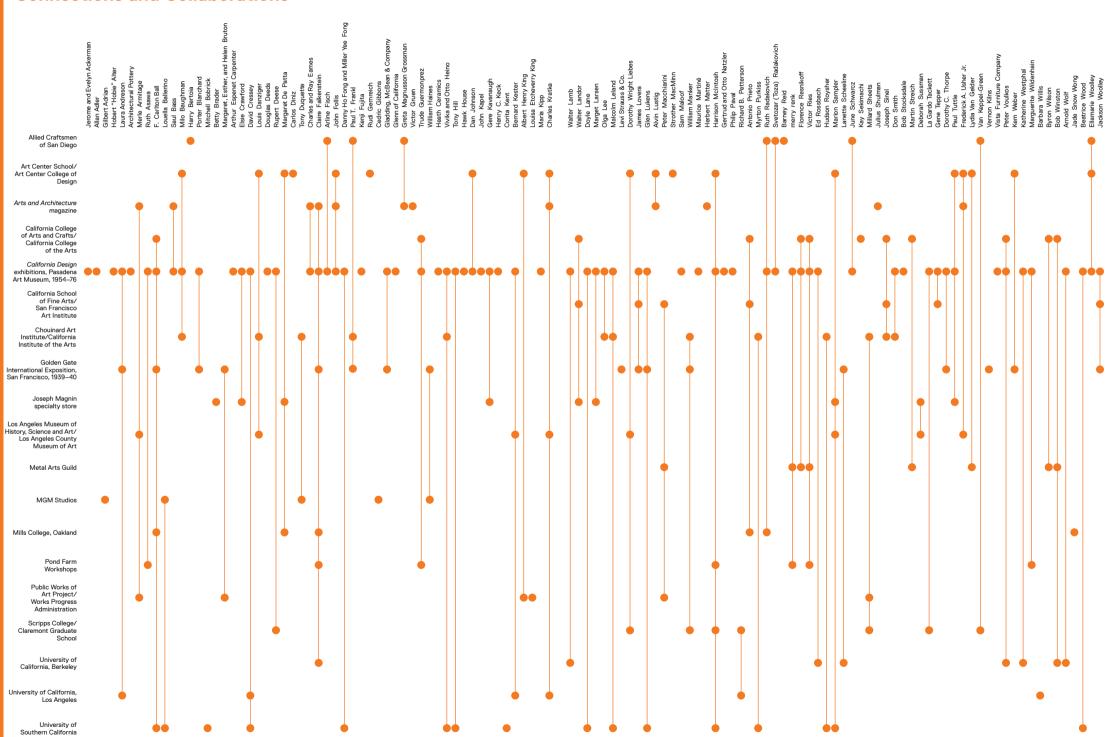


Connections and Collaborations



Hobart "Hobie" Alter

b. 1933

Native Californian Hobart "Hobie" Alter was a pioneer in the development of foam and fiberglass surfboards, recreational water equipment, and catamaran design. Born in Upland and raised in Ontario, Alter began shaping balsa-wood surfboards in the garage of his family's Laguna Beach summer home while still in high school. He attended Chaffey Junior College and fabricated surfboards in the summer before opening Hobie Surf Shop in Dana Point in 1954. With Gordon "Grubby" Clark, who worked for him as a glasser (one who lays fiberglass), Alter developed a marketable polyurethane foam surfboard blank in 1958. The pair soon established a foamblowing operation in Laguna Canyon, which Clark took over in 1961. (Clark Foam went on to become the largest surfboard blank manufacturer until closing abruptly in 2005.) Alter capitalized on the explosion of surf culture in the late 1950s and 1960s with his lightweight, easily shaped boards and created a brand name that became synonymous with surfing and watersports. He continued to experiment with innovative materials and expanded his product line to include skateboards, sportswear, and the *Hobie Cat*, a best-selling catamaran. JMM

Sources

- Drew Kampion, Greg Noll: The Art of the Surfboard (Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith, 2007).
- Mark Blackburn, Surf's Up: Collecting the Longboard Era (Atglen, Pa.: Schiffer, 2001).
- Andrew Rusnak, "Fun in the Son," part 2, Composites Fabrication, June 2001, 2–9.
- Andrew Rusnak, "Fun in the Son," part 1, Composites Fabrication, May 2001, 2–10.
- Bob Duke, "Hobie's Power Trip," *Motor Boating* & *Sailing*, May 1998, 60–63, 118.



