



# ideaBOOK

## 03. Converting and Reorienting

## Introduction

I think of what I would like to have and then design it. A case in point is a mobile desk for a room with a view. Since facing a serene garden is much more pleasant than staring at a wall, my goal was to find a way to place a table in front of a 9-foot sliding glass door without permanently plopping it in the middle of fairly small quarters, awkwardly. I chose to solve the problem by “converting and reorienting” or devising a slender machine-like workspace on casters – lightweight, compact and maneuverable – something that could be stashed in the corner while not in use and wheeled out as required. I called it A-Desk. “A” is for aluminum, the Earth’s most abundant metal.

I showed the prototype to Museum of Modern Art Retail Division. Subsequently, A-Desk was sold online and in MoMA Design Stores, promoted as follows: “... this portable desk has clean lines, sturdy casters, and narrow and wide work surface, making it suitable for a variety of uses, such as a dining sideboard or console table.” A-Desk received GOOD DESIGN™ Award from The Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design; it is in their permanent collection.

This ideaBOOK is about achieving effortless adaptability. It is also an invitation to think in ideal terms, always considering your best-case scenario as the only option. Why wouldn’t you? If there is a wheel, there is a way!



A-DESK



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# preparing to accelerate

## A-Desk (60"L x 18"W x 30"H)

This "gliding machine for work" bestows a sense of freedom on you. A sleek workstation-on-wheels "follows" you to the optimal work/play location, always compliant and sensitive to particular requirements or constraints at any given moment.

One thing by day, something else by night – fluid A-Desk is capable of instant conversion while remaining beautiful in its simplicity, regardless of the work you put it through.



GOING PLACES





# providing roadside assistance

.02

## A-Trolley (15 1/2"L x 22"W x 22 1/2"H)

This easy-going, multi-functional and portable storage station with a tiny drawer is a great companion when it comes to organizing and displaying lots of small items such as toiletries of a dressing table or office stationary.

The concept of efficiency behind light and compact A-Trolley can be appreciated in both small spaces of confined dimensions and in stylish bigger rooms with a streamlined look.



BEING A VITAL RESOURCE

## staying on track

.03

### A-Cart (22"L x 22"W x 25 1/2"H)

This unassuming stand for condiments, napkins or a bread bin serves and carries in the kitchen and beyond. It may be used as a modern service tray-on-wheels for afternoon tea and many other occasions.

Inherently resistant to corrosion, thus suitable for outdoors, A-Cart aids and assists time and time again.



## cruising

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### **A-Coffee Table Set** (44"L x 22"W x 11"H and 32"L x 16"W x 8"H)

This duo glides and telescopes. A pair of nesting companions works in concert to expand or contract on a whim. In addition, since both are extremely yielding and do not physically attach to each other – either one can be moved individually.

Designed to be seen from any angle, together or separately these mobile coffee tables are amenable to any arrangement.



*SHIFTING MINDSETS*

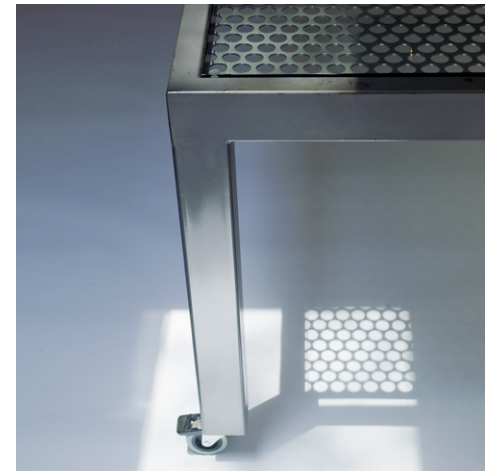
# wheeling and dealing

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## On the Fence (101"L x 35"W x 25 30"H)

This piece is conceived as a conference, work and dining table all in one. Its inherent dichotomy is playfully acknowledged by combining lightness and strength – a steel rectangular tube frame is topped with a sheet of glass resting on “pins” above a layer of gossamer perforated metal.

Designed for a studio that doubles as a garage, this multi-tasking table has to be maneuverable; casters make it possible. (see *ideaBOOK 01*)



KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE

# making sparks fly

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## U-Turn Table (38.5"L x 3.75"W x 25 26"H)

This piece started off as a fireplace screen; however, perforated stainless steel I specified, turned out to be too opaque. Not a problem. In the spirit of converting and reorienting, it was flipped and turned into a table. To emphasize and justify the differences between the two sides, I inserted a u-shaped bin made out of the same material as the top surface, under a gap created for a handle in the previous application. Besides, an extra compartment is always handy – a caddy for tee lights or a pocket for books and magazines.

Letting quirky U-Turn Table float on wheels means firing it up and extending its reach.



AWAKENING POSSIBILITIES





# hugging the road

.07

## Smoke Screen (40"L x 4.5"W x 25 32"H)

The hearth is the soul of a house. Having two back-to-back fireplaces in ours, has afforded me plenty of opportunities to prototype alternative solutions to the traditional off-the-shelf fireplace screen. This particular one made of white powder-coated steel frame with intersecting flat bar stock and heavier steel plate, allows a sheet of tempered glass to hover seemingly unsupported. Dramatic, but impossibly heavy. Since it is not just for show, being able to move it without lifting is a requirement.

