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Despite the attention and dollars spent on kitchens in the current homes of today, very few authors focus on kitchen design beyond the turn of the twentieth century. A visit to the Smithsonian inspired a study into the influences of Julia Child, a pioneering celebrity chef, in an exhibit of her kitchen in the Museum of American History. By reviewing the set of Child's influential television cooking show, *The French Chef* (1963-1973), I observe any changes to the kitchen set from inception to the finale. I then combine this information with an investigation of the design features on sitcom kitchen sets of the same period. In doing so, I reviewed possible influences created by *The French Chef* cooking set. I then contrast the visual culture of media images against Julia Child's actual kitchen-turned-exhibit. In addition, I tracked monthly floor plan sizes and relationships in *Better Homes and Garden*, as well as the relationships of kitchens to the home throughout the 1960s. Finding possible correlations and connections between The French Chef set, the kitchen exhibit and the other visual culture of the 1960s, I would need to undertake much additional research to further cement this relationship. In the end, a mix of counter-cultures of the 1960s sets a diverse stage for the influence of this cultural icon, and Child's set is influenced by rather than influencing the kitchen designs of the 1960s.

KITCHEN AS TEXT: DECODING THE INFLUENCE
OF JULIA CHILD ON INTERIORS, 1962-1969

by
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CHAPTER I

SETTING THE STAGE VIA THE TABLE

*We'd called **Julia Child** by her Christian name the moment Mastering the Art of French Cooking appeared in 1961, because she seemed to be talking directly to us...To cook French, eat French, drink French ... was to become versant in the civilized tongues of Europe as opposed to America's barbaric yawp. (Fussell, 1999)*

The presence of kitchens now dominates the pages of popular shelter magazines and the airwaves in numerous home décor television shows. In 2003, The Smithsonian Museum of American History opened an exhibit of Julia Child's kitchen from her Cambridge, Mass. home. The exhibit recognized her contributions to the world of television and cuisine. Standing in the exhibit last year, I questioned the transformations of kitchen designs in the late twentieth century. As a kitchen designer for the last ten years, I often wonder about the turning point in home design that brought kitchens from the back of the house into the spotlight. Part of the answer to this question lies in the mid-twentieth century and the suburban development that spread through the United States in the building boom that followed the close of World War II. Over a twenty-year period, the ways that we as Americans lived changed completely; the design of kitchens and their seminal place in the hierarchy of the household shifted correspondingly. Much of the influence for kitchen design stemmed from media forms: popular magazines such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, and the increasing presence of televisions in suburban homes. In the pages of magazines, readers garnered advice about cooking and recipes

with visuals that suggested the kinds of equipment they should have in their kitchens, as well as the kitchen design itself. On the airwaves, mid-century residents saw, among many choices, shows focused on cooking, where chefs prepared cuisine as their viewers learned techniques and menu suggestions from a variety of hosts. In these made-for-television cooking spaces, just like the still photographs of the magazines, viewers observed kitchen design and accoutrement for turning out tasty meals.

Among a group of culinary television personalities, Julia Child advocated for an updated continental style of cooking, adapting classic French techniques and processes on her show, *The French Chef* (1963-1973). The kitchen sets began as rather mundane and evolved into emulative performance spaces. With a focus on the 1960s and the magnanimous personality and influence of Julia Child and her breakthrough television series, I investigate the developments within kitchen design in this important period of cultural transition as women assumed increasing responsibility for this domestic space, as well as professional careers outside the home. I hypothesized that due to her success and celebrity status, her kitchen and kitchen sets influenced design and decoration of kitchen spaces in the 1960s. I use this chapter to set the stage for the success and influence of Julia Child. To begin that process, we must look past the many myths about Julia Child and focus on her contributions to 1960s kitchen culture and beyond.

Born August 15, 1912 to a privileged family in Southern California, Julia McWilliams, like most women of her generation, expected to get married and start a family (Fitch, 1997). After graduating from Smith College in 1941, at the cusp of the coming world war, she volunteered with the local unit of the American Red Cross to head their stenography department, while simultaneously volunteering with the Aircraft

Warning Service. A self-proclaimed “anti-isolationist”, she dedicated herself to the war effort entirely. After passing the civil service exam but before receiving her first job offer, she moved to Washington, D.C., the heart of the action. Women in the Air Core Service officials dismissed her application because, at 6’2”, she exceeded height parameters for service. Undaunted, she started her public service career with the Office of Strategic Services as a Junior Research Assistant in 1942, quickly working her way through three promotions in the next year. She disparaged her clerical work, but in reality found herself privy to names of infiltrators and spies, bending to the task of creating a complex language coding system to protect their identities and information, perhaps a foreshadowing of her exacting detail in cooking technique (Fitch, 1997). She supervised forty people and worked six days a week, eventually earning a transfer to India. While working in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) with the Office of Strategic Services, she met Paul Child, a fellow field agent. They continued to work together through another assignment in China, and eventually married in the United States in 1946. A short time later, the United States Government assigned Paul Child as cultural diplomat to France, and the couple relocated to Paris.

Child attributed her love of French food to a remarkable meal in 1949 she shared with her husband en route to their new home in Paris. She referred to the four-course meal with the main course of *sole meuniere* as “the most exciting meal of my life,” noting perfection in every aspect of the meal – from the rhythm of the courses to finishing with a slow-brewing dark coffee (Child & Prud’homme, 2006, p. 18). Child ‘s epiphany about food led to a decision to enroll at the famous French cooking school, Le Cordon Bleu, later in 1949, reinventing herself as an ambassador for the enjoyment of food. Her enrollment in cooking classes allowed this transformation in identity, and through a

social cooking group, the experience introduced her future co-authors, Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle..Alongside supplementary cooking courses at the Cordon Bleu, the three women together founded a cooking school, the L'ecole des Trios Gourmandes, to teach the joys of French cooking to Americans in Paris. Within a month of announcing their ideas and plans to start the classes, the women taught lessons in Child's kitchen to a variety of students (Fitch, 1997). This kitchen was the third kitchen the Child's lived in overseas, and due to the restrictive size, here Child begins to organize the space for optimum efficiency (Child & Prud'homme, 2006) Child, often admonished for not being a true French chef, shunned criticism from classmates and kept working and studying until finally getting her diploma from Le Cordon Bleu in 1951, a year after she passed the challenging cooking exam. Not unlike her work in the OSS, her skills of observation and dedication to hard work paid dividends: "She was a spy in the house of food, in the temple of gastronomy, and would reveal its secrets. One day she would make them clear and apparently simple to her compatriots" (Fitch, 1997, p.180).

Beck and Bertolle, her fellow cooks, previously had compiled a book on French cooking for Americans and they asked for Child's assistance with the project. Child eagerly joined the women authors and began revisions immediately. Rather than the standard collection of recipes, she believed the book needed to take time and detail the processes common in French cooking, In an effort to bring French culinary skills across the Atlantic, the tri-authored cookbook helped to meet Child's own goal for the printed work: sharing her love of French style cooking with Americans, using American ingredients (Child & Prud'homme, 2006).

A number of French cookbooks already populated the shelves of 1950s home chefs. Among them Dione Lucas' (1951) *Simple French Cookery*; Joseph Donon's

(1959) *Classic French Cuisine*; Culinary Arts Institute's (1954) *The French Cookbook*; Peter Pauper's (1958) *The Cordon Blue Cookbook*; Elizabeth Smart and Agnes Ryan's (1960) *Cooking the French Way* and Charlotte Turgeon, ed (1964) *La Cuisine De France: The Modern French Cookbook* offered by The Countess de Toulouse-Lautrec. In fact, because they had recently published Donon's work, the Knopf publishing house nearly turned down the manuscript offered by Child, Beck and Bertolle. Instead, the editors at Knopf demanded extensive rewrites and, some nine years from their first meeting, the three authors introduced *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* in October 1961. More than just a collection of recipes, this tome met Child's original goal for the work: an instructional cookbook with French cooking techniques for Americans.

Fitch (2001) credits the success of Child's cookbook as being at the right place at the right time. The cookbook greatly exceeded sales expectations, perhaps due to appearances on television in a massive promotional and demonstration tour across the country timed to coincide with the book release. If the cookbook provided the ticket to media attention, the television symbolized Child's express flight to stardom. *The Today Show* allowed the authors to have a five-minute spot to promote their book in late October 1961. The authors arrived with their supplies to find the definition of a kitchen by NBC standards hardly a match for their expectations; a long table with a barely-functioning hot plate. Stirring up the omelette ingredients hours ahead of time, Child and Beck let the pan sit on the barely warm burner until their timeslot. When the time came, they demonstrated the methods and produced a perfectly cooked omelet to great delight of the hosts and the viewers. After the spot ran, they realized they forgot to mention their book at all (Child & Prud'homme, 2006). At 49 years of age, Child stood at the doorway to yet another re-creation of herself as a celebrity chef.

Though her first television appearance on the *The Today Show* represented an incidental moment in her career, her next appearance demonstrated not only her talent in the kitchen, but also a special spark as an on-air television personality (Child & Prud'homme, 2006). Deploying her cooking skills as a way to fill a thirty-minute segment on a local public television show in 1961, *I've Been Reading* with Professor Albert Duhamel (Fitch, 1997), Child's appearance and cooking demonstration (with a copper bowl, whisk, hot plate and eggs) aired live due to the high cost of taping the segment. Afterwards, the station received 27 letters asking to see her again, but the station could not comply due to their lack of recording capabilities. Because of this interest, however, within the next year Child filmed three pilot episodes for her own show, *The French Chef*, with that same public station, WGBH, destined to become the home for her television kitchen (Smith, 2009).

Child's personality and entertainment value as a television presence softened her methodical identity as a chef. No stranger to research, she investigated every one of the recipes for her cookbooks, admitting, for example, that she used over 100 lbs of flour to learn how to bake French bread for the American audience (Child, 2005). While the kitchen spaces changed over the years, her methodical organization only improved with each transition to a new home kitchen. She admits to practicing each recipe in *The French Chef* (1971) cookbook upward of ten times before actual filming in her Cambridge kitchen. Standing within the first idealized vision of *The French Chef* kitchen on television, Child cooked and baked with a plethora of cookware and food stuffs surrounding her, in a kitchen that belied the realities of many suburban homes. A simple arrangement, the cabinetry backdrop in the beginning of the series connected the viewer to Child. The middle-class housewives could easily visualize themselves in the space,

cooking and learning alongside Child. On television, off-camera preparation work aided the effortless quality of Child's cooking, and dirty pots and pans magically disappeared, leaving only a finished meal on the counters at the end.



Figure 1. Image of *The French Chef* set. (1963)

Source: www.ediblepotential.blogspot.com

Visually, the audience never sees the staff behind the scenes that helped with *The French Chef* episodes, hidden from camera view. The show and in turn, Child, denies the amount of preparation and clean up necessary for her recipes.

Despite this perfect image, Child counterbalanced these views by teaching and cooking in a real way, making real mistakes, and correcting things as each show progressed, sometimes improvising with great success. In the Potato Show, Episode 28,

she grabbed a cast iron pan just from the oven with her bare hands, grimaced a bit, and using the moment as a teachable one, warned viewers not to do the same. When the ingredients got stuck in the pan or the cake developed a crack, Child treated these mistakes as opportunities to show viewers how to correct issues in the cooking process. In essence, she appears human to us; in fact, she appears friendly. This human element, in my opinion, suggests the secret to her success. Balanced against the ideal world of television sets, makeup, and sitcoms with women cooking with perfectly coiffed hair and impeccable clothing, we find Child wiping the sweat off her brow with her kitchen towel.

While Julia Child may not have been in the United States in the 1950s, she certainly contributed, as did many others, to its cultural reawakening at the end of the world war. Certainly by the mid-1960s, her presence in many suburban homes and her deep influence on the environment and on the preparation and consumption of food could certainly be felt. Like others, Child reinvented her identity a number of times in the post-war world, transforming from a Secret Service employee to a diplomat's wife, and then to a chef and teacher and finally to an author and celebrity chef. Not the first chef on television and certainly not the first French cookbook author, somehow she transcended to a celebrity and eventually iconic status in American culture, appreciated across political and generational divides (Polan, 2011). Was she truly at the right place at the right time? What made her work and kitchens stand above the others? To what may we attribute her success, and does it translate into kitchen trends in the 1960s? The answer lies in the cultural context of the 1960s, and in seeing Julia Child as one of many who experienced significant identity shifts through the decade. And to understand the cultural context and the amount of influence she had over kitchen design, we must first

uncover the national conscious of the American people who came in droves to watch her perform in dens and television rooms, where housewives adopted design cues from Child's sets. In the following chapters, I decode that environment in which she came into popularity, viewed on television and consumed within the suburban household.

CHAPTER II

IDENTITY IN MEDIA CULTURE, SUBURBAN HOUSES, AND KITCHENS

As my interests cross into different fields of study, so did the approach to my literature review. Taking cues from geographer Susan J Smith, I examined social and cultural events of the period as context for the work of decoding Julia Child's kitchen. At the heart of this study lie images of artifacts and spaces that represent the social discourses implanted within the "powerless" sex and the place that women occupied in the domestic sphere, the kitchen (Friedan, 1963). To understand the images projected of these domestic spaces and the houses in which they stood, we must investigate the social and political contexts these kitchens occupied on television, the dominant media form through which viewers encountered them. The re-invention of individual and cultural identity and a slow acceptance of individual differences stood at the center of the civil rights movement and the development of feminist critique. Both cultural processes of the 1960s, these social movements directly contrasted with life in the relatively complacent 1950s, a decade in which institutions, and individuals re-made the United States as a world leader through social processes (Gelernter, 1999). In civil rights, cities began complying with the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of the Supreme Court, ending decades of life with separate but equal facilities for blacks and whites. Particularly in the South, the counter-cultural sit-in movement brought blacks into a politically advantageous position of silent, sitting protest (Chafe, 1980). Feminists across the nation started a movement for the resurgence of women's rights, informed in part by Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique*, where the author encouraged

women to find purpose in their lives outside the boundaries of the home (Friedan, 1963). Through these protests and other forms of civil disobedience, cultural products in fashion, music and architecture reflecting the conservatism of the 1950s slowly morphed into artifacts more in line with the self-expressive 1960s (Wright, 1983), with commensurate changes in the spaces where housewives kept and used these artifacts.

