

The Eames Splint: Much More than Leg Support

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Rarely has performing patriotic duty woven, or in this case laminated, so many primary social functions into one object as in the case of the splint designed and partially manufactured by Charles and Ray Eames. In architectural circles the Eameses are widely renowned for both their 1949 Case Study House near Los Angeles and their whimsically modern furniture designs which are still widely available today. Elsewhere, their films, exhibition designs, and toys have also enjoyed critical attention and public enjoyment. However, their first successful commercial projects began with a molded plywood leg splint produced for the US Navy during World War II. In a monographic history of the Eames Office the leg splint, along with arm splints, litters, and airplane nose cones, find themselves relegated to a technological footnote used to explain molded plywood experiments and processes which consequently enabled the office's first produced line of critically acclaimed and commercially available plywood chairs.'

Eames furniture, however, should not be simplified as formally attractive applied technologies: their production follows directly from their wartime projects within a matrix of domestic and international ideologies, marketing strategies, and political maneuverings which inevitably impacted (reformulated in some cases) individual, regional, and national identities and representations. But somehow, these forces became nicely iced over, leaving an innocuous yet ubiquitous naturalized historical narrative. For example, Peter Smithson's 1966 essay on the "Eames-aesthetic" reads:

Charles Eames is a natural Californian Man, using his native resources and know-how – of the film-making, the aircraft and advertising industries – as others drink water; that is without thinking. And it is this combination of expertise . . . which produces the apparent casualness that is special to the American life-form and its art-form.

And, as it is the Californian Man's real originality to accept the clean and pretty as normal, it is not surprising that it is the Eames' who have made it respectable to like pretty things. This seems extraordi-

nary, but in our old world, pretty things are usually equated with social irresponsibility.?

A close reading of the Eames splint and the context of its production calls Smithson's normative characterization, and many others like his, into question and reveals that this particular view of the Eameses is just as much a product of their office as any of their furniture or films. Only in this case, the now identifiable Eames, that is, Charles Eames, the "natural Californian Man," traverses the Atlantic to inspire rebuilding in the war-ravaged "old world" with his specifically "American life-form." It makes no difference to Smithson that Charles Eames moved to California when he was 34, hardly an impressionable age, nor that Charles's primary mentors were "old-world" masters – Mies van der Rohe and Eiel Saarinen. For this study, the methodology of monographic history is sequestered, bringing anecdotal evidence, banal chronology, and interdisciplinary inquiry into play in order to escape the temptation of formal continuities and single-narrative histories which necessarily simplify the messy context of actual historical production. The results will be an understanding of how Smithson's statements are both completely accurate and ultimately untenable when confronted with the complexity of the Eameses' operational milieu.

The splint began as a suggestion by Dr. Wendell Scott in December of 1941, who, after having seen experimental applications of the Haskelite molded plywood process⁷ in the Eameses' apartment, suggested that they try to adapt the technology to the production of splints to replace the medically problematic metal splints that were in use by the military.

The Eameses had moved to Los Angeles from Cranbrook in 1941, into a Neutra designed apartment complex which had been secured for them by John Entenza, then publisher of *California Arts & Architecture* magazine. While teaching at Cranbrook, Charles Eames had collaborated with Eero Saarinen on molded plywood furniture designs which won major prizes in the 1940 Museum of Modern Art's Organic Design in Home Furnishing competition, with graphic assistance provided by Ray Kaiser, soon to become Eames. The

