

# Still cool in 2084

As a new exhibition exalts the designs of the past, experts predict which will still be loved in 60 years' time. By **Mark O'Flaherty**

**C**ertain design innovations and ideas take root in our homes almost immediately, from dishwashers to wireless speakers. Some things become anachronisms and vanish, like VCRs. Others lose popularity, like a new family piano. A few take time to be appreciated: the Modernist metal-framed leather armchairs by Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand took more than 50 years to shift from edgy to omnipresent.

The recently opened exhibition *Changing Spaces: 60 Years of Design with Habitat*, at the Design Museum in London, features an overview of objects that have come to define our homes, straddling decades in two very different-looking centuries.

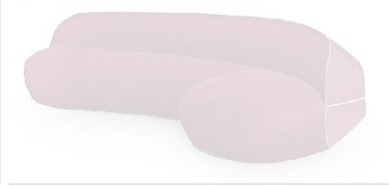
But what will our homes look like 60 years from now? A few things seem certain: green technology will thrive. Everything will, surely, be wireless. Super-flush Toto-type bidet seats in bathrooms could be in the mix. But so will simpler things we continue to take for granted.

With this in mind, 10 UK-based design experts pick the things, new and old, that they believe will continue to shape our futures.

**1. Ambessa Play DIY Kinetic Flashlight, £45**

*Johanna Agerman Ross, chief curator of the Design Museum, London*

"New technology quickly becomes obsolete, but this wind-up torch uses tech developed over 100 years ago – kinetic power that generates electricity. The torch is created as a make-it-yourself kit to teach kids and was co-designed with displaced out-of-school children globally. It points to a new way of product development, one that



introduces transparency and longevity in electronics, where modularity means that parts rather than the whole can be replaced to increase a product's life. Sixty years from now it is likely to still be functioning, providing light off-grid."

**2. Seguso Murano glass ashtray**

*Lee Bloom, lighting and furniture designer*

"Since the ban on smoking cigarettes in public in 2007, and a less tolerant view to smoking in general, society has lost an entire host of rather attractive accessories, such as the ashtray. Once a staple household item on the coffee table – and of course the most have access to steal from five-star restaurants and hotels – could the ashtray become the cult homewares accessory of the future? From the 1970s stand-up ashtrays to the heavy Murano glass sculptural objects from the 1960s and 1970s by Seguso, these are beautiful items in their own right and a new generation has begun finding new ways to revive them,

**3. Davide Groppi MOON suspension light, £802**

*Sam Buckley, interior designer*

"In 60 years' time, we'll still be embracing the humble paper shade. Its subtle filtered light creates an even glow, lending atmosphere to any space, making them an easy choice for a variety of interiors. Davide Groppi's MOON is a beautiful refinement, referencing celestial bodies, and adding an emotional experience. I also love Isamu Noguchi's classic Akari series an exploration of form and scale using Japanese wash paper and bamboo for an organic feel."

**4. Cassina Cab 412 chair by Mario Bellini, from £1,250**

*Faye Toogood, artist and designer*

"The Cab, designed in 1977 and made entirely of cowhide in 21 parts, has always been one of my favourite

designs. It looks even better once it's aged – like a shoe, you have to wear it in. It's renewable, repairable – you can even unzip it. It's an object that will undoubtedly hold its position as an icon for many years to come."

**5. Vitra Anagram sofa by Panter&Touren**

*James Melis, industrial designer, founder and creative director of BLOND*

"Vitra debuted this design as the Sofa System of the Future, during this year's 3DaysDesign in Copenhagen [available from September]. Initially, it looks like a simple, beautifully designed and detailed sofa. Looking closer, it is a new adaptable typology for seating. The carefully considered frame allows for infinite adaptations and accessories, continuous reconfiguration and ease of upgrade or repair. The flexibility provided is the future of furniture – as it adapts to the continuing development of the way we live, work, occupy spaces and consume."

**6. Wooden clothes peg**

*Tejumola Butler Adenuga, artist and designer*

"The humble wooden clothes peg is here to stay. It consists of just two pieces of carved wood and a spring, but is a symbol of practicality and toughness, reminding us of how simple craftsmanship gets things done. It's neat how they've spread beyond laundry – used in kitchens for sealing packets, and industrial versions in automotive and manufacturing. Their name is used as a verb in certain languages. They remind me of my school days in Nigeria."

**7. Mononware Everyday mug by Ian McIntyre, £19**

*Michael Marriott, industrial designer*

"Designing simple everyday objects that are a delight to use and aesthetically lasting too is a difficult thing, but it's something that Ian McIntyre spends a lot of time developing and refining. In 2016 he created a show at Vitsoe in London,

looking at the history of the classic Brown Betty teapot, and how it evolved over time. In 2020 he designed the Everyday stoneware mug, with a soft square base, for the launch of British tableware brand Mononware. Ian's practice is about studying and understanding (sometimes forgotten) archetypes, then evolving, updating or iterating them for a contemporary market or audience."

**8. Ahudid Silicestone Terrazzo**

*Eva Sonaike, homeware designer*

"One design I foresee in many homes 60 years from now is the Silicestone Terrazzo by Ahudid, which I launched in 2022. Made almost entirely (98 per cent) from recycled glass, ceramics and mineral waste, this material can be used for interior and exterior surfaces and comes in a range of organic colours. For me, this is a perfect example of blending sustainability and aesthetics; showcasing how innovative thinking can repurpose discarded materials into something truly remarkable and stylish for our living spaces."

**9. Binda Sofa by Raw Edges, £32,000**

*Russell Sage, interior designer*

The Binda Sofa for Louis Vuitton, designed by Raw Edges – an amazing east London-based design studio run by Yael Mer and Shay Alkalay – blew me away. It looks like a huge amount of considered thinking and creative energy has gone into it. It is instantly modern, but with a sense of nostalgia. You will see it reinterpreted over and over again in years to come, but the original will always be the best. It's always a pleasure to be stopped in your tracks by genuinely intelligent, brilliant design."

**10. Wiener GTV Design Lehnstuhl chair by Nigel Coates, POA**

*Sebastian Conran, designer and chair of Conran and Partners*

"The Lehnstuhl chair, designed by Nigel Coates for Wiener GTV Design, takes inspiration from Thonet's classic bentwood chair. The wide lounge exudes comfort and elegance and its aesthetic is balanced, refined and complex. Sweeping lines are defined by the curved steam-bent beechwood frame, woven cane seat and backrest. Coates's own philosophy emphasises longevity and reflects an understanding of classic form, making the Lehnstuhl chair, in my opinion, a timeless design."

*"Changing Spaces: 60 Years of Design with Habitat" at the Design Museum, July 10-August 11*

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