



El Dorado Arts Council presents

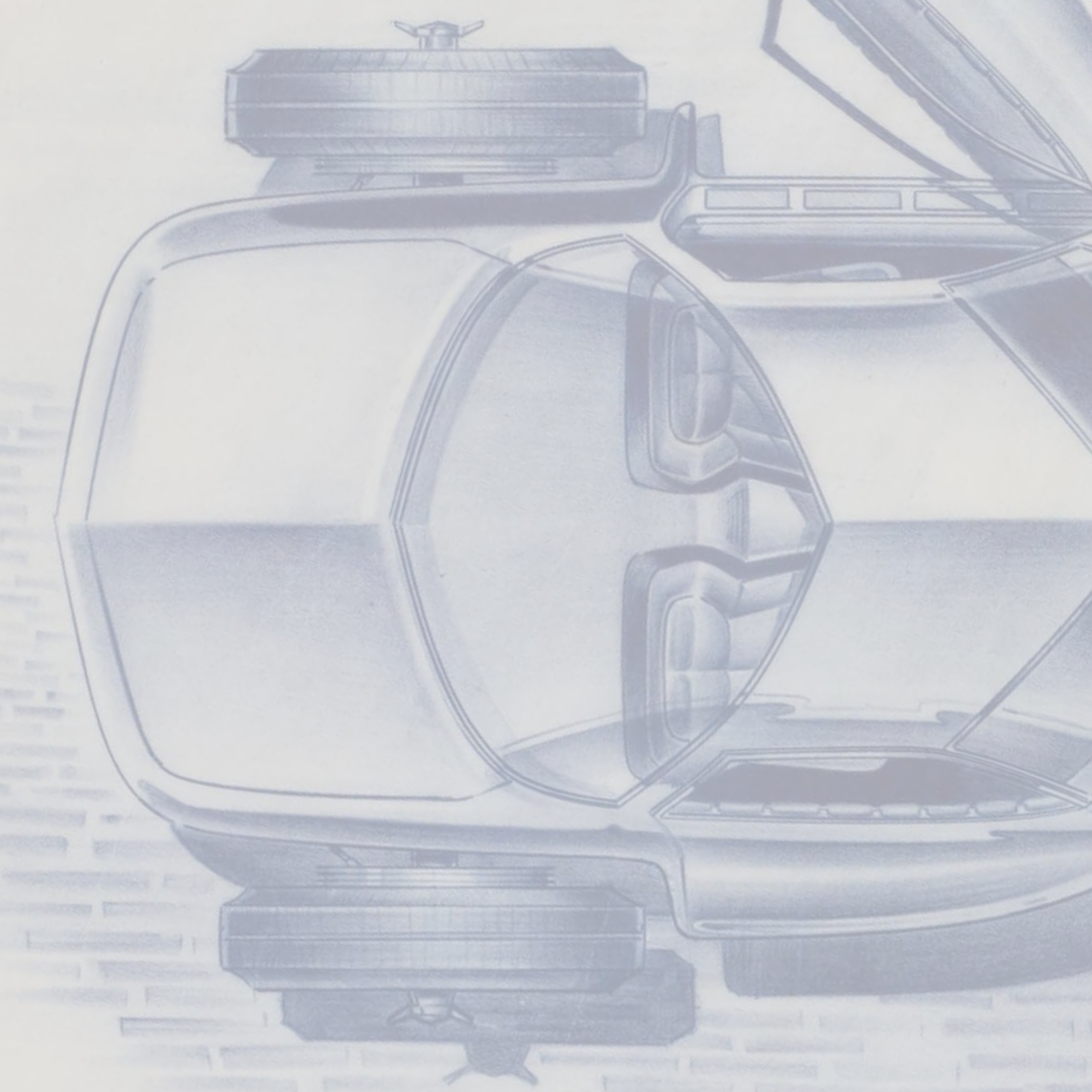
BACK TO THE FUTURE:

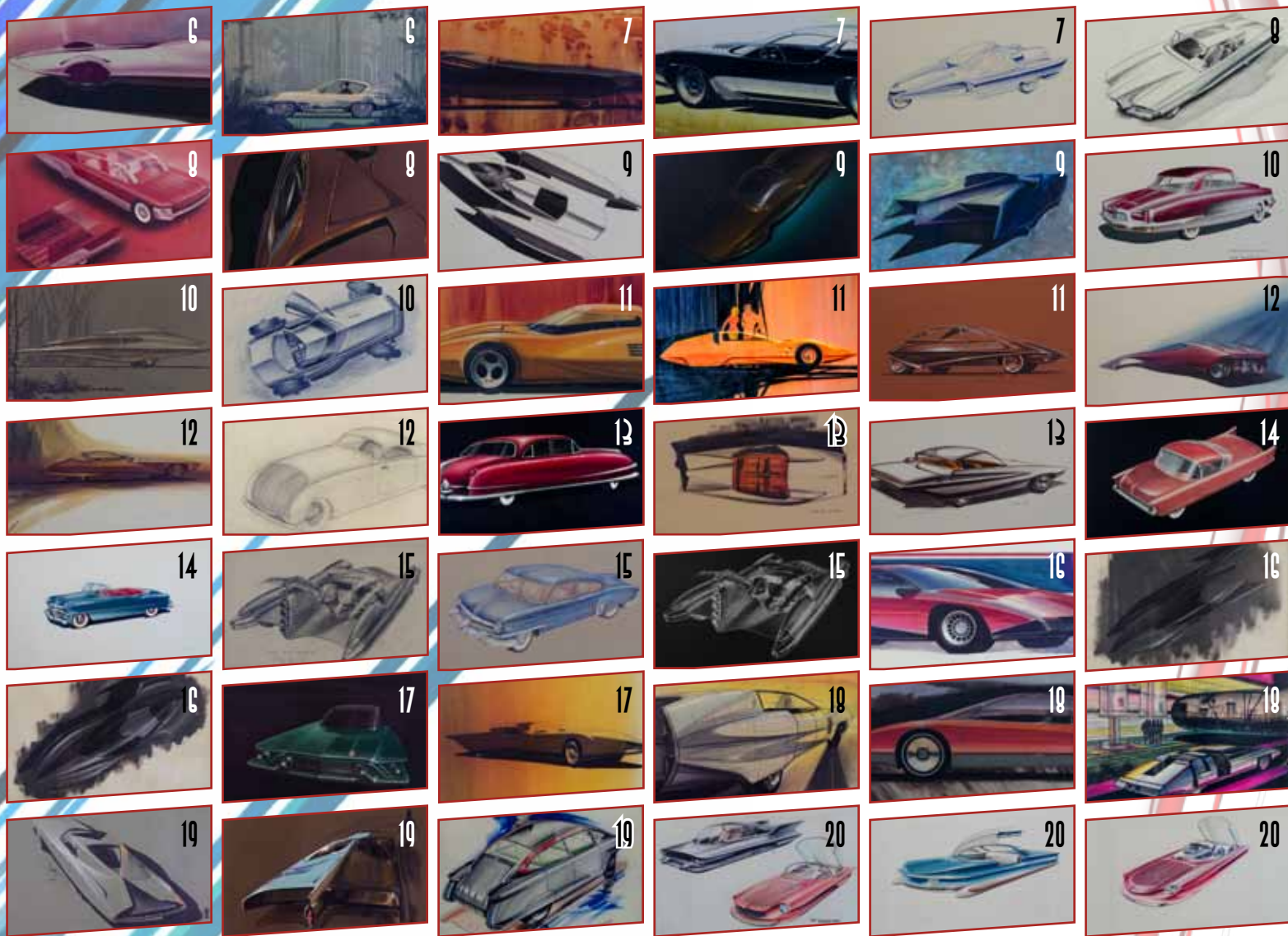
50
Years
of
Amazing Automotive Concept Art



