

Designing for
our future selves



Pratt
Manhattan
Gallery
02.07–05.23,
2020

Gallery hours
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FOREWORD

Anita Cooney, Dean
School of Design,
Pratt Institute

INTRODUCTION

Jeremy Myerson, curator

SECTIONS

Ageing
Identity
Home
Community
Working
Mobility

Pratt Faculty Projects
Acknowledgements

The Achelis & Bodman Foundation

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VERSUS
ARTHRITIS

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Foreword
Anita Cooney
Dean
School of Design

When Nick Battis, director of exhibitions at Pratt, reached out to see if the School of Design would be interested in partnering with him for the planned Pratt Manhattan Gallery exhibition of *NEW OLD: Designing for Our Future Selves*, I immediately said yes. I knew that *NEW OLD* would be an inspirational resource for the students in all of our programs (Communications Design, Fashion Design, Industrial Design, and Package Design), affording us the opportunity to address the changing demographics of our world by aligning projects and assignments to the themes organizing this provocative exhibition.

Equally significant was the fit of “designing for our future selves” to the daily practice of design. As a school, a community of new and experienced designers, we are preoccupied by the future. We design what our future selves, objects, and spaces could be. While design is both analytical and aspirational, good design also requires empathy. To design for the challenges and limits of ageing offers our students, the new designers, a rich scenario in which to exercise these skills of analysis and empathy, observing closely the seniors around them, to then design for their own imagined future.

Five professors from the School of Design were commissioned to make work for the exhibition. As a group, they are representative of the five disciplines taught in the School of Design. What unites them is the personal, interdisciplinary approach of each designer. Andrea Katz’s magnificent oversized dress embraces with humor the challenges of aging on the body. Karol Murlak’s toys are a physical invitation for communication between the very old and the very young. Alex Schweder and Ward Shelley create interdependent performative pieces that play out the fragility of our relationships, a truth all the more significant as one ages. Mitchell Reece’s multimedia environment honors the matriarchal foundation of his own family history through sound, touch, and image. Keena Suh and Marcus Waschewsky’s tapestry of texture, color, and sound evoke the shifting, haptic connection to our sense of home even as mobility and memory diminish. As a collective, these five works offer local evidence of the richness of the prompt to design for the NEW OLD.

The United States has an ageing population. The number of Americans aged 65 and over is projected to nearly double from around 52 million today to 95 million in 2060. In 1950, only eight percent of the US population was 65 or over; by 2017, that figure had climbed to more than 16 percent, thanks to a large baby boom generation unprecedented in American history. By 2060, nearly a quarter of the US population will be 65 and over. These statistics reflect a massive social shift and are part of a bigger global picture of demographic change. As societies age, what role can design and innovation play to enhance the lives of older people?

NEW OLD is an exhibition from the Design Museum in London that explores issues related to changing demographics and design. It has six themes: ageing, identity, home, community, working, and mobility. Under each theme, six leading design studios have developed new, speculative projects to demonstrate the potential of design to help people lead fuller, healthier, and more rewarding lives into old age. A world tilting away from youth and toward older people represents a major challenge for designers. But is design ready for ageing? And how can creativity reimagine the experience of the “new old”? These are questions that are addressed in this exhibition.

Jeremy Myerson is a design writer and academic. He is the Helen Hamlyn Professor of Design at the Royal College of Art, a Visiting Professorial Fellow in the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing at the University of Oxford, and Director of WORKTECH Academy, a global knowledge network on the future of work. With a background in journalism and design research, Myerson was founder-editor of *Design Week* magazine in 1986. He co-founded the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design in 1999 and was its Director for 16 years, helping to pioneer the practice of inclusive design in response to population ageing. The Helen Hamlyn Centre is the RCA's longest running centre for design research, specialising in innovation for ageing and healthcare. Jeremy Myerson is the author of more than 20 books in the design field. His international Design Museum touring exhibition *New Old* opened in New York in February 2020 after shows in London, Poland and Taiwan.

