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# Eliel Saarinen and Raymond Loewy: Immigrants and Indigenous Design Innovation

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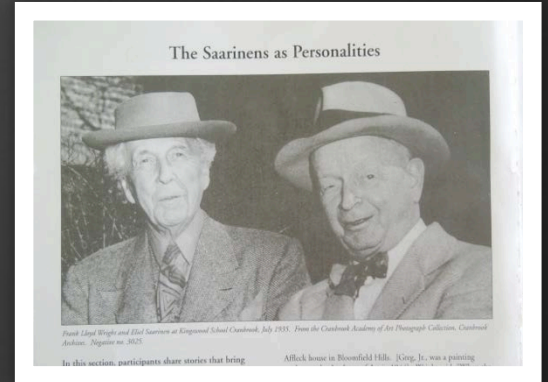
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Eliel Saarinen and Raymond Loewy:  
*Immigrants and Indigenous Design Innovation*

Lisa S. Banu, Ph.D.  
Design History



# Eliel Saarinen at Cranbrook

Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

## Cranbrook Dining Hall Window

Demonstrates Principle  
of Organic Design

Whole has the  
appearance of  
consistency but parts  
deviate (the window  
metal tracery in this  
example)



THE LEADING THOUGHTS OF THE  
CRANBROOK DEVELOPMENT

Education is not only the teaching of knowledge, but above all the planting of the seed of a lifelong accumulation and digestion of knowledge - through self-education. The earlier the proper seed is planted in the young mind, the stronger will its roots be, and the more fruit of a true Culture will it bear.

However, the young mind cannot be receptive for Culture in its truest sense unless the eyes are opened, for the first: to see the richness of Nature, to desire for understanding of her construction, organic life and inner meaning; and, for the second: to learn to understand and appreciate human Art as a true expression of human life. In other words: the mind must learn to dwell with the problems that belong to the realms of Science and Art. Science is the investigation of existing values that are created by Nature. Art is the creation of new values during the progress of human evolution. The principles that govern the construction and the evolution in Nature are made evident through Science. And in understanding the principles of "Nature's Art", one senses the stronger - those of human Art.

“The Leading Thoughts on the  
Cranbrook Development”

Saarinen's Mission Statement for  
Design Education, 1925

13

# Letter from Frank Lloyd Wright, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1932

Mr. Eliel Saarinen, Director, Cranbrook School, Birmingham, Michigan.

My dear Saarinen: Would you write to me such a letter concerning the Fellowship that I might show it to people who could help with the buildings and industrial equipment of the School? If these people felt that ten worth-while architects thoroughly approved and would like to see them help it might smooth our way a little, because I imagine many material men and manufacturers fear that were they to commit themselves to a radical architects venture like this they might antagonize the "field" and refuse.

I am sending a request similar to this to the ten architects I consider leaders whom the others follow.

Needless to say I should deeply appreciate a candid expression from you in any event.

