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MUSEUM



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*Reflections on  
"Do It Yourself"  
Constructing Masculinity  
in the Basement*

*Doing it Ourselves:  
The Joys of Imagining*



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# Museum President to Depart

After eight years as president of the National Building Museum, Susan Henshaw Jones has decided to step down as of January 31, 2003, to return to New York City. This is, of course, sad news for the Museum, since Susan has been its driving force during a period of remarkable institutional progress. Susan's decision was a very personal one. Her husband, Richard Eaton, is a federal judge based in New York, where he lives during the week, and her older daughter is attending college there. With Susan's younger daughter now making plans to leave Washington for college, as well, Dick and Susan intend to unite in New York.



President  
Susan Henshaw Jones

It is hard to imagine the National Building Museum without Susan. During her tenure as president, the Museum has grown tremendously. Total annual attendance has skyrocketed, reaching nearly 400,000 in 2001, while the annual budget has nearly tripled to over \$8,000,000. These accomplishments are truly impressive, but more importantly, Susan has guided the Museum to increasing recognition—for its exhibitions, its education programs, its award programs, and its professionalism.

Susan inherited in 1994 a diverse mission, and under her leadership, the Museum has developed a distinctive and influential voice. Eclectic, multi-disciplinary exhibitions that fuse the fields of architecture, engineering, planning, construction, and social history are a hallmark of the Museum. Susan worked tirelessly to expand the space available for exhibitions in our historic building, while successfully procuring greatly increased funding for individual shows. As a result of these efforts, today, the Museum regularly curates and installs ten or more exhibitions a year over two floors of gallery space.

Also during Susan's tenure, educational programming has flourished, with school programs attendance up from 3,944 in 1993 to an estimated 22,000 Scouts and students in the fiscal year now drawing to a close. Through its school and outreach programs, the Museum is arguably more connected to its hometown than any other local museum. And the exploration of the Museum's mission through lectures and symposia has reached an impressive level—this year the scheduled number of lectures stands at 117 with an estimated attendance of 14,500. Additionally, the Museum instituted three prizes: the Apgar Award for Excellence, The Vincent Scully Prize, and the Henry C. Turner Prize, the latter two with significant endowments. The Museum also recently launched an ambitious new Web site, including the online exhibition *Building America*.

No museum can grow without adequate funding, and Susan has been a prodigious fundraiser, creating *The Corinthians* program, enlarging the Honor Award galas, and raising millions of dollars for exhibitions and education programs.

Susan's energy, hard work, charm, leadership, and high professional standards have brought the Museum to this exciting point. I have enjoyed my close working relationship and friendship with her since 1995. It is now time to build on her impressive legacy as we search for a strong museum leader to carry us into the future.

Carolyn S. Brody  
Chair, National Building Museum

# Reflections on “Do It Yourself”

Home improvement offers compelling evidence that the history of architecture only begins when the initial structure, often designed and constructed by professionals, is completed. In this respect, as do-it-yourselfers took up hammer, saw, and paintbrush in the 1940s and 1950s, they were both producers and consumers of their homes. Like the generations of rural Americans who built and altered their houses as part of the ongoing operation of family farms, they converted unfinished spaces into bedrooms for new children and made other functional improvements. At the same time, as owners of urban and suburban homes, post-World War II do-it-yourselfers participated in a newer trend: a national culture of consumption characterized by the emergence of a mass market for industrially produced goods.

Three major historical circumstances—technological change, the growth of the mass media, and shifting ideas about gender—together cast “do-it-yourself” as part of American

consumer culture and domestic life, and launched a craze that embodied the postwar era and left a legacy that remains with us today.

Changes in technology played an important role in influencing homeowners’ decisions about what kinds of remodeling projects to take on and how to do them. Transformations took place in two sets of interrelated arenas: tools and materials on the one hand, and technical skill level on the other hand.

After World War II,

developers employed simplified house design and construction methods on a large scale; this meant that many of the new suburban dwellings were in need of completion. In some of the early Levittown houses, for example, a staircase led up to an unfinished attic. At the same

by Carolyn Goldstein

**From October 19, 2002 through August 10, 2003, the National Building Museum will present *Do It Yourself: Home Improvement in 20th-Century America*, a comprehensive look at an ongoing trend that has dramatically reshaped modern domestic life. In this article, Carolyn Goldstein, who served as originating and consulting curator of the exhibition and wrote the companion catalog published by the Museum and Princeton Architectural Press, outlines the broad cultural implications of the do-it-yourself movement.**



LEFT: Neighbors helping to paint the Newtown, Connecticut home of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Steck, 1943.

time, industrial reconversion led many manufacturers to redesign products such as power tools in lightweight, safer models for a civilian market. Makers of decorative materials similarly targeted amateurs when they introduced latex emulsion paints and pre-cut and pre-pasted wallpaper in the 1940s.

Many of the new building tools and materials introduced after World War II had years of experience and technical skill literally built into them. For example, carpentry historically required special knowledge of measuring, cutting, and joining a range of different woods. The increased availability of plywood, a versatile, laminated sheet which was often pre-cut into “handy panels,” enabled untrained homeowners to take up woodworking tasks previously limited to professional carpenters. Plywood could be used for finishing a basement, building kitchen cabinets, and making myriad other “improvements”—all one needed was a power saw. By the late 1960s, innovations such as PVC pipe and plastic-coated electrical wire similarly incorporated the craft knowledge of plumbing and electrical contractors, respectively. These kinds of innovations reduced the value of skilled professional repair and remodeling by increasing the number of home improvement tasks that were possible for amateur remodelers to do without them. At the same time, however, the rising popularity of do-it-yourself home improvement after the war encouraged new groups of people to acquire building skills. War experiences at home, in factories, and on the battlefield provided many men and women with the confidence and ability to undertake home improvement projects. And whereas amateurs of the 1950s may have limited themselves to plywood and glue, succeeding generations of do-it-yourselfers acquired a newfound interest in craftsmanship and cultivated specialized skills so they could restore and renovate historic structures.