Women and men joined forces in counter-cultural movements that rebelled against the conservative conventions which, in time, resulted in consumerism as a major form of social expression (May, 2009). At this cultural cross current, Julia Child made meals in a television kitchen, which, by 1965, found a home on every public television network in the country and a privileged place in homes throughout the nation (Shapiro, 2007).

Visual Culture and Clutter in Media

Alongside magazines full of visual images, consumers looked to an electronic media form for further stimulation in order to design and outfit their kitchens, with approximately 88 per cent of households owning a television set by 1960 (Gelernter, 1999), what Hine (1986) characterized as part of a consumeristic and material gain in the 1960s as “popular luxury, luxury for all” (p.6). Television changed the intimacy in the traditional private home by introducing controlled images of preferred domestic life through ideal visual images, (Spigel, 2001) where the aesthetics of objects shown there became as important as their newness. That particular media culture tells us what to believe and what to discard by manipulating our emotional responses to the predominately visual stimuli presented. Kellner (2005) reminds us that media culture represents not just visual culture, but a comparison of the reactions and responses to culture; exemplifying who has the power, who is conforming and who is not. Echoing this

sentiment and providing practical, relevant examples germane to this study, Friedan (1983) characterizes women as the powerless sex of the 1960s, with manufacturers taking advantage of their lack of power by pushing purchasing decisions and marketing to them to imbue a sense of responsibility for a well-functioning home and a well functioning kitchen. In this double coded world, women invested much effort into home-making and decorating more than ever before, with kitchens again a central social space for women (Friedan, 1963). Faced with the prospect that a husband and a nice home represented the things they needed to be a good mother, advertisers keenly tuned into this inner struggle suggesting that they have helped women: “rediscover the home as the expression of her creativeness,” characterizing “the modern home as the artist’s studio, the scientist’s laboratory, noting “the need for new products.” Significantly advertisers recognized: “that we have to liberate women to desire these new products [and] help them rediscover that homemaking is more creative than to compete with men” (Friedan, 1963, p. 227). Another advertising executive noted that the lack of purpose and fulfillment that most American women felt could be directed and manipulated into purchasing power. Child’s kitchen sits at the crossroads with Friedan: a feminine space used by a female chef who promotes cooking as an expression of fulfillment and enjoyment. Thus the ideal kitchen – such as that of Julia Child – functioned as an expression of power relations.

At mid-century, the characteristic of idealness – ideal families, ideal housewives, and ideal kitchens – makes a strong impression on homeowners and television watchers. Baudrillard & Evans (1991) indicate that consumerism as an avenue for expression results in the simulation of the ideal as real, where the public literally “buys” into the belief in the ideal. The fleeting artifacts of the 1960s – The visual imagery

associated with the sitcoms, cooking shows and images from popular magazines tell the story of an era. This evidence references ideal images important to the generation of Americans living in the 1960s.

Elsewhere on the airwaves, producers, writers, and actors transported United States viewers to far distant places. Space age fantasies mingled with surrealist visions of the American household, as the networks premiered *Lost in Space* (1965), *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965), and *Bewitched* (1964). These shows replaced the earlier versions of domesticity seen in shows of the 1950s such as *Father Knows Best* (1954-1958), *Leave it to Beaver* (1957-1963) and *My Three Sons* (1960-1972). Even the iconic Lucille Ball traced this arc from reality of one decade to the reality of the next with the traditional urban home in *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957) to the life of singlehood in the suburbs as a divorcee in *The Lucy Show* (1962-1968). These shows, and specifically, the kitchen sets within them, also influenced styles of the 1960s, and therefore deserve evaluation in this study.

But Americans did not totally jettison the media forms of previous decades, magazines and newspapers, with circulation of these publications remaining steady through the period. Writing of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, May (2009) indicates that journals began to shape images of women by portraying each reader as a white, middle-class young housewife who was: "a consumer, not a producer, relishing a role that gave her some leisure and seeming control over a vast array of goods and products" (p.60). Including the print media images as a method of analysis in my research ensures use of all media sources available in the time period. I have documented and noted differences among them.



Figure 2. TWA Terminal. Eero Saarinen (1962)

Source: www.greatbuildings.com.

Saarinen's modern design reached thousands of travelers and deeply influenced the design of airports for decades. With the concept of flight, Saarinen expressed the public's awe at this new transportation form.

Just as visual culture took on new importance through television and magazines, architects and designers morphed new shapes and styles not seen before. Between the world wars, architects redefined the landscape of American building design. Buckminster Fuller proposed mass production of housing systems, echoing the processes of the auto industry, and covered cities in geodesic domes to control climate (1967). Eero Saarinen's TWA Terminal (1962) suggested the promise of modern architecture emulating flight (Figure 2). At the U.S. Pavilion (Expo '67, Montreal), designers showed an unwavering faith in technology to solve problems (Eggner, 2004). Returning military veterans experienced the benefits of wartime technology in their new suburban homes with the advent of new materials and cooling systems, all couched in increasingly Modernist style language (Gelernter, 1999). In some neighborhoods, the austere, non-historical forms symbolized a break from the past and stood for a new age of prosperity free from the hardships of the Great Depression. The kitchens in the homes of this

period morphed into spaces visible to the main rooms of the house, breaking free of the restricted, servant spaces in the back of the home from previous decades (Gallagher, 2006).

The French Connection

Julia Child wrote an introduction to the thirtieth anniversary printing of *The French Chef Cookbook*, acknowledging the influence of the Kennedys influence on the 1960s, noting as “their every move was news” (Child, 1998, p. 2). President Kennedy appointed Frenchman René Verdon as Head Chef to the White House in 1962, coincidentally the same year *The French Chef* debuted on Boston public television (Child & Prud'homme, 2006). The Kennedys demonstrated a passion for French culture, and their iconic tastes and styles were emulated by the US population. The success of *The French Chef* could be tied to the timely appreciation of French cuisine by the First Family.

Inside the White House, Jacqueline Kennedy took on the redecoration of the historic structure in 1961. At first, she began to use only the finest period American antiques, under the direction and advice of Henry Du Pont. Later, reflecting the pervasiveness of French fashion, the First Lady hired the Parisian firm, Maison Jansen, and decorator Stephane Boudin for the public spaces of the building. Mr. Boudin incorporated French pieces into the space, to the objections of Mr. Du Pont, a debate documented by a journalist in late 1962 (Abbott & Rice, 1998). The final result shows much of Boudin's work remains as he designed. The White House, as represented in the media, provided additional influence for French fashion to the populace, with a televised tour of the First Family's home and national symbol by Mrs. Kennedy on February 14, 1962 watched by over 80 million viewers (Abbott & Rice, 1998). Fittingly, the designs of

the dining room sets from *The French Chef* appear to be patterned after these updates, as the style of the room is Georgian colonial throughout much of the series. The style in this room illustrates the influence of Mrs. Kennedy's project, as well as showing the reflection of popular culture in *The French Chef*.

En vogue French fashion, influenced in part by Jacqueline Kennedy, a self-professed Francophile, appeared in advertisements and other forms of visual culture. In the previous decade, Audrey Hepburn played a Cordon Bleu Apprentice in the movie *Sabrina* (1954) while Gene Kelly and Leslie Caron danced through The City of Lights to spur tourism with *An American in Paris* (1951). By the 1960s, these mainline movies about France yielded to films actually from France, with titles in *film noir* as well as the movies by the *Nouvelle Vague* (The French New Wave) shown in movie houses across the nation (Marie & Neupert, 2003). Outside the cinema, the media ran stories of Mrs. Kennedy in 1962 on both television and in magazines, capturing her lunching with friends at a French bistro in Washington. Not only did the First Family fall under the spell of French culture, many citizens also looked across the Atlantic Ocean, partly due to an alliance with France during World War II, partly because of the advent of American leisure time and ease of airplane travel, and partly with expendable income that increased the obsession and consumer tendencies of the populace (Strauss, 2011). Americans, infatuated with France, turned to magazines and the airwaves to learn of the latest Parisian crazes. Writers of a 1967 article in the *Saturday Review* recognized French cooking as having the largest effect on the increase of overseas tourism (Polan, 2011). Advertisers and manufacturers named products with French terms, and French cooking had become the definition of gourmet cuisine (Strauss, 2011). The stage for success, set by these interests and connections to French culture, resulted in *The*

French Chef's 10-year run on television and Child's two voluminous successful cookbooks on the subject of French cooking.

Spigel (2001) and May (2009) both characterize mixed messages on television in the 1960s. American culture, in a tug of war, found people yearning for tradition in some sectors such as culinary arts and traditional home designs, while others looked to technological improvements and Modern architecture and design as sources for inspiration. What resulted converged on confusion, with split-level houses that featured false Tudor half-timbering or ranch houses with Colonial-style broken pediments and symbolic iron eagles in gables promoting a unified nationalism. The combination of these various permutations took shape, not in urban centers but in the suburbs, making the overall concept appealing to most Americans (Gelernter, 1999). Hine (1986) helps us understand that to: "every consumable, from salt shaker to house, was added an overlay of fantasy, of personalization, of style" (p. 12). Teetering between these worlds of fantasy and captured on the idealized world of television, Julia Child's traditional approach to cooking in the French style contrasted sharply against – yet co-existed with – the t.v. dinner, freeze dried vegetables, and instant approaches. Her voice represented the counter-culture movement of food.

The Counter-Culture of Preservation

While the newness of suburbia lured many Americans, not everyone espoused the new. Learning of the proposed demolition of the historic block in Lafayette Square across from the White House at the beginning of her husband's presidency, Jacqueline Kennedy joined the grassroots movement to halt the skyscraper project that would replace the historic buildings where presidents and heads of state formerly resided. With

support of the Kennedy administration, designers altered the Lafayette Square proposal to retain the historic structures and to add complementary new construction.



Figure 3. Lafayette Square, Washington, DC.

Source: National Park Service, www.nps.gov.

Photo shows the New Executive office building addition (1969) in the background of historic square. Original plans called for demolition of these buildings, but protests from Mrs. Kennedy led to the retention of the domestic facades of the original buildings.

Just as the ideal world on television and in magazines projected images of both traditional and Modern buildings and objects in an uneasy co-existence, the historic preservation movement provided a foil to the quest for the new pervasive in the nation in the 1960s. Notwithstanding the efforts of organizations such as the Mount Vernon Ladies Association and similar groups in saving the houses of white men, and in the context of wholesale urban renewal in the 1960s, a small number of champions, such as activist Jane Jacobs (1961) slowly exposed the effects of progress. As Americans struggled to reconcile the rise of the suburban landscape and the decline of an urban one, powerful institutional and individual forces acted on homeowners as the dream of home ownership like the landed gentry of our ancestors became more readily available to the masses (Longstreth, 2000). Increased desire for privacy, freedom and individuality

fueled the movement to the suburbs, which left blocks of empty buildings in the urban core. Elsewhere, developers manifested office parks and shopping centers, whole new places of energy in communities that competed with the urban center, where designers and owners cleared out the old exuberant buildings in favor of clean lined, pristine new ones (Longstreth, 1998). The leaders of the movement recognized the consequences of demolishing city blocks of older buildings to make room for so called improvements to efficacious neighborhoods. The passage of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act required government agencies to consider the historical significance of buildings before demolition through a federal mandated process. The new legislation, coupled with Jacqueline Kennedy's publicized battle to save Lafayette Square in Washington, brought into question the wholesale demolition of historic building stock.

Our focus on the significance of history shifted in the 1960s, a seminal period in historic preservation. Criticized for decades after their construction as collections of structures isolated from the urban fabric, these Modernist responses have begun to gain appreciation (Hess, 2010). By looking at the idealized images projected on television and in the magazines, and by focusing on the changes wrought by a single show, and a single television personality, we unveil a counter-culture intertwined with the very tenets of the culture from which it springs. Historic preservation thus represented actions by a minority in the 1960s, who clearly placed different values on the historic structures that define our nation. In this counter-culture movement, we find Julia Child one of those proponents, with the purchase of a 1889 Cambridge, Massachusetts home as she returned to the United States with her husband, Paul. In a strange twist of counter-cultural events, her beloved kitchen from that structure sits, wholly transported as an artifact and as an ideal environment, in the Smithsonian's American History Museum.



Figure 4. Julia Child's home in Cambridge, MA from 1961-2001.

Source: www.centersandsquares.com

The Georgian styled home was built in 1889 within walking distance of Harvard University. The Child's purchased the home due to the proximity to the DeVoto family and confessed the kitchen was the selling point.

The Culture of Kitchens

To understand the influence of Child on kitchen design in the later twentieth century, it behooves us to return to the development of kitchen design in previous decades to, again, set the stage for the progression and influence of change. Just as with the cacophony of voices in debating about media in the 1960s, scholars positioned themselves widely on the dominance of the suburban landscape and home – and the importance of the kitchen within it – in the post-war world. Hine (1986) suggests the suburbs as the ideal location for home and the center of ideal domesticity. By contrast, Marsh (1989) indicates that the move to the suburbs dates from as early as the second

quarter of the nineteenth century, negating the development of the suburbs as a solely twentieth century phenomenon. Hayden (1984) indicates that: "The dream home replaced the ideal city as the spatial representation of American hopes for the good life" (p. 55). In reality the suburban home resulted from decades of experimentation in location, configuration, and decoration (Clark, 1986 and Hayden, 1984). Notably, however, the rhetoric of a promise for better living for GI's after World War II rarely discussed this better living taking place in an old house. Indeed, nearly all of the writing of the period suggested that this new life would include a newly built house in the suburbs, and that almost everyone would have the opportunity to purchase the American dream, an ideal of home ownership. The focus on newness, echoed in the pages of *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine, eclipsed reports on older homes in 50 issues dating between 1960 and 1971.

At the turn of the twentieth century, designers and homeowners relocated the kitchen from basement or separate structure to the interior of the main house, which correlates to increased sanitary measures in cooking and cleaning (Johnson, 2006; Clark, 1986). Due to the loss of domestic servants in an increasing middle class, the kitchen moved to a more integral space in the housewife's routine. Architects, not completely absent from the transformation process, translated clients' desires. Wives of the era increasingly demanded the removal of walls in their home to be able to cook and work leisurely while entertaining her guest and watching her family (Gallagher, 2006):

Since we do our own cooking now, and guests are a commonplace in the kitchen, why not bring the kitchen out of its ancient obscurity and make it a room- or part of a room-with social standing equal to other rooms? (Clark, 1986, p. 204).

