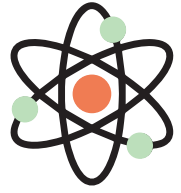


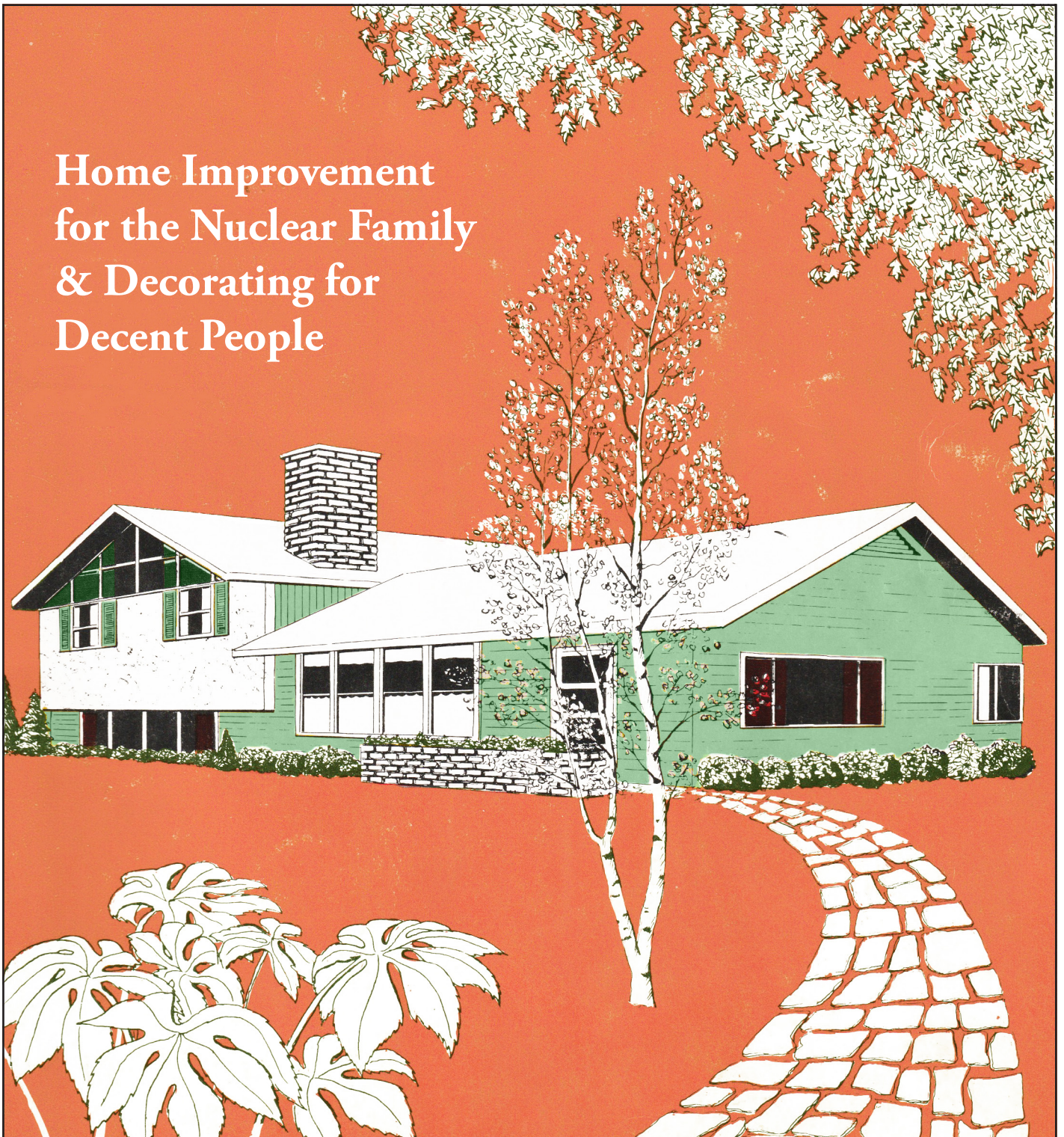
IDEAS FOR THE

# SUBURBAN HOME **White Flight!**



Fall Fallout Edition

Home Improvement  
for the Nuclear Family  
& Decorating for  
Decent People







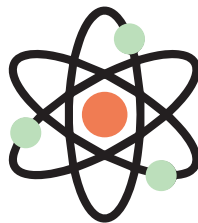
# White Flight

American metropolitan areas are segregated by race, both by neighborhood and across jurisdiction lines. In 1980, after a century of suburbanization, 72% of metropolitan blacks lived in central cities, compared to 33% of metropolitan whites. Because many public goods are locally financed, segregation between the central city and the suburbs can generate disparities in access to education and other public services... These local disparities have motivated large policy changes over the past fifty years, including school finance equalization plans within states and federal expenditures on education. Racial segregation by jurisdiction has historical roots in two population flows: black migration from the rural South and white relocation from central cities to suburban rings. Both flows peaked during World War II and the subsequent decades. Between 1940 and 1970, four million black migrants left the South, increasing the black population share in northern and western cities from 4% in 1940 to 16% in 1970. Over the same period, the median non southern city lost 10% of its white population. —Leah

Platt Boustan, "Was Post-War Suburbanization 'White Flight'? Evidence From The Black Migration, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2010



## Samsonite



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PUBLISHER

**!AGITPOP! PRESS**

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**!AGITPOP! PRESS** is the artist book collaboration between artist Johannah Herr and writer Cara Marsh Sheffler. Since 2020, the two have collaborated on four book projects: *Domestic Terrorism*, *The Banana Republican Recipe Book*, *I Have Seen the Future: Official Guide*, and *White Flight!* !AGITPOP! PRESS accepts no responsibility for poor taste or hot takes beyond the time it took the reader to consume them. Back issues of previous publications may be purchased at Printed Matter and where other fine books are sold to the remaining decent people of the world. Buckle up and enjoy the ride.



# RINGING IN AUTUMN AS A NUCLEAR FAMILY FALL OUT FOR FALL



"I mean talk about decadence...how decadent can a society get? Look at it this way. This country's probably the psychiatric, psychoanalytical capital of the world. Old Freud himself could never've dreamed up a more devoted bunch of disciples than the population of the United States—isn't that right? Our whole damn culture is geared to it; it's the new religion; it's everybody's intellectual and spiritual sugar-tit. And for all that, look what happens when a man really does blow his top. Call the Troopers, get him out of sight quick, hustle him off and lock him up before he wakes the neighbors. Christ's sake, when it comes to any kind of showdown we're still in the Middle Ages. It's as if everybody'd made this tacit agreement to live in a state of total self-deception. The hell with reality! Let's have a whole bunch of cute little winding roads and cute little houses painted white and pink and baby blue; let's all be good consumers and have a lot of Togetherness and bring our children up in a bath of sentimentality—and if old reality ever does pop out and say Boo we'll all get busy and pretend it never happened." —Richard Yates, *Revolutionary Road* (1961)



"Upstairs Margaret said abruptly, 'I suppose it starts to happen first in the suburbs,' and when Brad said, 'What starts to happen?' she said hysterically, 'People starting to come apart.'" —Shirley Jackson, "Pillar of Salt," (1948)