Thanks to a set of four wheels – two that glide and two that pivot – this piece is user-friendly from dusk 'til dawn.



TOUCHING THE SOUL



# setting the wheels in motion

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## Mobile Bed and Collection Cart

This group was designed for a nine-year-old inveterate collector. His room had no 90-degree angles. In response to its complex geometry and in an effort to amplify a sense of elasticity, I introduced Mobile Bed. The size of the rubber-and-metal wheels is exaggerated to promote a feeling of reliability, while the triangulated foot of the bed accentuates the forward-looking attitude. Glass-top Collection Cart's three of the four drawers pull out completely, allowing to showcase an individual found-and-gathered assortment by simply placing it above others.

This furniture is in play, amplifying flexibility and keeping up with a growing child.



MAKING ROOM



# going mobile

## .09

### Pivoting Bedside Table

This whimsical drum-like side table with a drawer swings in or away as needed; a decorative bracket attaches it to the off-center, double height headboard sporting a triangular perch for books and toys. A wheel at the base allows it to glide on the floor and to be moved closer to the bed as needed. Once it is pushed to the side, a narrow vertical cabinet under the headboard is revealed. A secret compartment runs the entire width of the bed – a perfect stash spot for a large drawing portfolio that belongs to a budding artist.

Think of this piece as a speedy satellite that works in tandem with a headboard to boost functionality and maximize fun.



*TAKING THE WHEEL*





# moving forward

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## Kitchen of the Mind

This is a family's place to come together, relax, do projects. As if that were not enough, it also serves as a guest room – once the disguised-by-the-rolling-bookcase Murphy bed is pulled down. In addition to built-in cabinetry serving various storage functions, there are plenty of moving components engineered to have retractable, collapsible and folding parts. For instance, the expandable stowed away table can be ready for a board game at a moment's notice. The so-called kitchen of the mind is a snap to convert and reorient on a whim.

Everything is in high gear here, adding an extra measure of ease and grace – there is no need to compromise on comfort or style.



LIVING IN THE NOW



## Conclusion

# ten ideas at a glance



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*Going places:  
A-Desk stays with you*



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*Being a vital resource:  
A-Trolley stores and displays*



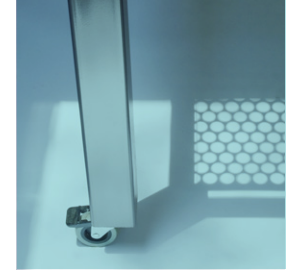
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*Making smart choices:  
A-Cart serves and carries*



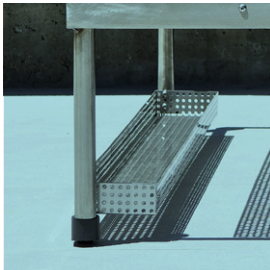
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*Shifting mindsets:  
A-Coffee Table Set glides  
and telescopes*



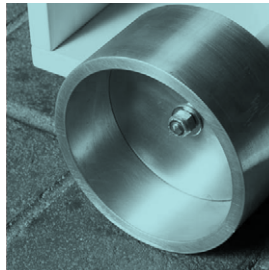
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*Knowing your audience:  
On the Fence Table converts  
and reorients*



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*Awakening possibilities:  
U-Turn Table organizes on  
multiple planes*



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*Touching the soul:  
Smoke Screen makes it easy  
to light a fire and enjoy it  
afterwards*



.08

*Making room:  
Mobile Bed and Collection  
Cart keep up with a growing  
child*



.09

*Taking the wheel:  
Pivoting Bedside Table adds  
interest and enhances  
functionality*



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*Living in the now:  
Kitchen of the Mind handles  
fun, games and guests*

# Who is Alla?

*Someone whose life is a never-ending DIY project.*

A “cobbler *with* shoes” – I use professional skills to enhance the quality of my own life by improving the lives of people around me.

While expecting my first child, I designed everything for the nursery, which gave birth to an architectural practice focusing on children. In an effort to be a better parent, I started Children’s Architecture Workshop, which subsequently served hundreds of kids. As my two daughters turned teenagers, I became a creativity coach, which resulted in an opportunity to join the faculty of Art Center College of Design. Building a house for our family meant creating a transformational hub, which led to its selection as one of the 100 best in the world by an international architectural publisher.

Having been able to experience the thrill, the satisfaction of forging my own way, I strongly believe in encouraging self-reliance and self-expression in others. As a mother, I acknowledge my daughters in all of their creative pursuits. As an educator, I challenge my students to push beyond their comfort zone. And, as **architect on demand**, I incite DIY home improvement enthusiasts by offering advice without strings.



*Winner of Product Design competitions; 1997, 2003, 2010.*

*Winner of Best Toy of the Year Award; Easel Art + Cart; 2003.*

*Winner of Good Design Award; A-Desk; 2009.*

**alla** DIYally.com