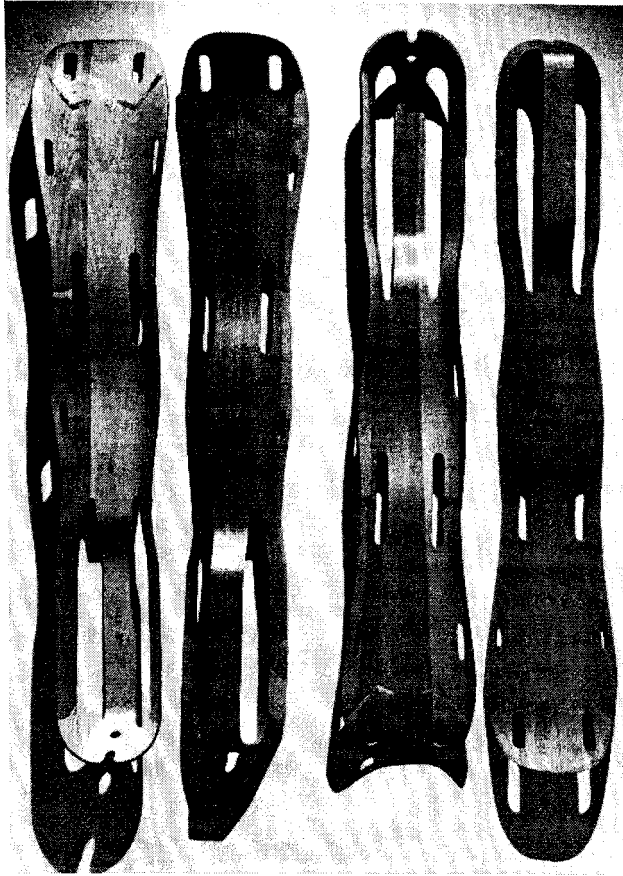


Fig. 1. Finished birch and mahogany productionsplints, 1943. Photo Credit: Eames Office © 1989,1998 <www.eamesoffice.com>

chairs were slated for production until war shortages halted their progress.

The splint was presented to the Navy early in 1942. Revisions were made and presented again in early summer, with Entenza accompanying Charles Eames on this trip. With the Navy's approval the equipment for mass production entered the design process with funding being provided by Entenza, and their first splint order came in November. The design team formed the Plyformed Wood Company which began to develop other molded plywood products for the military. In October of 1943, with production having difficulties meeting demand, the rights to the operation were sold to the Evans Product Company, which added the Molded Plywood Division and maintained the staff and its Los Angeles location for future development with Entenza acting as manager and president. By war's end, 150,000 splints had been manufactured and shipped to the Navy. In 1943 MoMA's Design for Use show included molded plywood splints among other Eames plywood forms.⁴

John Entenza, himself an import to the Los Angeles area after having conducted preparatory training for the diplomatic service under the Secretary of Labor in Washington, DC, purchased *California Arts & Architecture* magazine in 1938, prior to his entry into the splint business, and by the



Fig. 2. Wood-legged dining chair (DCW), 1945. Photo Credit: Eames Office © 1989,1998 <www.eamesoffice.com>

1940s had successfully reconfigured the magazine from its house-and-garden regional format into a modern multidisciplinary journal where the decorative arts and design were being treated on equal footing with the work of painters and sculptors.⁵

A new editorial introduction, "Notes in Passing," first appeared in the February 1940 issue as an annotated calendar of cultural events, but soon became a full-fledged editorial addressing the poverty of the arts in southern California, American isolationist tendencies, and fascist progressions in Europe.

The Arts & Architecture circle grew to include most young architects and designers of note in the southern California region, and with editorial eyes cast eastward, the magazine focused on artists exiled from Europe as well as American artists and critics operating both in Los Angeles and New York. In name and layout, the magazine reflected its change from its regional roots to the international art and architecture scene: the most drastic graphic redesign had occurred in the February 1942 issue which gave the magazine its first completely abstract cover, and *California* was dropped from the title in February of 1944. The international recognition of *Arts & Architecture* is only partly indicated by Entenza's position as American editor of *Zodiac*, the international design journal based in Milan and Brussels begun in the 1950's, and by the numerous reprints of *Arts & Architecture* spreads, even entire

issues, in foreign publications.'

Grace Clements, a "Post-Surrealist" abstract painter acting as Los Angeles art critic from 1942 to 1948 and as an editorial associate for the magazine, perhaps best exemplifies the directly political and cohesive atmosphere within the magazine's narrative objectives. Clements, active in the American Artists' Congress, an anti-fascist art organization based in New York, from the time of its chartering in the 1930s, contributed an article to the March 1936 issue of *Art Front*, a vehicle of the American Artists' Congress, in which she criticized formalism and Surrealist automatism and argued for a publicly legible art that addressed social issues: "If we had art—really had it—we wouldn't have the kind of poverty, exploitation, ugliness, and general chaos with which we have lived for so long."⁷ She saw Post-Surrealism, distinct from its European ancestors, as an abstract language that could still carry narrative meaning and continually reinforced her position in the art columns of *Arts & Architecture*.⁸

Alongside the political activism that was continually being championed in the publication's pages was a realization that things were going to be drastically different after the war. Entenza's 1942 "Notes in Passing" reads:

We have created fictions and expected them to stand as truths solid enough to uphold a social attitude that has become so cumbersome that it creaks with the weight of its own patches. . . . The future. . . has been delayed and compromised and denied over and over again simply because we have not yet satisfied ourselves as to the methods by which we could *buy and sell* it.⁹ [emphasis added]

This realization was indicative of a more general national attitude, primarily at the industrial production level. Advertising before and during the war continually reinforced the part that industry was playing in the war effort in order to maintain company name recognition in a time that offered little or no consumer goods. Instead of consumables, the companies highlighted their participation in wartime projects while urging the public to buy war bonds. Over the course of the war, the advertising of patriotic duty was slowly being replaced with advertisements predicting the new world of household and other consumer items that would be made available at war's end through wartime technologies.¹⁰ In effect, companies were preparing for peacetime retooling of their factories and priming the public for new consumer goods. This marketing strategy found its way into each wartime issue of *Arts & Architecture* and affected the magazine's general programming, most visibly surfacing in one particular issue.

Attempting to strip away outmoded fictions, the July 1944 issue of the magazine, both in its articles and advertising, highlighted the promising future of prefabrication in postwar domestic life. Curiously, what appears as the most striking image in the July issue does not occur within the graphically potent featured spreads but rather in an advertisement for the Evans Product Company's Molded Plywood Division facing

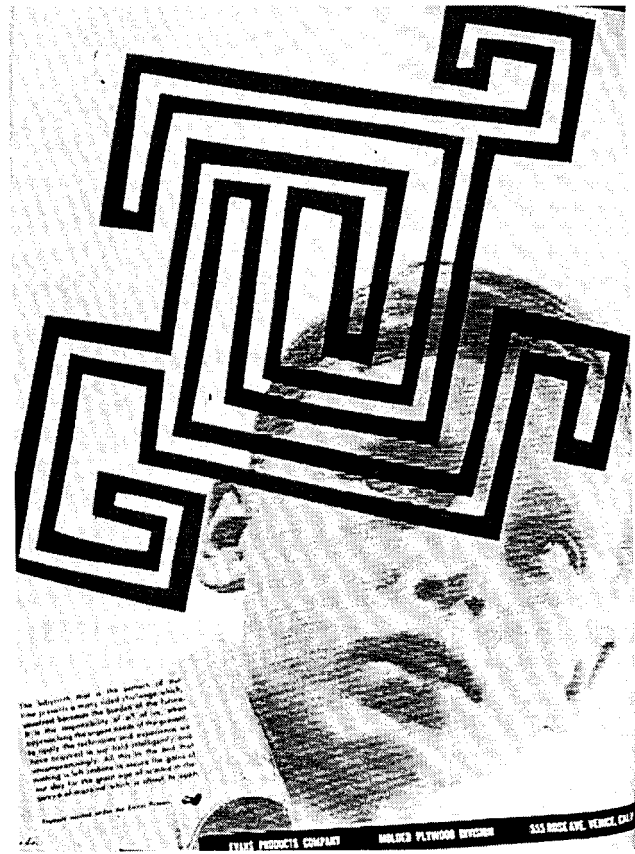


Fig. 3. Advertisement for the Evans Product Company's Molded Plywood Division. *Arts & Architecture* (July 1944).

the table of contents.

The advertisement features a boy looking anxiously towards an abstract illustration hovering above him and approaching the form of a swastika. The text of the ad reads:

The labyrinth that is the pattern of our time presents a many-sided challenge which, unsolved becomes the burden of the future. It is the responsibility of all of us, when approaching the urgent needs of the present, to apply the techniques and experience we have acquired in our field intelligently and uncompromisingly. All this to the end that nothing is left undone to secure the gains of our day for the great age of *science-in-the-service-of-mankind* which is about to open.

Products molded under the Eames Process.¹¹ [emphasis added]

The page is signed by Herbert Matter, a regular contributor of covers and layouts to the magazine and, incidentally, a member of the Eames Office. However, the Evans ad is by no means the limit of the Eameses's involvement in the Prefabrication issue, and the themes it broaches reverberate throughout the magazine's pages. Thumbing through the issue underscores the ideological underpinnings of both *Arts & Architecture* and the Eames Office.