*Fellowship Prospectus enclosed.*

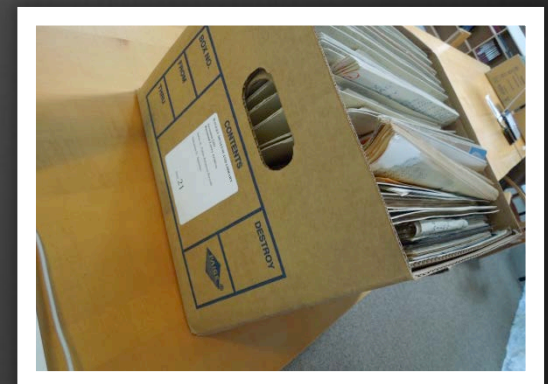
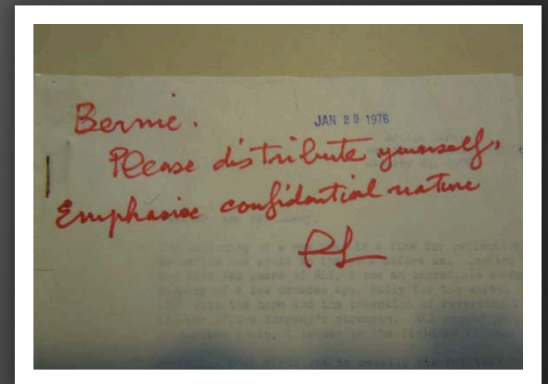
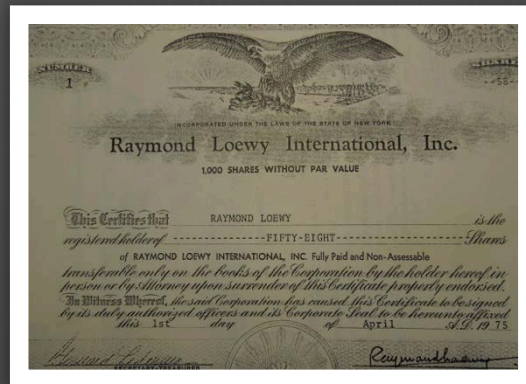
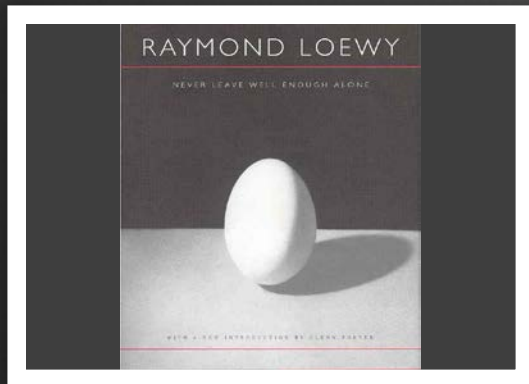
Faithfully yours,  
*Frank Lloyd Wright*  
Frank Lloyd Wright,  
Taliesin,  
Spring Green,  
Wisconsin,  
August 30th. 1932.

## PRESENT RATE OF SALARIES &amp; EXPENSES

Jan. 1, 1934 - to  
July 1, 1934

	Per Month	Per Year
Mr. Milles	400.00	4,800.00
Mrs. Saarinen	100.00	1,200.00
Rentals	70.00	840.00
Tuition (children)	13.55	162.50
Watchman (& uniform)	60.00	720.00
Insurance	99.04	1,188.48
Mr. Saarinen	600.00	7,200.00
Mr. Raseman	400.00	4,800.00
Wingerden	100.00	1,200.00
Office Supplies	35.00	420.00
Telephone and Telegraph	57.00	684.00
Printing and Publicity	50.00	600.00
Traveling Expenses	3.00	36.00
<u>Repairs and Maintenance</u>		
(Black	110.00	1,320.00
(Bell	83.33	1,000.00
(Witt	83.33	1,000.00
(Materials	56.66	680.00
Alterations to buildings	10.00	120.00
Maintenance of Grounds	55.00	660.00
Auto Service	25.00	300.00
Heat, Light and Power	340.00	4,080.00
Water	13.33	120.00
Librarian's Salary	83.33	1,000.00
Library Supplies & Expense	6.60	80.00
Rebinding and Repairing Books		
Photo Department	90.00	960.00
Books and Magazines	50.00	600.00
Museum Salaries	15.00	180.00
Museum Acquisitions	15.40	185.00
Sepeshy	133.33	1,600.00
Fredericks	41.70	500.00
Loan Fund	90.00	1,080.00
Exhibitions and Entertainments	50.00	600.00
Academic Department	60.00	720.00
Detroit City Plan - Salary and expenses	75.00	900.00
		<u>41,555.98</u>

## Salaries and Expenses 1934



# Raymond Loewy

Hagley Archives, Delaware





AKRON, OHIO  
BEACON JOURNAL  
Circ. D. 137,893 - S. 142,171

MAR 21 1951  
SYDNEY J. HARRIS

Loewy's Bragging Spoils His Bo

FORT WAYNE, IND.  
NEWS-SENTINEL  
Circ. D. 81,292

SEP 29 1951

residual property belonging to RB.

Page 1 of 2 pages

office:

- 2 Paintings by RB
- 1 Chrome statue, wheels, auto parts.
- 3 Motown hitograph
- All objects of art stored in desk cabinet
- Racecar model
- John Kennedy photograph
- 5 instruments plants instruments
- White House paper snow in case

9 of office Floating plastic discs

- 1 model Apollo, gift of D: Vanetta of NASA
- All personal documents stored in RB's closet
- All personal documents stored in three filing cabinets near RB's office door
- All documents in storage cabinets under windows

1 Painting copy of Memo

- 1 Black mesh spider
- 3 Barbours album

RB's office

- All materials of a PR or personal nature pertaining to RB's career such as photographs, clippings to be used in an historical volume now written about the program by RB or to be donated to the history of Langston or retained as of historical value
- All copies except Ten of LIFE bicentennial issue and the Smithsonian catalogues
- All copies except Ten of the L.D. magazine about Spence

# INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

A NEW ART FORM.

