

Faith in the future



LIKE MANY PEOPLE OF MY GENERATION, I grew up in a family enthralled by the modern. My father, a building contractor, took us on Sunday drives to look at architecture not landscape, and we often went to see the vast imposing geodesic dome at the American Society for Metals outside Cleveland that Michael Chesler describes visiting with his father in this issue. Like other domes by Buckminster Fuller and his followers, it embodied the modern ethos—a belief in technology, a faith in the future, a sense that the unknown was in fact knowable.

Last December when developer and collector Craig Robins erected Fuller's Fly's Eye Dome patented in 1965 as part of Design Miami, I was reminded of the faith and optimism that this structure represented and still represents. It is quite small (twenty-four feet in diameter) but full of meaning. Robins owns it and intends to have it on permanent display eventually.



Unlike art, design is seldom created for its own sake. And because it almost always has a purpose, there is often a narrative attached to it, a good story to tell. Not long ago, I visited the New York gallery Lost City Arts, where James Elkind showed me the tiny decorative metal screen made by Harry Bertioia shown at left. It measures just 15 inches high by 21 1/2 inches wide and is made of molten copper and brass on steel. Elkind got it from Gene Festa, an architect who had worked for Eero Saarinen in the early 1950s on the General Motors Technical Center, which was also Bertioia's first major large-scale commission. The screen was a gift from Bertioia to Festa and his wife Mae.

As the foremost dealer of Bertioia, Elkind is understandably passionate about his work, especially this small abstract gem. "This little piece reflects so much of who Bertioia was, his genius, his creativity," he says. And indeed the screen does encapsulate a good deal of history—the country's growth after World War II, the work of Eero Saarinen, the prodigious talent of Bertioia, and the Festas who cherished it for almost sixty years. It is now in the hands of someone who has played a significant role in preserving history in the form of design and decorative arts.

With this issue, you will see a new name at the top of the masthead and the bottom of this page. Founding editor Greg Cerio will continue to fill these pages with his wisdom and knowledge as editor-at-large. And I, like Bucky Fuller and the dome-makers of the postwar era, will hang onto my faith in the future—including the world of publishing, especially when such remarkable magazines as MODERN are still being created. Whether you turn our pages or see us only as pixels on a screen, I hope you share our credo that by understanding the gifts of material culture we can know so much more about who and what we are and arm ourselves for the world to come.

Beth Dunlop

BETH DUNLOP EDITOR