A RARE GLIMPSE OF VINTAGE AUTOMOTIVE DESIGN CONCEPTS FROM 1930-1970

FROM THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF PATRICK KELLEY





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INTRODUCTION

Do you remember that Chevrolet ad campaign from decades ago – “The Heartbeat of America”? If you listen carefully, you can hear that heartbeat echoing from the walls of the Fausel House Gallery, where on display is a sampling from some of the most creative design artists at work in the great era of The Big Three automakers. These drawings span the period 1930 to 1980; some look like cars you will recognize, others are futuristic designs that belong in a sci-fi movie. There are muscle cars and vintage roadsters and vehicles that seem to be jet-propelled. One car looks like a vacuum cleaner; another is clearly a Corvette, but why is it in a magical forest? And don't miss the dark, foreboding designs on the second floor by the only woman in the group, Joan Klatil Creamer.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the contributions of three extraordinary friends of El Dorado Arts Council. Christopher Mount's terrific show [When the Future Had Fins: American Automotive Designs and Concepts, 1959-1973](#) opened at his eponymous Los Angeles gallery in 2014 and was the inspiration for [Back to the Future](#). Leo Brereton, art collector and dealer, offered his expertise on the history of automotive design from the period, the artists behind the drawings, and their stories. And it was Leo who got Patrick Kelley hooked on collecting these beautiful artworks. Many original designs from this time are gone – lost or tossed – and many of the artists remain unknown. But Pat's passion for his collection will come right off the page to you in his essay that follows, and it was his love for the pictures and his delight at the notion that they will be displayed for the public that made this exhibition a reality.

Writing about this golden age of automotive on [Form Trends](#), Eric Gallina, Editor-in-Chief, asked us to “remember when the world was seemingly full of blue-sky concepts. Things you never knew could exist were it not for the creative mind of a designer with the artful skills to show it all to you. It was a world without limits, a creative melting pot of innovation and flights of fancy; a time when people dreamed big.”

So step back into that world and enjoy these beautiful hand-done drawings from a time before concerns about gas prices and oil shortages, climate change and foreign competition, and before CAD software made automotive design a different process altogether. Find your favorite image, be it a classic from the 1930's or a rocket from the 1970's, and take a moment to listen for the heartbeat.

FROM THE COLLECTOR



Whenever I mention that I have a collection of Automobile Concept Art, the usual response is one of "Oh...that's nice..." or other feigned interest. Nobody really knows what I am talking about, but if I invoke a Barbie collection or a collection of baseball cards, then they get it. Interest in my particular genre usually only comes after a viewing. After a brief introduction and explanation of what they are actually looking at, the interest usually broadens. Questions are asked, and requests to see other pieces will follow after that. When it is explained what it takes to get a "mind's eye" concept to paper and how many ladders these

pieces had to go up – and when they realize how few artworks of this type still exist (perhaps as much as 95% of all concept art work has been destroyed), well, now I've got 'em. What a fascinating story this all is with so many layers, twists and turns, amazing individuals with amazing creative minds. Big corporations, each trying to outdo, out-create and ultimately out-sell the others. Artists competing within the Corporate Structure while staying within very specific guidelines.

I've always been interested in cars, and like most boys, I remember the first one that got me hooked. Mine was certainly an E Type Jaguar, a black coupe with wide white wall tires. The mother of a friend had this car – so out of character for Fresno. What was she doing in this amazing creation? When she would come home I would always linger and size up the car – really unlike anything I had ever seen. As time went on, my taste in cars changed and I started becoming more interested in race cars; most any would do. But also show cars and hot rods were a fascination. To me, though, it all came down to one thing – design. Race, show, hot rod, lowrider or Ratrod – all these individuals with a most creative process, which was to draw, model and ultimately to bring a sketch to fruition, some as a fully functional vehicles ready to roll off the assembly lines in Detroit.

What I hope you see, is a sampling of some of the pieces that I have collected over the last 15 years. Some you may like, or others disdain. It's not important that you like them all. But do take the time to see what they say to you and what the artist was hoping to achieve at that point in our history. Many of the artists shown here went on to bigger and better things in and out of the automotive industry. Some never drew again. Others were lost to wars, changing economics or the inability to change with the times. But what these works represent to me is actually a lost art form and a lost story of America. Detroit's amazing factories and subsequent smaller support companies are but a shadow of things past. New young designers while still multitalented are now designing via CAD/CAM and often end up in Europe, where they tend to have a freer hand. Few cars that are on the market these days are appealing to me. The Ford GT and Chevy Corvette are certainly amazing cars, but even these are extensions from days past. Groundbreaking? Hardly. The art pieces shown here call back to another time, when the artist tried to keep an open mind and an open eye to the future. What was the future going to look like? How would we all get around? What would power our vehicles? And would we ultimately be better off? You can judge for yourselves.

I would especially like to thank El Dorado Arts Council and the great town of Placerville for seeing the intrinsic beauty and value in these pieces and making them available for many others to see. Many of these concepts have not seen the light of day for decades and may never have, without the interest and enthusiasm of Terry LeMoncheck and the Arts Council. We all hope you visit and enjoy the show! Now, let's get Back to the Future!