But the rise of do-it-yourself is not a story of technological change alone. There was a great deal of continuity in the tool industry over time: hammers and nails, for instance, remained pretty much the same as they were at the beginning of the century. And homeowners did not acquire new tools or learn new skills in a cultural vacuum. As members of a growing middle class, they defined themselves in large part by their available leisure time as well as their disposable income. After 1900, as an infrastructure expanded for promoting and selling tools, equipment, and decorative supplies to this new market, they were barraged with instructional pamphlets, product advertisements, and other publications. With more than a dozen home-related magazines on the newsstands every month by the 1930s, families could read about remodeling in greater detail than ever before and also participate in magazine-sponsored remodeling contests. At the same time, *Popular Mechanics* and a number of publications for hobbyists provided how-to instructions for leisure-time woodworking and mechanical enthusiasts. After World War II, these types of books and magazines intensified their coverage of home improvement. Bestsellers like the *Family Handyman* and the *Better Homes and Gardens Handyman's Book* met a demand for do-it-yourself by providing step-by-step instructions supported by photographic illustrations. The ever-growing flood of how-to literature and television programming had the cumulative effect of narrowing the gap between professionals and certain groups of amateurs.

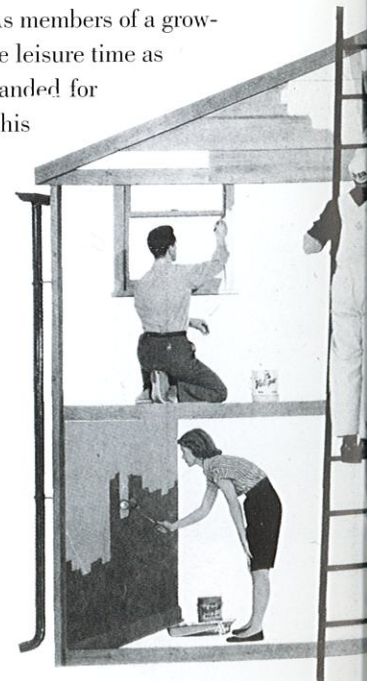
The importance of books, magazines, and advertisements



ABOVE RIGHT: Advertisement for Plumb brand tools, 1952.

ABOVE: A couple converting storage space into a spare bedroom, 1954.

FAR RIGHT: Detail from Valspar paint advertisement, 1955.



might make it seem that do-it-yourself home improvement was merely a creation of publishers, editors, advertising agents, and marketing managers. In spite of the media's influence, however, do-it-yourself was part of a dynamic consumer culture characterized by a give-and-take between powerful corporate messages and the preferences of ordinary people. Consumers bought and used products for reasons and purposes not intended by manufacturers. Within a culture suffused with the media and mass consumption, homeowners brought a range of expectations to the home-improvement supplies they purchased and they used do-it-yourself products to individualize their dwellings as well as to conform to norms advocated by writers in the commercial marketplace. And although many magazines aimed themselves at an ideal middle-class consumer, the act of applying building skills at home was a way for working-class Americans to assert their own values.

Assumptions about gender, and socially prescribed roles for men and women, respectively, were also central to the rise in popularity of do-it-yourself home improvement. Men and women used home improvement activities as arenas in which to work out changing ideas about male and female identity in relation to the postwar home. Advertisers and manufacturers struggled to determine the gender identity of the potential consumers of tools, decorative supplies, and other remodeling equipment. Magazine coverage of these products and their uses suggests that manufacturers, designers, retailers, ad agents, and editors were often uncertain about whether husbands or wives made remodeling decisions and carried out the projects. *The Family Handyman*, for example, contained advertisements for electric drills aimed primarily at men. On the rare occasions when these ads depicted women, these women used the power tools only in the kitchen for such tasks as polishing silverware. Yet the magazine's editorial content in the 1950s was more broadly aimed at both men and women and often showed women holding tools for building or lifting heavy equipment, suggesting that women were far more involved in do-it-yourself than the stereotypical advertising images from the 1950s and 1960s indicate.

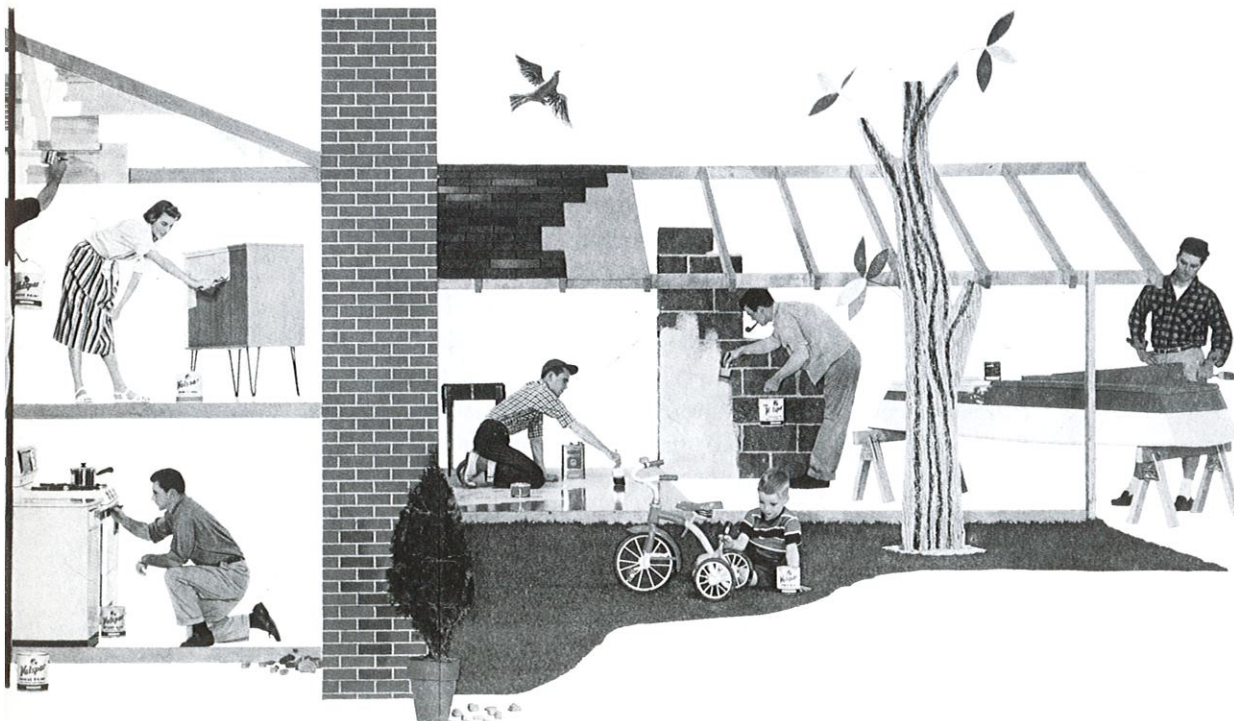
Contemporary ideas about remodeling and the choices people make today about "fixing up" their homes are part of a complex story of cultural change. *Do It Yourself*—the book and the exhibition—addresses this story and encourages readers and visitors to think about how developments in technology, the mass media, and gender identity continue to shape our expectations for improving our homes as well as our willingness—and ability—to tackle a new project.



