



Beatlemania took the world by storm in the early 1960s. Many asked in all seriousness what the cure was for this new teenage illness!



Black and White Op Art inspired earrings and dress, typical hairstyle of the mid Sixties and Union Jack imagery.



The Beatles Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, released in 1967. Where's your copy? £20-£30.

## The Style of the Swinging Sixties

by Judith Clarke



A selection of Poole Pottery Delphis ware from the early 1960s to c1975. Photo courtesy Poole Pottery Museum.



Featured in every trendy magazine of the late 1960s, 'Ball' chair designed by Eero Aarnio - 1965.



Troika Pottery, founded in St. Ives 1963. These pieces are later in date but typical of their rough textured output.



Mark Russell pin-striped suits/coats and Mary Quant berets. (1968)



Mary Quant geometric black and white bikini and distinctive daisy logo on label.

The Sixties, a decade when fashions and styles flashed before the eye like an LSD inspired kaleidoscope. A decade which saw everything from the mini skirt to the kaftan, women burning their bras and men landing on the moon.

Whilst the 1950s was a period of consumer liberation the Sixties was about personal liberation and the freedom to do just about anything. The 1960s saw Europe fully recovered from any post-war trauma and witnessed a gravitation towards the 'technicolor' centre of swinging London. A heady mixture of the sublime and the ridiculous perhaps best sums up this era for the enthusiastic collector. It was a period full of flamboyant design, smart geometric black and white colour schemes giving way to psychedelic swirls of colour and movement. Rock festivals, hippies, flower power, mods and rockers, The Beatles, Twiggy, Mary Quant, Carnaby Street - the scope for collecting is enormous.

On the furniture front fluidity and flexibility were the themes. The materials in use included foam, plastic, vinyl, acrylic, steel, plywood, fibreglass, aluminium, even highly compressed paper moulded into hard shapes in very bold colours. Relaxed casual seating was all the rage with plastic blow up chairs and fabric seating that could be moved around.

The influence of Italian and Scandinavian designers was very strong. Joe Colombo (1930-71) is very much an iconic name with collectors and famed for his modular plastic furniture such as the portable, multi-functional Boby trolleys fetch £150-£200 for an excellent example in a good colour. Totally groovy are the Finnish designer Eero Aarnio's 'Ball' chairs of the mid 1960s which could set you back as much as £2,500 depending on condition and colour. Red/white and blue/white were both popular. The hanging wicker woven suspended chair is also very much a 1960s seating icon as is the Garden Egg chair, an egg shaped capsule made of plastic with material inside designed by Peter Ghyczy. An example of the latter in very good condition can be worth £600-£800. There's also the output of Terence Conran's *Habitat* store which began in 1964 as well as furniture made for Knoll.

Lighting is another area of great design and where some of the highest prices are found for a piece of authentic Sixties style. From self-assembly lighting making use of such materials as perspex and acrylic to the well known 'Arco' floor lamp from the early sixties, arcing overhead from a floor base, they all add an instant touch of Sixties atmosphere. Though boot sale bargains can be found, in a specialist shop prices start from around £40

for an individual item rising to several hundred for a design classic. Another option is the lava lamp, hugely popular from the mid sixties on which saw a resurgence in popularity in the late 1990s with many retro examples being made. Glass and ceramic items naturally complement the authentic feel with early Troika and Poole Pottery leading the way in price terms. Early pieces of Troika, the Cornish pottery first established in St Ives in 1963, can fetch several hundred pounds apiece if not more for the right sculptural item. Poole Pottery launched their highly successful Delphis range in the early 1960s with production continuing until 1980. The haphazard colourful abstract appeal of this range has somewhat been succeeded in the collector's market by the more rugged and textured look of Atlantis. Perhaps the most recognizably 1960s designs came from Portmeirion Pottery established in 1962. Prices have been relatively high with single items fetching £20-£30 but this is now levelling off. Desirable patterns include Samarkand, Tivoli, Monte Sol, Magic City, Variations, Jupiter, Cypher, Talisman and Totem which was launched in 1963 in various colours including white, aubergine, dark blue and olive green.