Architectural Pottery

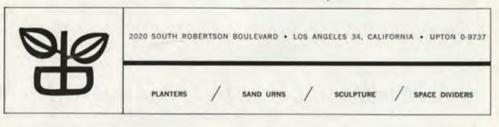
1950-1985

Ubiquitous accessories for the patio or living room, Architectural Pottery's line of ceramics embodied the ideal of versatile design for indoor/outdoor living and became an icon of modern California style. In 1949 La Gardo Tackett challenged his graduate students at the California School of Art in Los Angeles to update planter designs using molds for traditional terracotta pots. The class set to work developing geometric and biomorphic pots and stands that elevated the plants so that the containers could be used both indoors and out. Two of Tackett's students, John Follis and Rex Goode, struggled to produce these designs commercially until 1950, when they founded Architectural Pottery with business manager Rita Lawrence and her husband, Max. After gaining early recognition in trade magazines and exhibitions—notably MoMA's Good Design (1950)—the firm developed a following among architects and designers who specified the planters for their commissions. In subsequent years the company added forms by Paul McCobb. Malcolm Leland, and Raul A. Coronel, among others. Production was initially subcontracted, but in the early 1960s the company began to manufacture its own products using a range of techniques, including molding, casting, and jiggering. Demand for larger, lighter planters led to the launch of the Architectural Fiberglass division in 1961, which employed the talents of Follis, Douglas Deeds, and Elsie Crawford in the design of large-scale planters, outdoor seating, and trash receptacles. In 1966 the company added the Pro/Artisan Collection, formalizing an earlier program of hand-finished stoneware by David Cressey. All of the divisions were combined under parent company Group Artec in 1971. By this time the firm had more than two hundred employees, with factories in Oxnard, Maywood, and Manhattan Beach. Architectural Pottery closed in 1985 following a devastating fire. ss

Sources

- Max and Rita Lawrence, Architectural Pottery Records (Collection 1587), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Max and Rita Lawrence, "A Better World through Good Design," interview by Teresa Barnett, 2000, Oral History Program, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Dan MacMasters, "A Gentle Kind of Genius," Los Angeles Times, February 13, 1972.

ARCHITECTURAL POTTERY





Architectural Pottery company catalogue, March 1961.