Executive at work...with "Do-It-Yourself" Aluminum!

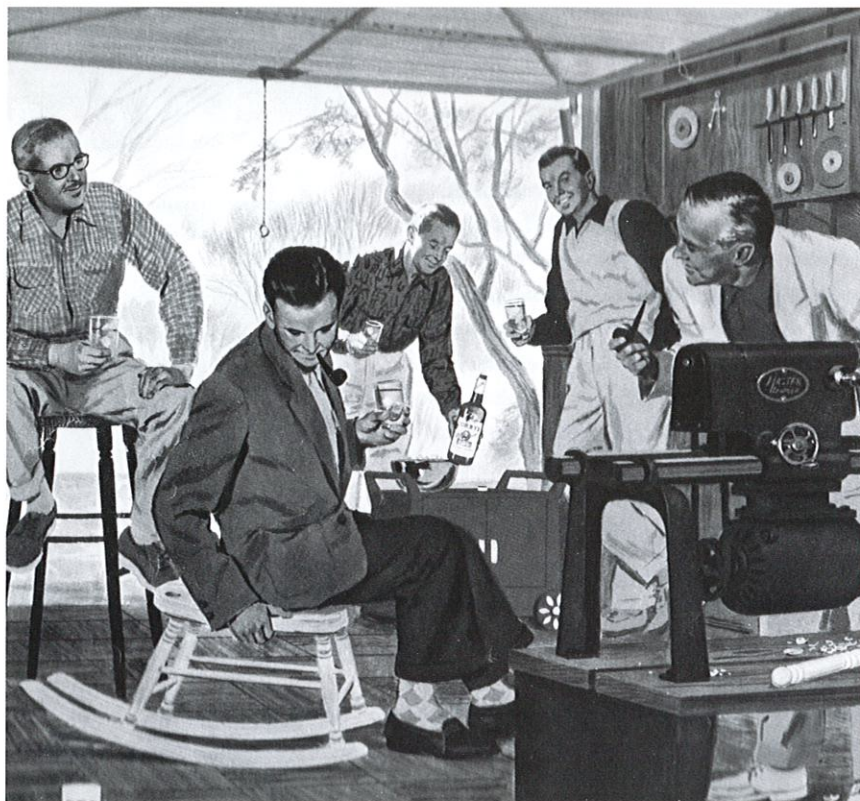
TOP: Detail from a Black & Decker advertisement, 1956.

ABOVE: Detail from a do-it-yourself aluminum advertisement, from the Reynolds Metals Company, 1953.



# Constructing

# Ma



by Steven M. Gelber

the power of the dishwasher so that it becomes a “man’s dishwasher that should say testosterone right on the front.”

Allen’s comedy works both because we expect contemporary white-collar husbands to do blue-collar work around the house, and because we recognize the sexually symbolic role of tools in that process. However, middle-class men brandishing tools are a relatively recent historical phenomenon. Nineteenth-century men left home repair and maintenance to professionals, and home advice writers assumed carpenters would be called in for jobs as simple as hammering in a nail on which to hang a picture. It was not until the Arts-and-Crafts Movement at the beginning of the 20th century that suburban husbands could literally leave their mark on their own homes.

That movement not only encouraged men to take up craft hobbies, but its associated style featured a hand-made aesthetic that enabled amateur artisans to build fashionable furniture. Freed from the design vocabulary of women’s fancywork, turn-of-the-century men began to create spheres of “domestic masculinity” in which they did jobs that had been the purview of professional craftsmen, and therefore retained the aura of pre-industrial vocational manliness. “Any fool can write a book, but it takes a man to dovetail a door,” declared one romantic practitioner of the new movement. Some of the new home workshops were in spare rooms, but most were in the newly created basement.

Sensing a new market, in 1910 *Popular Mechanics*, a professional engineering review,

In the premiere episode of *Home Improvement*, one of the most successful television shows of the 1990s, comedian Tim Allen’s character, Tim “The Tool-man” Taylor, dismisses a small drill as a “girl’s drill” and explains to his son, we want a “man’s drill.” We need “more power!” While his older sons flee the inevitable disaster, his youngest boy strips off his shirt, straps on a tool belt and joins his father in “reclaiming the male spirit” by helping him crank up

Steven M. Gelber, professor of history at Santa Clara University, is the author of *Hobbies: Leisure and the Culture of Work in America*, published by Columbia University Press in 1999. This article, drawn from a chapter in his book, expands on the question of gender roles raised in Carolyn Goldstein's lead article. Professor Gelber argues that do-it-yourself activity became a defining aspect of masculinity for late 20th-century Americans.

# Scullininity in the Basement

transformed itself into an advice magazine for homeowners. Filled with equal parts of hobby crafts and home maintenance, *Popular Mechanics* became the model for a new kind of men's magazine in which tools became objects of male desire. When Hammacher, Schlemmer & Co. offered an \$85 set of hand tools in 1908, it was fulfilling the fantasies of suburban amateurs playing at being blue-collar working men, not the needs of professional craftsmen. By the time of the Great Depression, *Popular Science* and *Popular Mechanics* were more widely read by adolescent boys than either sports or pulp magazines. Tools had become symbolic double-gendered sex objects, both the female thing desired and the male instrument of acquisition, while at the same time they sublimated real sex. Using tools, explained a high school principal, would protect youths from "morbid and degenerate practices." Rather than expelling an offending boy it would be better, she said, to "let him hammer or pound or chisel the pent-up feelings out of his system."