With Regards,

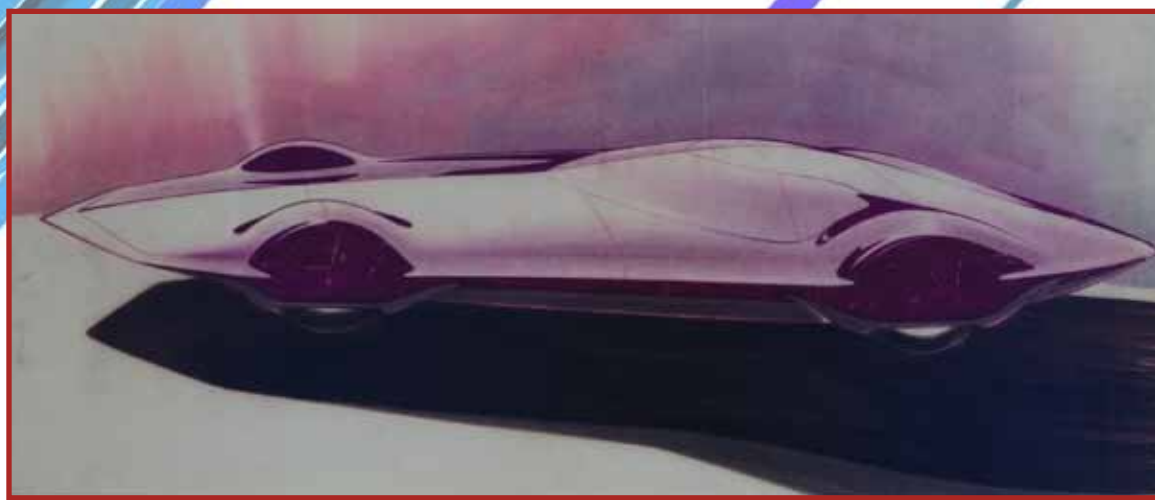
Patrick Kelley

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

- Some of the artists represented in this exhibition are well-known, but for others the biographical information is sparse. Many of the artists from this era labored in anonymity.
- However, their creativity produced not just classic automotive designs but also aeronautic and mechanical design, fine art painting and sculpture, architecture, the development of camouflage, product design, toys, illustration, and imaginative endeavors in many other fields.
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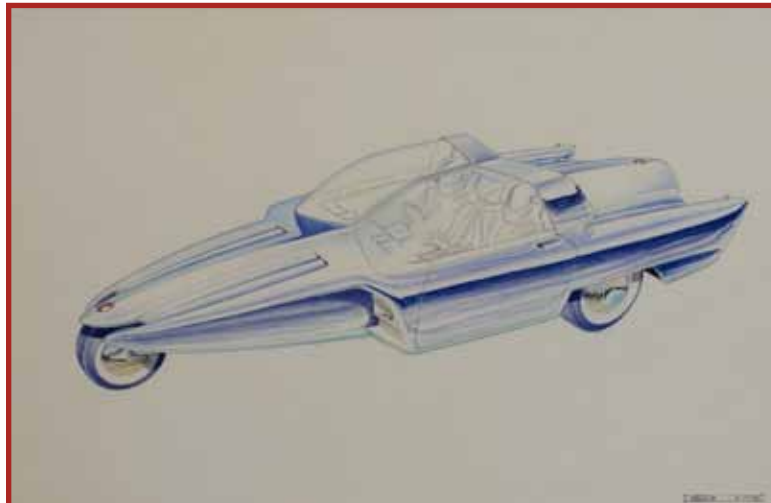
UNKNOWN ARTISTS



ROBERT ACKERMAN

Robert S. Ackerman (1935-present) attended Art Center School of Design in Los Angeles in 1956. He dropped out for lack of funds, but worked at North American Aviation (now

- Rockwell) on the X-15 project in 1960. Entering a competition by Motor Trend magazine, he won a full scholarship to Art Center. He became a successful designer at General Motors and did design work at Oldsmobile Studio and Chevrolet. He worked on a diorama for the 1964 GM Pavilion at the New York World's Fair.
- In 1969 he joined Chrysler until his retirement in 1996.