FIRST DRAFT OF A BOOK INTENDED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE  
INTERESTED IN THE I.D PROFESSION

1968

Never written  
By:



## PREFACE

Explain early life: Beginning of career.  
What I.D does for the world, for the standard of living, for improvement  
of the public's taste, for convenience, to make life easier.

The Dept of Commerce estimates that the pace of technology doubles every  
15 years. If so, 100% of all scientific and technological achievements  
occurred since 1937. (check) (1946 to 1966 Design news)

A great painter, <sup>or</sup> great sculptor, a craftsman of genius create their  
masterpieces through sheer talent and aesthetic intuition. This does not  
apply to industrial design. A successful design in this new art form is the  
end result of . . . etc (borrow from my modeling piece)

## INTRODUCTION

Reader may wonder why  
In many paragraphs the evolution of the Profession is demarcated  
by examples from my own argumentation. The manner is simple  
that my own experiences are very much those of other my  
colleagues, and that it applies to <sup>designers in</sup> other countries as well. Besides  
It enables me to give factual accounts based upon design  
realities and actual experience.

There shall be illustrations from I.D products from other  
countries and <sup>by</sup> leading designers from leading countries  
and other designers. In other words, I shall endeavor  
to explain the what I.D has done to demonstrate what  
is industrial design and why its effects upon the entire  
world and its influence covers the entire world.  
But in order to do so I must present not only its benefits <sup>fairly</sup> but also its mistakes. Thus we can realistically appraise its real contribution  
(over)

in our situation may make him change his mind?).  
Regardless, even if he stays, there are serious chances that our  
position may deteriorate further and faster. That is where  
I will have to be most careful. I must try not to let  
every cent I have go down the drain trying to plug bottomless  
holes. It wouldn't take long for me to be wiped out.

In order to do this, there are possibilities as follows.  
One would be to start immediately a process of orderly  
liquidation, trying to taper off gradually so we can  
terminate operations without actual loss or unpleasant  
employees situation. As you will remember, Jack Breen  
was more or less in favor of such a plan. It would at  
least protect whatever capital I have. Besides, conditions  
might improve as we go along, making it possible  
to stop retrenchment and start to build again.  
But all this would have to be done without Bill as  
he told me he would not be interested and he would  
leave. I have no ~~idea~~ idea of what Barney would  
choose to do.

Another possibility is that of a merger, with such a firm  
as L and M for instance. They are very strong in selling which is  
our weakest point. Our business is important, about twice  
their volume, I am told, therefore it could be very desirable  
to them. So it might be workable and I would like  
you to give it a thought. I understand that I might  
see my income reduced (even if the business of the new  
is successful) but I am ready to make

Personal letter dated 1958,  
describing plans for the  
possible liquidation of RLI

Hearst's International Combined with

# COSMOPOLITAN

HERBERT R. MAYES *Supervising Editor* RICHARD E. BERLIN *President*

FRANK ELTONHEAD *Art Editor*

*Associate Editors* • ROBERT C. ATHERTON • KATHRYN BOURNE

DAVID BROWN • RUTH HARBERT • ANTHONY LA SALA • JOHN P. MARQUAND, JR.

JOHN J. O'CONNELL • HOLLY ROTH • BARBARA SCHNECK

ALICE SHERIDAN • PEGGY THORNDIKE

*August, 1950*

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*A date with Margaret Truman*

HEARST'S INTERNATIONAL COMBINED WITH

# Cosmopolitan

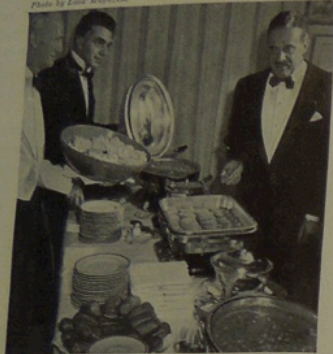
AUGUST, 1950 • 35¢

CANADA 40 CENTS



Two-week Plan  
... to Win a Man

Photo by Leah Maysinger



Mr. Loewy says: "When the ordinary American cook attempts complicated recipes, it is time for a quick exit or sodium bicarbonate."