The growth in smaller suburban houses after 1900 increased the number of men who could treat their homes as an arena of masculine competence. The Depression, however, introduced a note of ambivalence to the household use of tools. In good times craftsmanship was a sign of manly self-reliance, but in bad times it could be an indication of economic impotence. Therefore, in the 1930s craft-work advocates went out of their way to describe wealthy do-it-yourselfers, explaining that "tucked away in a closet of one of the swankiest of New York's apartment hotels there happens to be a woodworker's bench, a

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Hammacher, Schlemmer & Co.  
Hardware, Tools, Supplies and Piano Materials  
New York, since 1848  
4th Avenue and 13th Street, Block South of Union Square

OPPOSITE: Male bonding with alcohol, tobacco, and tools.

LEFT: Tool set for the 1908 suburban handyman.



ABOVE: Do-it-yourself fashion spread in *Look* magazine with Shopsmith multi-purpose power tool.

BELOW: Gender specialization: women direct, men work.



power lathe and an amazing assortment of hand tools ready, at a moment's notice, to make the sawdust fly!"

The idea of male dominance over home maintenance and improvement remained unchallenged through World War II, although the exigencies of mobilization forced greater equality of practice. It may have been hard for Rosie the Riveter to plead incompetence, but as one female writer reminded "womenfolk," they were only "the temporary guardians of the menfolk's precious supply of tools."

In the postwar period the ex-GIs reclaimed their tools and embraced the do-it-yourself movement. The name was just coming into common usage, but the behavior was a continuing expression of domestic masculinity, a way to combat the contradictions of being a man in the feminized family environment of postwar suburbia.

Along with car care, lawn care, barbecuing, supervising boys' sports, and taking out the garbage, household maintenance and repair permitted the suburban father to stay at home without feeling

emasculated or being subsumed into an undifferentiated entity with his wife. By the mid-1950s only reading and watching television were more popular forms of recreation than do-it-yourself among married men. Do-it-yourselfers were reportedly spending \$4-6 billion a year on supplies and tools like the newly-developed hand-held quarter-inch drill. "It makes every man his own building boss, his own carpenter, his own cabinetmaker," promised *Collier's* in 1954. Crafters who wanted more than a drill, but who did not have the space for a full set of stationary tools, could buy Shopsmith's combination lathe-tablesaw-drillpress, whose complexity was ridiculed by *MAD* magazine.

Manufacturers, writers, and educators tried to interest women in heavy tool projects and some accepted the invitation, but most remained on the sidelines. In an adult version of the tomboy pattern, the wife who did a man's work around the house was admired for her competence, but the husband who did not, was less than a man. Wives, like those parodied by John Keats in *The Crack in the Picture Window*, felt contempt for the men who could not perform the marital act of home repair. "I wanted Buster to put up a towel rack for the children," one wife complained. "I went out and bought it for him, screws and all, and gave it to him and told him where I wanted it," but he did nothing but read his paper. Keats was being critical of both a domineering and emasculating wife and the husband who did not shoulder his responsibility.

The workshop remained the husband's designated space, a repository of maleness in an increasingly ungendered world. A 1954 whiskey advertisement shows five men standing around in the garage workshop, smoking and drinking. They have retreated to this male sanctuary to fraternize around three potent symbols of manliness: alcohol, tobacco, and tools. These suburban handymen were not only husbands, but also fathers who needed to act as gender role models for their sons, who were in danger of being mollycoddled by their mothers into sissyness if not outright homosexuality. Sharing masculine hobbies gave fathers a structured environment in which to interact with their sons.

The post-war literature is full of indulgently humorous references to handyman disasters, but like Tim Allen's TV character, they make it clear that for do-it-yourselfers there was pleasure in the pain. The quintessentially male pastime of reveling in self-inflicted discomfort had moved indoors. A man no longer had to play football, climb mountains, or sail outside the harbor, to experience the perverse joy of suffering. Now even the un-athletic could participate in the community of manly perseverance by wasting money, bruising their fingers, and making six return trips to the hardware store.



by Karal Ann Marling

# Doing it Ourselves

## *The Joys of Imagining*

Karal Ann Marling, professor of art history and American studies at the University of Minnesota, is a witty and perceptive observer of cultural trends. In the following article, she places the post-World War II do-it-yourself movement in the context of the popular culture of the era.

I am addicted to do-it-yourself shows: *Trading Spaces*, *Martha Stewart Living*, Bob Vila, anything on HGTV. This is a legacy of a childhood misspent in front of the only television set in our neighborhood. The personnel of one of the two stations on the air in the early 1950s in our part of America seemed to consist of a single pair of on-camera personalities—Bob and Anne Keefe, husband and wife. She hosted the nightly bowling show. He dressed up in a velveteen leprechaun suit and, as “Gilly,” with a fake Irish accent, showed kiddie cartoons in the afterschool hours. But at suppertime, just after the evening newscast, the two of them teamed up for fifteen minutes of classic do-it-yourselfism. *The Bob and Anne Show* featured him repairing screendoors and fixing the doorbell. And her making wastebaskets out of cardboard tubs covered in old wallpaper. Whatever mild humor the show managed to evoke came from his unflinching ability to foul up his task while Anne breezed through hers with ill-disguised contempt for her inept mate.

I loved that show—and the scissors-and-paste segments of *Ding-Dong School* with the intrepid Miss Frances, and the morning *Home Show* on NBC, with Poppy Cannon demonstrating how to mix three cans into one gourmet casserole and Nancy-anne Graham transforming two orange crates and a yard of dimestore fabric into a Hollywood-style dressing table. The airwaves were crowded with such offerings during the postwar years. Adelaide Hawley impersonated Betty Crocker on ABC. *The Better Home Show* presented around-the-house projects in the guise of drama, in which star Norman Brokenshire was assisted in his folly by the folks next door. Every time you turned on the set, it seemed, somebody was showing somebody else how to beat an egg, refinish old furniture, or make charming Christmas ornaments out of wallpaper cleaning compound.