By the middle of the twentieth century, open plan kitchens dominated, as suggested by home builder, Joseph Eichler, who employed architects and requested they design multi-purpose rooms in the center of house plans, which included, among other spaces, kitchens. This builder promoted the multi-purpose room as the “living center of the Eichler home” (Adams, 1995). With the open floor plan, the mother could see all spaces of the house for visual control over the children and for a position of standing as hostess for dinner and cocktail parties, a common social ritual for business partners of their husbands. As seen in the floor plan (Figure 3), Eichler encouraged the “responsible housewife” to prepare drinks and food in the kitchen while entertaining guests simultaneously in adjoining multi-function spaces (Adams, 1995). This opening up of the home levied economic incentives as well, but not for home owners. By increasing the square footage of the space, and “making mother a member of the family again” as one Formica advertisement proclaimed, the manufacturers slowly increased their profits(Hine, 1986).

Designers, in espousing open plan designs in houses, stripped the interiors of formality and made rooms like the kitchen an event or an occasion to celebrate cooking, more than a household chore (Hine, 1986). *The French Chef* sets demonstrated the popular style of open plans by opening the kitchen set to the audience and viewer, visually connecting the audience’s living room television set with Child in her kitchen onscreen. Developers utilized Modern design to include changes to their builder’s box to upgrade it to a modern style (Isenstadt, 2006). Originating in the 1920s and 1930s in Europe, the Modernist architectural movement stood for socialism as a radical style in contrast to extant historic styles. Translated to the United States through designers who emigrated here during and after the world wars, Modernism crossed a number of

economic and political boundaries as an acceptable building form, though seemingly stripped from its social meanings. Gelernter (1999) cites the success of Modernism in the home because it represented a break from the past, it indicated a rational and efficient technology for building (a problem solving concept of house design that appealed to military veterans), and without being overly self-expressive or flashy, stood as a summation of America's power in the world.

Though not necessarily tied to the opening of the house plan, color changes between the 1950s and 1960s moved from the fanciful to a more grounded, earthly palette. According to Leavitt (2002), American women believed their color choices could affect the character of future generations. Like their predecessors, housewives turned to magazines and television for guidelines and advice for which they longed. In making the case that design of interiors impacted the entire family, Leavitt (2002) noted: "America's children depended on strong furniture, strong colors, and strong gender-appropriate rules" (p. 128). By the 1960's a more grounded color palette replaced the pastels of the 1950s, with earth tones taking the lead, including avocado green, harvest gold and brown. Designers and manufacturers responded to the idea that appliances no longer needed to stand out and integrated them by color into the overall decoration of the kitchen. By the end of the 1960s, all white kitchens disappeared and kitchen appliance manufacturers turned to color to boost sales, making color and style a fashionable status symbol (Hine, 1986). We see these changes emulated in the progression of Child's television show, from the first black-and-white episodes that featured integrated appliances within the cabinetry and the move to earth toned colors in later shows, albeit laid up in a French Mediterranean design. The move of the kitchen to a more central and less peripheral place in the plan also introduced changes in size, location, and number

of kitchen objects and appliances. Advances in the small appliance industry included the development of new products that would need counter space and storage when not in use. According to Hine (1986), "The appliances were no longer seen as objects in the kitchen, rather, they *were* the kitchen," (p.227) reflected in the pages of magazines and on television. From the beginning of the series, *The French Chef* set illustrated this point, as the appliances dominated the early sets and provided the only visual cues defining the kitchens in later episodes.

As appliances became built-in features, advertisers touted women as household engineers, concurrently documenting their power while suppressing them as inferior. Advertisements assured women of the necessity only to know how to push buttons, rather than understand the details of machinery. This dual messaging of the media – one of a masculinized machine-like space accompanied by predominantly female users – continued through most of the 1960s, mirroring the gender struggles in the center of the decade. Not immune to this debate, Child felt that cooking, best done by men, emulated the practices of France. She also believed that American women, easily persuaded by the commercialism of the United States, should take their husbands shopping for equipment so they purchased quality goods without regard to fashion (Fitch, 1997). The turn of the century saw many upgrades in kitchen equipment, most promoted as time saving and a reprieve from the drudgery of housework. Child had a hand in this promotion, including sending lists of gadgets she would use in upcoming episodes to local retailers, advocating the use and purchase of such items.

While technology quickly evolved in the kitchen, particularly spurred on by new materials and technologies introduced in the inter-war period, the amount of effort needed to complete the required domestic tasks did not disappear at the same rate. In

fact, a housewife in 1965 spent just as much time on housework as a housewife of 1935, approximately four hours per day (Cowan, 1983). The new technologies made possible the elimination of servants as kitchen workers as well as the development of new standards of cleanliness. Strausser (2011) and Cowan (1983) note that Christine Fredrick, an American home economist encouraged women to become “purchasing agents” for their homes as early as the 1920’s, linking the influence of advertisements shaped for women. Child also influenced the perception of workload in the kitchen by prepping much of the work in advance and having several assistants to help with tedious kitchen tasks out of the audience’s view.

Since the nineteenth century, the pressures of self-expression and class definition resulted in rooms of gender and particular uses, mostly divided by sex, patterns that remained imprinted in the twentieth-century suburbs. Sitting rooms for the ladies of the home stood separate from libraries for men (Spain, 1992). Made to feel responsible for their homes as outward expressions of their family’s value and social standing, women decorated the home and presented the correct aesthetic to guests. Turning to magazines, and then television, women linked to the extended marketing programs of manufacturers and suppliers, literally buying into the mid-century mass consumerism. This responsibility supposedly empowered women to use their homes for self-expression, yet increasing marketing and consumerism by women decorators and manufacturers made those decisions less personal, impressing on women the importance of presenting the correct aesthetic in the home (Wright, 1983). As women entered the labor force, smaller homes remained more popular because women could more easily manage them.

In the post-war suburbs, gender roles morphed, as men bonded with children (Marsh, 1989) and concentrated on relationships with their wives, perhaps taking them to dinner in the evenings, rather than spending that time with male co-workers or socializing as a couple at the home of friends. Though the boundaries between husband and wife loosened, politics and education remained topics for discussions among men rather than across genders.

Cowan (1983) describes the changes in the twentieth century as a societal shift from American families as producers of goods to consumers of goods. She contends that as factory work replaced work at home, women felt less responsibility in maintaining the home. The commentators of the post-war era saw women with more leisure time, but the loss of servants and the increase in cleanliness standards did little to change her amount of necessary work (Cowan, 1983). As the decades progressed, women worked twice as long as their mothers had, with the help of servants, due to the addition of work outside the home. Wright (1983) indicates that the suburban home forms a trap for women into the cult of domesticity, with women condemned to be isolated with little means to express themselves other than decoration of their homes or childbirth. The shift to careers, not without dilemmas and controversy, brought pressures that women who worked outside the home represented unfit mothers who cared little for the quality of their families' lives. Rarely depicted in popular magazines in a positive light, if seen at all, these working women met with resistance and less than desirable outcomes. Modern technology in food preparation and appliances did not free women from the drudgery of housework, but allowed them to work outside the home while still providing clean clothes and nightly dinners. By considering women in these suburban houses, we turn our attention to yet another kitchen set, one simultaneously real and hypothetical – an

idealized space. This “kitchen of the mind” may reflect Child’s influence on kitchen design and thus remains a space contextually important in understanding the impact on real kitchens in this study.

In the context of Julia Child, this discussion of career women sets the tone for exploration into her life and her home. A career woman since her graduation from Smith College in 1934, she also struggled with boredom and lack of fulfillment after becoming a wife of a diplomat. Her story should have provided inspiration to other women, as she found a passion in food and cooking that became her lifelong brand (Fitch, 1997). What remains is the methodology for liberating the multiple meanings of Child’s kitchen and its attendant equipment, as expressed on the airwaves and, much later, in the museum exhibition devoted to Julia Child as television personality and chef.

Interconnecting Methodologies

In this study, I gleam methods from scholars of different fields to provide a multi-disciplinary approach, in an attempt to avoid bias of approach from primarily visual sources or material artifacts. Smith (2001) writes in favor of such multi-faceted, qualitative research, and states that all experiences can be viewed and analyzed as texts. She argues that the choice to perform qualitative research is a political choice, rather than a philosophical one: “We are accessing a representation (a vision, an image, an experience) of a text (the world of lived experience) through a text (the interview transcript) that is itself open to interpretation” (Smith, 2001, p. 24).

Rose (2007) provides a method for content analysis of visual sources that requires the researcher to create a code for the interpretation of each photograph in a systematic way that reveals empirical results for a large volume of the photographs

under examination. With little distinction between the real and unreal in visual imagery, Rose posits that images become so detached from their real world parameters that the line between them remains blurred, a phenomenon coined by Baudrillard (1988) as simulacra. Goldstein (cited in Stanczak, 2007) provides justified criticism of photography as an objective form of documentation, stating the impossibility for a completely objective image. Echoing the field of material culture, he expresses that the subjectivity comes to images due to our own inherent views and cultural contexts of the world, as well as those of the photographer. He indicates that a researcher should note an emotional response, as well as the photographer's perceived choices for the shot before, during and after the photo. Taking these instinctual reactions, Goldstein indicates how analysis of those choices contributes a response from the photograph that allows the reviewer to see and then question the photographer's intent. Moving from still image to moving image, Marling (1994) provides insight into the viewers of television programming in the 1950s, and how they absorbed this new visual medium into their homes: "... the eye of the TV set opened private life on the sofa to the blandishments of advertisers, to the visual allure of the beautiful and the strange, to the political symbolism embedded in the charm bracelet or the washing machine," thus linking the visual and the material.

The study of material culture links physical and visual objects and the culture that informs them (Prown & Haltman, 2000). Prown (1986) suggests a classic three-part methodology – description, deduction, and speculation – at the base of much of the literature in this area of scholarship. Prown & Haltman (2000) suggest that material artifacts result from causes: "There are reasons why an object comes into existence in a

particular configuration, is decorated with particular motifs, is made of particular materials, and has a particular color and texture.” These authors derive a series of yin/yang dichotomies useful in analysis of and space and artifact, as well as images in the visual and print media. Two stand out particularly for this study: male/female and reality/illusion.

The Prownian approach provides a guide to analyze objects, but sometimes results in one or only a few conclusions upon completion of the deductive (and thereby reducing) process. To supplement this classic approach, I also deploy a sub-cultural or Hebdigian process, which allows me to consider multiple meanings, particularly useful in such dually coded spaces as the kitchens of the 1960s. Hebdige (1979) differed from other leaders of the material culture field, indicating the impossibility of complete objectivity in the study of objects. As an early post-modernist, he determined the possibility of multiple readings rather than one final analysis of meaning for a particular object based on an individual’s previous experiences and beliefs.

In sum, all of these approaches to the material and the visual rely on the fundamental assumption that the image of a thing and the thing itself contain meaning that can be understood if the researcher dissects the image or the object to understand it. Linking back to the wide range of images in the 1960s and the potential for at least dual coding in the gendered kitchen spaces within those images, I hope to think through the influence of particular media forms and a particular personality in deconstructing and reconstructing the mid-century kitchen. In that the kitchen is on the move, literally on television, and more slowly within the suburban house, I hope to couple the visual and material evidence with the social and cultural contexts that informed the appearance and

frequency of products in the kitchen, as well as the kitchen space itself. Through a specific methodology, then, I plan to weave together the story of Julia Child's influence on kitchen design, as mediated through the television.

CHAPTER III

KITCHENS OF ILLUSION

At the outset of this thesis, I hypothesized that Julia Child influenced the designs of 1960s kitchens, and suggested that evidence of those influences appear in visual media cues of the decade. Furthermore, I surmised that Child's own home kitchen of the same period provides background to the dichotomies present in her real kitchen and those idealized spaces broadcast to the public. Below, I outline the process implemented in this mixed method study process to search for understanding of the impact of Julia Child on kitchen interiors.

Interestingly, the epistemology of the design process, often regarded as researching through making, or more simply, learning through doing – echoes the cooking class methodology: both result in learning through doing. When searching for the appropriate research methodology for my study, I considered the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative studies, the right recipe for examination of the evidence. By choosing qualitative research methods, I attempted to understand the diversity of the human experience, as characterized by Smith (S. J. Smith, 2001) as the *how* of the situation rather than the *what*. In doing so, I followed Smith's lead to examine psychic, social, and cultural events, paired with the cultural and visual analysis of Rose (2007) and Marling (1994) as a multi-disciplinary approach. To counteract the subjectivity often associated with qualitative studies, my approach to the research led in more than one direction. Using multiple readings of meaning and disclosing my subjectivity strengthened the work herein (Hebdige, 1979). My experience as a kitchen

designer provided a different perspective of kitchen design, increasing the effectiveness of analysis. For additional support of the research, quantitative studies of magazine features rounded out the mix.

Three approaches-material culture analysis, quantitative collection and visual analysis-established the methods for data collection in this research project. The three-part tactic to my research layered methods to identify relationships between Julia Child and kitchen design in the 1960s. I launched my analysis of Julia Child's kitchen, as exhibited at the Smithsonian's American History Museum, and reading the exhibit as a map of multiple meanings (Hebdige, 1979). Because the kitchen from her Cambridge, Massachusetts home served as both a home and a stage in her career, I stepped out of the 1960s in the analysis of this space, ending my work in 2003, when Child donated her entire kitchen to the Smithsonian. Understanding this space as an accumulation of years of objects, I returned to it at the end of my analysis to make comparisons to the fictionalized set versions and sitcom kitchens of the 1960s.

Due to the large quantity of objects to review, I provided a system for artifacts and spaces within Prown's classic methodology (describe, deduce and speculate) by dividing the 14' x 20' kitchen into five parts: cooking utensils, appliances, cabinetry/furniture, architecture and decorative elements. Since the cooking utensils category included the majority of the items, I further divided it into three additional categories: cookware, knives, and gadgets. I utilized the same approach for the deduction and speculation phases, echoing the categories that Child proclaimed she obsessed over, and often acknowledged on her shows: her love of knives, copper cookware and gadgets (Child & Prud'homme, 2006). In the speculation phase of the research on the kitchen as artifact and collection of artifacts, I produced several possible

deductions. Instead of eliminating any one cultural reading, I continued to explore each in context with the design culture of the 1960s. From this work, I hypothesized the existence of several major causal relationships, leading into the final analysis.