FROM RAYMOND LOEWY'S RECIPE BOOK

**CHAMPAGNE AND PEACHES:** Place a nice juicy peach, previously peeled, at the bottom of a tall glass. Half fill with cracked ice, and add a jigger of Grand Marnier. Crush the peach slightly, and fill the glass with iced champagne. Drink while very cold.

**COFFEE CARAMEL SAUCE:** Take a pound of granulated sugar, ¼ lb. of butter, 2 pints of heavy

cream. Place in copper pan, blend well, and let cook until it reaches the consistency of fudge. Add a tablespoonful of real vanilla extract and a half cup of very strong coffee. Let simmer a while. In order to test the consistency, pour a drop on a buttered plate and feel hard—like chewy caramels. Sauce should be firm but not rather hot over good vanilla or coffee ice cream.

**SHERBET:** Prepare a mixture of ¼ apricot nectar, ¼ tangerine juice, and ¼ pineapple juice. Add plenty of good champagne, a dash of fresh lime juice, and freeze in an ice-cream freezer. It is delicious.

Another simple recipe for anyone interested in a demonstration of complete happiness in this world of ours. I use it quite often and find it refreshing:

Take a good-size live dog fast asleep, preferably an Irish setter. Place gently, as close to its nostrils as possible, a large chunk of liverwurst. Sit back and watch.

**Stage One:** At each intake of breath, the scent of the sausage slowly permeates the unconscious brain of the subject until it reaches the boundaries of semi-consciousness. Then the nostrils begin to quiver slightly.

**Stage Two:** Lashes begin to flutter, saliva oozes out, and breathing evolves into sniffing.

**Stage Three:** Subject suddenly realizes the reality of the dream and in a violent convulsion lunges at morsel and swallows in one gulp.

**Stage Four:** This final stage is the most interesting one for the expert to watch as it greatly varies according to individual dogs. Setters ordinarily express their utter bewilderment by sitting up and staring blankly—unable to decide what to do next. They remain there, unconvinced that such ecstasies exist outside the world of dreams.

with their times. Young married couples who consider past styles as dead and who courageously invest a great part of their savings in modernistic furniture are poor, misguided kids who discover in a few years that there is no style deader than bad modern. Then it is too late; they are stuck with the dreary stuff. They have traded their precious savings for an arty mess of module-system junk. The module system is a wonderful idea of the bright *avant-garde* of contemporary designers. It is also called flexible furniture. Every piece, whether a commode, a bookcase, a bedside table, a buffet, a desk, or whatever, is of a same, standardized dimension, or module. You can permute, arrange, and combine the units any way you like. People of imagination and physical restlessness can juggle the pieces around in infinite variations so a poor setup can be transformed in a matter of minutes into another layout just as poor. I have seen countless versions of the masterly flexible furniture, and I must say that it all has a feeling of dreadful sterility.

It is a pity that there are so very few good pieces available, for we can't go. (Continued on page 114)

recognized for well over fifty years as the classic treatment for hepatose, are in reality too familiar to require enumeration. Among its well-known properties are its action as an anti-toxic-desinterocolic vehicle for the arto-ami-benzo-steral contained in—"

It then proceeds to enumerate, in three thousand well-chosen words, the well-known properties of ZAZAPAR. It is cute reading for places where reading matter is scarce, such as bathrooms. The literature is usually available in the medicine cabinet of the average home.

Modernistic furniture is one of the many everyday commodities that need the attention of intelligent designers. Do you like modernistic furniture? Can you live happily with it? Good. I am delighted for you, and it satisfies me no end—as a modern designer and as a modern man. As far as I am concerned, it makes me sick, and I'd rather live in a thatched-roof cottage on Cape Cod. There is nothing worse than bad modern. Bad modern represents about ninety per cent of the output, and it is tragic—tragic and unfair to the multitude of young, contemporary Americans who yearn to be up to date and to live

START

decided to have a truly utilitarian bedroom in his New York apartment. Room in his New York apartment. Room reduced to essentials, a bedroom need not be a large, it should comprise a bed, a chair, a door, and a window. To be liked to read in bed. So he took a room like a large closet and painted the floor it all in white-enamel paint. The floor was waxed, and the window had frosted glass. In one corner was a hospital bed. A lacquered in white, crank and all. A dentist's floodlight projected a cone of bluish light over the exact spot at which Tolson would hold his reading matter. The only other piece of furniture was an operating room's tubular stool, also white enameled.