Having more older people in society gives designers a major innovation challenge.

The ageing of our population reflects a profound change in the human condition, the result of gradual increases in life expectancy at a time of falling fertility and mortality rates. Americans today live longer than they did in the past—average life expectancy in 1950 was 68 years and by 2016, this had risen to 78.6 years. However, life expectancy in the US is lower than in other large and wealthy countries, which score an average of 82.2 years; and it has been in decline for three consecutive years due to a range of factors such as access to health services and rates of obesity, suicide, violence, tobacco, and drug use.

If more years are granted to us, the question is how we will live out those years. Will we enjoy independence and a good quality of life? Or will we become isolated and marginalized? This section explores how the scale and implications of demographic change—and people's views about age—are creating the context for designers to intervene to support an ageing society.

Including projects by:

Yves Béhar, Fuseproject and Superflex

Yves Béhar, Fuseproject and Intuition Robotics

Maria Benktzon, Hakan Bergkvist, and Sven Juhlin, Ergonomi Design Gruppen

Harmut Esslinger/Frogdesign

David Mellor

Oxford Institute for Population Ageing, Oxford University

The Age of No Retirement

Lella and Massimo Vignelli

Aura Power Suit,
Yves Béhar, Fuseproject and
Superflex, Design Commission



7

This project explores the potential of “powered clothing” to enhance our physical ability, and to help us continue to live actively and independently as we age.



Installation view, Pratt Manhattan Gallery, photo by
Jason Mandella Photography

Deep-rooted stereotypes around ageing endure...design can play a key role in removing stigma.

A steep rise in the number of older people in society has not yet changed deep-rooted negative stereotypes around ageing: the stigma of growing old persists. In the past, America's rugged culture of individualism was cited as a barrier to ensuring its older citizens were well supported. However, the meaning of being old in the next 30 years will be quite unlike previous definitions—the new old will benefit from better healthcare, education, and diet, and from changing social attitudes. For this group, new narratives around active ageing will increasingly challenge a medical view of ageing as characterized by disease, decline, and dependency.

Design can play a pivotal role in the changing representations of older people in the media, branding, advertising, and public discourse. This section explores how perceptions are being shifted by creative new ideas in fashion, furniture, graphics, signage, and communication.

Including projects by:

Andy Chen, Isometric Studio
Alan Dye/NB Studio
IDEO
Japanese Forms
Mother
Fumi Nagasaka
Karmarama
Andrea Katz, School of Design, Pratt Institute
Lanzavecchia & Wai
Pattie Moore
Special Projects
Mitchell Reece, School of Design, Pratt Institute



No Country for Old Men,
Lanzavecchia & Wai, 2012

9

Products in this collection include:
the Together Canes; the Assunta Chair,
which helps older people to stand up
from the chair; and MonoLight, a table
lamp with a magnifying screen and LED
components built in to illuminate and
magnify the reading material.

Photography by David Farabegoli



The Design Museum worked with
Creative Review magazine to brief
leading advertising agencies to
promote the benefits of ageing.
Photo by Luke Hayes

Left: Karmarama, Learn from experience
Right: Mother, New Old Fine Aged Spirit



Installation view, Pratt Manhattan Gallery,
photo by Jason Mandella Photography.

More adaptable and specialized housing will be required in order for older people to thrive.