Researching the variations of *The French Chef* sets required establishing parameters of the documented visual cues. While I do not claim that Child alone directly influenced the design of the set, I reviewed changes in the various sets over the years in a series of screen shots of the show, giving me the same images as a viewer in the 1960s. In addition, I captured visual images from popular sitcom kitchens of the 1960s, specifically *The Lucille Ball-Desi Arnaz Show* (1957-1960), *The Lucy Show* (1962-1968), *Bewitched* (1964-1972), *The Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961-1966), *My Three Sons* (1960-1972), and *Leave it to Beaver* (1957-1963). After I reviewed these sources of visual evidence – those from *The French Chef* set and the sitcom kitchens – I compared the television idealized kitchens and Child's home kitchen (the material artifact in the Museum of American History and its representative images on television). Through this careful examination, I attempted to correlate the extent to which Child's kitchen set shows in the view of the audience. I discerned the quantity of gadgetry illustrated in the kitchen (non-mechanical kitchen implements apart from pots and pans) as well as the quantity of pots and pans. I delineated the types of items hung on the walls of the kitchen and the types of appliances contained in the space. Working from the description of these domestic spaces, I connected the attributes of the space and the various material objects to the values and hopes of Julia Child, linking to biographical work accomplished by other scholars in the secondary literature (Fitch, 1997; Barr, 2007; Shapiro, 2007).

Magazines of the 1960's revealed trends and patterns in homemaking based on advertisements and articles related to popular culture of the period. Using visual analysis through content analysis (Rose, 2007) to study these sources, I developed a uniform approach to the category of print media. I focused on advertisements from *Better Homes and Gardens*, a quintessential publication at mid-century that sketches in the kitchen environment as perceived by many housewives – and as represented by editors, writers, and illustrators. This publication, geared to women homemakers, symbolized the desires of homemakers and products geared to the American home (Isenstadt, 2011). Additionally, I scrutinized *Gourmet* magazine to provide a counterpoint on the culture of cooking, specifically in the French style. For purpose of this research, I split the analysis of magazines into two sections: the use of French words or French influence within advertisements, and the overall appearance of the kitchen as depicted. By correlating this data with that garnered in the examination of Child's kitchen, and by following the same data analysis patterns in both aspects of the study, I speculated on the increasing popularity of Julia Child's show and her influence on the design culture of the 1960s as represented in this periodical. One final bit of evidence, a comparison of changes in square footage and location of kitchens within the houses in *Better Homes and Gardens'* monthly home floor plans from 1960-1969, provided a foil for the other data collected and grounds the material and visual analysis for the kitchens of illusion on television.

In totality, for this research, i analyzed six types of kitchen spaces. The first from Julia Child's kitchen during her beginnings as a television personality. I closely examined this space as an exhibit in the Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution, a partial curation of her Cambridge home she shared with her husband and friends, and where the concept of this research project began. Through

the screening of hundreds of hours of television footage, I scrutinized the second kitchens from *The French Chef* show in the decade of the 60s, noticing similarities and differences between sets B, C and D. *Better Homes and Gardens* provided the third type of kitchen spaces, and the review of these plans allowed me to speculate about the kitchens built and used by Americans during the 1960s. Sitcom kitchens as a group make up a fourth category of kitchens, a source I investigated to furnish additional visual information for evaluation of Child's kitchens as "the other" kitchens on television. Julia Child's kitchen, as exhibited at the Museum of American History, differs from her home as discussed in the first kitchen type. The curators and designers laid out the room and duplicated many features, but the restrictions and exhibits they introduce change the visitor's perception of the space, making this fifth kitchen another performance set. The sixth kitchen, granted a hypothetical one, took form in the minds of housewives watching *The French Chef*, spaces both real and imagined. In the following chapter, I deconstruct and reconstruct both imagined and real kitchens through visual analysis.

CHAPTER IV

BATTERIE DE CUISINE

“Here we were again, establishing new patterns about where to hang clothes or turn on the heat, where to store food, and how to decorate the walls.”

--Julia Child (Child & Prud'homme, 2006, p. 235)



Figure 5. Julia Child's kitchen at the Museum of American History.

Source: The Museum of American History.

Since 2003, her kitchen and gadgets were featured in a popular exhibit entitled “Bon Appetit!”, with videos of her show and stories of her diverse background before and after her training as a chef.

Julia Child's kitchen – now on display at the Smithsonian's Museum of American History and originally part of the structure at 103 Irving Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts – served as the set for three of Julia Child's cooking shows filmed in the 1990s, albeit toward the end of her career. Though not the kitchen in which she first shared her recipes and cooking techniques on television, this space provided her the setting for her real kitchen during those years, from 1960 to 2001. Outfitted upon Paul

Child's retirement from his government consulate position in 1961, the space stood as the ninth kitchen the couple designed together. Built before her television career, the redesigned kitchen benefitted from knowledge the couple collected over years of successes and failures with the various kitchens in their apartments and homes throughout Europe (Child & Prud'homme, 2006). The principles of material culture teach us that people wrap identity into the ownership of objects and their attendant spaces, and the many objects in the kitchen provide significant insights and understandings to the identity of Julia Child (Hebdige, 1979, Prown & Haltman, 2000). After understanding Child's own kitchen (as placed in the Smithsonian), I demonstrate how this kitchen influenced the design of her studio kitchen, and how all of her television kitchens together affected the design and organization of kitchens throughout the United States in the 1960s.

The architecture of the exhibit, meaning the walls, windows and doors, replicate those at the 1889 Cambridge home. At 14 x 20 feet, the kitchen stands on the large end of such spaces for middle class homes of the period and through most of the twentieth century (Isenstadt, 2006). Paul Child installed the kitchen while Child finished the final edits of her cookbook in the early 1960s. Several of his choices and finishes accommodated her physique and needs, including raising the countertops to 39 inches high to accommodate her 6'2" frame and selecting a maple butcher block, so she could chop ingredients from several locations. His influence on the placement, color choices and accessories in the design should not be underestimated. Paul Child's own art decorates the walls, and the decorative items he chose to include in the space reflected his wife's interests, such as the cat sculpture on top of the refrigerator, as Child felt that every kitchen needed cats at the feet of the cooks (Child & Prud'homme, 2006). Mr.

Child chose the pale blue and soft green paint colors to complement the food (Child & Prud'homme, 2006) and lend a soothing atmosphere to the kitchen. About the design of this ninth kitchen in Cambridge, Julia Child wrote: "After so many moves, we were becoming rather expert kitchen-designers by now." (Child & Prud'homme, 2006, p. 235).

The architecture of the space included three windows flanking one wall that filled the room with daylight, a pantry for food storage and multiple doorways that led to another pantry, the pastry room and other parts of the home. Large windows typically impede the storage solutions in a kitchen, but their presence did not prevent the use of the space between and above them by the Childs (Figure 5). Paul Child cleverly hung knife racks and storage hooks in these in between spaces.



Figure 6. View of sink and windows at MAH kitchen exhibit.

Source: Author

The use of every available space for storage is illustrated in this photo of the knife racks and additional storage between, around and above the windows in Child's kitchen exhibit.

Child referred to her kitchen as the soul of her home and the Child's spent most of their time in this space, on their own as a couple and also entertaining others (Shapiro, 2007). The rough-hewn table placed in the center of the room allowed for a

crowd of eight to gather but could be pressed into service for more diners, although a larger number did not represent Child's preference (Fitch, 1997). Like many of the items in Child's kitchen, the chairs stand as souvenirs from Oslo, Norway when Mr. Child served there as cultural attaché. A Marimekko print cloth in sunny yellow covers the simple table, likely purchased at Design Research, Inc, a sponsor of *The French Chef*, and the only U.S. distributor of the Marimekko line, echoing the Scandinavian connection. The set designers for the cooking shows from the 1990s on replaced the table with a large island for filming (Figure 6).



Figure 7. "Pecan Sticky Buns".

Source: WGBH Boston Video

Baking with Julia episode. Nancy Silverton makes Pecan Sticky Buns in Child's kitchen while the copper pot wall, knife racks, and rolling pins provide the backdrop. The mobile island replaces the kitchen table for filming inside her kitchen.

From this table, Child eagerly invited her guests to join in food preparation activities, what Shapiro (2007) calls kitchen chamber music, with instruments of knives and corkscrews, and conversations that result. These events represented another stage for Child, and as Shapiro points out, she had refined the art of entertaining and hosting for many years since her days as a new bride and novice cook. Contrary to her visual message on the sets of *The French Chef*, Child rarely used the dining room located in

her home, instead preferring the company of her guests in the kitchen (E. Bolton, personal communication, March 15, 2012).



Figure 8. Child's pegboard wall inside the Museum of American History.

Source: Author

Polaroid photos assist friends and family with putting cookware and gadgetry in the right spot on the pegboard.

The functional and now famous pegboard system to store pots and pans installed by Mr. Child modeled the system of storage they developed in several of the European kitchens. He outlined her pots and pans on the pegboard in black marker to indicate the size and home for each. In their tiny apartment in Paris and on a limited budget, Mr. Child devised this effective system of storage using pegboard, and the tradition continued for the kitchen in the United States, despite greater wherewithal for the couple (Child & Prud'homme, 2006; Fitch, 1997). While pegboard provides versatility

and transience in storage solutions, the use of the black marker creates a permanence of locations. The pegboard remained in place over the years, rather than being updated to closed storage, for example, speaking to a certain practicality for useful items with little expense and perhaps nostalgia for items that reminded the Child's of life in France. Retaining the pegboard countered the American concept of upgrading to the new even when unnecessary, the built-in obsolescence of consumerism. Likely added at a later date, Polaroid pictures depicting pots and pans in place assist visitors helping in the kitchen. The system ensured that items quickly returned to their original locations, and thus easily found at their next use. This idea of easing the learning curve for visitors illustrates how often the Childs received guests for company as informal, unpretentious hosts.



Figure 9. *Domino* Magazine, September 2007.

Source: <http://www.rebeccaloewke.com/2010/10/kitchen-pegboard>

Domino Magazine used Child's kitchen at the Smithsonian MAH as a model for articles on kitchen storage with decorative pegboard.

Editors of magazines today quickly identify Julia Child as the innovator in utilizing this everyday wallboard (Figure 8), though editors from *Better Homes and Gardens Magazine* published articles in 1960 and 1964 (before Julia Child's kitchen became a familiar set on her cooking shows) where pegboard appears commonly as a wall finish in various parts of the home, occasionally making its way to the kitchen (Figure 9). The unpretentious storage system relates to the unassuming identity of Julia Child, evidenced by her utilitarian kitchen space and her no nonsense approach to the culinary arts, but the early evidence of its existence negates her direct influence of its use.



Figure 10. Pegboard in October 1964 *Better Homes and Gardens* article.

Source: *Better Homes and Gardens Magazine*

This article illustrates that pegboard use in kitchens was popular before Julia Child became a well-known celebrity chef on television. While the demonstration kitchen B exhibits pegboard in the backsplash, this use is a reflection of the design trends for kitchen storage of the early 1960s.

Child's appliances, far from standard fare in most kitchens, have a history all to themselves. She bought her Garland Range, an American product, in 1956 for \$429

from a friend in the restaurant business. One of her favorite tools, the professional grade stove featured a capacity to bake two 25lbs at once and the Childs adapted it for residential use (Fitch, 1997). Of great importance to the Childs, they used the stove in their Georgetown home and then moved it to storage while they performed their last deployment. Later, the couple reunited with the beloved object in their Cambridge home. The Garland stove, of increasing interest as a template, likely spurred emulation, as many manufacturers now design ranges with the look of professional grade products, if not their capacity. Commercial ranges today remain incompatible with residential buildings, as the larger gas inlet valves used in commercial settings produce a greater flow of gas. A popular style and often requested by my clients when I served as a kitchen designer, I never fully resolved the connections and inter-connections there. Did this obsession with the professional look begin with Child's Garland? How many other chefs or celebrities used a professional range before her? I have not observed commercial ranges in earlier magazines or on television and this remains as a topic worthy of further exploration.

As evidenced in the exhibit, her kitchen also included a wall oven, dishwasher, ice maker, warming drawer, and refrigerator, all of standard variety. The quantity of appliances makes them unique in the context of contemporary kitchen design. An ordinary household might include a single oven and a four-burner range, an appliance count inadequate for Child, as the appliances spoke to additional resources needed for hosting and entertaining needs and for those of a kitchen set.

Though the furniture in the kitchen might have been considered minimal, the clutter of kitchen supplies countered that characterization. On every available wall space, Child exhibited colanders, baskets, knife strips, additional kitchen gadgets and

cooking vessels, all with the pegboard backdrop, container after container of various cooking implements.

Child's legendary copper pots represented the value this chef placed on quality cookware, and the uniform heat distribution that a copper pot lined with tin provided. She spent many years collecting these pots in France, and used a variety of these pots as her own equipment on the television show (Child & Prud'homme, 2006). The pots and pans she adored mirrored Julia Child in many ways: tough and long lasting, wonderful to look at, and easily reinvented and shined up with a little lemon juice and baking soda.



Figure 11. Copper pots at MAH.

Source: Author

Prominently featured in the exhibit, albeit not in their original location, the copper pots are displayed on the original pegboard outlined in marker to allow for quick replacement by guests and consistent location for Child.

Hung on pegboard with their bottoms facing out, Child thus displayed their “war scars” from the wear they received with constant use. Rather than this lofty correlation, perhaps the pegboard display simply provided a way of keeping dust out of the inside of the

vessels until their next use. Child acknowledged the preference for easy access to her equipment rather than closed storage, claiming ease of food preparation and adjacent equipment, instead of searching through drawers to find the right implement (Child & Prud'homme, 2006).

Early in her television career, however, viewers admonish her for not using American shortcuts and utensils in her cooking (measuring spoons, spatulas and thermometers) instead relying on estimated measurements by visual cue, a knife to turn items in pans, and her finger to feel for doneness (Fitch, 1997). These skills she attempted to share with viewers of her shows, impressing on them the importance of not only using tools, but understand by eye and feel as the art of cooking.



