



Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture, from Cockpit to Playboy

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The technological innovation and unprecedented physical growth of the cold war era permeated American life in every aspect and at every scale. From the creation of the military-industrial complex and the beginnings of suburban sprawl to the production of the ballpoint pen and the TV dinner, the artifacts of the period are a numerous and diverse as they are familiar. Over the past half-century, our awe at the advances of postwar society has softened to nostalgia, and our affection for its material culture has clouded our memories of the enormous spatial reorganizations and infrastructural transformations that changed American life forever.

Cold War Hot Houses casts a clear, even playful, eye on this pivotal time in history, examining topics as diverse as the creation of the interstate highway system and the shopping center, and the domestication of the national parks as well as the production of such seemingly mundane products as the drive-in theater, aluminum foil, and the king-size bed. The result is a vivid snapshot of American culture that still resonates today.

This beautifully illustrated collection of essays is based on a series of seminars focusing on the impact of the Cold War on the built environment, which was recently conducted at Princeton University by Beatriz Colomina. Colomina is editor of *Sexuality and Space*.

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