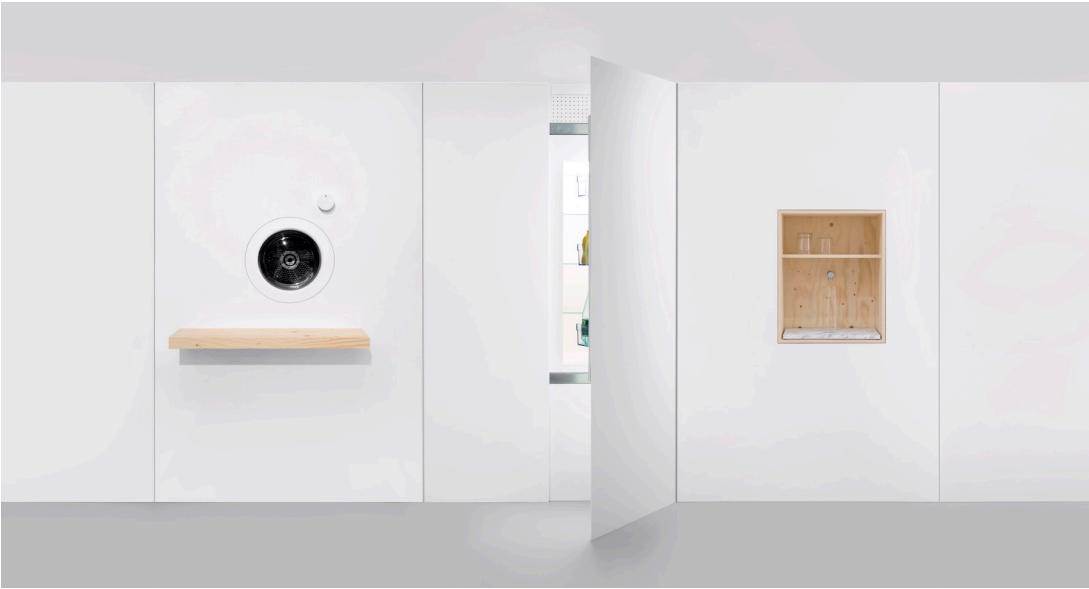
If we are to cope with the needs of an ageing population, then we will need to transform the way that we design and build homes over the next 25 years to provide more adaptable and specialist housing. The vast majority of older people in America live in houses, apartments, or mobile homes (96 percent); only four percent live in specialist group units such as nursing homes. US citizens aged 65 and over are therefore “ageing in place” in nonspecialized homes that can be difficult to maintain and adapt.

Future homes will need to be safer for older people—they will also need to be adapted to support new technologies for working and caring in the home. This section looks at design for everyday living, from smart materials and sensual bathrooms to robot-assisted care.

Including projects by:

Matthew Barrett, Natalie English, and Thomas Fantham
Sebastian Conran/Consequential Robotics
William Dolman
Fixperts
Gillette
Sam Hecht and Kim Colin, Future Facility
Simon Kinneir
Tomek Rygalik/Ideal Standard
Sugru/Jane Ní Dhulchaointigh
Keena Suh, School of Design, Pratt Institute; with Markus Waschewsky
Shao Yao

This project proposes a technology company as property developer and manager. The fictional corporation provides a serviced apartment block in which older residents can rely on smart appliances and technology built into the walls, thereby reducing maintenance and anxiety. All appliances are designed to have two sides—the customer side and the service side—and the apartments are serviced from an efficient network of unseen corridors.



Improved connectivity to ensure that older people are not left isolated will depend on better design.

Successful ageing depends on how well older people can interact with the wider world in their neighborhoods and communities. Loneliness and social isolation are exacerbated in older age following retirement from work, the loss of a partner, family breakdown, or ill health reducing mobility. According to a study by the AARP Foundation, about one-third of US adults aged 45 and older report feeling lonely, and those on low incomes are especially vulnerable.

This section looks at how designers can develop the new physical and digital enablers of connectivity, helping older people to age well in their communities. It looks in particular at examples from Japan, which is focusing its industrial companies on the needs of an ageing society through the International Association of Universal Design (IAUD) and Norway, which has an ambitious government-led plan for inclusive design.

