservation is not about just buildings like Grand Central."

If only Mr. Newson would expand his practice, the bungalow might make a comeback.

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