And it wasn't just television. Magazines were full of similar features on what amounted to self-improvement through home improvement. While chipper directions for creating treasures from trash have been a standard feature of women's magazines, like Godey's *Ladies Book*, since Victorian times, the instructional mode took on a fresh intensity after World War II when, as our Baby Boom Generation can attest, the formation of new households amounted to the national pastime. Young wives who had spent the '40s in the labor force suddenly found themselves in the kitchen, wondering what to do.



ABOVE: Adelaide Hawley shows how to bake perfect cookies on ABC-TV in the early 1950s.

LEFT: Betty Crocker Picture Cookbook, 1950.



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Enjoy "The Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet" on radio and TV each week on ABC, sponsored by *Picture Craft* and *Lipton*.

Ozzie and Harriet Nelson, TV sitcom stars, advertise paint-by-numbers sets, 1953.

The *Betty Crocker Picture Cookbook*, published in 1950, outsold the Bible because it answered a pressing need for clear, visual lessons in how to function at home. Based on techniques first explored in photo magazines, such as *Look* and *Life*, the new cookbook anticipated the camera shots soon to be used on daytime variety shows where everybody, from Arthur Godfrey to Dinah Shore, was whipping up a Jell-o mold or a spectacular cake in between the musical numbers and the celebrity interviews. Furthermore, the backgrounds and settings themselves gave intriguing clues as to the possibility of making the scullery of the servantless, suburban ranch house into a "dream kitchen" through the creative deployment of colored appliances and coordinated accessories.

If television supplied the householder with new ways of doing things, the TV set itself—as a physical object—multiplied the possibilities. Why eat in the dining room (if your new house even *had* a dining room) when the action was wherever the console-model television cast its grayish glow upon—a TV tray for eating as one watched? a portable refrigerator on wheels, so the party could continue without annoying sorties to the kitchen? In effect, with formal patterns of dining and entertaining shattered by the arrival of television, meals also became do-it-yourself affairs, or moveable feasts, assembled when and where the nightly listings dictated. *Disneyland* on Wednesday nights called for individual TV dinners on TV trays—turkey for Mom, beef for Dad, mix-and-match, brown-and-serve, flash-frozen. Oh, how very modern!

Sometimes, modernity backfired. Convenience foods, for instance, promised a world of effortless leisure. But little by little, the creative itch so evident in the popularity of didactic television was scratched by the manufacturers of cake mixes and the like. In the mid-'50s, magazine ads for Jell-o displayed such lavish and time-consuming molded salads that sales plummeted; housewives had clearly set limits to what they would do to achieve artistry in gelatin. When do-it-yourself meant tedium rather than fun, it became more pleasurable to read the ad or watch the show and imagine one's self in the sensible shoes of Betty Crocker.

Creativity was fine, so long as it was easy—and that was the rationale behind the paint-by-numbers craze of the 1950s. Widely advertised on television and by TV stars appearing in magazine ads to endorse art-making, the boxed sets (like the plastic model kits of the day) offered many advantages. The finished product was yours to frame. The pre-measured paints meant no muss, no fuss. And the pre-printed canvases showed you just where every numbered color went. The sets were foolproof. The number-painter had all the fun of smelling and squishing the paint and none of the disappointments attendant upon one's ability to draw a convincing puppy or sunset.

It is easy to denigrate the modes of TV-inspired creativity that sprouted from all sides throughout the 1950s because so many of them involved simple operations, predigested results, or the mere rearrangement of various manufactured items. Decorating the kitchen, for example, often came down to matching the color of the wallpaper to the shade of the range. Decorating the whole house involved buying the right items—as pictured in the pages of *Better Homes and Gardens*—and arranging them just as the illustrations showed. Even the fad for charm bracelets meant that the owner told the story of her own life or travels by accumulating ready-made ornaments, made by someone else.

But that is where the Stewarts and the Vilas go wrong on occasion, by assuming that we want to do-it-ourselves from scratch, by growing the tree to hand-craft the roof beams on the guest cottage in the backyard. Do-it-yourself, however, generally means watching Bob and Anne mess up, imagining how I might do it better—and then persuading the nice guy at the Home Depot to do most of the work.

EXHIBITION SPONSOR

# This Old House Ventures, Inc.

The National Building Museum thanks *This Old House Ventures, Inc.*, lead sponsor of the upcoming exhibition, *Do It Yourself: Home Improvement in 20th-Century America*.

"*This Old House Ventures, Inc.* is very proud to participate in the National Building Museum's exhibition on home improvement in America," states Rich Berenson, publisher. "In 1979, when *This Old House* premiered, little did its creators dream that the show would go on to inspire an entire generation of do-it-yourselfers and home renovation enthusiasts, and be responsible for a completely new genre of television programming—from situation comedies to dedicated networks.

"Indeed, homeowners have visibly transformed the landscape and their lives by investing their own sweat equity and hard-earned income. We applaud an exhibition that celebrates this passion and recognizes the ingenuity of the American public."

The Emmy award-winning *This Old House*, television's premier home improvement series, celebrates its 23rd season on PBS this year. As companions to the television show, *This Old House Magazine* and a related Web site, books, and videos help homeowners uncover the full potential of their old and new homes. *Do It Yourself* will be featured in *This Old House Magazine* and as a special *This Old House* one-hour presentation on PBS.

*Do It Yourself: Home Improvement in 20th-Century America* is sponsored by *This Old House Ventures, Inc.* in association with Andersen Windows, Benjamin Moore & Co., DuPont™ Corian®, GMC, Hewlett-Packard, Home & Garden Television, Leatherman Tools, Lennox Industries Inc., and Whirlpool.

*Blueprints* readers are invited to receive a free preview issue of *This Old House Magazine*—call 800 621.6700 or visit online at [www.thisoldhouse.com](http://www.thisoldhouse.com).



Hotpoint designed these plastic appliance models to aid kitchen planning, 1948.