Ray Eames designed the cover which introduces the agenda of the issue: democracy and mass-production are not incommensurable and individual identity can and should be maintained in a prefabricated world. Inside, the issue begins with an advertisement for glue laminated struts (a timber substitute after supplies began to dwindle), another for laminated plywood plank (which also advises the reader to buy war bonds), and a third for a type of insulation used in stran-steel Quonset huts. In the issue's monthly column on art, Grace Clements argues for abstract art over that of "the exhibitionists, the Tories, the copy-naturalists" who seem to have the southern California art scene at their command. Only at the end of the last paragraph does she reveal that she is actually writing a show announcement for The Circle Gallery's abstract art show featuring, among others, Grace Clements, Harry Bertoia, Ray Eames, Herbert Matter, and Man Ray. Could self-promotion be more blatant?¹²

After three more similar ads appears the Evans Product Company ad and the table of contents. The contents page, outlining the eighteen-page prefabrication feature to come, makes attributional note of two Herbert Matter montages and one Charles Eames Chart but leaves overall authorship in question. The editor offers his "grateful acknowledgment" to Herbert Matter, Charles and Ray Eames, Eero Saarinen, and Buckminster Fuller for assisting in the issue's preparation, and to the left of the page is the magazine's usual listing of its staff and editors, including Charles Eames as Editorial Associate and Ray Eames as part of the Editorial Advisory Board.

Entenza's "Notes in Passing" occurs on page 21, which begins by framing an impending crisis of peace: "We can no longer look at the end of military destruction as a time of recuperation and the licking of wounds... This time, the best efforts and the greatest struggles will be necessary to make peace itself bearable." He goes further to outline the prime concern for the postwar era which is centered around the word "HOUSE": "It is first... to "the house of man" that we must bring the abundant gifts of this age of *science-in-the-service-of-mankind*, realizing that in the word "HOUSE" we encompass the full range of those activities and aspirations that make one man know all men as himself." What is the source of the phrase "science-in-the-service-of-mankind"? Is Entenza referencing the Evans Product Company's ad on page 8? The phrase does not reappear in the prefabrication spread itself. It seems odd that an editor would quote from an advertisement rather than the featured article in an editorial obviously meant as an introduction to a special issue.

Following "Notes in Passing" is Matter's montages which ask "What is a House?", which use diagrammatic imagery of human digestive, neurological, and circulatory systems on the left with a contrasting, but comparable, image of a mechanical/industrial system on the right. The feature continues by postulating that "modern man, if he is great, is great only in relation to what he has accomplished through his creation of the machine." Turning the page the reader finds another montage, signed by Matter but unattributed in the contents, and to its right an application of "true mass produc-

tion": if "properly directed and properly disciplined [it] will not only save lives but also set them free."

While explaining industrial prefabrication processes, the article assures the reader that the new form of production is not "just a trick" to be used "for the reproduction of the architecture of the past. The next spread shows how laboratory technologies will facilitate domestic living. In the upper left hand corner is a quote by Norman Burns, an electronics engineer regarding the home use of electrical devices. Burns was a staff member of the Eames office at the time and designed the electrical heating elements to aid in curing the glues and resins used in plywood splint production.

Charles Eames's chart, noted on the contents page, diagrams how all parts of society will band together to provide "the family" with all they might need. The next two pages show the plethora of choices that a consumer will have among prefabricated goods. It is through choice that individuality will be maintained. Nearing the end of the feature, one spread illustrates the utility of motion studies for the domestic environment, with an obvious debt to the Gilbreths' work in the factory and home, and further underscores a relationship between industry and the home.

Immediately following the feature article are ads for prefabricated structures and components as well as a statement from the Prefabricated Home Manufacturers Association, which lends pragmatic accreditation to the featured concerns, and another by U.S. Senator McCarren who's defense of western industry directly relates to the infrastructure necessary for realizing the prefabricated dream.

It seems that everyone agrees on the direction of housing after the war. But, who actually wrote the feature on prefabrication? The magazine itself is unclear. There is attribution made for Matter's montages and Charles Eames's Chart, but none regarding the author of the text. In Eames Design, Ray Eames's definitive monograph on the work of the Eames office, "What is a House?" is credited to Charles Eames and John Entenza.¹³ Eames Design also credits the charts and drawings to Charles and Ray Eames and the photographs, montages, and layouts to Herbert Matter. In short, the entire prefabrication feature – actually the entire issue from cover to content – was orchestrated and produced, both textually and graphically, by two entities: John Entenza and the Eames office. The lack of attribution seemingly signals concerns over the limited pool of energies that created the issue and its possible discreditation for its localized view.