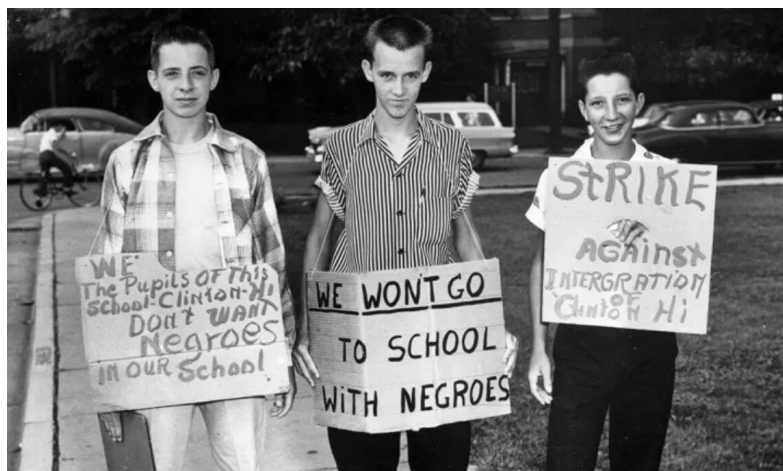


## BACK TO SCHOOL

White parents and politicians framed their resistance to school desegregation in terms of “busing” and “neighborhood schools.” This rhetorical shift allowed them to support white schools and neighborhoods without using explicitly racist language. As early as 1957, white parents in New York rallied against busing. In Detroit in 1960, thousands of white parents organized a school boycott to protest the “busing” of three hundred black students from an overcrowded school to a school in a white neighborhood. In Boston, Louise Day Hicks made opposition to “busing” a centerpiece of her political campaigns. “It was Mrs. Hicks who kept talking against busing children when the NAACP hadn’t even proposed busing,” the Boston Globe noted in 1965. “I have probably talked before 500 or 600 groups over the last years about busing,” Los







Angeles assemblyman Floyd Wakefield said in 1970. "Almost every time someone has gotten up and called me a 'racist' or a 'bigot.' But now, all of the sudden, I am no longer a bigot. Now I am called 'the leader of the antibusing' effort." With "busing," northerners found a palatable way to oppose desegregation without appealing to the explicitly racist sentiments they preferred to associate with southerners. —Matthew F. Delmont, *Why Busing Failed: Race, Media, and the National Resistance to School Desegregation*



Photograph to the left and on opposite page taken from protests against William and Daisy Myers, who moved into the home at 43 Deepgreen Lane in Levittown, Pennsylvania, in August 1957—setting off a violent racial conflict that lasted months.



As was the case in every Levittown, by Levitt's orders, not a single resident was black. It was not for a shortage of potential black buyers. Black housing demand far exceeded supply. In metropolitan Philadelphia, between 1946 and 1953, only 347 of 120,000 new homes built were open to blacks. Racial exclusion had perverse economic effects: It created a vast gap between supply and demand. As a result, blacks paid more for housing on average than did whites. In nearly every northern city, black newcomers crammed into old and run-down housing, mainly in dense central neighborhoods left behind by upwardly mobile whites. —Tom Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (2008)

## CHOOSING YOUR MODEL COMMUNITY

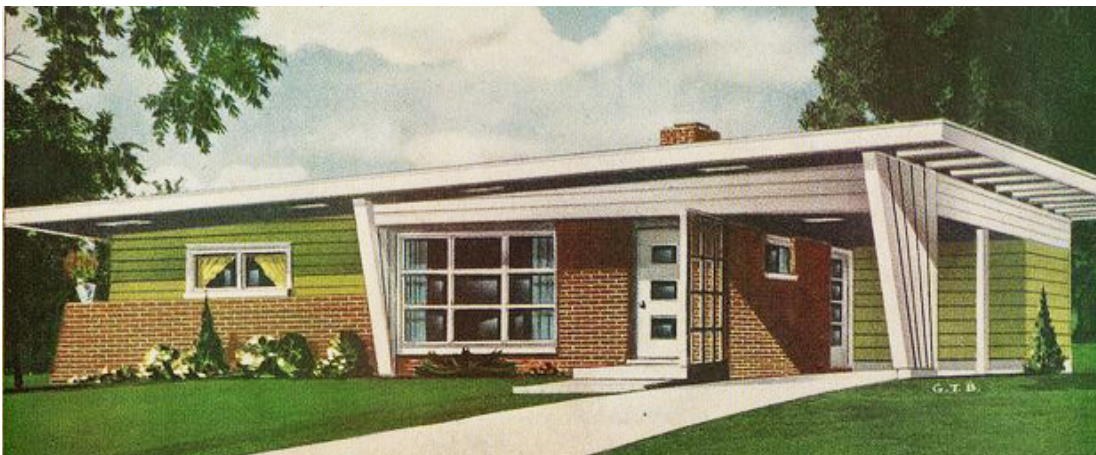




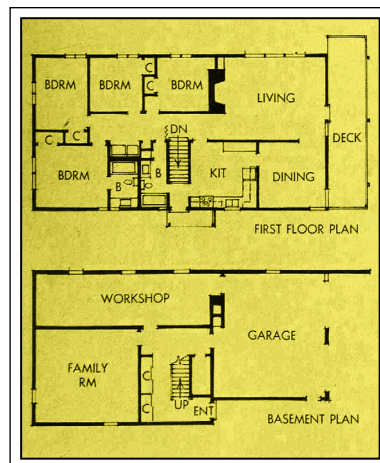
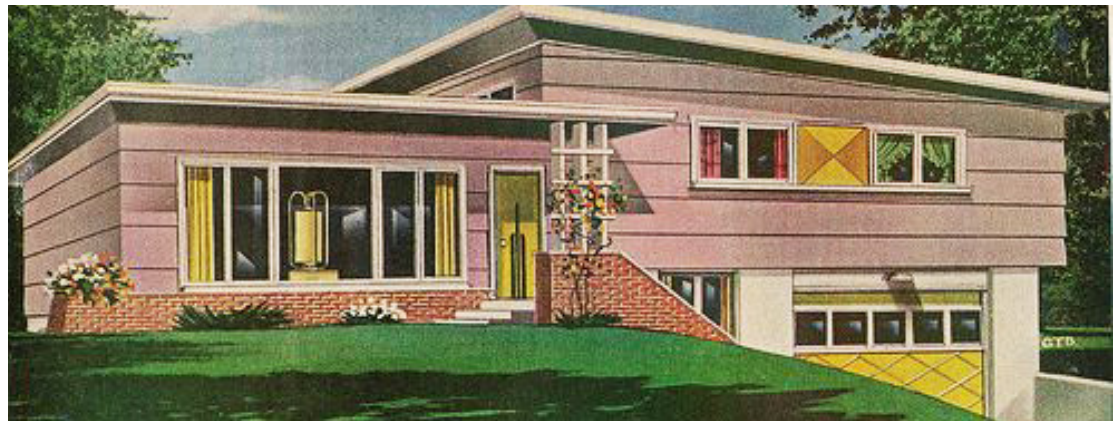
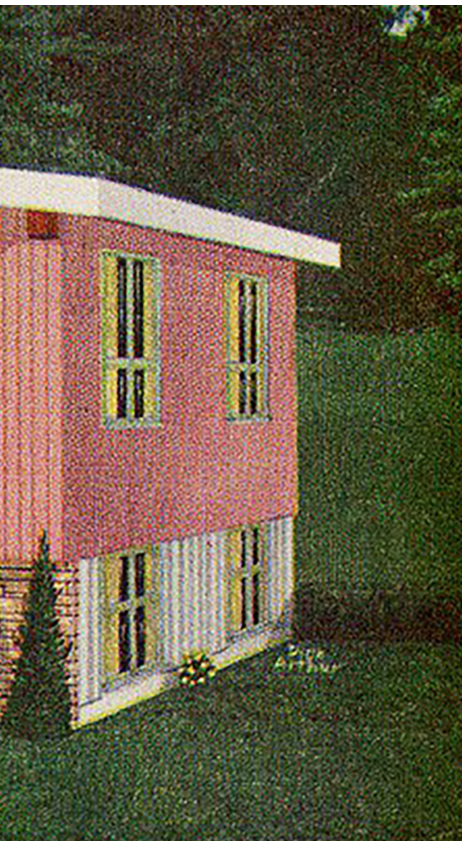
PICK FROM A SELECTION OF POSTWAR COMMUNITIES RESERVED FOR WHITE PEOPLE THROUGH RACIALLY RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS INCLUDED ON THEIR DEEDS. PERUSE THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE TAKEN FROM HOMES ACROSS THE LAND, FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA!



**The Greater Village, St. Louis**  
 "... no part of said property nor any portion thereof shall be for said term of fifty years occupied by any person not of the Caucasian race, it being intended thereby to restrict the use of said property for said period of time against the occupancy of owners or tenants of any portion of said property for residence or other purpose by people of the Negro or Mongolian race."