Figure 12. Close-up of knife rack in MAH exhibit.

Source: Museum of American History

Child stored and showcased her knives on magnetic strips attached between the windows of her kitchen, turning them into artistic pieces. Notice the blue labels located next to the switch plate, possibly instructions for the garbage disposal use.

An extremely important part of any cooks arsenal, knives for Julia Child represented an important part of her history as well. The knives also had the ability of reinvention through oiling and re-sharpening blades and Child displayed them on magnetic racks in order of decreasing size, coincidentally making them objects of art along with her other gadgets. This method also encouraged care when using and storing, and prevented the scarring that can occur to knives tossed in a drawer. She

discusses this advice at length in several of *The French Chef* episodes, focusing on the technique as an important part of the cooking process. Though Child discussed knife care and storage in some detail for several shows, she never addressed storage for the larger number of gadgets used on *The French Chef*. Easily tackled in her home kitchen, storage issues included options ranging from pegboard walls to three large pantry spaces.

The spatial use of knives in her home provides an interesting query. Though the show's designers equipped the kitchen with butcher block counters throughout the space, so that Child could use any location for cooking, she preferred the single section of the wrap-around island. Despite their limited use by Child, the butcher block counters reflect the versatility and the ability of the space to serve multiple functions. Though she chose a particular spot for chopping, she appreciated the functionality of multiple spaces easily used for this purpose. .

Even with no record to indicate how many gadgets she brought with her to the Cambridge kitchen, we know she has added to the collection over the years, including one key modern convenience, the ubiquitous stand mixer. In one early black and white episode of the French Chef, she battles against a stand mixer demonstrating who can whip egg whites for a meringue faster, and jokingly brags of winning because of her bigger size. Slowly, and in response to viewer and station demands, she incorporated these time saving pieces into her show and her recipes. She acknowledged the submission to these gadgets in her later "cookery bookery", and stated there that we must adapt and understand new technology as it comes along (Child & Prud'homme, 2006), suggesting a statement of note from Child, someone who re-invented herself throughout her life. By the 1980s, for example, she loosens her strict French cooking

methods to acknowledge and adapt to the new methods introduced by the cooking revolution in America. Nonetheless, she never acquiesced on the use of pre-packaged foods.

French signs hung on the walls in the kitchen, and the same signs made their way to the set in her first cooking shows ("Bon Appetit! Julia Child's Kitchen at the Smithsonian," n.d.). In addition to her use of pegboard, she also labeled and organized her utensils in crocks on the stove's ledge, marking them with masking tape such labels as "Spoonery", "Forkery" and "Mostly Wood". Julia and Paul Child re-invented the equipment and the kitchen concept through the process of redisplay in every new location they lived. While living in the space, the couple distributed Post-it notes on which they had written out instructions for many tasks, telling guests everything from how to use the restroom to the proper ratio of water and coffee for the coffeemaker (Barr, 2007).

The degree to which Child labels and uses signs in her space deserves additional consideration. What end effect did she expect from this penchant for signage? Do these acts hint at her desire to teach and coach others? Do the notes represent a way of ordering her world? Her biographers all agree she loved having others cooking alongside her in the kitchen, and often put guests to work for their meals (Barr, 2007; Fitch, 1997; Shapiro, 2007). Since the cooking process could be labor intensive, with lengthy preparation times, Julia relished the companionship stating, "cooking together is such fun" (Barr, 2007, p. 136). It appears that this need for labels and signs filtered into other parts of her life, including her television career, seen in the Julia Child papers housed at Harvard University. The signs and directional messages she provided to herself and to the crew parallels the direction and advice given to women through

popular magazines, television and even advertisements as they struggled with the dilemmas of domesticity and careers outside the home. Experts and advice in childcare, design, cleaning and cooking issued warnings to women on what they should and should not do (Friedan, 1963). Child appears ordinary in this way, and relates to the average woman's struggle to maintain order over her world, be it career or personal matters.

In writing about the character of her kitchen, Child stated, "my kitchen was my office. I liked to have my pots and pans hanging within easy reach, my cookbooks *in* the kitchen, and my counter layout to make sense" (Child & Prud'homme, 2006, p. 235). Each relocation allowed the refinement of her preferred spatial arrangement, moving her every growing collection of equipment nine times since her training at Le Cordon Bleu. The images found of her previous kitchen illustrate this point.



Figure 13. Child in Paris kitchen (1951).

Source: www.nytimes.com

The organization, visible in one of her apartments in Paris, demonstrates Child's ability to utilize a wide range of objects in small, well organized spaces.

***The French Chef* set as Alternative Text**

The set design for *The French Chef*, Julia Child's television show, shifted frequently at the beginning of its broadcast history. Only days before Child filmed the pilot in 1962, the television studio sustained a massive fire. The Boston Gas Company generously loaned the volunteer station a demonstration kitchen to shoot these early episodes, titled "The French Omelette", "Coq Au Vin" and "Souffles" (Child & Prud'homme, 2006). With evidence of any footage from the pilots lost to history, this first kitchen set remains in the realm of a distant memory for purposes of this research (hereinafter referred to as kitchen A). Though we do not know what the demonstration kitchen looked like, it did not seem to impact the positive feedback WGBH received from fans to the show. As a result, WGBH executives agreed to a series on cooking with Julia Child as host. By this time, Boston Gas Company had dismantled their temporary kitchen but the Cambridge Gas and Electric Company came to the rescue by offering a demonstration set on the upper floor in their downtown location. This set (hereinafter Kitchen B) provided the platform for recording the first seasons of *The French Chef* from 1963-1965. Staff estimated barely a gap of eight feet between the prep island on which Child worked and the back wall of the kitchen (Polan, 2011). With a minimal production budget, Child reportedly used her own equipment and props on the early shows (Child & Prud'homme, 2006). For purposes of this research, I estimated the demonstration kitchen at approximately 15'x17', larger than many kitchens of the era. Determined by visual cues in the cabinetry and appliances, I drew the layout of the set, re-creating an arrangement with this information. The abundance of appliances and the standard sizes during this decade assist with the interpretation.



Figure 14. "Beef Bourguignon".

Source: WGBH Boston Video

The French Chef episode 1, aired February 11, 1963. The set decorators sparsely add kitchenware to the pegboard backsplash of Kitchen B, and visual field that evolves significantly over time.



Figure 15. "Bouillabaisse".

Source: WGBH Boston Video.

The French Chef episode 23. The gadgetry hanging from the backsplash increases, and the countertops fill in with additional cookware.



Figure 16. "Cake for Company".

Source: WGBH Boston Video.

The French Chef episode 44. Designers rotate the working island 90 degrees to place the window in the background, and the process for decoration begins anew.



Figure 17. "Introducing Charlotte Malakoff".

Source: WGBH Boston Video.

The French Chef episode 65. Designers then fill the background with plants, mixers, and additional kitchen supplies, just weeks after the turn of the island.

In 1965, the show moved back into the studios of WGBH and into a new studio space and a new kitchen. The larger appearance of this new set (Kitchen C) a striking change for viewers, served as the set for multiple shows, not just *The French Chef* (Figure 16). Francis Mahard Jr., the set designer, created the expansive island with Julia Child in mind at a height convenient for Child's tall frame. WGBH staff reported that other chefs who used the island employed the use of lifts to stand at the countertop at an appropriate height. Biographers suggest that designers specified a neutral palette and design features, compared to typical kitchen appearances, so the expansive island could be rolled away and the set used for other purposes (Fitch, 1997; Shapiro, 2007, Polan, 2011). Absent of cabinetry in the background, the set contrasted with previous versions, making Kitchen C appear larger than Kitchen B. However, my estimates show Kitchen C at 16 by 16 feet, a nearly equivalent size, still larger than kitchens depicted in *Better Homes and Gardens*.



Figure 18. "Buche De Noel".
The French Chef episode 73. Decorated for the holidays, the new set, Kitchen C, includes a mixture of American Colonial-style furniture and Mediterranean accessories.

In the final set of *The French Chef* (Kitchen D), designers introduced color to the set used from 1970-1973, allowing the colors of the food and set to take on brilliant hues translated to television through new color technology. The format of the show, too, shifted the design sensibility and art direction as each episode featured Child visiting food venues in Europe, including segments as various as the open markets of fishmonger wives in Naples and patisseries in Paris. The set remained nearly the same size (roughly 16 feet square) as the previous version, with a few additional storage nooks and a glass atrium added to the background. While the changes provided additional spaces for accessories, the vibrant colors truly transformed the visual impact of the built environment as expressed on the airwaves. To play up the new media form, designers specified yellow, plaster-finished walls with red and white accent tiles on the oven wall and the counter fronts.



Figure 19. "Salad Nicoise"

Source: WBGH Boston Video

The French Chef episode number unknown. This color version of the set dates after 1970 and illustrates the French rustic color scheme and additional decorations of the background to set the ethnic tone.

Looking In and Beyond the Kitchens

Kitchens C and Kitchen D permitted a much more open studio set and camera operators used this openness to advantage, with wide angle shots during each episode simply not possible in Kitchen B. Several reasons could exist for this difference; the demonstration kitchen on loan to the studios might not have the depth of space necessary to create this shot, the camera operator choose not to use such an angle or technology had not developed at the time to allow a panned view from wide to close. One final observation in this regard: approximately half of the shots during filming in Kitchen B feature close up hand work by Child as she demonstrated cooking techniques. In this instance, the productions did not require the panoramic shots of the kitchen.

The extensive use of dining room scenes, outside of the kitchen space proper, represented one design feature and attendant space that distinguished *The French Chef* from other cooking shows. At the end of every show, Child enjoys the meal, while explaining entertaining and hosting options to viewers. Though Child believed in the pleasures of sharing meals with family and friends, she felt that the American tradition of family dinners would soon disappear, given the current trend of speed in both cooking and eating meals (Barr, 2007). The dining segment of the show countered that trend. Both kitchen and dining spaces vary in style and treatment, but the pedagogy remains the same. For Kitchen B, the adjoining dining space remained distant from the kitchen, requiring camera operators to cut from an image where Child leaves the kitchen to an image where she enters the dining room. In Kitchen C & Kitchen D, the dining room adjoins the kitchen stage left, with more seamless transitions resultant for viewers. Dining room décor evolved from a space featuring Neoclassical detailing (B) to one with Modern décor complete with bold patterned wall hangings, reverting back to a

Neoclassical and Georgian space with colorful brocade fabrics on the two chairs in the center of the view (Figures 19-21).



Figure 20. "Vegetables the French Way", Dining Room.

Source: WGBH Boston Video.

The French Chef episode 15. The screen shot illustrates the decoration of the dining room set from an earlier episode.



Figure 21. "Vegetable Adventures", Dining Room.

Source: WGBH Boston Video.

The French Chef episode 40. The dining room set evolves through the series, featuring contemporary furniture and accessories, although a temporary change.



Figure 22. "Salad Nicoise", Dining Room.

Source: WBGH Boston Video

The French Chef episode number unknown. The Dining room in this later show includes traditional architectural features and furnishings, illustrating the color version's formal dining setting.

The kitchen of home and the once constructed on television function differently as well. The Cambridge kitchen included a large center table to seat and greet guests, while the show used a very formal dining space for the enjoyment of meals. Not unlike the spaces in the Child's Cambridge home, the couple preferred the the informal kitchen for entertaining rather than the formal dining room, a place seldom mentioned by biographers because of its limited use (E. Bolton, personal communication, March 15, 2012). In an article for *Architectural Digest*, Child admits rarely using their dining space for the original purpose, instead as a space for photo shoots and hypothetical meals (Child, n.d.). She much preferred the casual table in the kitchen, and claims she would never waste square footage on a dining room again. For Child, the informality of this kitchen setting directly contrasts with the formal space of the dining room in both her own home and in her sets, which created both a contradiction and correlation to the visual images she portrays on television. While the kitchens morph into more formal and

less kitchen-like spaces, the dining rooms consistently read as formal Colonial or Georgian style rooms.



Figure 23. Julia Child's Dining Room in Cambridge.

Source: www.architecturaldigest.com

The dining room from her home, rarely used for dining, served as the location for assorting and shooting photographs for the cookbook and other publications.



Figure 24. Child in kitchen photo shoot, July 1970.

Source: www.vanityfair.com

This photo shoot for *House and Garden* illustrates change over time in the wall storage, as well as the starring role of the table in the space.

Dressing the Kitchen

Designers and set dressers included ever more extensive decorations on more elaborate sets through the years. As the main visual element in Kitchen B, cabinets allowed for very little wall surface visibility. While pegboard adorns with backsplash in Kitchen B and harkens to Child's personal kitchen, the more open spaces of Kitchen C and Kitchen D feel less personal than Kitchen B, perhaps attributable to the use of Child's own belongings in Kitchen B or the closer proximity of the celebrity to the camera that result in a greater sense of intimacy. While the pegboard material provides a surface for the organization and display of assorted utensils, very few artifacts provide notable size and scale in terms of emphasis (Figure 14-17). In the latter two kitchens, the props

change little, unlike the background props of Kitchen B, perhaps because designers and set decorators felt a stronger need to change the entourage frequently due to the static nature of the appearance of the cabinets.

Along with the visual appearance of the walls, the working counter/island transitioned as well, from a long barrier of a countertop in Kitchen B to a design allowing more movement in Kitchen C and Kitchen D. The countertops in these later spaces wrap around Child in a semi-circle, placing all parts the cooking experience easily within her grasp. Unlike Kitchen B, the counters in Kitchen C and Kitchen D facilitate movement through the set with little change to the camera's perspective. The later kitchens created a stage for a dancer, who gracefully moved from double sinks to double ovens, and from warming drawers to six-burner cooking surfaces. Her movements translate into energetic bursts rather than jolts and staggers from camera movements of the earlier set. Kitchen B's counters limited the motion of Child, focusing the viewer into close proximity with her work, creating a personal and engaging connection.