At the time of the July '44 issue, the Molded Plywood Division was in heavy production of splints with Charles Eames acting as Director of Research and Development and Entenza as manager/president. The Division had begun experimenting with mass produced plywood furniture, which was made possible by their access to wartime-controlled materials. The results of a trial run were previewed to the press by the Evans Product Company at the Barclay Hotel in New York in December 1945, quickly followed by showings at the Architectural League in February and at MoMA in March, all in New York at high-end institutions. The common postwar

consumer was not the target audience until Herman Miller was brought in for distribution purposes in 1946 with marketing being redirected towards department stores.

The timing of Madison Avenue's marketing strategy of highlighting companies' wartime involvement and postwar "fantasy" projects could not have benefited Entenza and the Eameses more. They had all it took to fit the profile with the splints, litters, and airplane parts and an idea for plywood furniture. They also had a forum in which to argue their point: *Arts and Architecture* magazine. Further, the splints and associated plywood products had been displayed at MoMA and had received other mention in Sidney Janis's *Abstract & Surrealist Art in America*. Janis writes: "[the *Arts and Architecture* circle has] pooled their talents and efforts in a cooperative venture, a war project. . . Their products, splints for the wounded, are organic abstractions in which esthetics and science meet on the plane of utility."¹⁴

Simultaneous with the marketing and dissemination of the molded plywood furniture from its wartime genesis is the construction of an aura of Charles Eames-as-isolated-genius, making natural use of his own localized social context in southern California. The intricate tale of wartime production was simplified, abbreviated, and even fictionalized into a *Reader's Digest* version for quick and easy consumption. The MoMA shows and subsequent articles featured the work of Charles Eames, not the work of the Eames Office, not the work of the Molded Plywood Division, not the work of John Entenza's immediate circle of friends and collaborators. A 1946 article in *Interiors* magazine devotes one third of its article on Eames plywood chairs to a modified description of the company's wartime production.¹⁵ An article in *Magazine of Art* of the same year also finds it necessary to mention the company's wartime efforts.¹⁶ Both articles give photo credit to MoMA who had hosted the March 1946 exhibition *New Furniture Designed by Charles Eames*. However, the most extensive publication of the new chairs occurred in the September 1946 issue of *Arts & Architecture*. Written by MoMA's Eliot Noyes, this nineteen-page spread included pieces featured in the MoMA show, pieces still under development, a montage including the splint and litter, and a text which offered an in-depth explanation of the wartime experiments in molded plywood but without mention of John Entenza. The splint is continuously presented as an icon of the Eameses' sincerity and patriotism and as what consideration of your fellow man can become.

The art and design world's interest in the Eameses and their products stems from the relative novelty of molded plywood, and of course it didn't hurt that Charles and Ray Eames were familiar in artistic and cultural institutions. Charles Eames had already been recognized through the *Organic Design Show* at MoMA, while teaching at Cranbrook, and Ray herself had come out of a New York art school training as an abstract artist in her own right. But most importantly, however, the prime social agenda with which the production company was allied was being championed in the context of *Arts & Architecture* as an "avant-garde" journal.



Fig. 4. Herbert Matter's assemblage designed for MoMA's 1936 exhibition *New Furniture Designed by Charles Eames*. Photo Credit: Eames Office © 1989.1998 <www.eamesoffice.com>

Graphically, the magazine relied upon Bauhaus, Dadaist, and Surrealist inspired methods of montage and abstraction and featured constituents of these groups: Man Ray, Kepes, Moholy-Nagy, and Mondrian were frequently mentioned and showcased. And as previously mentioned, both Grace Clements and Ray Eames brought their New York abstract art influences to the magazine's pages.¹⁷ No one involved in the graphic production of the magazine came from a southern California regional background, nor does it seem that the magazine's target audience was particularly regional as evidenced by its name change in 1944. The magazine most directly addressed those involved in, or at least familiar with, the discourse of European and East Coast abstract political art.

