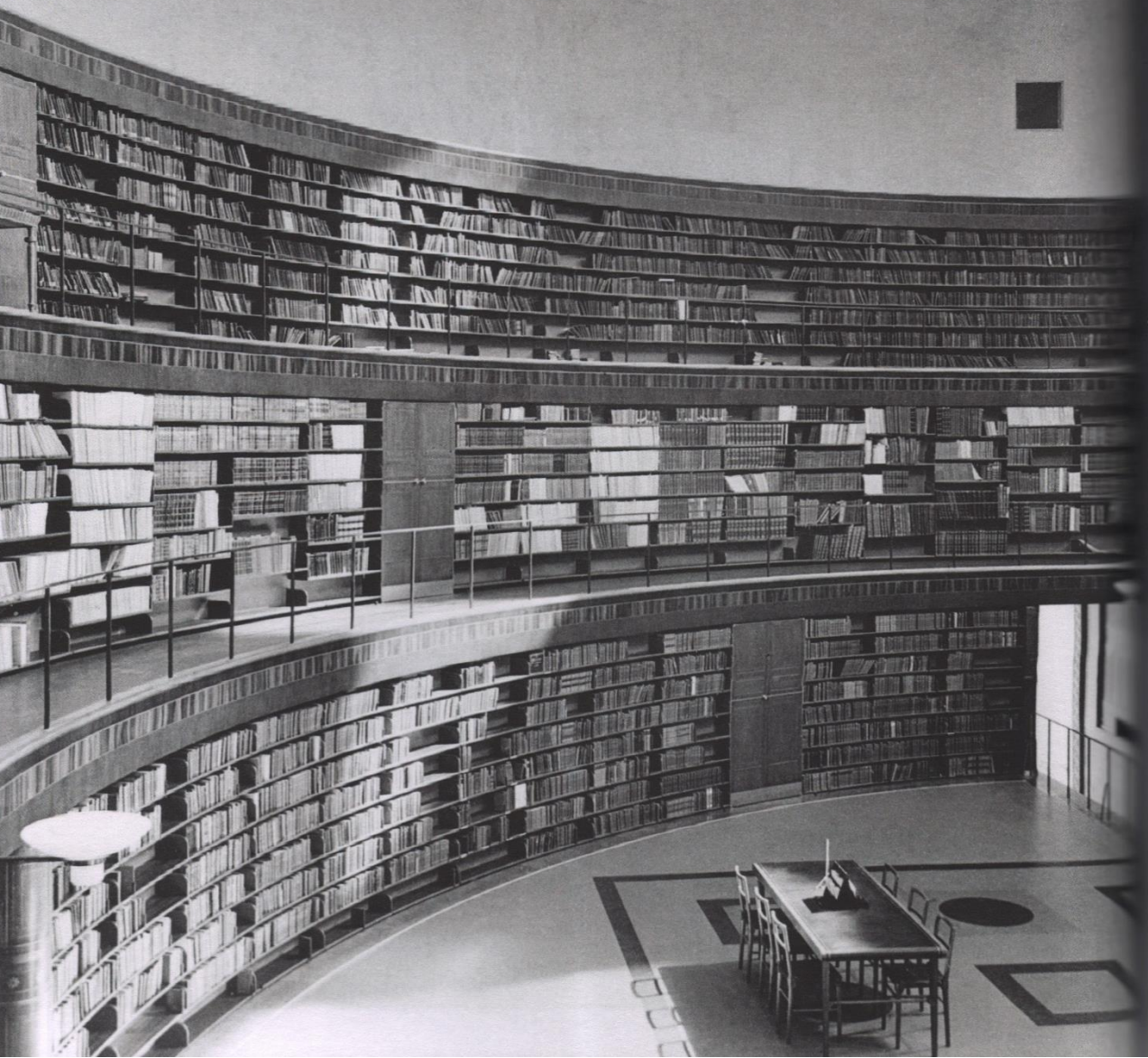


# Design heroes

Seven leading interior designers nominate the 20th-century innovators who most inspired them



# Erik Gunnar ASPLUND

CHOSEN BY MARTIN BRUDNIZKI

'GUNNAR ASPLUND'S Stockholm Public Library is a behemoth of early 20th-century modernist design. Located on Sveavägen, it is not far from Adolf Fredrik Church, a city landmark that was constructed two centuries earlier. These two buildings sit not just on the same road, but at a crossroads in architectural history: the church coming at a moment when Sweden looked to reinterpret the classicism of ancient Rome; Asplund's library referencing and reducing classical antiquity to abstract geometric forms, as the neoclassical movement morphed into modernism. I grew up in Stockholm, around the corner from these buildings, and they became a huge influence on my thinking. The way Asplund harnessed the history of classical design into something so contemporary made me realise not only the impact architecture and design has on a person, but also how history can shape that journey.'

