



## From Palaces to Pre-fabs

### Pioneering Women Interior Decorators and Designers

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- **Palaces to Pre-fabs** sets out to restore the reputation of such women working in what was the largely male-dominated world of interior design.

Although how we furnished our homes in the latter part of the 20th century was largely influenced by two men – Terence Conran of Habitat and Ingvar Kamprad of IKEA – a number of women attempted, in their various ways, to influence our taste when it came to how we lived. Early on were the Victorian/Edwardian women, often associated with the Suffragette movement who both designed and sold furniture. These were followed, after WWI, by others also breaking social rank – the society hostesses – totally untrained but full of confidence, and having their own ‘interiors’ admired, saw a way of supplementing their incomes by imposing their tastes on others. Meanwhile a few women were proselytising their concerns for well-crafted and designed products, through retail outlets from small financially precarious shops, to running part of the prestigious store, Heals. Wartime threw up an altogether more professional group – the ‘doers’ – those empowered to ‘do it themselves’. Additionally there were a handful of professional furniture designers and another small groups looking to the design needs of the masses rather than the comfortably off. *From Palaces to Pre-fabs* sets out to restore the reputation of such women working in what was the largely male-dominated world of interior design.