Francis Mahard designed and built the later sets, Kitchens B and C. His name appears among episode credits as set designer from the beginning of the series, having this title for all of WGBH studio sets (Polan, 2011; Shapiro, 2007). Child commented on how delighted she was with his set design in Kitchen C, which featured chestnut paneling and scenes of French cookery, rustic tiled walls, and other embellishments to bring to the airwaves a sense of French country living (Child, 1998; Polan, 2011). Two facts minimize the possibility that Mahard designed any part of the earlier sets, both demonstration kitchens loaned to WGBH for taping, with minimal show budgets, barely covering the cost of food. Child mentioned bringing her own cooking equipment to the set regularly due to the size of the budget and her preferences for her own *batterie de*

cuisine. She also brought French signs to the set for decorative use. In the absence of any criticism in the record about the design, we imagine cooperation and collaboration between Child and Mahard, with Mahard ultimately responsible for the design elements and background decorations on set, particularly Kitchen C and Kitchen D, both located in the WGBH studios.

Outside the studio, the changes in the sets certainly corresponded to the design elements and cultural factors of the 1960s, from the simplified cabinetry common in the pages of popular magazines and sitcoms, to the pegboard backsplash and utensils for decoration. The set of Kitchen B reminded of the importance of function over style in a demonstration kitchen by the installation of multiple appliances within the space. In this large space, the overall design echoes the kitchen styles in magazines of the same period (Figure 24 & 25). In Episode 35, the production staff changed the orientation of the camera to the set and includes the window in the backdrop, opening for the viewer the possibility of life outside the kitchen – an instantaneously new location without added expense.

The first set (Kitchen B) offers the closest resemblance of a real kitchen than the later versions. The cabinet and appliance styles remain consistent with designs of the early 1960s. Kitchen B does not have the breadth of use and movement as Kitchen C and Kitchen D, even though similar in size. Kitchen B featured one long island counter as the location for the majority of work, whereas Kitchen C and Kitchen D contained far more spaces for multiple functions spread over multiple areas – places for chopping, cleaning, cooking, and demonstration. Throughout the run of the show, the sets visually detach from the other media images of the decade, getting less real over time. The Mediterranean Revival style of kitchen D provides a direct contrast to kitchens used by

housewives of the period and to Child's home kitchen. During this decade, the style does not reflect the current trends portrayed in media images from other television kitchens, *BHG* and therefore stands apart from the previous two sets.



Figure 25: "Cooking Your Goose".

Source: WGBH Boston Video.

The French Chef episode 34. The pegboard remains empty in Kitchen B, as if preparing to turn the island for the next shooting.



Figure 26: "Vegetable Adventures".
 Source: WGBH Boston Video.
 The French Chef, episode 40. Kitchen B now includes the window in the background and sparse decorations along backsplash.



Figure 27. "Croissants".
 Source: WGBH Boston Video.
The French Chef episode 76. Kitchen set C illustrates how the decorative items change little from episode to episode. See also Figure 22.

The Dichotomies in Child's Real and Ideal

The two kitchen spaces occupied by Child in the 1960s easily divide between the television world and the space she occupied at home; dichotomies of the real and ideal. What similarities and differences did these spaces share? Besides the obvious necessity of appliances, both physical spaces defy the averages found in *Better Homes and Gardens* floor plans of the period; decidedly large at 15 ft x 17 ft for the television set and 14 x 20 ft for her home (*Better Homes for America*, 1960-1971). Given the plethora of signs and notes to guests and the pegboard storage system, Child never or rarely cooked alone in either place. On television, she appears alone, contradicting the cooking regime from her home kitchen, where guests spilled forth and helped with the process. Through television magic, small appliances appeared and disappeared with little effort, dishes cleaned themselves and the counters were always clean and ready for the next step. Behind the scenes, however, Child most assuredly had help in both real and ideal kitchens. Child admits her husband often stood as a handy dishwasher in the early days of the show, as well as while she was traveling. Paul Child, in fact, claimed a happy as backstage assistant and sometimes photographer for his wife: the cultural attaché to foreign countries now turned assistant and grocery getter (Fitch, 1997).

While reinvention emerges frequently as a theme in Child's career and life, unpretentiousness defines her behavior, though many mistook her approach to cooking as snobbish or condescending. In reality, Child's simple and straightforward approach to cooking translated also into kitchen designs. The materiality of both pegboard and Post-it Notes exemplify modest materials used in easy ways. The basic approach to entertaining, where the host involves everyone and all enjoy the workaday private spaces of kitchens, alongside more formal dining rooms inscribes Julia Child's world.

The simply-adorned cabinets in both her home and her early set kitchens stood quietly in the background, while the flair and personality resonated outward from the chef herself. As she became a more successful television personality, the sets changed with her, with the addition of color and a Provençal style of the idealized kitchen set in Kitchen D and culminating with the use of her own real kitchen, chock full of the material culture of a lifetime. Also found in the kitchens of model homes and designer advertisements throughout the 1960s, the simple, streamlined look of cabinets in earth tones transformed into vivid, primary colors and bold cabinetry statements by the 1970s. Her theatrics with knives and oversized food also built through the years, earning her a reputation as a natural entertainer and consummate cook.



Figure 28. Featured kitchen, September 1970.

Source: Better Homes and Gardens Magazine

This kitchen illustrated the dramatic colors that enter the kitchen in the 1970s, at the same time as the introduction of the color version of *The French Chef*.

Throughout her television career, as reflected in the kitchens of her cooking shows and in the ultimately final “set” for the show, her own kitchen, Julia Child remained a steady and unchanged figure in a slowly evolving but relatively stationary physical space. With direct correlations between Child’s kitchen and the corresponding development of suburban kitchens on screen or off, generally speaking Child’s kitchen maintained continuity over time, and while she did not invent the use of pegboard in kitchens, she certainly perpetuated its use. *The French Chef* sets, *BHG* floorplans and sitcom kitchens, all as sources of evidence, mirror each other through the mid 1960s. In the later years, *The French Chef* strays too far as a transformed stage for French cooking, as opposed to a kitchen. The advent of bold colors and patterns in the sitcom kitchens align with this period, and in the bold expression of parallel styles in suburban homes. As a sub-cultural foil to the television kitchens and as a mirror to 1960s kitchens, generally, Julia Child’s home kitchen reflected the spirit of the age, albeit on the high end of consumerism.

Kitchens in *Better Homes and Gardens*

Better Homes and Gardens (hereinafter *BHG*) popular shelter magazine provides a window into the 1960s through the pages of archived editions, media culture in the form of house plans. The *BHG* floorplans are effective resources to indicate the average ideal size of homes built in the US, and provide visual evidence on the styles, sizes and location of kitchens of the 1960s. Using the visual cues of design in the 1960s from these feature articles, I compared the designs of the photos of *BHG* floorplans and *The French Chef* sets to these cues to determine influence or relationship. Some of the consistent cues found include the presence of appliances and cabinetry with sleek, square designs and minimal ornamentation, a shift from the 50s appliances with rounded

corners and chunky handles. A second commonality, ornamentation on walls in the form of real or abstract art, counterbalances the open and simple storage options for gadgetry (i.e. pegboard walls and open shelving for dishes). Further linking the two, countertops feature small appliances consistently, with canisters and copper accessories close behind in appearance. One final linkage between the environments: earth tones in the beginning of the decade mutate into dramatic, boldly colored spaces by the end.



Figure 29. *BHG*, April 1961.

Source: Better Homes and Gardens

This image from the publication illustrates the beginnings of the earth tone colors and the squareness of appliances in the early 1960s. Note the pegboard on the backsplash and blender on the countertops here as well.



Figure 30. BHG, October 1963.

Source: Better Homes and Gardens.

This kitchen image illustrates the use of kitchen gadgets and items for decoration, including on a shelf over the window. Warm colors and pegboard also shown.

In 1960, the magazine reported 115 square feet as the average size of the kitchens with the average house size at 1568 square feet. At the middle of the decade in 1965, the kitchen size averaged 133 square feet, with the home size estimated at 2,077 square feet. In 1970, the square footage of kitchens increased again to 146 square feet but the size of the home decreased to 1,918 square feet. Thus kitchens commanded 7.3% of the space in the house plan in 1960, 6.4% by 1965, returning to a level of 7.6% in 1970.

Year	Kitchen (SF)	House (SF)	Percentage
1960	115	1568	7.3%
1965	133	2077	6.4%
1970	146	1918	7.6%

Table 1. *Better Homes and Gardens* floorplan analysis. Documented change to kitchen square footage and house square footage throughout the 1960s.

By the 1970s, floor plans only appeared sporadically, with features every other month, and then less frequently until the end of 1971, the last issues reviewed for this study. In the early 1970s, gas prices increased across the country, driving up the cost of living and real estate prices. Lack of land in popular suburban neighborhoods also forced up land prices, resulted in changes of coverage in the magazine. In the February, April and September issues of 1971, authors of the house plan articles specifically addressed how to leverage more space on smaller lots, with cluster home, patio home, and townhouse types resulting.

The floor plans featured under the title, “Better Homes for America,” show slow changes in the location and size of the kitchen, as well as the incorporation of open spaces in and around the kitchen. House plans with open concept spaces especially appear in the Modern designs in the magazine. Counter to common assumption, the magazine shows that 86.7% of the total kitchens open to other rooms throughout the decade of the 1960s, but that, by 1971, the percentage of open kitchens drops to 64.2%. In other sources of printed media, my research led to a quest to discover all things French in media sources that might help illuminate the interest in a French cooking show on television, opposed to other ethnicities. The importance of Jackie Kennedy as an

influence on the culture of the 1960s cannot be over-stressed, as Strausser (2011) acknowledges that Mrs. Kennedy iconic status her affection with French culture directly resulted in a fascination with French cuisine and French fashion. While reviewing the literature of the early 1960s, I discovered a large number of manufacturers who deployed French elements and themes in advertisements to market their products. Looking at sample publications from 1960 to 1965, the number of French mode advertisements nearly doubled (from four to seven in the five-year period) over time in *House Beautiful*, *Gourmet*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *House and Garden*. The products advertised with French images or phrases ranged from bath towels to furniture, though notably not of items in the kitchen. I also tracked the appearance of kitchen spaces in advertisements in the same magazine, resulting in only one image in 1960, slowly increasing to three by 1965. Most of the advertisements focused on products, not the interior environments in which those designed products found a place. No conclusive evidence, in terms of house size, or an interest in French culture helped to address the impact of Julia Child's television show on the design of the 1960s domestic environment. To continue that inquiry, we must turn directly to the design of the environment of *The French Chef*, a convoluted lineage at best, standing far distance from the simplicity to which Julia Child aspired in her cooking and in her cooking places.

Tuning into Kitchen Design

In the sitcom kitchens, two types emerged: those that reflected design styles and features of previous decades, relying on nostalgia for their aesthetic effect, and those that contained current technology and design of the period. In the first category: kitchens from *Leave it to Beaver* (1957-1963), *My Three Sons* (1960-1972), and *Father Knows Best* (1954-1958) contained older appliances and lack of interior details. These

television spaces left the viewer looking at a space as easily representative of the 1940s as the 1950s, perhaps intentionally reflecting the nostalgic storylines of the show, often reflecting an innocence and the curiosity of youth (Figures 31 and 32). These kitchen spaces traded on this nostalgia and these domestic spaces rarely appeared as critical ones within each series.



Figure 31. "Beaver gets expelled".

Source: Amazon instant video.

This *Leave it to Beaver* episode illustrates older models of appliances, indicated by softer, curved lines on the range in the background, along with minimal cabinetry as a visual cue to earlier kitchen designs.



Figure 32. "Fathers Biography".

Source: Amazon instant video.

Father Knows Best, scene filmed in kitchen set, exhibiting minimal decoration and limited view of appliances.

Up-to-date kitchens, in keeping with design trends in magazines of the same period, found their way into the domestic environments in *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965-1970), *Bewitched* (1964-1972) and the *Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961-1966). For the fantasy shows, *Bewitched* and *I Dream of Jeannie*, kitchens with modern appliances and entourage countered a world of the other outside the home. In both shows, the kitchens anchored the female characters as domesticated women, albeit both with magical powers. Laura Petrie, the housewife in *The Dick Van Dyke Show* served through the first several seasons of the sitcom as wife and, ultimately, mother. Her fashionable kitchen included appointments and appliances well within standards of the day. Notably, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, with its contemporary storyline about television writers writing, included an opposing female character, the career woman Sally Rogers, the first female

character on television who appeared as a completely independent woman, not a housewife.

When comparing the sitcoms in which the actress Lucille Ball appeared in both the 1950s and the 1960s, the two domestic spaces suggest a divide marked by the decades. The New York apartment kitchen of the 1950s, a simple space, includes appliances to set the tone for an earlier period, much like the first group of television shows reviewed above (Figure 33). The Connecticut suburban kitchen of the 1960s reflected the modern woman Lucy had become, divorced and living with Ethel, a widow. The kitchen, very rarely shown appeared only as a stage for classic comedy not as a place for cooking - embodying a modern view of a career woman and not a housewife – a female character beyond the norm (Figure 34). When shown, the clearly modern space with its open floorplan and a kitchen island, indicated a much more forward-thinking layout, a rare site in this era of television. Child's kitchens shares characteristics with Ball's spaces on both shows. While not open, the colors are cool pastels, and colorful kitchen items decorate the space. The first space includes a table for dining, reminiscent of Child's home. The appliances take center stage in both of Ball's show, but the use of an island in the latter mimics *The French Chef* sets (Figures 17-19).



Figure 33. "Visitor from Italy".
 Source: Amazon instant video.
I Love Lucy kitchen set illustrates a simple design with an updated look of built-in cabinetry but older, curvilinear appliances, lending the kitchen a nostalgic feel with minimal wall adornment.



Figure 34. "Lucy and the Ring-a-ding-ding".
 Source: www.youtube.com.
 Episode from *The Lucy Show*, where the kitchen is only a prop when Lucy drops a diamond ring down the sink.

In all, the sitcom kitchens demonstrated the variety of kitchen types and decoration schemes in the American suburbs. That *The French Chef* set in its various configurations fits within type remains a notable observation, in the totality of all kitchen spaces on the airwaves. In that the culture and identity of the 1960s, one of youth and of rule breaking and one of increasing government mistrust, found half of the U.S. population under the age of 18, people increasingly turned to television as a source for knowing how to live (Marling, 1994). Though not displacing completely the popularity of magazines and other forms of print media, television ascended as a prominent method of communication in the decade. When color television debuted, the enlivened visual world on the airwaves, in turn shaped the houses and kitchens of an increasingly suburban population. The relatively small kitchens of the families on television shows of this decade mirrored trends in kitchen design, as reviewed in the next section of analysis. These performance spaces also linked with the variety of kitchens used by Julia Child during the run of *The French Chef*. Linking this visual and imagined world with the realities of their suburban lives, the kitchens on the airwaves allowed middle class Americans to dream of their ideal kitchen space and, in some cases, to make it a reality.