*Do It Yourself:  
Home Improvement in  
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# Me, Myself

# Infrastructure

by Martin Moeller

Admit it: You take infrastructure for granted. You read by electric light; drive your car on paved roads, take public transit, or walk on sidewalks; and frequently turn on a faucet, confident that potable water will emerge in limitless quantities—but never think about what it takes to make all this happen. In fact, none of these things would be possible without a strikingly complex web of ever-expanding engineered systems—that is, infrastructure.

This is the message behind a new exhibition, *Me, Myself and Infrastructure: Private Lives and Public Works in America*, that will be on view at the National Building Museum from October 4, 2002 to February 16, 2003. Presented in conjunction with the 150th anniversary of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the exhibition explores the myriad connections between our daily routines and the engineered networks that define modern life.

The exhibition engagingly reveals the fundamentally human implications of infrastructure by posing a series of questions such as “Is It Safe?” and “Why So Big?” These questions are answered through a wide variety of case studies. The exhibition addresses such diverse topics as the origins of the traffic light and the illusion that the Internet is somehow “free.”

As the exhibition catalog states, “[Infrastructure] is the major cultural and technological achievement of the United States.” The exhibition will encourage visitors to examine their own lifestyles and to consider how their behavior and consumer choices will affect current and future engineered systems. The answers may surprise you.

*Me, Myself and Infrastructure* is underwritten by the American Society of Civil Engineers, and is made possible by the support of the American Society of Civil Engineers Foundation, The Elizabeth & Stephen Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, and Charles Pankow Builders, Ltd.

American Society of Civil Engineers



Building a Better World

ABOVE: Construction of City Tunnel No. 3, Queens.

# Zaha Hadid Laboratory

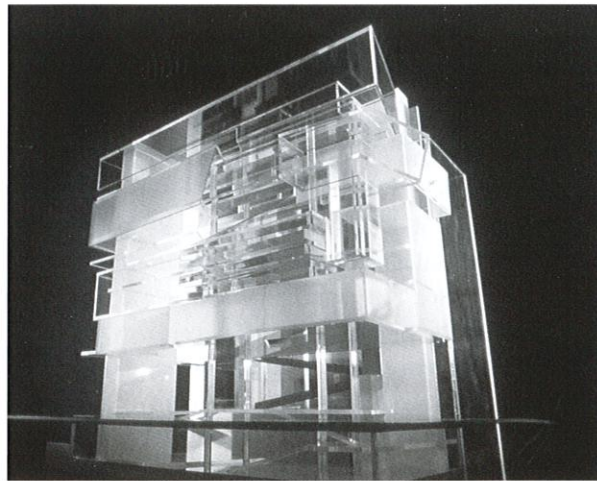


Through November 17, 2002, the National Building Museum will present *Zaha Hadid Laboratory*, an exhibition of recent and current projects by one of the most inventive architects practicing today—and arguably the most prominent female independent practitioner in the world.

Born in Iraq and educated in Beirut and London, Zaha Hadid first garnered international attention with her controversial winning entry for the Hong Kong Peak International Design Competition in 1983. Her boldly serrated design, though never built, became an icon of “deconstructivism,” and indeed, Hadid was the only woman included in the Museum of Modern Art’s 1988 *Deconstructivist Architecture* exhibition.

After a decade during which she became known primarily as a “paper” architect—albeit an influential one—with no major built works, Hadid’s career entered a new phase with the construction of the Vitra Fire Station in Weil am Rhein, Germany, her first physically realized project. In recent years, the pace of her practice has increased, yielding a number of completed buildings and others now under construction. Among these is her first American project, the Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Arts in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Hadid was recently named by *House Beautiful* as one of its five “2002 Giants of Design,” and *The New York Times* architecture critic Herbert Muschamp has declared that “As a pure virtuoso of design, [Hadid] has no rival.” This exhibition will illuminate the highly original and sometimes aesthetically challenging work of an important architect with a rapidly growing international reputation.



by Martin Moeller

*Zaha Hadid Laboratory was originated and produced by the Exhibitions Program at the Yale University School of Architecture in collaboration with Zaha Hadid Architects. The exhibition was organized by Dean Sakamoto, Director of Exhibitions at the Yale School of Architecture and was made possible by Autodesk, Inc; Carolyn Brody; Alexander C. Gorlin; Thomas A. Kligerman; Gilbert P. Schafer III and the Elisha-Bolton Foundation, as well as the Office of Zaha Hadid. Presentation of this exhibition at the National Building Museum is made possible by the Museum’s F. Stuart Fitzpatrick Memorial Exhibition Fund.*

TOP: Zaha Hadid.

LEFT: Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Arts, Cincinnati, Ohio, presentation model.

# DAP Squad

by Mike Hill

## Tackles Design Challenges

Major funding for the DAP Squad is generously provided by The McGraw-Hill Companies. Additional support for Outreach Programs is provided by the Bender Foundation, Inc., The Clark Charitable Foundation, Clark-Winchcole Foundation, Dimick Foundation, Fannie Mae Foundation, Freddie Mac Foundation, The M. A. Healy Family Foundation, Inc., Anthony Francis Lucas-Spindletop Foundation, and the Hattie M. Strong Foundation.

### Information Desk Dedication

On July 14, 2002, the Museum dedicated a newly redesigned and rebuilt information desk in honor of Jeffrey Wilde. Jeff was a devoted Museum volunteer who died suddenly in 2000. Shown below are architect Rich Markus, who offered pro bono design services and Jeff's widow Brenda Derby, standing in front of the desk after its dedication.



On May 25 and 26, 2002, a group of 21 young people from the Museum's outreach programs went camping along the C&O Canal. Taken by itself, that may not seem particularly noteworthy, but two details of the endeavor separate it from the typical overnight camping trip: One, the young people went camping in temporary shelters they themselves designed and built, and two, the primary materials they used were corrugated plastic, duct tape, and mesh screen.