I saw it once and felt depressed for days.

This poor dear, a delightful young Swede, disappeared during the war while crossing the Pacific aboard a transport ship. One day he could not be found anywhere. Strangest of all, every single piece of his clothing, personal effects, weapons, and weapons had vanished, and no one had any idea of what had happened. A most functional disappearance.

TO SUM UP this modern-furniture business, I think most of it is awful. I know this statement may get me into plenty of trouble. All I ask for my potential executioners is the favor of not being quoted out of context. I am not a fan of modern-design furniture in theory, and I own many delightful examples of it, and my only regret is that there is so little that is any good. Bad modern is just as ugly as the revolting type of furniture that the trade calls "borax." For the reader unfamiliar with it, let us say that borax is sold in enormous quantities throughout the country by cheap furniture stores. Heavy-handed in design, over-stuffed, gaudy, and over-styled, it is the essence of furniture vulgarity. Almost always covered with loud, sleazy fabrics, it is loaded with golden curlicues and polychromatic reliefs and usually sold to the lowest-income group in staggering quantities. To many recently arrived immigrants, still obsessed by the misery of their desolate backgrounds, it represents materialistic splendor. They buy the stuff ravenously; take snapshots of the family, sunk in upholstered American luxury, and mail them to the Old Country.

To me, bad modern is just as horrid as borax, whether its perpetrators like it or not. Let's hope that someday the designers of modern furniture will think of it in a different vein—in terms of gracefulness and charm; pieces that will help make the home a cozy place to live in perhaps a bit less functional than a dissection lab or a dog hospital, but more inviting.

As for lighting, could we have it less engineeringly perfect? Could we retain pales of penumbra, realms of firelight and golden halo? Let's have contrasts, coziness, and warmth.

To realize fully the extent of the fluorescent catastrophe, one has only to travel to Latin America. I am thinking of a small village in Havana I revisited after ten years. It used to be delightful, especially at night when the colorful little corner bars, hardware stores, and fruit shops were aglow with blond light. It was sunny and gay. Every color retained its brilliance. It was an orgy of saffrons, apricots, mandarins, and magen-

on living forever with poor copies of Chippendale, Sheraton, or French Provincial. What we need are a few inspired designers with far more than a system or a knowledge of modern materials and technology. The prime requisite is an understanding of charm, of the so-called amenities of life, a flair for the human, instead of a dryly logical concept of home surroundings. Some American designers have shown talent in this direction, and several Scandinavian artists have grasped the idea. Unfortunately, the latter's Nordic creations do not seem to blend well with the stream of American life. They look best in Oslo, in Jönköping, in Malmö. In Philadelphia they are lost; in Little Rock they are poison.

ANOTHER pitfall into which some of the modernistic decorators have fallen, with an acceleration of three G's, is bad lighting. Being rational gentlemen, they have decreed that illumination, in order to be logical, must be evenly distributed, without high lights or shadows; in other words, it must be diffused. So we have been flooded with that dismal invention called "daylight fluorescent lighting." This unfortunate discovery produces a ghastly bluish halo that makes any healthy person look absolutely livid. When it is used in a white kitchen with all-white equipment, you expect to see Daddy stretched out on the white-enamel table ready for the post-mortem. Junior seems to have caught a bad case of luhonic plague, and Mother looks ready for the embalmer. The steak, when served, appears very, very gangrenous. Coffee is horrid, and the mashed potatoes are a mass of blue-gray putrescence. It is all efficient, gaudy, and logical. How-

ever, it sparkled with joy. Now the whole village is standardized to the level of lividity, like other villages of Peru, Nicaragua, Chile, and Venezuela. The sliding-rule gents have done their damage. I doubt that their souls will ever fluoresce in peace.

LET, if anything, has been written about psychology applied to design. This is one of the most fascinating aspects of the new profession, and one to which I often attract the attention of our designers. The sensory aspects of the normal human being should be taken into consideration in all forms of design. Let's have the perfect Coca-Cola bottle, for instance. Even when wet and cold, its twin-sphered body offers a delightful valley for the friendly hold of one's hand—a cozy and luscious feeling. It is interesting to watch the almost caressing, affectionate manner in which the average teen-ager fondles his Coke bottle.