Figure 35. The whirlwind of gadgetry at MAH.

Source: Amy Stibbich

The display hypothetically spills the drawer of Child's kitchen for all visitors to see the contents. A few items highlighted in the same case link to Child's overall story.

Kitchen as Exhibit: the Museum as Performance Space

Not only do the sitcom kitchens inform us about the importance of mediated forms of kitchens as influencers for culture, Child's own kitchen takes another form as an exhibit in the Smithsonian Museum of American History. As a performance space of its own, this site particularly dramatizes the media personality and the material artifacts that helped make up her world. Given that the kitchen space from the Cambridge home served as a set for *The French Chef* late in Child's life, we come to understand this space as one where the real and the ideal re-combined. What served as an ideal on the airwaves literally became one with the realities of Julia Child's own world. Importantly, though, the kitchen did not appear exactly how Child used it in Cambridge, being removed from its physical site there and transported to museum space. Curators then selected a series of small antechambers as an orientation space of sorts to help center visitor experience of the kitchen itself.

At the exhibit, several rooms encircle the kitchen space as the primary artifact, but visitors to the exhibit never enter into the actual kitchen, instead relying on peripheral views. The context of the exhibit has an air of voyeurism, as if we are not supposed to be peeking into Child's kitchen. The limited views defy easy documentation as the number of people standing around the exhibit makes it impossible to capture images without reflections of strangers in the plexiglass windows. The antechambers around the heart of the space provide the location for the display of more objects removed from the kitchen itself. These spaces also include videos and stories using the props of Child's profession and the actual collections of kitchen equipment she accrued throughout her lifetime.

The gadgetry collection embodies different meanings when comparing the home kitchen to the kitchen exhibit. In the home, the gadgetry supported the housewife in the development of the main meal, whereas in the exhibit, the accoutrement commands a leading role. Like something out of a department store, Child's kitchen gadgetry numbers in the hundreds. To prepare for the exhibition of her kitchen, the Smithsonian American History Museum divided the kitchen gadgets into categories: Opening, Decorating, Crushing, Extracting/inserting, and Grabbing. From the two-foot tall mortar and pestle set to the garlic press she loved, her collection included a wide variety of kitchen gadgetry. The display and use of these items dramatically differs from her first kitchen, the various kitchen sets on television, and the kitchen as used in her home. Curators showcase artifacts in a tornado shaped display, a whirlwind of gadgetry pulling various object out and away from their original locations and into proximity with one another to create interest and focus unintended by Child. Not present in the Smithsonian during the first few years of display, curators later reunited the pots with the kitchen display in 2003

on a separate wall within the exhibit, allowing visitors to see the more authentic kitchen interior. The curatorial choice of an isolated “pot wall” acknowledges the importance of these kitchen tools to identity of the chef. All of these artifacts perform in ways unintended by Child in her actual home. Instead, through the eyes of curators and designers at the Museum of American History, they draw the visitor in to see aspects of Child’s television personality and her home environment transformed as backdrop for that cultural work.

As a mundane and ordinary space such as a kitchen can be, Child’s Cambridge kitchen takes the status – much like its owner – of cultural icon. Its inclusion and popularity, speaking to Child’s fan base also reaches kitchen design enthusiasts. The space both celebrates the elevated status of the everyday into the museum and the woman as chef who brought the kitchen to such an elevated plane of existence. On the website of the Museum of American History, fans refer to their trips to the space as pilgrimages, further underscoring the cult status of the television personality and, importantly, the physical extension of her personality in material form (“Bon Appetit! Julia Child’s Kitchen at the Smithsonian,” n.d.). The Smithsonian representation of Child’s kitchen takes us, too, to the last kitchen space examined within the confines of this work, the idealized kitchen of the mind, where all of these mediated images and memories of kitchens past form a collective memory of sorts, one that helps us place and re-member the kitchens of our mothers and grandmothers (Kammen, 1991).



Figure 36. View into the kitchen at MAH. Looking at the location of former pot wall.

Source: Author

Without a ceiling and doors leading into other rooms, the surreal form of the kitchen obscures its original context and reality as a functioning kitchen space.

The Sixth and Final Kitchen Space: Yours and Mine

Beyond the real/ideal kitchen dichotomies at work in this study, additional spaces exist only as postulated ones. These kitchens of the mind represent spaces, used and lived in by housewives and homeowners of the 1960s, that take on design trends of the era as postulated in magazines and on television. With the fifth kitchen set, cooks visualized themselves in the performance spaces used by Julia Child in her shows. The spaces in which these housewives worked stood though as notably different than the the latter kitchen sts on *The French Chef*. Significantly smaller, the kitchen areas in the *BHG* floorplana illustrate the average sized suburban kitchen spaces. Additionally, the built-in cabinetry and appliances typical in these homes, both in the magazines and in reality, reflect the set of Kitchen B, and increasingly grow disparate from the representations of

the latter kitchen sets. Kitchen C and Kitchen D grew, ultimately, to be less like the kitchens of the era, yet presumably they continued to have visual impact as environments seen on television. One premise of the show, where housewives visualized themselves preparing and cooking meals like Julia Child in a space like hers, asked these women to intentionally construct a kitchen of the mind that varied from their suburban realities. Given that women watched *The French Chef* (and the other television sitcoms reviewed in this thesis, for that matter) in the den or living room, women had to construct their ideal kitchen in order to transform themselves into it.. Did they imagine themselves in the kitchen that they viewed on television, a French Mediterranean revival space? In these imagined kitchens, viewers idealized the cooking process, their own celebrity status, and the presence of material culture collected around them as they created wonderful meals from the comfort of their living room sofa. As with Child's visual presentation, this type of cooking seems easy. All of the prep work and clean up remains hidden from this view, making the space elevated in the minds of housewives, as a lofty ideal. Our housewife views herself there, assuming the professional persona and skills of a chef, elevating cooking from drudgery and oppression to personal power and passion.

The Commodification of Julia Child

In my observation from screen shots in many of early episodes, Child rarely looks directly into the camera and only makes passing eye contact with the audience. An obvious nervousness in her earliest episodes resulted in viewers thinking her rushed and unpoised. However, this nervousness quickly dissipates into an ability to think quickly, despite drops and mistakes when cooking. If a charlotte gets stuck in the dish and breaks, Child shows viewers how to repair it. Again, she takes the opportunity to present

real solutions to these issues, appealing to the viewers on a completely human level.

What may first come across as unpolished gufts soon rolls into passion and a story, and quickly viewers forget, swept into Julia Child's television kitchen. Though lampooned in subsequent years and decades, most notably on *Saturday Night Live*, Child never dropped anything or retrieved items that had fallen to the floor.

Child embraced the idea of television, as she did technologies in the kitchen, and the political work that she performed on the airwaves served as a form of activism for quality food preparation and consumption (an idea espoused for the internet, as expressed by Kahn & Kellner, 2005). In that the show appeared on a public station, an alternative media to the networks, Julia Child once again participated in a sub-cultural movement through the show. Two innovations demonstrate the pioneering qualities of this show in this medium: *The French Chef* broadcast with closed captioning in 1972 to aid deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers and the show won an Primetime Emmy award in 1966 for Achievements in Educational Television (Polan, 2011). Further evidence of a sub-cultural agenda, found in Child's revolutionary cooking methods offered an alternative to the mainstream culture, where frozen and canned methods of food preparation deeply influenced popular forms of cooking prominent in the nation. With instant as the new buzzword for most food brands of the era, Child's slow and laborious counter-cultural methods illustrated a love for fresh foods and processes that naturally brought the best qualities of ingredients together in handmade meals.

Far from the first chef on television, Julia Child joined a handful of other kitchen professionals (including her good friend, James Beard), all of whom attempted to start their own shows a few years earlier than *The French Chef*. But none of the other cookbook authors claimed as much success as Julia Child. As Shapiro (2007) observed

Child's predecessors, she commented on the lack of passion and entertainment value of earlier cooking shows. Dating from the 1940s, most cooking shows relied little on teaching skills, but on establishing protocols for each specific recipe, with little room for variation. Instead of placing Child within this category, Shapiro insisted Child belonged with those who made "instant-indelible impressions" on television, characters such as Lucille Ball and Milton Berle. Those television personalities, as actors and comedians, had similar command and passion for craft, but Child's taught others opposed to drawing attention to herself.

In addition to the television kitchens of these celebrity chefs and cookbook authors, many stations broadcast cooking shows through agricultural extension programs, funded by the federal government and promulgated through educational institutions throughout the nation. A student writing a thesis on homemaking television programs in 1952 noted that in a survey of 108 stations, 82 per cent included regular broadcasting of cooking shows, on average five a week throughout the nation that year (as cited in Polan, 2011). When asked about the sets of the cooking shows, 60 percent responded that the extension programs provided had permanent kitchen sets on which to film (Polan, 2011). Outside of the sitcom kitchens reviewed earlier, these additional food preparation spaces form a television kitchen landscape not investigated for this research.

Julia Child carefully retained ownership of her brand, as exemplified on the copyright dates inside *The French Chef Cookbook*, one every two years through the 1960s and again in 1996 and 1998 (Child, 1998). After the start of *The French Chef*, Child received many gifts in the mail of some of these items from fans and manufacturers. In the case of the latter, she remained steadfast that she would not

become a marketing mechanism. She only agreed to the use of her name when the event or activity involved a charity of importance to her (Shapiro, 2007). She further cemented her brand position by only allowing photographs taken by Paul Child and by founding her own production company in 1983.

Child worked hard to keep the manufacturers and advertisements out of her cooking shows, turning down many requests for using certain products, but she never feared recommending one product over another to a fan who wrote for her opinion (Fitch, 1997). For example, she studied the magazines she felt best suited the crowd they wished to attract, listing *House and Garden*, *House Beautiful*, and *Holiday* among her preferences. Strauss (2011) suggests that she chose periodicals because of the clientele: “the prime targets of the book would be the Julia Childs of America, the growing population of college-educated, upper- and middle-class women who had traveled to France and experienced the delights of French cooking” (Strauss, 2011, p. 230).

Gender Dichotomies in Child

One could argue that Julia Child rapidly propelled forward a career in television because of her gender neutrality. Child’s kitchen, blending feminine and masculine components – the Garland stove, the cleaver, the power tools, and the mortar and pestle – demanded as much strength from their user as they produced. The attractiveness of the colors and art in the kitchen, and in fact the nature of being in a kitchen itself, represented a more feminine position. The juxtaposition of the two genders, and the combination of them, exist in several forms throughout her kitchen: pegboard meets photograph; whisk meets signaling mirror, cat art meets copper pan. One could even dissect her junk drawer similarly. Child possessed a kind of everyday practicality that

balanced the more nuanced view of gender and worldliness. The kitchen throughout history remained a feminine space, yet the assortment of tools displayed throughout the room brings a more masculine view of a workshop to the same space. The balance between decorative cat art and the overabundance of machinery and appliances, for example, provides evidence of a space co-existing between two gendered worlds. People both admired and admonished Julia Child for openly declaring she did not cook for the bored housewife, but rather served as a chef for all people truly interested in cooking. Feminists admonished her for promoting the stereotype that the kitchen stood as woman's place while she recognized men as better cooks because of the physically demanding work required in the kitchen.

Child, in reality, openly advocated for equal rights for both sexes (Barr, 2007), adamantly speaking on the subject and directing her cookbooks and television series to both men and women. Yet, she expressed disappointment at the growing segment of homosexual men who followed her, openly acknowledging that she hoped gay men did not "fagify" the art of cooking, thus discouraging straight men from enjoying the art (Fitch, 1997). Despite her intentions of openness, she reinforced the stereotypes of her generation by suggesting men go shopping with their wives when searching for proper cookware and knives, thus preventing women from distraction by pretty things and insuring the purchase of quality materials under the supervision of men (Child & Prud'homme, 2006). The relationship between Julia and Paul Child, after Mr. Child's retirement defies modern conventions of the day but provides additional insight to this topic of gender perception within Julia Child's world. Before Mr. Child retired, Julia Child shaped and re-shaped her life around his as a government attaché. After leaving government service, he completely committed himself to Julia's work as her assistant on

the show and on tours and as photographer and illustrator for her countless cookbooks. A man who previously held powerful positions in foreign countries now washed dishes out of a bucket while his wife performed onstage (Fitch, 1997).



Figure 37. Child's Kitchen exhibit, looking to butcher's table.

Source: author

The view in this image illustrates the many gendered items in this kitchen, including the butcher table, cat art, a plethora of knives, and color kitchen gadgets.

The visual cues of Child's kitchen as home indicate an abundance of spaces and objects with gendered associations. The commercial range, a decidedly masculine artifact, speaks with its dark black iron exterior and extra-large capacity as a connection to the male chefs of the commercial restaurant world. So, too, the butcher's table, taken

from a profession dominated by masculine figures because of the physical demands and use of cutting implements. The sink exhibits more feminine traits, with a curved swan like faucet and twin bowls as receptacles, reminiscent of the female form. The table, viewed as a nurturing place to feed and care for others, echoes similarly more feminized qualities of the interior. Both masculine and feminine, these qualities relate to characteristics earlier defined in Child. Gender resides in object, spaces and styles of the kitchens design, as well as in the owner of the kitchen herself.

Polan (2011) recognized the “gender bender” persona of Julia Child and posited that many of her kitchen tasks and practices contained a decidedly non-feminine aura. Child herself believed men were better designed to handle the difficult tasks that French cooking involved, and used the dominance of men in the profession in France as evidence (Child & Prud’homme, 2006). Her colleagues and instructors at Le Cordon Bleu acknowledged that her physical strength allowed Child to keep pace with the men in the profession, but her strength of commitment led to her surpassing them (Fitch, 1997).