**Diamond Lake, Minnesota**  
 "It is further stipulated and agreed by and between the parties hereto for themselves, their heirs and assigns, as part of the consideration hereof, that the within described premises shall not be sold, mortgaged or leased to or occupied by any person or persons other than members of the Caucasian race."



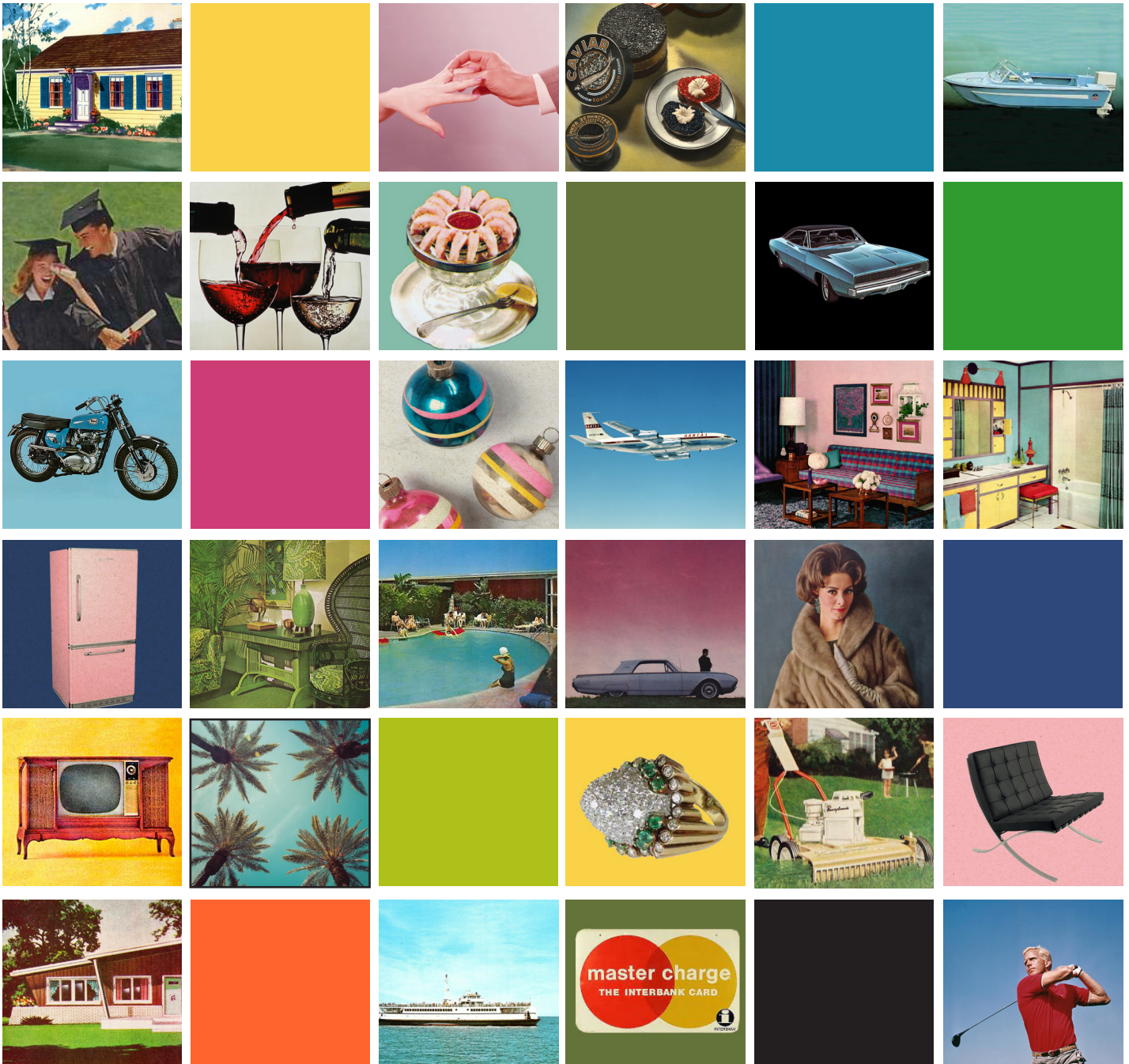
**El Cerrito, San Diego**

"(15) That neither said lots nor portions thereof or interest therein shall ever be leased, sold, devised, conveyed to or inherited or be otherwise acquired by or become property of any person other than of the Caucasian Race.

"(16) That neither said lot nor any portion thereof shall ever be lived upon or occupied by any person other than of the Caucasian strictly in the capacity of servants or employees..."



# Exceptional banking for people like you, the right people






Part of keeping power out of black hands is turning the community's aspirational class into a bevy of easy marks. You can only imagine what kind of money was made exploiting the dreams of middle class black people trapped in the ghettos of America. That money represents a transfer of wealth from black hands to white hands. It continued unabated from the early 20th century, through the New Deal (which actually aided this process), well into the 1960s. We spend a great deal of time talking about the black poor, but less talked about is how America for most of its history has actively punished black ambi-

tion. The black middle class has been the field for demonstrations upon the subject of what happens to "n\*\*\*\*\* with ideas." Any history of race riots in America will note that the targets are invariably institutions of black improvement—churches, "black wall streets," schools, homes, etc. It's worth considering what message a country sends to a people when it persecutes ambition.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Effects of Housing Segregation on Black Wealth," *The Atlantic*, 2013

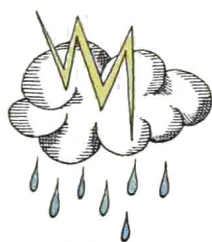




No  man who  . . .  
owns his  own house   
and lot . . . can be a communist.

. . . He has too much 

to do! —William Levitt 



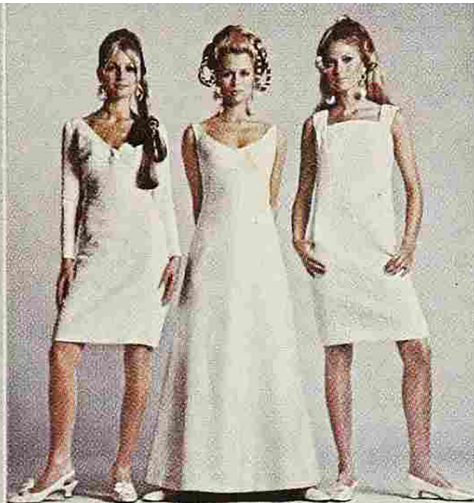
## A LEVEL OF COMFORT AND EASE AT WHICH WE COULD ONLY WONDER

**BEAVER'S STREET WAS WHERE WE WANTED TO LIVE,** Beaver's house where we wanted to eat and sleep, Beaver's father's firm where we'd have liked Daddy to work. These shows for us were about property, the property that white people could own and that we couldn't. About a level of comfort and ease at which we could only wonder. —Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1994) on the 1950s television show *Leave It to Beaver*



GENERAL  ELECTRIC





## A Dumb Blankness, Full of Meaning

But not yet have we solved the incantation of this whiteness, and learned why it appeals with such power to the soul; and more strange and far more portentous—why, as we have seen, it is at once the most meaning symbol of spiritual things, nay, the very veil of the Christian's Deity; and yet should be as it is, the intensifying agent in things the most appalling to mankind. Is it that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation, when beholding the white depths of the milky way? Or is it, that as in essence whiteness is not so much a color as the visible absence of color; and at

the same time the concrete of all colors; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows—a colorless, all-color of atheism from which we shrink? And when we consider that other theory of the natural philosophers, that all other earthly hues—every stately or lovely emblazoning—the sweet tinges of sunset skies and woods; yea, and the gilded velvets of butterflies, and the butterfly cheeks of young girls; all these are but subtle deceptions, not actually inherent in substances, but only laid on from without; so that all deified Nature absolutely paints like the harlot, whose allurements cover nothing but the charnel-house within; and when

we proceed further, and consider that the mystical cosmetic which produces every one of her hues, the great principle of light, for ever remains white or colorless in itself, and if operating without medium upon matter, would touch all objects, even tulips and roses, with its own blank tinge—pondering all this, the palsied universe lies before us a leper; and like wilful travellers in Lapland, who refuse to wear colored and coloring glasses upon their eyes, so the wretched infidel gazes himself blind at the monumental white shroud that wraps all the prospect around him. And of all these things the Albinos was the symbol. Wonder ye then at the fiery hunt? —Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*