Or you may watch his daddy holding in his gently cupped hand the lovely globe of a snifter brandy glass. He wavers it up lovingly, firmly pressing the stem against the sensitive inner part of his forked and outstretched middle fingers.

Chewing gum is another example. After a few minutes, the goeey mess loses practically all its flavor. Yet the addict keeps on chewing it for hours. This may act as a release from some sort of frustration. Under the masticator's deliberate and masterly will, the resisting body of the brittle finally yields and flattens out into complete subservience, and this pleasant victory occurs at the rate of thirty defeats every minute. A defeat that is cruel,

ever, the newer fluorescent tubes have a warmer tone and are much more acceptable.

The living room is flooded with the same fluorescent lighting, and the regimented module furniture stands at attention—all chrome knobs, bright as buttons. Chairs are rigidly functional, and covered with some orange or poison-green fabric as a tribute to color. A low coffee table with spindly legs and an amoeba-shaped top introduces the freestyle and some work of art. Probably an elongated black panther. Or it may be a Nubian slave in gold turban ecstatically proffering another black ashtray.

Cubistic bookends keep Forever Amber and the Manatee from falling over each other under the standardized stare of a Van Gogh in lithograph. (There is another Van Gogh across the room—the ineluctable sunflowers in a white frame.)

From a theoretical viewpoint, the lighting is perfect: no shadows, no eye-strain, no dark areas. The furniture is efficient; all drawers, all shelves, all closets; no wasted space, no unnecessary projections. The heating is perfect, too. No wasteful fireplace, but a diffused, evenly distributed temperature. No warm glow, no cool corner. Everything has been leveled at its logical base, reduced to its simplest technical expression. It is a wonderful machine to live in.

It is murder.

BEFORE the war, I had a topflight Swedish designer. He had exquisite taste, and he designed many lovely things for us. However, once in a while he would go on a functional binge that would lead to extraordinary results. He

under the pressure of the master's crushing molar. Each mastication is an assertion of victory over animated matter. One might almost say "living matter," as chicle possesses a combination of malleability, warmth, moistness, resiliency, and intimacy of contact.

These and many others are examples of sensory designing of sorts. All happen to be very successful products.

Sensory design can go too far, however. Take, for example, the new types of deluxe coach trains that were put in operation between New York and Florida in about 1940. These trains included the latest type of coaches, with reclining seats that were very comfortable. The armrest between seats could be folded up, and when two seats were fully reclined they became, more or less, a double bed. For a while, it turned out that many young couples had discovered this characteristic—what with a nice dinner, a few drinks, the prospect of sunny Florida, the lights off, and the friendly cooperation of a fur coat spread out fully!

Before long, the railroad found in its mail numerous letters from shocked passengers who objected to this undervalued form of travel comfort. So we had to install an electric light bulb under every other seat; a type that could not be conveniently turned off by the amorous passengers.

UNDOUBTELY that persistent light is a desirable inconvenience, but not so most of life's little annoyances. Maddeningly enough, most of them could be ironed out immediately, with no help from the industrial designer. To list a

# Ayres' Lafayette

...invites you...

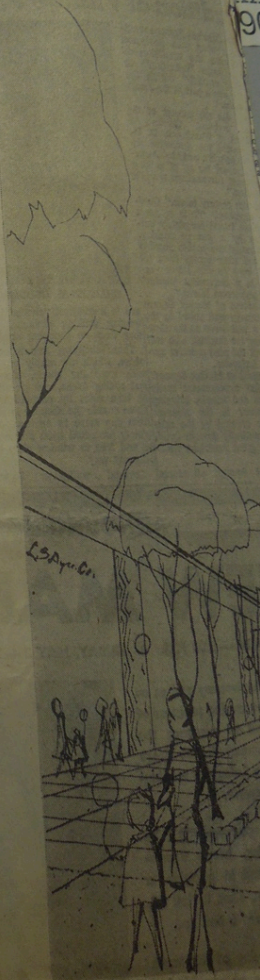
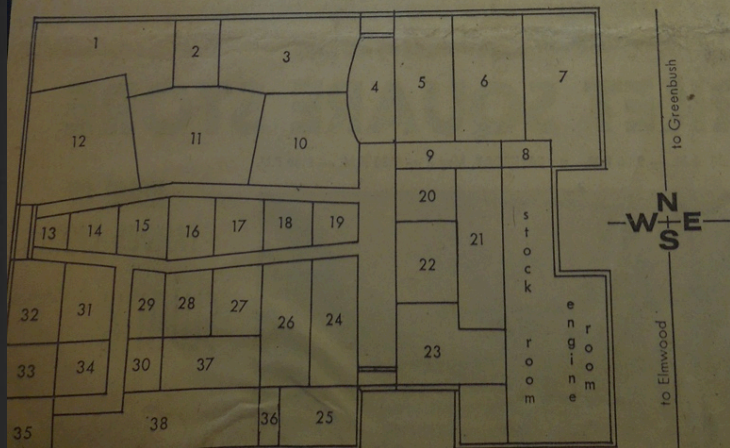
**Come to see** Lafayette's newest department store—Ayres' Lafayette in the new Market Square Shopping Center—opening tomorrow at 11 a.m.