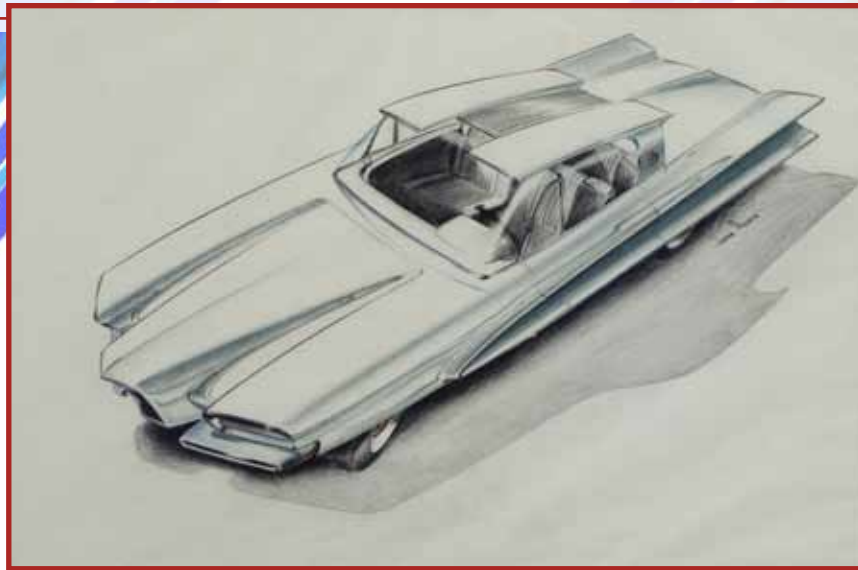


ANDERSON DESIGN

JOHN AIKEN



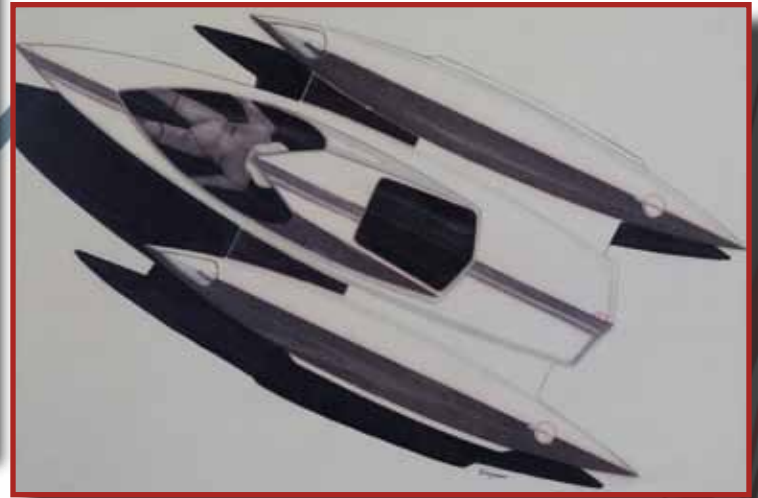
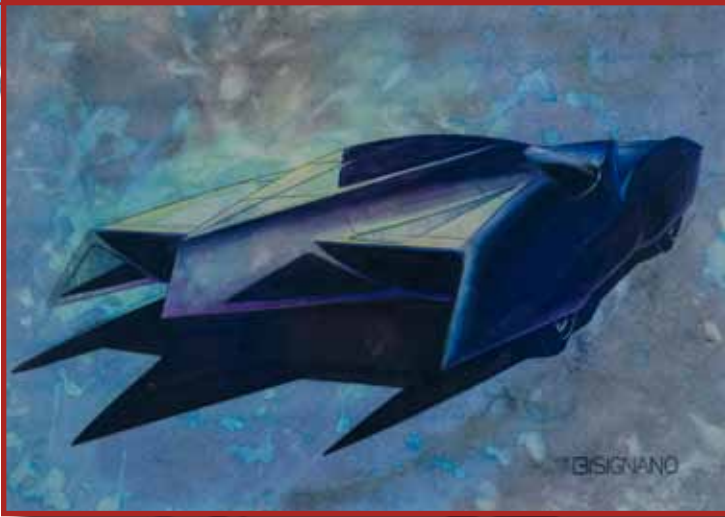
John Aiken graduated from Art Center College of Design and worked at Ford Motor Company in the Lincoln Continental department in the 1970's and 1980's, ultimately as Styling and Design Manager.