This is just one example of the types of learning experiences young people have as part of the *Design Apprenticeship Program*, or *DAP Squad*. This program joins *CityVision* and *Investigating Where We Live* as the newest of the outreach programs offered by the Museum. Where *CityVision* serves as a broad introduction to community planning and the design process, and *Investigating Where We Live* focuses on community character, photography, and graphic design, the *DAP Squad* projects are devoted to teaching construction techniques and problem-solving skills related to turning design ideas into reality.

The program began in the spring of 2000 as an outgrowth of the fall 1999 *CityVision* session. The group of students working in the Midtown sector proposed that a series of sculptural trash cans be sited around their sector. The group designed and built one full-size prototype of a trash can from corrugated board. Upon seeing the prototype, Mary Liniger Hickman, Arts in Education Coordinator of the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities,

suggested that the prototype was so good that a full-fledged version should be built. That trash can, built using sheet aluminum and recycled street signs, now graces the Museum Café. Since then, *DAP* program participants have designed and built a community information kiosk for a local library (fall 2000); working light fixtures using non-traditional materials (spring 2001); prototypes for public benches that incorporate a tree guard and bike rack (fall 2001); and the temporary shelters for the overnight camping trip (spring 2002).

When asked what she liked about *DAP Squad Five*, participant Isabella Warren-Mohr said, "It's something I have never seen done before. To build a structure out of corrugated plastic? Everybody did their part—it was great teamwork." Isabella's mother, Cherlyn Warren-Mohr, added, "I have never seen people of that age range work together with such ease. As long as you participated, you were part of the group, regardless of race or class. If you want to talk about blueprints, that's the kind of blueprint you want for living your life."



TOP RIGHT: Participants in the DAP Squad program.

# Second Festival of Origami Architecture

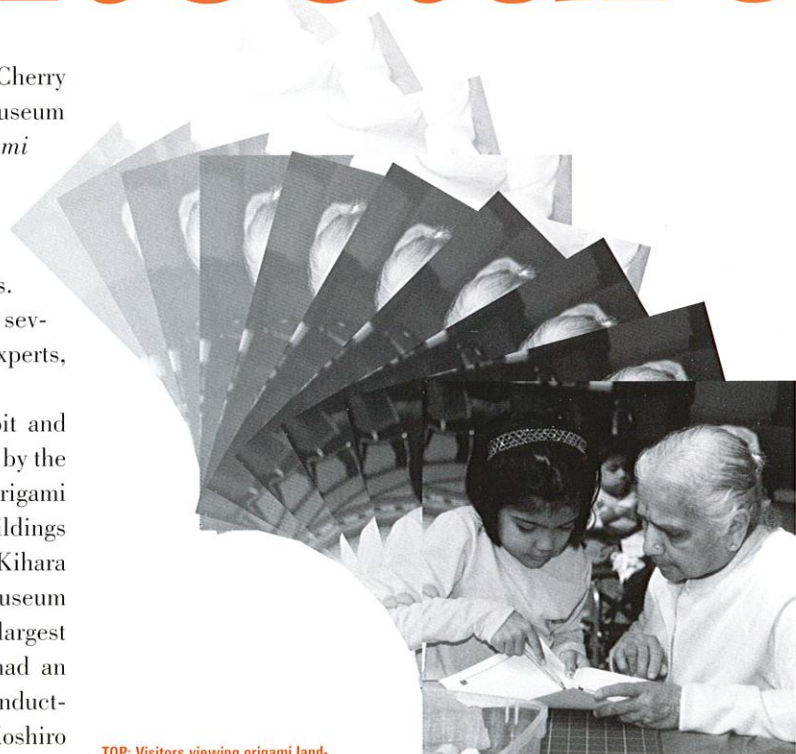


*The Architecture and Children Network and the Japan Institute of Architects assisted with funding for the Festival. ANA-All Nippon Airways, Aitoh Company, and PIP Printing generously contributed goods and services, and Washington Parent magazine served as media sponsor.*

This past spring, as part of the National Cherry Blossom Festival, the National Building Museum presented its second *Festival of Origami Architecture*. More than 2,700 children and adults celebrated the art of folding paper (origami) and the art of designing buildings (architecture) in this program that uniquely combines the two disciplines. Festival-goers from all over the country took part in several hands-on activities and learned from origami experts, several of whom came from Japan and New York.

Highlights of this festival included an exhibit and live demonstration of the art of origami architecture by the Japanese master Takaaki Kihara plus a display of origami streetscapes by Makoto Yamaguchi who created buildings and their furnishings entirely by origami. Mr. Kihara made a 10-foot-long, 3.5-foot-high replica of the Museum especially for the festival—reputedly the world's largest work of origami architecture ever. Visitors also had an opportunity to participate in origami workshops conducted by members of OrigamiUSA (June Sakamoto, Koshiro Hatori, Kay Eng and Kathy Alsegaf).

The festival was organized by Ayumu Ota, the Museum's Scout and family programs coordinator.

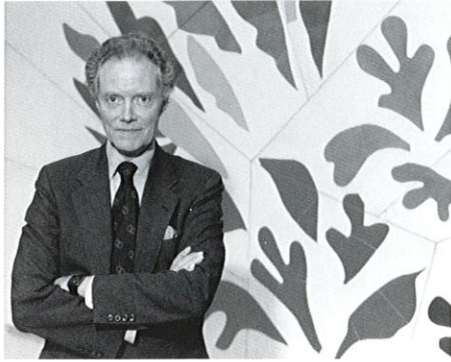


TOP: Visitors viewing origami landscape created by Makoto Yamaguchi.

ABOVE: Family creating an origami architecture pop-up card.

## A Tribute to

# J. Carter Brown



J. Carter Brown

by Carolyn S. Brody  
Chair, National Building Museum

When J. Carter Brown became chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts in 1971, the National Mall was still lined with “temporary” military office buildings dating from World War I, Pennsylvania Avenue was mostly scruffy and barren, and the opening of Washington’s first Metro station was years away. Over the ensuing three decades,

Carter used his position on the Commission—along with his vice chairmanship of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation and numerous other civic appointments—to transform the nation’s capital from a dowdy government town into a world-class city. Indeed, no individual has had more influence on the architecture and urbanism of modern Washington’s monumental core than Carter Brown.