*Martin Brudnizki Design Studio, London and New York. mbd.com*

Above, Erik Gunnar Asplund. Right, the grand staircase and, opposite, the curved main room at Stockholm Public Library



Below, a feature on Eugenia Errázuriz in *Harper's Bazaar*, February 1938, with text by Jean-Michel Frank

and photographs by François Kollar. The 'painting by her friend Picasso' is *Compotier, Bouteille et Guitare*, 1925



*The front hall, scuffed and polished, with humble household implements for decoration*

MADAME ERRAZURIZ

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*Madame Errázuriz and a magnificent painting by her friend Picasso*

AT HOME

**T**he friends, I was about to say the disciples of Madame Errázuriz, the simple elegant taste lines of the beautiful have recognized nothing. They define her better than any encyclopedia. You can forget that she left Chile at a very early age to take up life in London and then later in Paris. You can forget that she is no longer young. She has no airs, no attachment to any soil. She is profoundly human, touched by the beauty of form and color, sensitive to the special quality of an intelligence or a personality. Her influence is indelible.

In a salon of Madame Errázuriz—whether it is her little house in Paris or her villa in Biarritz—the walls (Continued on page 130)

*Buenos Aires 6 5 de Mayo de 1938  
para Luis María Castellet Saavedra  
el arquitecto  
un homenaje a Eugenia  
Luis María Castellet*

# Eugenia ERRÁZURIZ

CHOSEN BY ROSE UNIACKE

'THE DAUGHTER OF A BOLIVIAN silver magnate, Eugenia Errázuriz was born in Chile, but moved to Paris after marrying the painter José Tomás Errázuriz. There, she became a great patron of the arts, with a circle that included Cocteau, Diaghilev, Stravinsky and, in particular, Picasso, who adored her. Her husband, meanwhile, developed a relationship with John Singer Sargent, for whom she sat several times. Towards the end of her life, she became a tertiary

Franciscan nun, and dressed in a sober black habit she had commissioned from Coco Chanel in keeping with her mantra: "Elegance means elimination." She was also a mentor to Jean-Michel Frank [whom she met in 1927], and was ahead of her time in promoting a strict simplicity in design, relentlessly stripping away the grandiose in her interiors. She hated knick-knacks.'

Rose Uniacke, London. [roseuniacke.com](http://roseuniacke.com)



Right, Jean-Michel Frank. Below, his straw marquetry interior for the home of Charles Templeton Crocker

## Jean-Michel FRANK

CHOSEN BY ANDRÉ FU

'THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL WORK of [the French interior and furniture designer] Jean-Michel Frank has had a great influence on my sense of aesthetics. I see him as a genuine visionary. His spatial sense gives his designs a characteristic purity, and his bespoke furniture has a lushness as well as an elegance. I am particularly fond of the way he used straw marquetry [on cupboard doors such as those of the sycamore-wood cabinet he designed for Chanaux et Pelletier in 1935, and occasionally on entire interiors]. It is distinctly intricate, yet also understated, and it gives his pieces a timeless, eternally modern quality.'

*Andre Fu Living and AFSo, Hong Kong.*  
[www.andrefuliving.com](http://www.andrefuliving.com). [afso.net](http://afso.net)





# Carlo SCARPA

CHOSEN BY JOSEPH DIRAND



'I HAVE AN ADDICTION to many periods and many designers, and my taste is always evolving, but today I'd say my hero is Carlo Scarpa [the Venetian architect whose architectural projects included the interiors of both the Olivetti showroom on Piazza San Marco and the Fondazione Querini Stampalia, as well as the restoration and transformation of the Accademia and Ca' Foscari]. There is something about the way his work relates to classicism. His interventions were often in historical buildings, and he always created a dialogue with the past. He was almost like an artist in the way he played with composition, with the materials he used, with lines and the rhythm he created between spaces. I think that's what I really admire in his work. Besides this dialogue between the classic and the contemporary, there was an extraordinary level of perfectionism in his work. You can zoom in on the smallest detail – a screw, for example – and find that everything has been considered and thought through. He had a mania for detail. So although his work can seem very pure, it is also extremely rich.'