The magazine's aesthetic, and most of its ideology, reaches back to European precedents and managed to mold these prefabricated languages to its own wartime situation. The socialist rhetoric of interwar European avant-gardes was carefully inter-twined with democratic ideals being espoused



Fig. 5. Herbert Matter's son astride a molded plywood elephant (1945). Photo Credit: Eames Office © 1989, 1998 <www.eamesoffice.com>

by Roosevelt to present the next move in American society as a logical outgrowth of the democratic urge in a capitalist system of supply and demand, producing a non-threatening, or at least non-revolutionary, alternative to the "labyrinthine mess" that was blamed for American involvement in the war.¹⁸ The cohesion of advertising and content in the magazine illustrates economic interdependence at the level of both the publication itself and in the larger construction and design market.

In this context, it is not difficult to see why the Eames plywood chairs were marketed first in New York locations rather than department stores in Los Angeles. Yet, even in a museum and journal setting, the splint continually reappeared. Its position was foundational in that it legitimated and facilitated the furniture's reading in a modernist ideological way: a specific instance where design made a definitive practical difference in daily life (if in actuality only for a wounded soldier). This application of "science-in-the-service-of-mankind," that is, informed design and mass-production at mythic scale had already been produced (primarily on Madison Avenue) by an industry poised to fulfill America's nascent needs, as soon as peace permitted.

It is not possible to attribute the success of the Eames products solely to one factor, whether it be war production, societal atmosphere, marketing, or high culture's accreditation (in the museum or in print). The point at hand is that the historical Eameses are a product of all of these stories, each with its own composition of multiple mini- (as well as meta-) narratives, each being necessary, sometimes contradictory, and always interrelated, which presents a veritable nightmare for traditional historical inquiry. Smithson's characterization, when read against the events and ideologies of 1940's America and 1960's England, makes perfect sense, but only

if mystification, naturalization, and heavy-handed narrative editing are taken as final products into the realm of identity recognition and projection. Looking more closely at the circumstances of the Eameses' (specifically Charles Eames's) own identity construction and self-projection, reveals that "identity," or more aptly, self-representation-turned-identity, whether from within or without the source, is anything but "natural," leaving Smithson's metonymic characterization of the "American life-form," epitomized by Charles Eames's West Coast, without grounds, yet sound enough to present a future for design in Britain. In the end, the "final" narrative, in the Eames case is manufactured, highly orchestrated, and sometimes incidental, resulting in an almost seamless construction, all packaged and ready for shipping, an entity which appears almost organic, almost as organic as plywood itself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the help of the Eames Office who most willingly granted permission to publish the photos accompanying this paper. The Eames Office, in its continued existence, is dedicated to communicating, preserving, and extending the work of Charles and Ray Eames.

NOTES

Pat Kirkham, for example, discusses the splint project in her 1995 book on Charles and Ray Eames and characterizes the wartime endeavor as providing "access to classified information, including the latest Allied developments in synthetic glues and plywood production." Kirkham's discussion quickly moves into an outline of how the plywood furniture was produced, confining her examination of the Eames's efforts from 1942 to 1944 to one page of text within the 486 page book. Kirkham, Pat, *Charles and Ray Eames: Designers of the Twentieth Century*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995), p. 212.

Peter Smithson, "Just a few chairs and a house: an essay on the Eames-aesthetic." *Architectural Design* (September 1966). This entire issue is devoted to the "Eames-aesthetic" and the views presented therein are of the same genre as Smithson's: nice people with a little ingenuity and a lot of hard work.

³ In 1919 the Haskelite Company in Grand Rapids had succeeded in making a two-piece airplane fuselage in concrete dies, but production never proceeded. "Plywood." *Fortune* 25.1 (Jan. 1940). Applications of molded plywood lost to aluminum in the original applications in the aviation industry, showing a preference for the novelty of the completely new material advances found in the alloy rather than through the connotations of a reformulated traditional material.

⁴ John Neuhart, Marilyn Neuhart, Ray Eames, *Eames design: The Work of the Office of Charles and Ray Eames*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989), p. 25. This document of the Eames office solidifies a recurring theme within their work: the office maintained complete control over every aspect of their production and reproduction. The book itself was the result of the final ten years of Ray's life which was spent sorting and cataloging the artifacts of office production. The book's production was aided by long-time office employees Marilyn and John Neuhart who had mounted a show on the work of the Eameses in 1976.