## A vacant, hollow, whited chamber...cleared of any evidence of the grotesque embarrassments of an actual life

The inner life of this world was entirely hidden: nothing was allowed to spill out from its allotted space; all circuitry, all conduits, all the accumulated stuff that attaches itself to an everyday life remained concealed, held in, snapped shut...perhaps this was a model of what the body should be like from within. Not a place of fluids, organs, muscles, ten-

dons and bones all in a constant, precarious and living tension with each other, but a vacant, hollow, whited chamber, scraped clean, cleared of any evidence of the grotesque embarrassments of an actual life. No smells, no noises, no colour; no changing from one state to another and the uncertainty that comes with it; no exchanges with the outside

world and the doubt and the dirt that goes with that; no eating, no drinking, no pissing, no shitting, no sucking, no fucking, no nothing. It won't go away. Whiteness always returns. —David Batchelor, *Chromophobia*



The Most Trusted Name in Electronics



Tmk(s)®



## Another Frigidaire Space Age Advance



Oh, you see children, it's not hard to be normal. Oh, thank you, God. Thank you for answering my prayers! We're a family again. A normal American family. Oh! Oh! —Divine as Francine Fishpaw,

*Polyester*

## KITCHENETTE BUILDING

We are things of dry hours and the involuntary plan,  
Grayed in, and gray. "Dream" makes a giddy sound, not strong  
Like "rent," "feeding a wife," "satisfying a man."

But could a dream send up through onion fumes  
Its white and violet, fight with fried potatoes  
And yesterday's garbage ripening in the hall,  
Flutter, or sing an aria down these rooms

Even if we were willing to let it in,  
Had time to warm it, keep it very clean,  
Anticipate a message, let it begin?

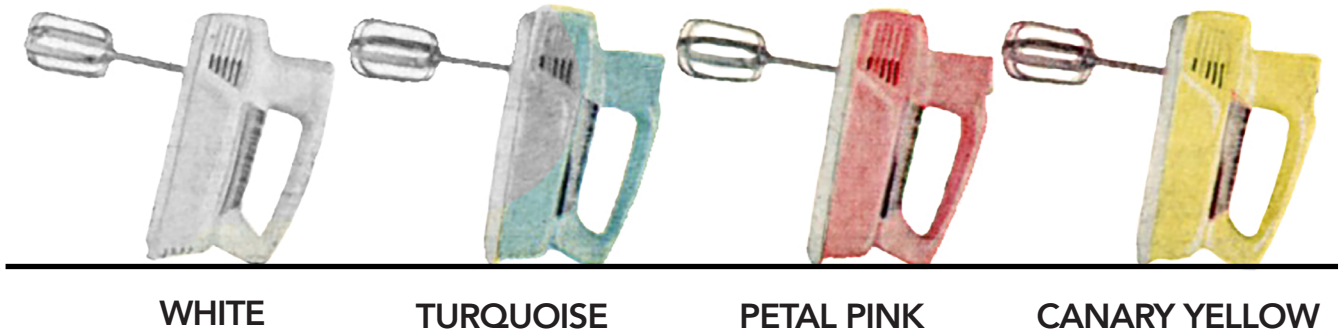
We wonder. But not well! not for a minute!  
Since Number Five is out of the bathroom now,  
We think of lukewarm water, hope to get in it.  
—Gwendolyn Brooks, 1963



**FRIGIDAIRE**



# Consumption, like the education system, is a class institution:



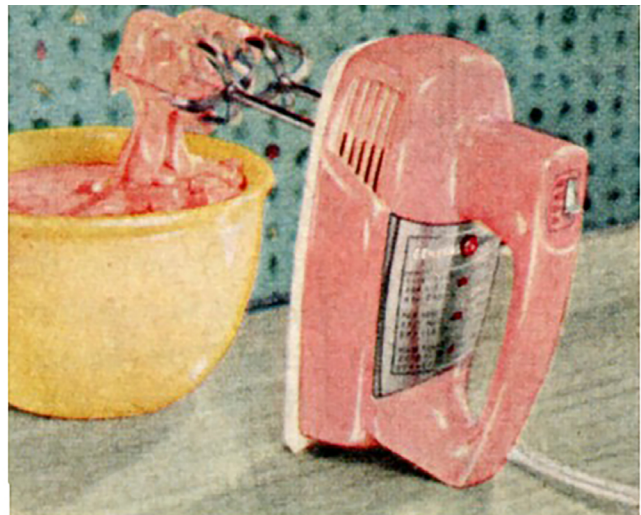
Consumption, like the education system, is a class institution: not only is there inequality before objects in the economic sense (the purchase, choice and use of objects are governed by purchasing power and by educational level, which is itself dependent upon class background, etc.)—in short, not everyone has the same objects, just as not everyone has the same educational chances—but, more deeply, there is radical discrimination in the sense that only some people achieve mastery of an autonomous, rational logic of the elements of the environment

(functional use, aesthetic organization, cultural accomplishment). Such people do not really deal with objects and do not, strictly speaking, 'consume', whilst the others are condemned to a magical economy, to the valorization of objects as such, and of all other things as objects (ideas, leisure, knowledge, culture): this fetishistic logic is, strictly, the ideology of consumption.

—Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths & Structures* (1970)



KHRUSHCHEV... Your capitalistic attitude toward women does not occur under Communism.



NIXON... I think that this attitude towards women is universal.

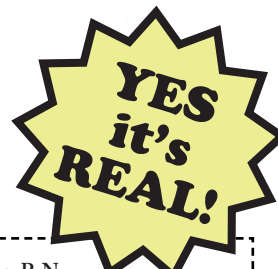
*Progress Is Our Most Important Product*  
**GENERAL  ELECTRIC**





# Don't buy a douche without smelling it first. Because that's how you'll smell when you use it.

Send for sample packettes of Jeneen—the only douche with the scent of fresh lilacs and roses.



When you use a douche, you find its scent all around you...on your body...in the air. That's why we gave Jeneen the scent of fresh lilacs and roses.

But that's not why you use it.

You use Jeneen because it cleanses you effectively. It refreshes you. It helps remove odor. It leaves you sure of your personal hygiene.

And Jeneen is easy to use. It's a liquid. It mixes instantly with water. So it can't cake or clump. And it comes in a convenient bottle as well as individual pre-measured packettes.

All these things are what douching is about.

The fact that you use Jeneen means you'll smell as fresh as you'll feel.

And that's what douching's about, too, isn't it?



To: Mrs. Virginia Drake, R.N.  
Dept. WO-49 The Norwich Pharmacal Co.  
Norwich, N.Y. 13815

Please send me 4 introductory packettes of Jeneen. I am enclosing 50¢ to cover the cost of mailing and handling.

Name

Street

City

State  Zip Code

© NORWICH PRODUCTS/division of Morton-Norwich Products, Inc.



## You can't set her free. But you can help her feel less anxious.

You know this woman.

She's anxious, tense, irritable. She's felt this way for months.

Beset by the seemingly insurmountable problems of raising a young family, and confined to the home most of the time, her symptoms reflect a sense of inadequacy and isolation. Your reassurance and guidance may have helped some, but not enough.

SERAX (oxazepam) cannot change her environment, of course. But it can help relieve anxiety, tension, agitation and irritability, thus strengthening her ability to cope with day-to-day problems. Eventually, as she regains confidence and composure—your counsel may be all the support she needs.

Indicated in anxiety, tension, agitation, irritability, and anxiety associated with depression.

May be used in a broad range of patients, generally with considerable dosage flexibility.

**Contraindications:** History of previous hypersensitivity to oxazepam. Oxazepam is not indicated in psychoses.

**Precautions:** Hypotensive reactions are rare, but use with caution where complications could ensue from a fall in blood pressure, especially in the elderly. One patient exhibited drug use dependency by taking chronic overdose developed upon cessation questionable withdrawal symptoms. Carefully supervise dose and amounts prescribed, especially for patients prone to overdose; excessive prolonged use in susceptible patients (alcoholics, ex-addicts, etc.) may result in dependence or habituation. Reduce dosage gradually after prolonged excessive dosage to avoid possible epileptiform seizures. Caution patients against driving or operating machinery until absences of drowsiness or dizziness is ascertained. Warn patients of possible reduction in alcohol tolerance. Safety for use in pregnancy has not been established. Not indicated in children under 6 years: absolute dosage for 6 to 12 year-olds not established.