In correlation to the sitcom kitchens, I find that up-to-date and even cutting edge kitchens exist only in those kitchens where the female role owns personal power over her own existence. The fantasy based shows give power to the female leads, literally, allowing them to pursue their own interests with only minor restrictions. In the case of family comedy sitcoms such as *The Lucy Show* and *The Dick Van Dyke show*, power equates with female character’s command over the details of their lives, albeit to comedic effect. In the male dominated sitcoms, such as *Leave it to Beaver* or *Father knows Best*, the masculine character holds the power in the relationships, and likewise the sets do not appear up to date with the current images from *BHG* and kitchens of the

1960s. Here I find a parallel to Child in the duplicity of gender defining the designs and trends of sitcoms.

In the end, the blurry lines of gender come into no significant focus throughout the quarter century that Child cooked in her various kitchen spaces. The complexity of the Cambridge home kitchen and the variety of cookware in an open workshop handily served as a space for cooking and discourse, a place for learning the art of cooking and learning about the world, and a location for entertaining and sharing with a wide variety of visitors, a guest list that grew exponentially at first outside this physical space in the world of television, and then again in this space as television viewers came to encounter Julia Child's "real" kitchen, not her idealized television one. Before turning to Child's own kitchen on the small screen, though, we first visit popular television situation comedies and their attendant kitchens to know more completely the visual context for kitchen design in the decade's popular media form. The common visual images of these various television shows, alongside the set for *The French Chef*, helped establish the visual baseline for kitchen spaces as they appeared on television, the next subject for analysis.

The Anti-Instant, Anti-Snobbish Authentic Julia Child

After returning to the U.S. for a few years in 1957, Child realized she and her co-authors had likely waited too long to publish their book, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, as the cooking scene had been bombarded with the large numbers of instant foods and TV dinners on the market. Appalled at the food served in most homes, Julia Child postulated that Americans had succumbed to prepackaged foods just as they had to pre-packaged quiz shows (Fitch, 1997). Craig Claiborne, a writer and food critic for the *New York Times*, announced on the front cover in 1959 that "cuisine is on the wane

in the U.S.,” calling it a national crisis (Shapiro, 2007). As a public person on television, Julia Child had a platform from which she could argue for a more authentic and restorative approach to food preparation. Her pedagogy demonstrated that the pleasures of cooking should be enjoyed equally as much as the results of the labor; the focus on authentic food was in direct contrast to other popular cookbook authors of the period (Polan, 2011). Moving beyond the conventional cooking show model of “dump and stir” to explain the *why* behind the *how*, each episode of *The French Chef* featured Julia Child teaching techniques ranging from use and care of knives to the deployment of everyday items, like broom handles, for stringing pasta and sugar thread. Imparting additional knowledge on the history behind dishes, from the lowly potato thought to be poisonous prior to the fifteenth century to the mysteries surrounding who the namesake for Charlotte Malakoff, Julia Child appealed with her characteristic, entertaining style (Child & Morash, 2005). Not alone in the desire to spread the authentic message of food beyond the methods of cooking, Child’s counter-cultural approach represented a sharp departure from others who cooked and made a public spectacle of it. Peg Bracken, for example, received accolades for her *I Hate to Cook Book* as part of feminist political culture in the 1960s. Thinking of cooking as mechanical drudgery, along with washing clothes or ironing, Bracken advocated a position that cooking represented a task to be tolerated but not enjoyed. Correspondingly, her recipes required little to no thinking or ingenuity from the cook (Polan, 2011). A more common approach to cooking in the 1960s, Bracken’s cookbook reads like instructions for the use of mechanical equipment, a direct contrast to Child’s methods and pedagogy.

Because the 1950s and 1960s also heralded a time when the American family increased expenditures on food, the manufacturers of modern convenience in cooking

heralded the ease of their products. Increased costs, justified by increased convenience, resulted in wholesale adoption of canned goods, powdered mixes and the like, overflowing from the brightly lit shelves and freshly paved parking lots of the new supermarket (Hine, 1986). The convenience of a cake mix, worth its extra price over buying ingredients and assembling them yourself, meant significant time savings for a housewife and a simpler approach to cooking. Nothing fully exemplifies this trend more than the onion soup mix, where Hine (1986) claims companies stripped the soup of its French cultural connections and offered recipes for dips and sauces, as well as a wide variety of uses for the freeze dried product in roasting meats and, least of all, making soup. Through the words of advertisers, the food of the nation became homogenized culturally by making the same recipes found on the back of the same boxes sold in similar supermarkets throughout the land.

Life in the suburbs – increasingly as homogenized as pre-packaged foods – met with immediate successes. Newly established supermarkets took hold in suburban shopping centers increased at the turn of the century (Strausser, 1982). The advent of pre-packaged foods, borne in the United States under the auspices of frosted produce that extended harvest seasons, experienced a boom in frozen TV dinner sales that, by the 1970s, consumed 25% of the frozen food market. Popular magazines encouraged creative with pre-packaged foods, with more than 50% of recipes within their pages requiring the use of these convenience items (Hine, 1986). Microwaves entered the domestic kitchen, with food and appliance manufacturers working together to bring products to market that better used this new technology.

Decades of appreciation for gourmet approaches to food sharply contrasted with this frozen food convenience world of the 1960s, not the least of which the founding of

Gourmet: The Magazine for Good Living in 1941. In 1960s parlance, a “gourmet” described a person who lived a life of leisure and fully appreciated good food and wine. Until 1961, gourmet dining referred to French cuisine, slowly morphing to include other world food ways by the end of the decade. Into this world, Julia Child stepped and in this world, she built upon the gourmand’s command of food and wine in crafting her cooking style and image (Strauss, 2011). Not wanting to be classified as such, Julia Child admonished gourmets for making many French dishes seem unapproachable to the average cook. In episode 23, “Bouillabaisse,” she looked at the camera and said:

Unfortunately, when you get a recipe like this, the gourmets get a hold of it and they fancy it up so much and, say, do this, or do that, or that’s not the real thing, that us ordinary people feel that it’s impossible to do and terribly expensive. (Child & Morash, 2005).

This gourmet approach to cooking coincided with several local and regional food movements with champions for good cooking by Child’s side: James Beard, Craig Claiborne, and Clementine Paddleford.

Coincidentally of course, Friedan published her seminal work, *The Feminine Mystique*, only eight days after the launch of the *The French Chef* series in 1963, appealing to the same audience (Strauss, 2011). Friedan’s called women to look for meaning outside the home while Child reveled in the pleasure within it. Both Smith graduates advocated a more rewarding and passionate life for both women and men, urging the great search for authenticity in life.

While the early kitchens in *The French Chef* certainly echo the trends in media culture during the period, no evidence suggests a causal relationship between suburban material culture of the kitchen and the media culture images of *The French Chef*.

Although not directly influential, Child reflected the authentic and the ideal, really best

understood as a sub- or counter-cultural existence in a burgeoning and object-filled consumer world. One of the ideals reflected in media and manufacturers – the fascination with all things French – parallels the qualities on the last set of *The French Chef* (Kitchen D), designed and built in a French country aesthetic that could be interpreted as too specific and ethnic in taste for mass appeal. The increase in quantity of appliances and gadgetry deployed on the set by Child, clearly links to the consumeristic tendencies of kitchens in the 1960s. Additionally, the large sizes of the set correlates some to the increasing size of kitchens in the *Better Homes and Gardens*, as illustrated in floor plans published there.

Though reflecting both traditional and Modern design aspects, kitchens portrayed in magazines changed more rapidly Julia Child's kitchen set or, in fact, any of the sitcom kitchen sets on television. This delay or lag between the physical real and magazine portrayal of the ideal – sometimes years and possibly a decade later – brings into question the currency of trends portrayed in magazines, as the media both rely on nostalgia and the quest for the new.



Figure 38. *Better Homes and Gardens*, September 1960.
 Source: *Better Homes and Gardens* Magazine.
 Pegboard wall separates telephone area from kitchen. Cabinetry closely resembles the set from *The French Chef*, Kitchen B and gives example to the reflection of current styles in this set.

Child's Cambridge kitchen as a set and the exhibit tell a different story. Though many credit her with the trend for kitchen pegboard systems, a number of publications included images of pegboard (Figure 38) before the appearance of *The French Chef* on the airwaves, not to mention that the ingenuity for the system goes, at least in part, to Paul Child. Nonetheless, at the end of my analysis, I find more influence from Julia Child's Cambridge kitchen as a set than from *The French Chef* sets of the 1960s. In that this kitchen, now transported to and part of the Smithsonian's collection since 2003, continues to influence our sense of Julia Child's presence in the world, I believe the reflections of her space in kitchen designs and styles will continue for many years to come. Just as the televised images of the 1960s and 1970s impacted, at least in some undocumented way, the design of suburban kitchens, The French Chef kitchen of the 1990s influenced kitchens and other media forms in that decade, the museum exhibit of

the 2000s and 2010s lingers in the hearts and minds of its visitors and translates back to kitchens in the present day.

The 1960s, indeed a decade of cultures and counter-cultures, marked the rise of the individual taking importance over the whole. I am not surprised that this focus on individuality follows decades of nationalism and war, requiring unity for success. The feminism, de-segregation and peace movements, preservation and localism all suggest sub-cultural activities that blurred over into the mainstream. At their heart, these various movements and causes celebrate the passions of people as individual tastes and personal freedoms re-defined the decade. I also view the humanistic quality present in Julia Child as part of the counter-culture movement, bringing to culture the ideal of an individual full of flaws. As the informal counter-culture spokesperson, Julia Child worked for the preservation of tradition in cooking methods when others jettisoned such rules. In her cookbooks, and physically in her television kitchens, and her Cambridge kitchen, which served as her home, this television celebrity re-shaped her own image a number of times over a life time, and she invited others to do so as well, though cooking, and through the enjoyment of eating well-prepared food. If successful, as an ideal, we would have “la Juli-fication des gens,” what Paul Child jokingly termed the Julia-fication of everyone.

CHAPTER V

THE RECIPE FOR A PERFECT THESIS

As with any project, reflection represents the best kind of teacher. The mixed methods approach to this study, one of its strengths, resulted in a conglomeration of methods, a process that I found deeply satisfying. The multi-disciplined approach of this study, too, found me searching for material in disciplines including the culinary arts, media and material culture, preservation, cultural studies, gender studies and home design. I was fortunate to make a connection to one of the authors cited in this project, Dr. Dana Polan, who provided support and additional resources from a cinema studies perspective, adding significantly to the depth of the study. The invaluable relationships I formed with other graduate students as we struggled together throughout the process and celebrated writing victories suggests yet another positive outcome of the work.

As I look back on the research, I question my assumptions. I assumed that the persona of Child and her star status would result in quick incorporation of the styles into popular media images and into the material culture of her own kitchen. Consumers could not and did not instantly change their kitchens to reflect the designs of kitchens in print and visual media as popular styles in those same publications. The changes in color choices and details take years, the alteration of floor plans consumes even more time. Unlike changing a scarf or a pair of shoes in fashion, the reflections of styles in homes certainly take several years to update and that point became increasingly clear as I proceeded with the research. My childhood home reflected my mother's harvest gold phase, her mauve phase, and now the green phase for years past their popularity. A

logical conclusion, yet none of the data or my own personal training provided information on the length of “new style adoption” periods. Certainly I now know that the timing for kitchen consumerables has not been studied sufficiently to determine a gestation period. Child pre-warned local stores when she added a new gadget to the show, so they could accommodate the requests for new products, and with small kitchen items the adoption period correspondingly grows more rapid.

My own experience as a designer sometimes clouded my opinions, and I worked to eliminate my own preferences for hidden storage and minimal clutter when evaluating Julia Child’s kitchen. As an amateur cook, I challenged myself to watch and understand episode after episode of her show and yet remain focused on the sets lurking in the background. At times I would be drawn in as a viewer and had to force myself back into observer mode. Julia Child’s inspiring story sometimes got in the way as I attempted to remain neutral when viewing her artifacts or sets without prejudice. Inevitably some of this admiration slipped through. I feel rather silly complaining about research methods entailing the review of sitcoms, but the difficulty in finding kitchens in many of the shows contributed countless additional hours necessary to find images that included these spaces.

I found it difficult to manage the breadth of my study, as it involved following three separate influences: Child’s home kitchen as a set and then as an exhibit; the sets for *The French Chef* through four changes, and media culture read of sitcom images and magazine floor plans. While looking at all three avenues strengthened my analysis, it also limited the amount of detail I included for each. Ideally, I would have liked to sit in Julia Child’s kitchen for days and absorb the *batterie de cuisine* around me, but the location and the closing of this exhibit in January limited access. The access to the

Smithsonian exhibit did not allow entering the space, only visual images from the fringe rooms, requiring the extensive use of photographs and memory to recall certain items.

Visual analysis, a central focus in my research agenda, brought invaluable to the fore in understanding the details of the space. The approach also brought some limitations in viewing photographs of running episode, possibly limiting understanding and the importance of the sequence in television footage. The shows themselves represented a limitation in this analysis, as they focused on a particular target audience, skewing the results to one demographic rather than a true representation of everyone's ideal. The use of sitcoms from a variety of genre assisted with solving some of the issues, but only anecdotally.

I remain surprised at the connections that exist with Julia Child's kitchen and today's design styles. With the accidental or serendipitous discovery, I validated a theory of influence spanning several decades. Media also influences, as Julia Child's life and story recently unfolded in a plot for the film, *Julie and Julia*. On the other hand, I was surprised at how many of the sitcoms from the 1960s reflected styles from previous decades rather than more closely mirroring images in popular magazines of the period. This, too, a validation of sorts, reminds me that the designers, directors, and producers of those shows used the sets to influence viewer perception and to make statements about values housed within the shows.

My study does not fully confirm my thesis statement and, as one result, provides additional research options for further analysis. I am not ready to state a lack of influence on kitchen design from Julia Child's cooking show. However, I am prepared to note that the study would need to be greatly expanded, both in terms of evidence scrutinized and the time frame selected, in that style change and influence can take much longer than

one might initially assume. I can continue with the project by looking at other aspects of kitchen design, for example taking the professional grade appliances and tracking its origination and use from 1970s to the present. All of these avenues of inquiry may provide additional directions for further exploration and possible future writing.

In the meantime, I will remember Child's advice, "nothing is too much trouble if it turns out the way it should. Good results require that one take *time* and *care*" (Child & Prud'homme, 2006, p. 413).

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