Including projects by:

David Baker Architects

IDEO

Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture

Panasonic

Toshimitsu Sadamura

Alex Schweder, School of Design, Pratt Institute; with Ward Shelley

Takanori Shibata



Installation view, Pratt
Manhattan Gallery,
photo by Jason Mandella
Photography 13



Dr. George W.
Davis Senior Building,
San Francisco, 2017

Community housing
for low-income seniors
creates a real sense of
place and a point of entry
for a range of services for
older people. Designed
by David Baker Architects
with associates MWA
Architects.

Photograph by Bruce
Damonte



Paro the Seal,
Takanori Shibata, 2005

Paro is an interactive
robot seal that is widely
recognized as one of the
world's most therapeutic
devices for supporting
people with dementia.
Its inventor is currently
the chief senior research
scientist in Japan's
National Institute of
Advanced Industrial
Science and Technology.
Photograph courtesy of
IAUD

A new design approach can enhance the productivity of older workers.

As the population ages, our working lives will extend beyond current retirement models. The importance of retaining the knowledge and expertise of older workers will grow, as employers face gaps in the labor market and governments struggle to fund care for a dependent elderly population. One in five workers in America is aged 55 and over, but as many as two-thirds of workers say they have seen or experienced age discrimination in the US workplace.

Longer working lives will not only plug skill gaps and reduce welfare bills, but can also bring health and cognitive benefits to older members of the workforce. To achieve this, the work environment will need to be designed more appropriately. Age discrimination in the workplace must be effectively countered. This section looks at design innovations that create healthier offices, more flexible production lines and more accessible technology, so that older workers can continue to make a contribution.

Including projects by:

BMW Germany
Boskke
Konstantin Grcic
Philips Lighting
Senior Planet
Special Projects
Vitra



Today for Tomorrow,
BMW Group, 2005

An older BMW employee on the production line at the carmaking plant in Dingolfing, Germany sits at a height-adjustable seat on a cushioning-effect wooden floor and uses a “pick by light” system which shows what part he has to take next. These changes were a result of employee input using a co-design approach and drawing on the patience and skill of older workers. Photo courtesy of BMW Group



Senior Planet,
Older Adults Technology Services,
2013

A group of older people get to grips with iPad technology at the New York-based Senior Planet coworking space run by the nonprofit Older Adults Technology Services (OATS), dedicated to people 60 or older. Photo courtesy of Senior Planet



Installation view, Pratt Manhattan
Gallery, photo by Jason Mandella
Photography

Designers must address the many barriers to mobility that affect the health of older people.

Maintaining mobility is vital for an ageing population. Being able to get around is important not just for practical reasons such as working, shopping, or leisure, but also for social connection, identity, and self-esteem. Loss of mobility has a direct impact on health and well-being.

Generally, those aged 70 and over travel significantly less than other age groups. In the United States, this lack of mobility is worsened by a reliance on the private automobile and a lack of public transport options outside large cities. Around one in five older Americans cannot drive due to declining health, poor eyesight, or lack of access to a car. This section explores mobility solutions for the new old—from folding wheelchair wheels and assistive technology for walking to the future of autonomous vehicles.

Including projects by:

EasyMile/Busways Group
Duncan Fitzsimons
Intelligent Mobility Design Centre, Royal College of Art
Karol Murlak, School of Design, Pratt Institute
Lise Pape
PriestmanGoode

Scooter for Life, PriestmanGoode
Design Commission
Photo courtesy PriestmanGoode

Developed in response to a brief to design a new product or service that keeps people on the move as they age, the Scooter for Life adapts over the user's lifespan as their mobility requirements evolve. It offers older people greater independence without the stigma associated with a mobility scooter. 17



Installation view, Pratt Manhattan Gallery, photo by Jason Mandella Photography



IDENTITY

Getting Old Is Hairy,
Andrea Katz, School of Design,
Pratt Institute, 2019

This project—a rotating dress made of organza and hair extensions—is a tongue-in-cheek visual representation of our collective discomfort with greying hair, the loss of hair, the growth of hair in previously less hairy places, and the changes in the quality of hair that occur with ageing. Rather than seen as the natural “science experiment” that occurs as we all age, our discomfort is manipulated for monetizing on ageism by the beauty industry.