**Side Effects:** Therapy-interrupting side effects are rare. Transient mild drowsiness is common initially; if persistent, reduce dosage. Dizziness, vertigo and headache have also occurred infrequently; syncope, rarely. Mild paradoxical reactions (excitement, stimulation of affect) are reported in psychiatric patients. Minor diffuse rashes (morbilliform, urticarial and maculopapular) are rare. Nausea, lethargy, edema, slurred speech, tremor and altered libido are rare and generally controllable by dosage reduction. Although rare, leukopenia and hepatic dysfunction including jaundice have been reported during therapy. Periodic blood counts and liver function tests are advised. Ataxia, reported rarely, does not appear related to dose or age.

These side reactions, noted with related compounds, are not yet reported: paradoxical excitation with severe rage reactions, hallucinations, menstrual irregularities, change in EEG pattern, blood dyscrasias (including agranulocytosis), blurred vision, diplopia, incontinence, stupor, disorientation, fever, euphoria and dymetria.

**Availability:** Capsules of 10, 15, and 30 mg. oxazepam.

To help you relieve anxiety and tension

**Serax**  
(oxazepam)



Wyeth Laboratories  
Philadelphia, Pa.





## The problem lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women.

The problem lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women. It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night—she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question—“Is this all?”

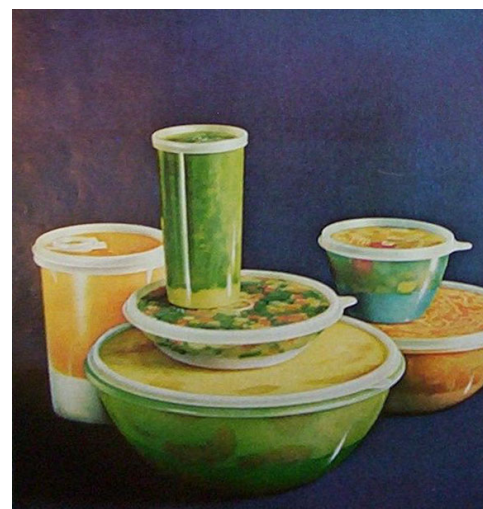
For over fifteen years there was no word of this yearning in the millions of words written about women, for women, in all the columns, books and articles by experts telling women their role was to seek fulfillment as wives and mothers. Over and over women heard in voices of tradition and of Freudian sophistication that they could desire—no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity...

They were taught to pity the neurotic, unfeminine, unhappy women who wanted to be poets or physicists or presidents. They learned that truly feminine women do not want careers, higher education, political rights—the independence and the opportunities that the old-fashioned feminists fought for...

By the end of the nineteen-fifties, the average marriage age of women in America dropped to 20, and was still dropping, into the teens. Fourteen million girls were engaged by 17. The proportion of women attending college in comparison with men dropped from 47 percent in 1920 to 35 percent in 1958. A century earlier, women had fought for higher education; now girls went to college to get a husband. By the mid-fifties, 60 percent dropped out of college to marry, or because they were afraid too much education would be a marriage bar. Colleges built dormitories for “married students,” but the students were almost always the

husbands. A new degree was instituted for the wives—“Ph.T.” (Putting Husband Through).

—Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*



# TUPPERWARE





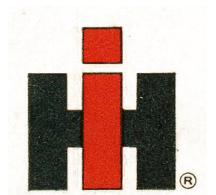
## Anyone With a Lawn Like This Must Be Decent and Respectable

The quintessential American lawn is a tidy and handsome work of horticultural art. A neatly cropped rectangle of green sprinkled with the occasional tree or flowerbed, with its borders drawn by black asphalt driveways or just-painted wooden fences. Instantly legible and immediately recognizable as a sign that reasonable and responsible people live in this modest yet lovingly maintained home, in this nice sleepy neighborhood, in this decent and God-fearing town or suburb...

This scene is a fond and familiar one to many people who've spent their childhoods, adolescences, and/or adulthoods in the post-World War II United States. This isn't to say it's universal—like a lawn itself,

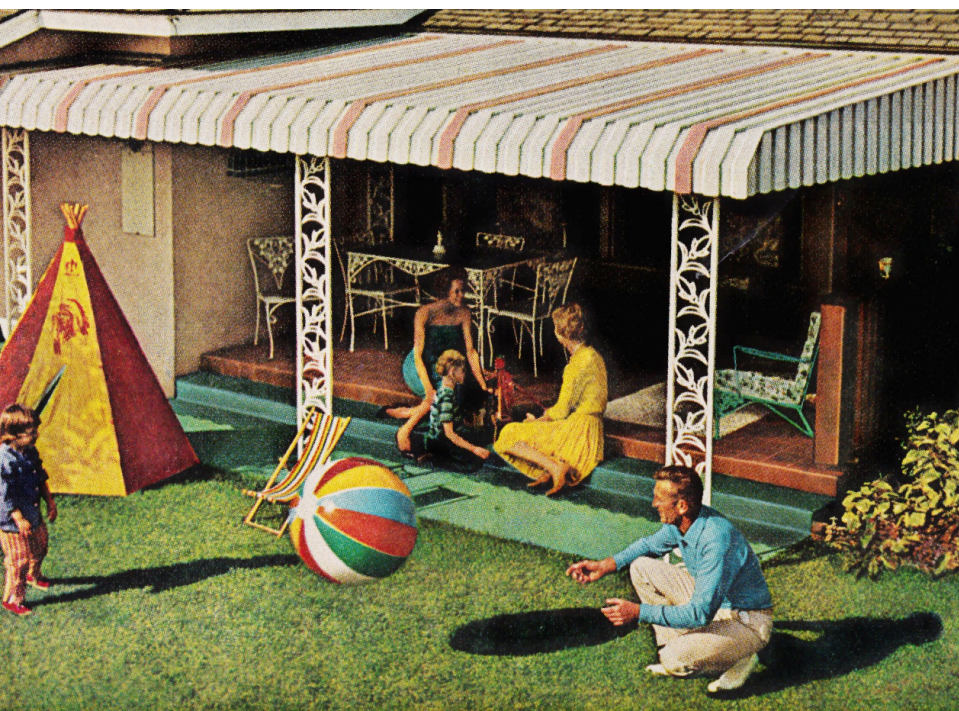
such memories tend to be possessed by some demographics more than others. Abe Levitt, a real estate developer whose meticulously manicured mid-century “Levittowns” are widely regarded as the prototypical American suburbs, understood the power of a lawn. “It’s the first thing a visitor sees,” Levitt once said. “And first impressions are the lasting ones.” In Levitt’s case, the impression he wanted to give visitors was, “Anyone with a lawn like this must be decent and respectable, and anyone that decent and respectable must be...well, you know...let’s just say none of the neighbors like jazz music.”

—Nick Slater, “Manly Thoughts About Mowing the Lawn,” *New Thinking*, 2022





# IS **YOUR** LAWN IMPERIALIST?



Does your lawn  
improve upon Nature?

In the 18th century, English landscape architect Capability Brown popularized the "natural" look for manor homes, creating a rage for lawns that are actually higher maintenance.



Do you prize grass  
of uniform length?

First the reserve of the upper class, with the invention of the cylinder mower in the 1830s, the cut grass paradise was democratized.



Does your lawn require  
copious watering?

According to the EPA, the US uses nearly 9 billion gallons per day to irrigate lawns.



Do you actively  
cull weeds?

After all, a weed is simply a plant growing where it is not wanted. This has a parallel in Mary Douglas's famous definition of dirt as matter out of place.



Do you use fertilizers to  
tame your patch of the  
good earth?

According to the EPA, the US uses a total of 22 millions tons of fertilizer each year!

—adapted from Giles Frasier,  
"Is Your Garden Imperialist?"