**Come to see** one of the most beautiful stores in the country—with interior plan and decor by Raymond Loewy of New York.

**Come to see** a wonderful array of fashions and furnishings keyed to casual living—for men, for women, for juniors, teens and children, and accessories for the home.

**Come to shop** for at Ayres' Lafayette shopping is easy, shopping is fun. Our watchwords: the famous Ayres' traditions of friendliness and courtesy, integrity and service.

## A Guide to Ayres' Lafayette



1972 Opening of  
Ayres Department Store  
From Scrapbook

# Raymond Loewy and The Bittersweet Taste of American Design

How to cook like a designer?	How to consume like a designer?	Raymond Loewy Recipes	How to Design New dishes?
<p>1. Why have a Chapter on Cooking? Recipes in Ladies Home Journal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Appeal to women?</b></li> <li>- <b>Project lifestyle?</b></li> </ul> <p>2. Reviews of NLWA</p> <p>3. Interpretive problem</p> <p>4. Different from Design Theory (MAYA principle) Interpretations of design theory</p> <p>5. Different from Design History (personal history and motivation)</p> <p>6. Interpretation of historians</p>	<p><i>Design and Philosophy</i></p> <p>Historical Culinary Metaphor: <b>Adolf Loos</b></p> <p>Metaphorical Method of Design Lakoff and Johnson</p> <p>Contemporary Design Uses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jerszy Seymour</li> <li>2. John Maeda</li> <li>3. Steve Jobs</li> </ol> <p>Philosophical uses of digestion metaphors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Baudrillard</li> <li>2. Zizek</li> <li>3. Bennett</li> </ol> <p><i>Food examples demonstrate:</i></p> <p>A. The priority of experience over theory. Continuity of aesthetic, gastronomic and literary taste</p> <p>B. Shared dishes and experiences personal preference versus shared metaphorical taste.</p> <p><b>Loewy's Recipes for success [and failure]</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sausages</li> <li>2. Candy</li> <li>3. Cake</li> <li>4. Ice-cream</li> <li>5. Daiquiris</li> <li>6. Lipstick</li> <li>7. Army Barracks</li> <li>8. Mayo over peaches</li> <li>9. Burgers</li> <li>10. Strawberry Shortcake and Cold spot 1934</li> <li>11. Trashcans and Trains 1937</li> <li>12. Helen Peter's Eyelashes and the MAYA principle</li> <li>13. Swiss Cheese on Rye</li> </ol>	<p><b>Recipe Rescue and Developing New Recipes</b></p> <p>Smithsonian 1975 Dave Butler Memo 1976 Industrial Design 1979 1968 Unpublished Text</p> <p>Critique of Loewy Legacy Victor Papane and Gui Bonsieppe</p> <p><b>Task: Design your dish. How do you digest life?</b></p> <p><b>Lesson Plans</b></p> <p><b>Shortcake in Dhaka</b></p> <p><b>Consuming Modern Design</b></p> <p><b>Personal Ethnography</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of culinary metaphors a cross cultural method (Loewy in Dhaka)</li> <li>2. Use of culinary metaphors as inspiration (consuming modern design)</li> <li>3. Experience design and multisensory issues of taste</li> </ol>

# Future directions....

## **Pappy:**

*Eliel Saarinen's Design Strategies and Organic philosophy*

## **Refrigerators (and Blenders):**

*The Cold Case of Designing the Modern American Woman*

National Museum of American History Archives, *Appliance Recipe Collection*: GE, Frigidaire, Sears, Hamilton Beach, Sunbeam etc.