Carter’s recent death therefore leaves a profound void in the cultural leadership of Washington. I had the honor of serving with him on the Commission of Fine Arts for seven years, until he resigned this spring due to failing health. Despite his famously patrician demeanor, I always found Carter to be gracious and collegial, as well as a constructive and highly effective chairman. At times, the monthly Commission meetings seemed more like graduate seminars, in which Carter eagerly engaged his colleagues in animated discussion of design matters great and small. I appreciated his deep intellect, wit, wisdom, and wonderful spirit.

Whether passionately advocating the “radical” design of Maya Lin’s winning entry for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, or offering astonishingly detailed comments about something as seemingly mundane as the camber of a grassy mound near a proposed new office building, Carter brought a uniquely erudite viewpoint to any discussion of the city’s built character. Never at a loss for words or opinions about matters of design and planning, neither was he at a loss for relevant knowledge and insight.

Numerous cultural institutions and programs—including the National Gallery of Art, of which he was the long-time director, and the Pritzker Prize, which he chaired for many years—benefited from Carter’s involvement. The National Building Museum was among these fortunate institutions. Carter received the Museum’s Honor Award in 1993 in recognition of his role as an influential advocate of good design, and he remained a valued supporter of the Museum thereafter. He was a frequent participant in our public programs, and was instrumental in helping us to secure the fascinating exhibition recently on view here about Windshield, the strikingly modern summer house designed for his family by Richard Neutra in the 1930s. We are grateful that the previous issue of *Blueprints* included an interview with Carter, in which he discussed his experiences growing up in this extraordinary house.

With the death of J. Carter Brown, the cause of excellence in architecture and urban design has lost a staunch champion, and a remarkable era in the history of Washington has come to a close. Carter was truly a visionary and inspired leader, and we will miss him greatly.

### Correction

The interview with Carter Brown in the Summer issue of *Blueprints* contained an editorial error. The “imitation French chateau” to which Mr. Brown referred was his grandmother’s house in Newport, rather than his grandfather’s house in Providence.



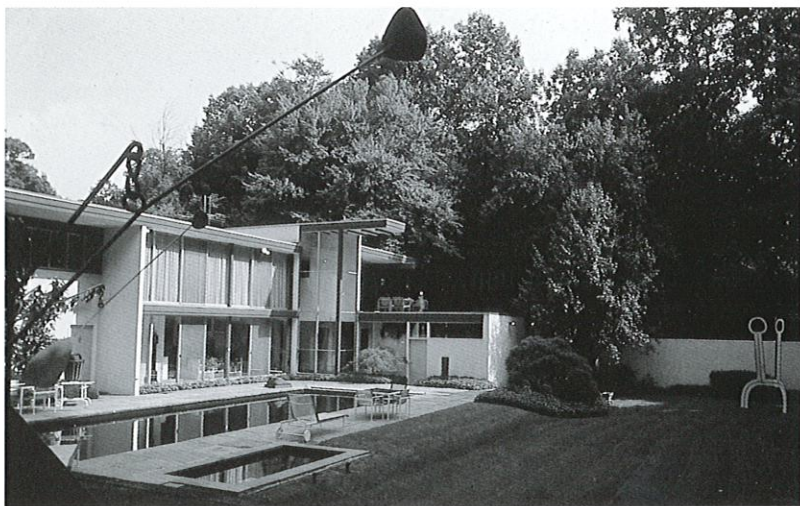
# Modernist Houses

by Mary Zehe

On Saturday, June 8, members of *The Corinthians* enjoyed a private tour of modernist houses in Washington, D.C. Offered in conjunction with the Museum's exhibition, *Windshield: Richard Neutra's House for the John Nicholas Brown Family*, this tour visited three of the most notable examples of modernist architecture in the area.

The first stop on the tour was the Hechinger House and the neighboring England House, which were designed by Walter Gropius and The Architects Collaborative and completed between 1951 and 1952. With their simple forms, large expanses of glass, and open plans, both houses reflect Bauhaus-inspired design principles. The tour finished the day at the Brown House (built for a different Brown family from that which commissioned *Windshield*), the only Washington work by California architect Richard Neutra, completed in 1968 and now owned by the Brown Family Residence Trust. The day was made even more special by the participation of the homeowners who not only graciously welcomed the *Corinthian* members, but also shared the interesting details of their collaborations with architects Gropius and Neutra.

Private tours are just one of the many benefits of *Corinthian* membership. For more information on becoming a member of *The Corinthians*, please contact Julie Wolf-Rodda at 202 272.2448, extension 3501.



Rear view of the Donald and Ann Brown House, which was included on *The Corinthians* tour of modernist houses.

## Museum Welcomes Back United Technologies Corporation as an Exhibition Sponsor

The National Building Museum is pleased to announce that United Technologies Corporation (UTC) and its subsidiary, Otis Elevator Company, will be the lead sponsors of *Up, Down, Across*, the upcoming exhibition on the history of elevators, escalators, and moving walkways.

*Up, Down, Across* documents the history of vertical and horizontal transportation systems—from 19th-century mining and freight elevators to 21st-century elevators that one day may connect Earth to space. The exhibition explores the extraordinary impact of these transportation systems on America's cities, buildings, and culture. The exhibition's opening in September 2003 coincides with the sesquicentennial of the invention of the elevator safety brake by Elisha Graves Otis.

UTC is a founding member of the National Building Museum and sponsored the inaugural exhibition, *Building a National Image*, in 1985. United Technologies Corporation is the parent company of Otis, Carrier, Hamilton Sundstrand, Pratt & Whitney, Sikorsky, and UTC Fuel Cells.

## DEVELOPMENT

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This major exhibition explores the profound impact of transit systems on the physical and social geography of cities.

**The Turner City Collection: Rendering a Century of Building**

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This exhibition presents a selection of Turner City drawings, commissioned annually since 1910 by the Turner Construction Company to show the company's most important projects.

**Zaha Hadid Laboratory**

*through November 17, 2002*

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**ON THE COVER:** A typical Home Depot store, 1996. Expansion and diversification of hardware retailing has facilitated the growth of the do-it-yourself movement.