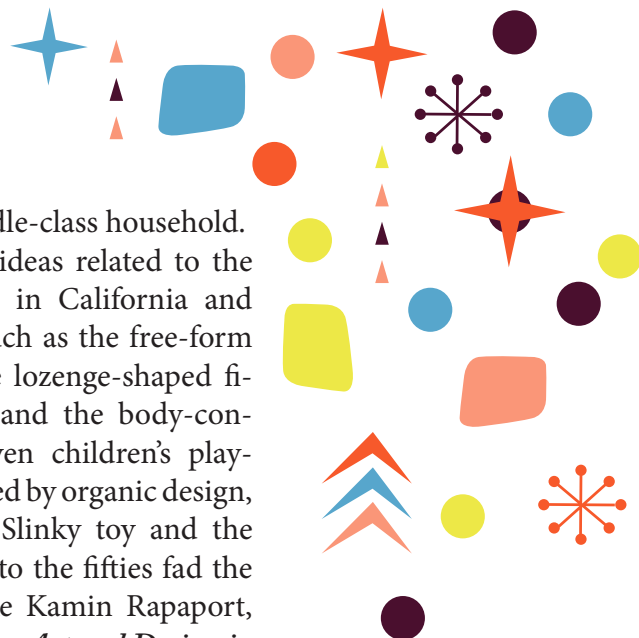




## AN EXPLOSION OF GOOD TASTE

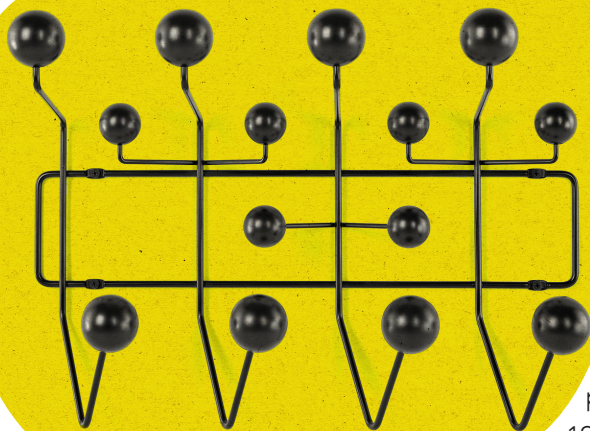
America's popular culture was invigorated when, after two decades of pent-up demand during the Depression and World War II, the public's craving for consumer goods could finally be satisfied. Products were now often seen on television shows and commercials. Newly prosperous young homemakers fastened onto biomorphic design as an up-to-date modern look, a departure from the Art Deco and streamlined Moderne styles of the prewar period. Sensuously modeled, mass-produced ceramics and glass brought high-style, low-cost organ-

ic design to the middle-class household. Many novel design ideas related to the outdoors originated in California and spread nationally, such as the free-form swimming pool, the lozenge-shaped fiberglass surfboard, and the body-conscious swimsuit. Even children's playthings were influenced by organic design, from the snakelike Slinky toy and the Spacelander bicycle to the fifties fad the hula hoop. —Brooke Kamin Rapaport, *Vital Forms: American Art and Design in the Atomic Age, 1940–1960*, the Brooklyn Museum (2002)



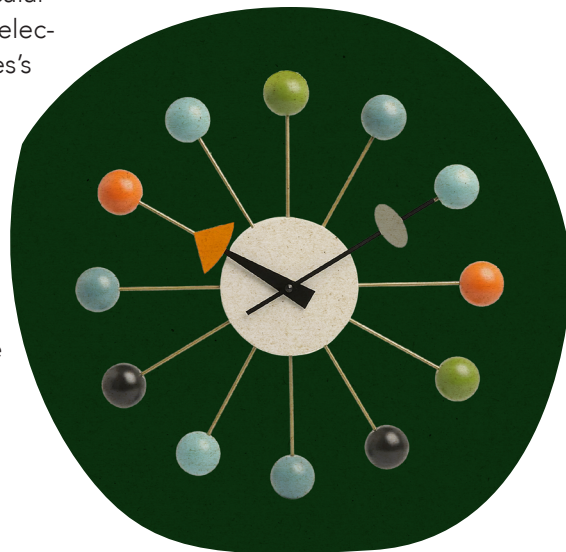


# 5 SHAPES TO TRANSMUTE YOUR ATOMIC ANXIETY INTO NIFTY HOME DECOR



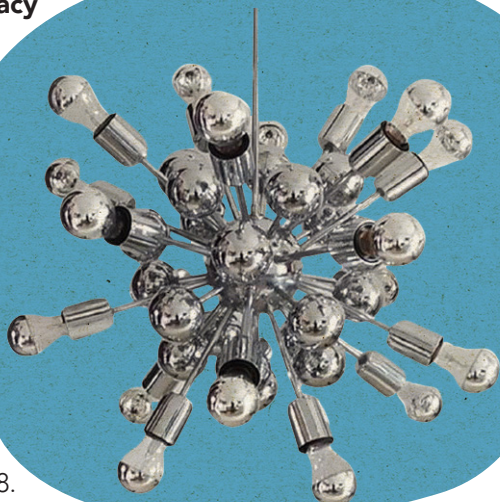
## Molecular meddling!

Playfully evoking the molecular structures revealed by the electron microscope, the Eames's Hang-it-All was designed with children in mind. The colored balls, for hanging coats, hats, and scarves, seem to move around each other as one passes by. Hang-It-All transforms the popular scientific imagery of the 1950s into a dynamic design.



**Countdown to Doomsday!** Tick-tock goes the Atomic clock! The Ball wall clock, sometimes called the Atomic clock—with rods and spheres evoking the structure of the atom—was the centerpiece of a line commissioned by the Howard Miller Clock Company to update its collection for a new, postwar generation of consumers.

**Soviet scientific supremacy on your ceiling!** The Sputnik Chandelier was first designed by Gino Sarfatti and inspired by the Soviet satellite of the same name, which featured four long antennae emanating from a center sphere. It was the first satellite to orbit the earth and it is believed that the Sputnik largely contributed to the push for the USA to create a rival space program in 1958.



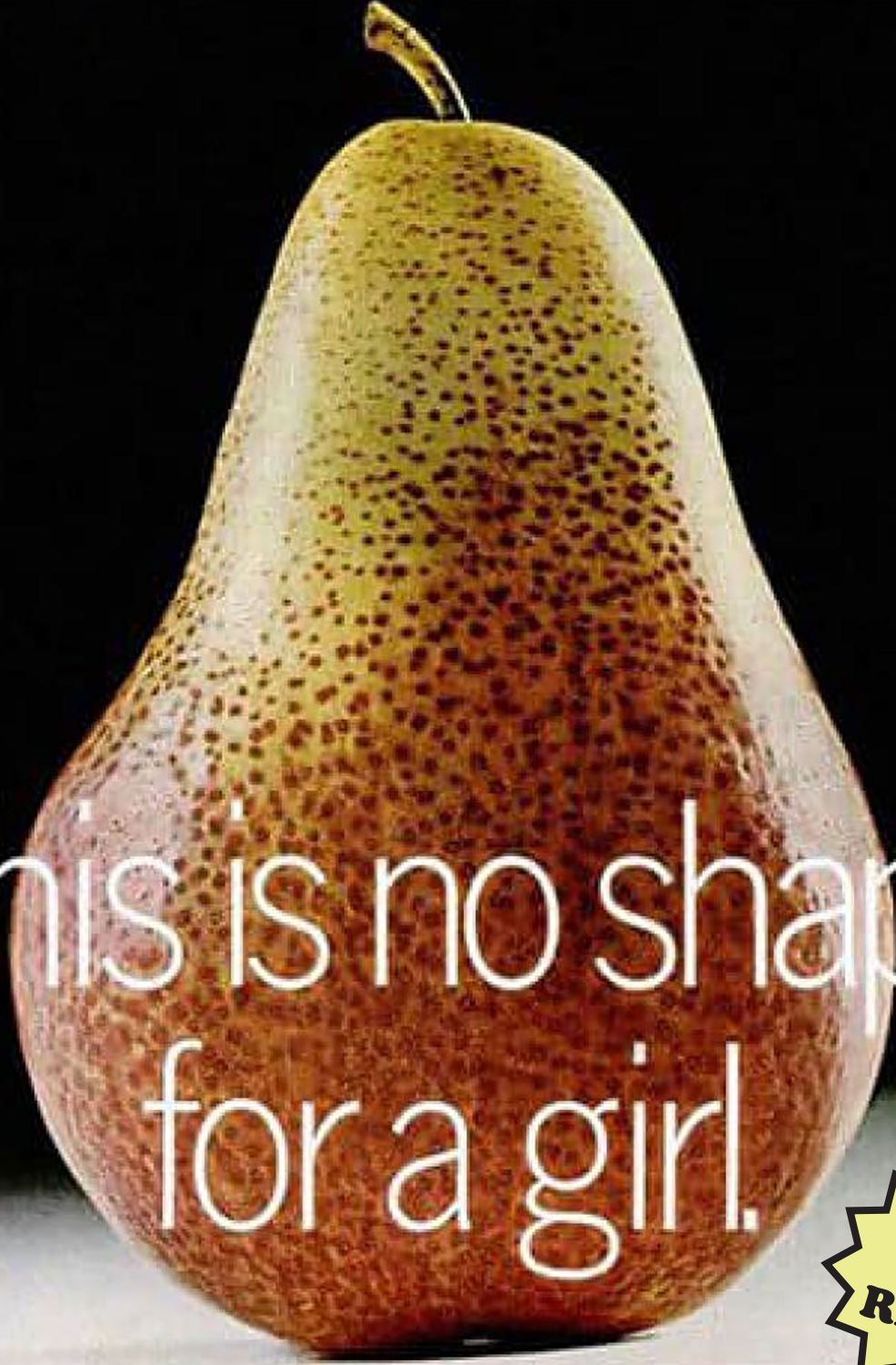
## Space Age in bloom!