Midwinter Pottery also produced some instantly recognisable designs in the Sixties, though price-wise their innovative Fifties production remains the most sought after. Their Fine shape range was brought out in the early 1960s. Some of the most well known patterns are Sienna, designed by Jessie Tait, Queensberry Stripe and Spanish Garden. Two designs which were very much Op Art inspired are Focus (1964) and Graphic by Barbara Brown. The Finnish pottery of Arabia should also be mentioned and Denby Pottery with their very popular 1960s design, Arabesque.

Decorative and practical glassware from the 1960s is also a strong collecting area and there's a vast choice of Italian and Scandinavian chunky and sculptural pieces to choose from. Orrefors, Murano and the Danish company of Holmegaard are just some of the top names. Taking the glass collecting world by storm is the firm of Whitefriars. (James Powell & Sons of London) Whitefriars is now so collectable that even reference books on the Company are fetching top of the range prices. The strongly textured, novel shaped and colourful Whitefriars glass of this period is highly sought after. Large Banjo vases in bright colours have regularly been hitting the £1,000 apiece mark at auction.

Affordable and accessible fashion really took off in the Sixties and whether your taste be for mini dresses in black and white op art style or flowery and frilly hippy and dandy wear there's plenty to choose from. The extremely innovative Mary Quant rules the roost in terms of desirability, opening her Bazaar shop in the King's Road back in 1955. By the early 1960s her fashion utterances had become the Holy Grail of every teenage girl.

Quant items have become as sought after as Barbara Hulanicki's Biba shop products. Mary Quant dolls and dresses, currently fetching some very high internet prices, story books, toasters, lipstick transistor radios, never mind the actual clothes she designed, all constitute a style that simply came to be called 'The Look'. For designers and wearers alike fashion became synonymous with style. Flares, space suit-like fashions, smart mod gear, bell bottoms, polka dots, stripes, Paisley, Op Art or military styles are all a fascinating pastiche of rigid social organisation and sum up the 'anything goes' essence of the period.

This is also a period of collecting when Pop and Rock memorabilia really comes to the fore, covering as it does the era of The Beatles whose first album was released in 1962. The Rolling Stones and Jimi Hendrix are also at the top of the collectable charts.

Anything overtly psychedelic in appearance, be it on book covers, record albums, posters or fabrics is hugely collectable right now. At the other end of the spectrum Sixties technology was very much inspired by the space age and a very sought after piece of the sixties would be a space helmet shaped television set, difficult to procure and expensive.

The old adage that if you remember the Sixties then you weren't really a part of it is a bit of an insult to all those who lived through it and do remember it. But it does fully capture the image we have of this most influential decade. Though the late Sixties saw student riots and a Vietnam enhanced disintegration of peace and free love who can fail to be fascinated by a decade which had so much going on and so many design classics to collect.



Portmeirion Pottery set of six spice jars in Tivoli pattern. £40-£50 for the set.



Midwinter Pottery Barbara Brown Focus design, launched in 1964.



Plastic furniture so typical of the Sixties trendy style. Joe Colombo yellow 'Bobby' trolley, Eclipse lamp and clear plastic table, all very flexible. Photo courtesy of Tremayne Applied Arts, St. Ives, Cornwall.



Italian designed bedside lighting 'Eclipse' with inner shade. Late 1960s, £50-£70. Photo courtesy of Tremayne Applied Arts, St. Ives, Cornwall.



By 1967 the mood of the 60s had changed to a dreamy Flower Power, a result of hippy influences from the west coast of America.



Psychedelic inspired gloves made in a stretch material, £15-£25.



1960s Habitat/Scandinavian style self assembly large table lamp made of acrylic and Perspex supports. Value £50-60 provided in complete and excellent working condition.



Everything was swinging in the Sixties. This 1966 advert for Yamaha joins in the fun.