*Joseph Dirand Architecture, Paris. [josephdirand.com](http://josephdirand.com)*

Above, Carlo Scarpa and a detail from his design for the Olivetti showroom in Venice. Opposite, a view of the showroom with Alberto Viani's 1956 sculpture *Nudo al Sole*

# Axel Einar HJORTH

CHOSEN BY GIANCARLO VALLE

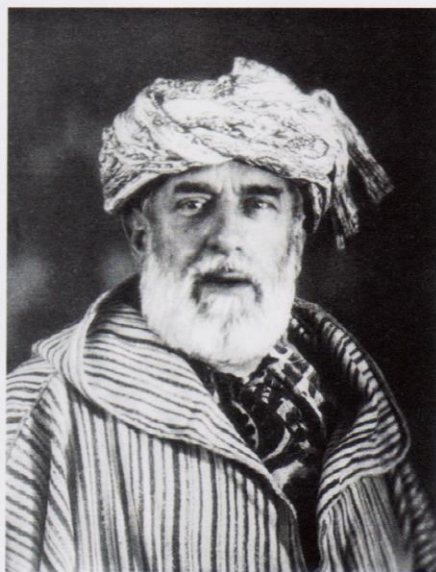


Above, the dining room shown by Axel Einar Hjorth at the Stockholm Exhibition in 1930. Right, an armchair he designed for Nordiska Kompaniets in 1929



'I LOVE HOW FREELY Axel Einar Hjorth moved between styles at a time - the 1930s - when Swedish design was particularly mature and well defined. While he is probably best known for bringing Swedish decorative arts to the USA in the 1920s [when he worked for furniture makers including H Joop & Co, Myrstedt & Stern, Jonssons and the Stockholm department store Nordiska Kompaniet, where he became chief designer and architect in 1927], he also started to experiment with new, highly primitive functionalist forms that had strong chunky silhouettes and playful decorative elements. Later, he began to incorporate these designs into his work, which he would make in pine, creating a kind of functionalist modernism well before many of the better-known French modernists began to define their own work in such a way.' *Studio Giancarlo Valle, New York.*  
[www.giancarlovalle.com](http://www.giancarlovalle.com)

Clockwise from right:  
a printed silk velvet  
designed by Mario  
Fortuny after 1909;  
*Self-portrait*, circa 1935;  
an interior on the first  
floor of Palazzo Pesaro  
degli Orfei, circa 1925



## Mariano FORTUNY

CHOSEN BY PATRICIA ANASTASSIADIS

‘ONE OF THE BIGGEST influences for me has been [the Spanish polymath and fashion designer] Mariano Fortuny, because of his curiosity and varied talents. These included painting, sculpture and inventing [items such as the revolutionary Fortuny Moda Floor Lamp, which he designed in 1903 as a stage lamp, but which is now widely used in domestic settings and is still in production], as well as architecture, photography, fashion, textile design, and designing sets and lighting for the stage. His house, Palazzo Fortuny on Campo San Beneto in Venice, was his laboratory, and is now used as a gallery; and both it and his personality have been a source of inspiration for me since I was young. I really believe that multidisciplinary practice creates unique compositions, which I’m always trying to bring to my work.’  
*Anastassiadis Arquitetos, São Paulo.*  
[www.anastassiadis.com.br](http://www.anastassiadis.com.br)





# Gio PONTI

CHOSEN BY ACHILLE SALVAGNI

‘THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE on my work has been the Italian rationalist school from the 1930s to the 1960s. This was basically a synthesis of all the European modern movements, but it was particularly influenced by Scandinavian design: the work of Alvar Aalto, Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz, for example. They took a softer approach than architects such as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, whose work was extremely straight and square. The Nordic style was much more organic. Italian designers such as Gio Ponti, Paolo Buffa and Tomaso Buzzi took the essence of the main rationalist message, but tempered it further in their consideration for classicism and Italy’s own history and heritage. If I had to single out one figure, I’d say Gio Ponti. He was many things: a designer, a tastemaker, a collector... His work embraced a wide range of sophisticated “experiments” in everything from cutlery to urban master-planning. All of it looks to the future in a very direct way, but it is also informed by an innate sensitivity to the past.’ ♦  
*Achille Salvagni Atelier, Rome and London.*  
[www.achillesalvagni.com](http://www.achillesalvagni.com)

Above, Gio Ponti with the Superleggera chairs he designed for Cassina between 1950 and 1955. Right, his cutlery for Sabattini Christofle, 1956. Opposite, his apartment in Milan