Taking full advantage of pliable fiberglass, the Pedestal armchair's flowing lines create a unified design statement that has led to its being nicknamed the "Tulip" chair. It is the culmination of Saarinen's experiments with molded shell forms, begun in 1940 in a collaboration with Charles Eames.



**Regress to comfort!** The organic shape of the Womb Chair offers a place to turn within and away from the pesky news! This authentic Knoll chair features a sweeping structure, indented armrests, and movable cushions that let you relax with feet up, at an angle with one leg over an arm, or knocked sideways with a crippling sense of doom.





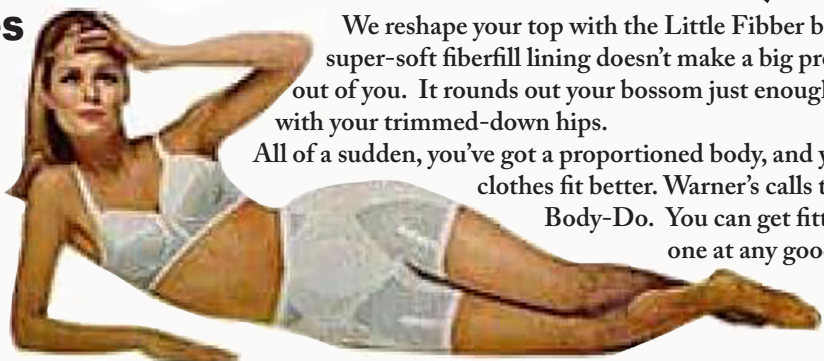
This is no shape  
for a girl.

**YES  
it's  
REAL!**

**That's why Warner's makes  
the Concentrate girdle  
and the Little Fibber bra.**

Girls with too much bottom and too little top:  
Warner's can reshape you.

We reshape you on the bottom with the Concentrate girdle: Its all around panels do more for you than a little girdle (they're laced up to help you where you need help most), yet Concentrate doesn't squash you like a heavy girdle.



We reshape your top with the Little Fibber bra. The super-soft fiberfill lining doesn't make a big production out of you. It rounds out your bosom just enough to go with your trimmed-down hips.

All of a sudden, you've got a proportioned body, and your clothes fit better. Warner's calls this a Body-Do. You can get fitted for one at any good store.



# 10 EASY STEPS TO OBJECTIFICATION

(adapted from the work of feminist scholars Martha Nussbaum and Rae Langton)

1. **Instrumentality:** the treatment of a person as a tool for the objectifier's purposes
2. **Denial of autonomy:** the treatment of a person as lacking in autonomy and self-determination
3. **Inertness:** the treatment of a person as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity
4. **Fungibility:** the treatment of a person as interchangeable with other objects
5. **Violability:** the treatment of a person as lacking in boundary-integrity ownership: the treatment of a person as something that is owned by another (can be bought or sold)



6. **Ownership:** the treatment of a person as something that is owned by another (can be bought or sold)
7. **Denial of subjectivity:** the treatment of a person as something whose experiences and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account
8. **Reduction to body:** the treatment of a person as identified with their body, or body parts
9. **Reduction to appearance:** the treatment of a person primarily in terms of how they look, or how they appear to the senses
10. **Silencing:** the treatment of a person as if they are silent, lacking the capacity to speak





BRING THE  
**TIKI SPIRIT**  
TO YOUR  
NEXT PARTY





# TRANSFORMING RELIGIOUS IDOLS INTO KITSCH



The roots of tiki are far from the Pacific Islands. A Maori word for the carved image of a god or ancestor, tiki became synonymous in the United States and elsewhere for gimmicky souvenirs and décor.

Tiki was invented by a few white guys in California in the 1930s [Ernest Gantt, better known as Donn Beach, and Vic Bergeron, aka Trader Vic]. They took rum from the Caribbean [a liquor that is cheap because of the slave labor on which the sugar cane plantation economy was born], food from Asia and iconography from the Pacific lands, put ‘em all in a shaker, strained the results and called it tiki. It was created for Americans to “escape” to a faux tropical paradise where they could forget their troubles during the Great Depression...

[Tiki] restaurants served Chinese food, because it was considered “exotic” yet was identifiable to American palates. Both became chains as well. There were 25 Trader Vic’s in the world by the 1960s [the Washington, D.C. location was a favorite of Richard Nixon’s], and 16 Don the Beachcombers...

After World War II, tiki took off and joined the trend of themed restaurants that flourished in the late 1950s and early ’60s. They created an idyllic setting that evoked “island living,” employing images of palm trees, tribal masks and topless native women in grass skirts.

Restaurants transformed religious idols into kitschy artifacts and even drinking vessels, known as tiki mugs. But tiki bars can often reinforce the idea that Oceania is just a place to vacation, which belies America’s history with the region. In 1960 when the Mai-Kai, a tiki restaurant in Florida, sold 10,000 “Mystery Drinks” presented by half-dressed “Mystery Girls,” the U.S. military was using the Pacific Islands to test nuclear bombs. Fantasy was a far cry from reality.

—Sammi Katz, “Reclaiming the Tiki Bar,” *The New York Times*, 2020





**tropitan**



In 2018, the Silicon Valley billionaire Marc Benioff bought a wooden statue of the Hawaiian god Ku at auction for about \$7.5 million and donated it to the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. Ancient carvings of Ku are scarce: most were burnt, starting in the 1820s, at the behest of American Christian missionaries campaigning against graven images. When the Bishop Museum hosted an exhibition of the three major known Ku statues in 2010, two needed to travel from overseas to visit their ancestral home—one from the Peabody Essex Museum in Boston and another from the British Museum. The Benioff donation was, then, a generous act of cultural

repatriation. It might, alas, have been in vain: early in 2019, the New York Times reported that experts examining the statue expressed doubts about its authenticity. Rather than being a survivor of nineteenth-century pyres, it resembled a knock-off from the 1930s. "It's the sort of thing you see in a tiki bar", said one appraiser. And indeed, because the British Museum does not keep its own carving of Ku on display, Londoners certainly are more likely to encounter the god as tiki bar kitsch, among the South Seas decor in the basement of the Hilton on Park Lane, where an outpost of the American restaurant chain Trader Vic's uses Ku's imposing presence to

sell exotic cocktails. "Tiki" refers to the first Maori man, and carvings of him hail from a different Polynesian context to Ku; both belong to a history distinct also from the Rapa Nui moai, the great stone heads of Easter Island. But from the mid-twentieth century onward, one could commonly find replicas of all three figures, stashed indiscriminately together amid palm thatch and rough-hewn bamboo, alongside coloured glass fishing floats and a stuffed macaw or two, in the bricolage of exotica known as tiki. —Eric Rauchway, "South Seas dreaming: The Exoticization of Polynesian Culture," *Times Literary Supplement*, 2019