MOBILITY

Ageless Toys,
Karol Murlak, School of Design,
Pratt Institute, 2019

A set of intergenerational toys, made out of wood, encourages older people to engage in physical activity through play with children. This project helps children and older people to spend time together, actively benefiting the mental and physical well-being of both groups.



HOME
Senses of Home,
Keena Suh, School of Design,
Pratt Institute, 2019; with collaborator Markus Waschewsky

This installation explores how home can be understood as a personal organization of space in our minds, constructed through our senses (from sight and hearing to equilibrioception). It investigates how design can enhance our agency in responding to diminishing senses and changing acuity, which impacts our emotional constructs of home that are layered onto the external logic of physical environments.

**Pratt
Manhattan
Gallery
Credits**

Nick Battis, Director of Exhibitions
Blumlein Associates, Exhibition Design Consultants
Gregory Kramer, Gallery Technician
Paul Matvienko-Sikar, Gallery Technician
Travis Molkenbur, Installation Manager
Kirsten Nelson, Assistant Director of Exhibitions
Kate Scott, Gallery Coordinator
Setzler, Exhibition Fabrication

**Special Thanks
to Pratt Staff**

Rachel Asher, Associate Director of Research and Strategic Partnerships
Constantin Boym, Chair of Industrial Design
Anita Cooney, Dean, School of Design
Cedric Jackson, Building Operations Facility Manager
Kirk E. Pillow, Provost
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Cheryl Stockton, Lecturer, Continuing & Professional Studies

**Special Thanks
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and Sponsors**

David Baker Architects
EasyMile/Busways
Gillette
Pattie Moore
Aaron Santis, Director, Senior Planet
The Achelis & Bodman Foundation
Sha Yao, EatWell

**Pratt Institute,
School of
Design Faculty
Projects**

Andrea Katz
Karol Murlak
Mitchell Reece
Alex Schweder
Keena Suh

**Design
Museum
Credits**

Charlotte Bulté, Acting Head of Touring Exhibitions
Silvia Meloni, Cleo Stringer, Project Managers
Jeremy Myerson, Curator
Plaid London, Original Exhibition Design
LucienneRoberts+, Original Graphic Design

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Ipsos MORI
Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture
Oxford Institute for Population Ageing, University of Oxford
Professor Roger Coleman and International Association of Universal Design (IAUD), Japan
Studio Levien
Studio Rygalik
The Age of No Retirement
The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, Royal College of Art

**Design
Commissions**

Amazin Apartments by Future Facility
Design by Sam Hecht and Kim Colin; project assistant Edwin Wester

Exchange by Special Projects; Film by Alice Masters and Special Projects;
concept, design, and creative direction: Clara Gaggero Westaway, Adrian
Westaway; production: Alexa Münch; graphic design: Joana Mendez

Head in the Sky by Konstantin Grcic

Mother campaign for Creative Review

Photographer Sam Hofman; copywriter David Ormondroyd

Power Suit by Yves Béhar, Fuseproject and Superflex

Scooter for Life by PriestmanGoode

Chairman Paul Priestman; creative lead Dan Window; senior designer Mike Lambourn. Thanks to Transcal and Bowes Fastrac for model-making support.

Spirit by IDEO

Concept and design by IDEO in collaboration with Studio Waltz Binaire (visual interface design and data visualization) and Agi Haines (body part design)

Original logo and graphics by LuciennRoberts+

Section intro texts by Jeremy Myerson.

Original dates of the exhibition noted in this brochure were affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

PARTICIPANTS:

Matthew Barrett, Natalie English, and Thomas Fantham

Yves Béhar, Fuseproject and Superflex

Yves Béhar, Fuseproject and Intuition Robotics

Maria Benktzon, Hakan Bergkvist, and Sven Juhlin, Ergonomi Design Gruppen

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