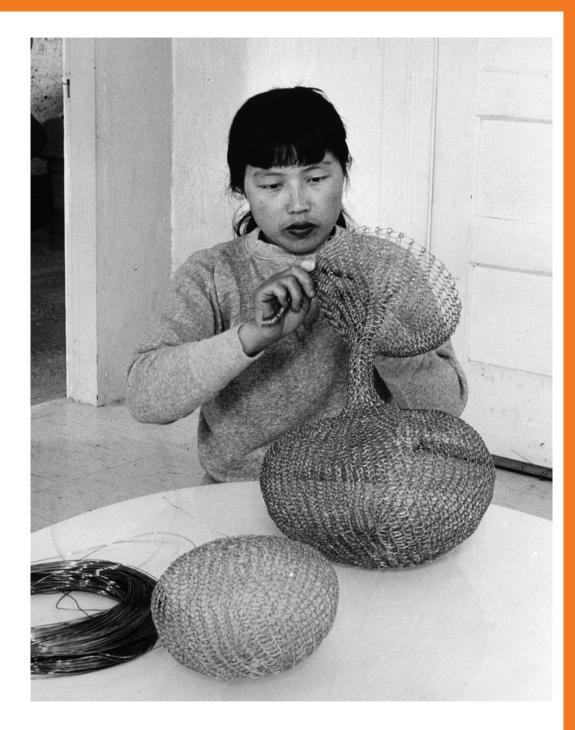
Ruth Asawa

b. 1926

Born in Norwalk, the daughter of Japanese immigrants, Ruth Asawa skillfully manipulated metal wire into delicate yet powerful sculptural constructions. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Asawa and her family were interned first at Santa Anita racetrack, where she took art classes with Disney animator and fellow internee Tom Okamoto, and later at Rohwer Relocation Center in Arkansas. In 1943 she was allowed to enroll at Milwaukee State Teachers College with plans to become an art teacher. Asawa subsequently attended Black Mountain College in North Carolina (1946-49), where she studied drawing, design, and color theory with Bauhaus émigré Josef Albers and also met her future husband, architect Albert Lanier. Initially focusing on drawing and painting, she later began experimenting with three-dimensional wire sculpture using a looping technique that she learned in Mexico in 1948. Asawa moved to San Francisco in 1949 and became well known for her looped-wire and, later, tied-wire sculptures. In 1965 she accepted a fellowship at the Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles, which allowed her to develop a body of printmaking work related to her earlier drawings. She maintained strong alliances with many San Francisco craftspeople, and her intricate pieces appeared in Four Artists (1954), an exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Art (now SFMOMA), which also included work by weaver Ida Dean, jeweler merry renk, and ceramist Marquerite Wildenhain. She received monographic shows at the Pasadena Art Museum (1965), the San Francisco Museum of Art (1973), and the M. H. de Young Museum (2006), among other venues. In the late 1960s Asawa became involved in several civic art initiatives: she cofounded the Alvarado Art Workshop at the elementary school her children attended, and she served on the San Francisco Arts Commission and the California Arts Council. BT



- Daniell Cornell, The Sculpture of Ruth Asawa: Contours in the Air, exh. cat. (San Francisco and Berkeley: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and University of California Press, 2006).
- Ruth Asawa and Albert Lanier, interview by Mark Johnson and Paul Karlstrom, June 21–July 5, 2002, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
- Gerald Nordland, *Ruth Asawa: A Retrospective View*, exh. cat. (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Art, 1973).



Saul Bass

1920-1996

One of the foremost graphic designers of his era, Saul Bass was renowned for his innovations in film title and corporate identity design. Characterized by a reductivist precision, Bass's work used simple, bold graphics to communicate complex ideas and distill the missions of large corporations. Born in New York, Bass supplemented his onthe-job training as a commercial artist with night classes at the Art Students League and Brooklyn College. He came to specialize in trade advertising for film, and in 1946 Buchanan & Company Advertising transferred him to Los Angeles to work with clients in Hollywood. He established his own office in 1952 and only three years later shocked audiences with his radically abstract animated title sequence for Otto Preminger's film The Man with the Golden Arm. Partnering with several celebrated directors, including Preminger, Alfred Hitchcock, and Martin Scorsese, Bass created dozens of titles, often in collaboration with his second wife, designer Elaine Bass (b. 1927). Their titles brilliantly expressed the mood and message of each film in a short, metaphorical sequence. In the early 1960s Bass began making short films—many with Elaine—and received an Academy Award for Why Man Creates (1968). Films, however, accounted for less than half of the output of Saul Bass & Associates; the majority of work consisted of corporate identity campaigns. In the 1960s Bass developed identity guidelines for international corporations such as Alcoa and Continental Airlines, designing everything from logos to packages to flight attendant uniforms. The firm was renamed Bass/Yager & Associates in 1978 when Herb Yager came on as a financial partner. Other collaborators included illustrator Art Goodman, who worked for Bass for more than thirty years, and sculptor Herb Rosenthal, who worked with Bass on environmental design, including an installation at the 1968 Milan Triennale, ss



Sources

- Saul Bass Papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Beverly Hills.
- Jennifer Bass and Pat Kirkham, Saul Bass: A Life in Film and Design (London: Laurence King, 2011).
- Idea Archive 01: Saul Bass and Associates (Nishikicho, Japan: Seibundo Shinkosha, 1979).