# GET BOMBED ON THESE TIKI DRINKS

## Pacific Theater Scorpion Bowl

- 3 major Pacific Ocean island groups
- 1 Monroe Doctrine run amok
- 2 (minimum) dimming  
trans-Pacific empires
- 1 US Army general with a god complex

Start with at least two ailing empires—ideally one Spanish and one British—and peel off outer layers. Pour over Monroe Doctrine. Scatter in archipelago form. Muddle guerrilla warfare with yellow journalism pestle and strain through Insular Cases. Pour into vast bowl warmed with ambitions of new, fanatical political ideologies. Set alight with one Gen. McArthur. Once the flames have cooled, distribute straws to multiple guests so all can partake. (Bonus! This drink contains one-third of the earth's surface but only 1/145th of its land mass, making it a low-cal cocktail that packs a punch!)

## Pacific Garbage Patch Painkiller

- 750 languages
- Scores of infectious diseases
- 1 white whale
- 1 bottle of poorly aged Hollywood misrepresentation
- 25 million TEUs of annual cargo flow
- 1.8 trillion garbage pieces
- dry ice for garnish

Begin with 750 languages. Blanch and freeze for cultural erasure. Scatter scores of infectious diseases and stir about with white whale and the spoils of attendant whaling industry. Drown in one bottle of poorly aged Hollywood misrepresentation and shake over ice of forgotten tongues. Pour out over shipping lanes and detritus of cargo flow and then very unevenly distribute 1.8 trillion garbage pieces to most negatively impacted areas and communities. Garnish with dry ice and trap carbon dioxide under a glass dome to serve.



## Zombie Apocalypse Now!

- Roughly a half dozen isotopic signatures
- 29 Marshall Island atolls
- 1 two-piece swimwear craze
- 1 nuclear coffin (for garnish)

Stir up roughly a half dozen isotopic signatures, ideally in a desert environment. Gather atolls as individual serving pieces. Measure out isotopes and prepare for fission by handing your guests special viewing glasses before you serve. Detonate each drink and sprinkle with swimsuit craze for ironic and spectacular effect. Once cooled, garnish with one concrete nuclear coffin that is allowed to sink slowly into rising, barren waters and reveal its glowing, half-life treats to the certain oohs and ahhs of your guests!





# TOURING THE MODEL MEMORY HOME

The furniture of the mind is a funny thing. Redecorations—even gut renos—are possible, but in my own experience things almost imperceptibly shift, move about from too much jostling, or fade and even break from too much wear. Like furniture, the more a memory is used, the less it looks like its original incarnation, the thing we made or bought.

When I went off to college, I left a leafy, absurdly cushy suburb in a huff. Surely, I was attempting the gut reno, too naïve to realize I was merely repainting the place, probably in the same color. But once at college—equally absurdly—I discovered Medieval Studies. I was eager to ground my preposterous self-perception in something older than America, in something grander, more ornately carved, and even more delusional than the suburbs of New Jersey.

What I found was the memory house.

Memory was an art in the Middle Ages and the memorizer was taught to build a structure in their mind and to “place” the memories in various rooms. The visualization of this imagined house was key. Halfway down the pathway of this life—as Dante put it—I realize this is the truest form of home ownership I will ever have.

On one level, everything is a memory structure of sorts. My pandemic-emptied Manhattan was a memory city, but so is the populated one (“I remember when this was Beatrice!”). So, too, are all ideas that went into the conception and construction of a building or a place—and what memories were *meant to be* made therein. What are intentions if not blueprints? Aren’t we handed a set of so many plans we are told we *should* desire?

On another, more literal level, I’ve certainly played my part in this suburban circular—on my own little carousel of progress that goes around in circles. I’ve benefited from a place that shut out so many. I took all its opportunity and squeezed it for all it was worth. I took the even greater privilege of leaving of my volition. Then, of course, I was unable to afford to replicate it, as I was born during the Reagan administration.

Here, irony intervened: my father, born in Brooklyn in 1950 and raised in a Jubilee model home in Levittown, Long Island, was killed by the kind

of military-industrial tumor Long Island has cultivated ever since it stopped growing potatoes. The opportunities the suburbs gave him likely killed him. The privilege he afforded me in our New Jersey suburban ranch house transmuted into an inheritance of a Manhattan apartment to call my own.

Progress, I guess?

My mother, meanwhile, grew up a couple of miles from where she and my father raised me. A few months ago, she sold the only childhood home I knew. She sold the ranch. My memory home became something like a phantom limb—much in the same way that my notion of progress I was raised with in the Clinton 90s has. The place had great bones, I’ll give it that.

The dream of suburbia was a timelessly American exercise in deliberate discrimination. Yet, the desires attached to that dream and the holy trinity of social advancement, home ownership, and education, speak to a certain postwar time and place that we cannot recover nor can we seem to recover from. It’s a broken La-Z-Boy in the memory house’s rec room. I don’t know if anyone is comfortable in it anymore, but we cannot afford to replace the damn thing.

There is no recovering yesterday’s dreams: they only made sense in a certain place in time. Every day, I benefit from what I left, and here I criticize the things that make this criticism possible: the property taxes, the education, and the slate of attendant possibilities in their wake. What hurt so many helped me, and no matter what my politics, that is the first truth of my path. But that path also veered away from its own beginning, half by choices granted by a previous generation’s wealth, half by the declining circumstances of my peers’.

Utopias are built to warp and rot, especially those intended to harm. But, like an abandoned shopping mall—let us continue suburban metaphors—they are a floorshow of consumer desire of yore that we might understand and see how the hell we got here. Lost at the memory mall, we might call Heraclitus from a payphone and hear a voice that tells us we are never going back again, we will never step in the same fountain twice. But that’s true of everything, I suppose.

—Cara Marsh Sheffler



## My God, the suburbs!

They encircled the city's boundaries like enemy territory and we thought of them as a loss of privacy, a cesspool of conformity and a life of indescribable dreariness in some split-level village where the place name appeared in the New York Times only when some bored housewife blew off her head with a shotgun. —John Cheever, *Esquire*, July 1960

(NB: At the time of writing these words, Cheever had been living in the suburbs of New York for over a decade.)







## THE SUBURBS ARE A VIOLENT PLACE— JUST NOT FOR THE DECENT FOLKS WHO LIVE IN THEM

Across the land, the postwar American family migrated to a new and verdant frontier: the suburb. Join us and explore this outpost! Experience the postwar planned community in all its monolithic splendor! The above image features artist Johannah Herr's flocked architectural model of the "Jubilee" Levittown home, which came fully furnished with new appliances—and a racial covenant on the home's deed that to this day remains nearly impossible to remove.

The model was first included in Herr's solo show *I Have Seen the Future*. Through a sensibility that emphasized intersectionality, interconnectedness, and correlation, *I Have Seen the Future* was a multifaceted, immersive exhibit of components meant to evoke the experience of visiting the 1964 World's Fair—with the hindsight of 2022. The show also featured *I Have Seen the Future: Official Guidebook*, a collaboration with writer Cara Marsh Sheffler.

Herr and Sheffler's latest collaboration, *White Flight!*, takes a journey deep into the dark heart of *I Have Seen the Future*'s "American Home Pavilion." Meant to accompany Herr's latest solo of the same name, *White Flight!* picks up where the *Official Guide* left off. *White Flight!* asks who was allowed into suburbia—and what mechanisms of exclusion kept others out. The history of the suburbs draws a direct path to today's mottled US map of desperately unequal opportunities and wealth distribution. Through collage, subverted advertisements, found texts, and essays, *White Flight!* tells the story of what actually constitutes a white picket fence.

—**!AGITPOP!** PRESS

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