⁵ Elizabeth A. T. Smith, "Arts & Architecture and the Los Angeles Vanguard." *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses*, ed. Howard Singerman. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989), pp. 145-151. Smith's article surveys

general trends in the course of the magazine: she begins with Entenza's initial involvement and maps out the way in which "... Arts & Architecture continued its sunswerving commitment to the advancement and elucidation of all things modern... until a time when the modern and progressive no longer represented the dominant avant-garde impulse." p. 163. Her discussion lacks, however, in-depth discussion outside of the pages of the magazine itself and only briefly mentions their European and Japanese reprints.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Grace Clements. "New Content—New Form." *Art Front* (March 1936), pp. 8-9. Clear, legible Art will save the world from itself. Picturing the threat and contemporary conditions was seen as the way to convincingly present the individual's obligation to action. For Clements's graphic contribution to *Art Front*, see: Clements, Grace., *Dialectic*. New York: *Art Front* (June 1936), p. 8.

⁸ Clements's position remained strong and primary in the magazine until the shift toward Greenbergian formalism, championed by Dore Ashton and James Fitzsimmons in the late 1950's and early 1960's. After the wartime threat passed, art returned to itself in order to continue its evolutionary past. It had performed its duty, but had come too close to design and pragmatism in the process and needed to be rescued for the psychic good of society. Smith (1989), p. 152.

⁹ John Entenza, "Notes in Passing." *California Arts & Architecture* (April 1942): 15. The key to the future for Entenza was not its reformulation – the future of "man's ability to control his environment" had been within reach for some time – but its entering into the marketplace. What good is the technology if it could not be distributed – or specifically, bought and sold?

¹⁰ Robert Friedel, "Scarcity and Promise: Materials and American Domestic Culture during World War II." *World War II and the American Dream: How Wartime Building Changed a Nation*. ed. Donald Albrecht. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995), pp. 76-78. Contemporary handbooks concerning what the war meant for American life were being produced specifically to convert the domestic environment into an integral part of the war effort and were in wide distribution and targeted individual households. For further discussion of material shortages and its impact on manufacturing and housing construction, see: Blum, John Morton. *V was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976); Childs, Marquis W. *This is Your War*. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1942); Eichler, Ned. *The Merchant Builders*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1982); Eichler, Ned. *The Thrift Debacle*. (Los

Angeles: University of California Press, 1989); Nathan, Robert R. *Mobilizing for Abundance*. (New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1944); Nelson. Donald M. *Arsenal of Democracy: The Story of American War Production*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1946).

¹¹ Evans Products Company Advertisement, *Arts & Architecture* (July 1944), p. 8.

¹² Self-promotion is a lesson well-learned from the narratives of the European pre-war and inter-war avant-gardes.

¹³ Neuhart. Neuhart, Eames (1989), p. 55. The degree to which their book-sized log of office production assumes an objective posture through a completely uncritical language is undermined by the insanely bizarre (and sometimes minute) facts they choose to include. It is in the anecdotal references that their true project can be accessed.

¹⁴ Sidney Janis, *Abstract & Surrealist Art in America*. (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1944), p. 51. The full text reads: "A group of the highest quality has formed around John Entenza, editor of *Arts & Architecture* in Los Angeles. Charles Eames, architect and designer; Herbert Matter, photographer; Ray Eames. Bertoia and Mercedes Carles, artists; and others have pooled their talents and efforts in a co-operative venture, a war project that has developed a process for molding laminated bentwood forms. Their products, splints for the wounded, are organic abstractions in which esthetics and science meet on the plane of utility."

¹⁵ "Charles Eames: A designer's progress to the development of plywood furniture." *Interiors* (July 1946), pp. 52-59. Interestingly enough, this issue of *Interiors* sports a cover designed by Alvin Lustig, redesigner of *California Arts & Architecture* in 1942, but the interior layouts follow a more conservative design direction.

¹⁶ "Charles Eames' Forward-Looking Furniture." *Magazine of Art* (May 1946), pp. 179-81.

¹⁷ Ray Eames was a founding member of the American Abstract Artists group in 1936 and exhibited in their first group show at the Riverside Museum in New York City in 1937. Clements's position in New York has been discussed earlier in this paper.

¹⁸ Esther McCoy refers to this time as "an age in which the emerging pragmatism partially veiled the Rooseveltian idealism." McCoy, Esther. *Case Study Houses 1945-1962*. (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1977), p. 4. See also: McCoy, Esther. "Charles and Ray Eames." *Design Quarterly* (1975), pp. 21-9. The question that must be asked is was their any veil needed? To what extent was the average citizen aware of the congruence of pragmatism and idealism?"