Harry Bertoia

1915-1978

Harry Bertoia, a renowned sculptor, graphic artist, and designer of furniture and jewelry, was born Arieto Bertoia in San Lorenzo, Italy. After immigrating to Detroit in 1930, he studied and later taught at Cranbrook Academy of Art, where Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen were instructors. By 1939 Bertoia was teaching metalworking at Cranbrook and experimenting in the print shop; his monotypes—a creative endeavor he continued throughout his life—and his jewelry garnered early recognition. In 1943 Bertoia married Brigitta Valentiner, the daughter of prominent art historian and Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art director William Valentiner, and moved to California. While working at the Eames Office in Venice, Bertoia was involved with defense projects and the development of molded-plywood furniture. After leaving the Eameses in 1946, Bertoia made jewelry and monoprints that were shown at the Nierendorf Gallery in New York. His jewelry exploring sculptural form and the play of light on metal was featured in the exhibition Modern Jewelry under Fifty Dollars at the Walker Art Center (1948). From 1947 to 1950 Bertoia worked in the publications department at Point Loma Naval Electronics Laboratory in San Diego. During this period he shared a studio with designer Barney Reid and continued to make prints and jewelry, exhibiting with the Allied Craftsmen of San Diego beginning in 1948. He also began making sculpture. Bertoia left California for Pennsylvania in 1950 to develop his iconic wire chairs produced by Knoll Associates. In 1953 he left Knoll to concentrate on welded-metal sculpture, the focus of his work for the rest of his life. Jмм

Sources

- Harry Bertoia Papers, 1917–1979, Archives of American Art. Smithsonian Institution.
- Nancy N. Schiffer and Val O. Bertoia, The World of Bertoia (Atglen, Pa.: Schiffer, 2003).
- June Kompass Nelson, Harry Bertoia, Printmaker: Monotypes and Other Monographics (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988).
- Harry Bertoia, interview by Paul Cummings, June 20, 1972, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.



Brayton Laguna Pottery

1927-1968

One of the first producers of solid-color dinnerware, Brayton Laguna Pottery is often credited as the originator of the craze for brightly colored pottery that enlivened many tables in Depression-era American homes. Its founder, Durlin E. Brayton (1897–1951), was born in California, graduated from Hollywood High School, studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and Otis Art Institute, and worked as a carpenter before he began making pottery. In 1927 Brayton opened a shop in his home on Pacific Coast Highway in Laguna Beach, which had become a burgeoning artists' colony. He created press-molded earthenware in an impressive array of glowing colors and attracted buyers by displaying the wares in his front yard. In addition to the simple forms of his dinnerware, Brayton sold limited quantities of artware and figurines. The pottery moved to a larger facility in 1938 after Brayton decided to capitalize on the market for mass-produced figurines; the company was the first licensee of ceramic versions of Walt Disney Studios' popular animated characters. Drawing from the artists' colony in Laguna, the company tapped sculptors to model a wide range of collectible figures. From the 1940s figurine production made up the bulk of the firm's business. JMM



Durlin Brayton for Brayton Laguna Pottery, Dinnerware set, c. 1930. Collection of Bill Stern.

Sources

- Jennifer J. Bush, "Pottery Pioneer Laguna's Brayton Ceramics Shop Is Gone, but Its Work Is Far from Forgotten," Orange County Register, May 1, 2005.
- Jack Chipman, Collector's Encyclopedia of California Pottery (Paducah, Ky.: Collector Books, 1999), 57–58.