AL BORST



James Bisignano was born in 1939, and worked for General Motors in the 1960's, but turned his focus to fine art. His impressionistic landscapes have been exhibited in Europe and the United States, and his work is held in gallery and museum collections, including the Frye Museum in Seattle.

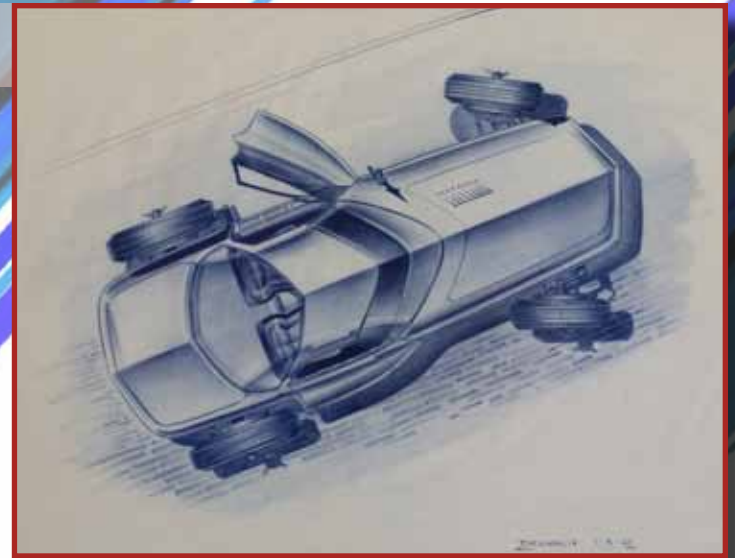


JERRY BROCHSTEIN

Jerry Brochstein (1937-present) was born in Houston, Texas. He attended Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles from 1955 to 1959, and then went to work for General Motors. Jerry started with Cadillac, and then moved to the Buick and Chevrolet divisions. In the early 1970's, he transferred to the Advanced Studio, where he ultimately became studio chief. At the time of his retirement in 2000 he was working in the GM Truck Studio.

BILL BROWNIE

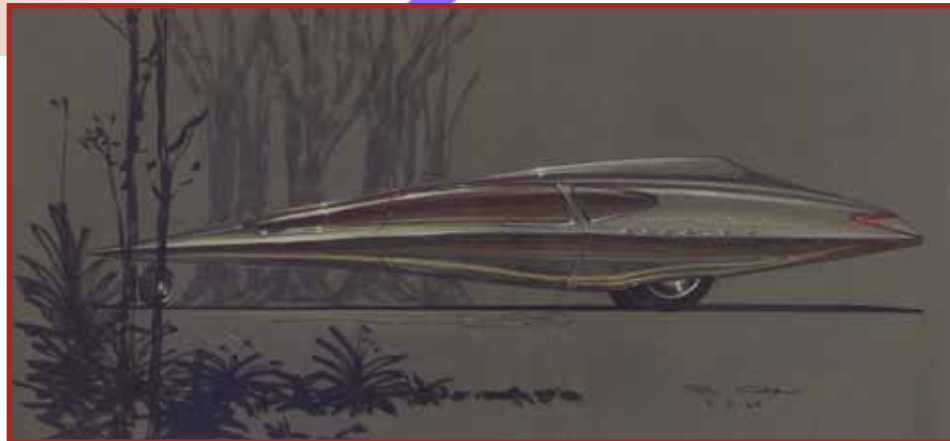
DON BUTLER



Don Butler went to work for Hudson during World War II, where he added finishing touches to the step-down Hudson. At Willys-Overland he worked on the Jeep Station Wagon and a Willys passenger

car concept. Next in his career was Nash in 1948; in 1954, Nash merged with Hudson and created American Motors. In 1956 with AMC having a rough time he jumped to Chrysler and began an 18-year career. He worked on interiors as well as body and ornamentation styling on all Chrysler makes and models. Retiring in 1975, Don became active as an automotive historian, authoring books on the history of Hudson, Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg, Desoto and Plymouth.

RIC CARRELL





George Camp attended Art Center College of Design from 1960 to 1963 and earned a degree in industrial design. He worked at General Motors on GM Trucks, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Cadillac, Buick and Corvette designs.

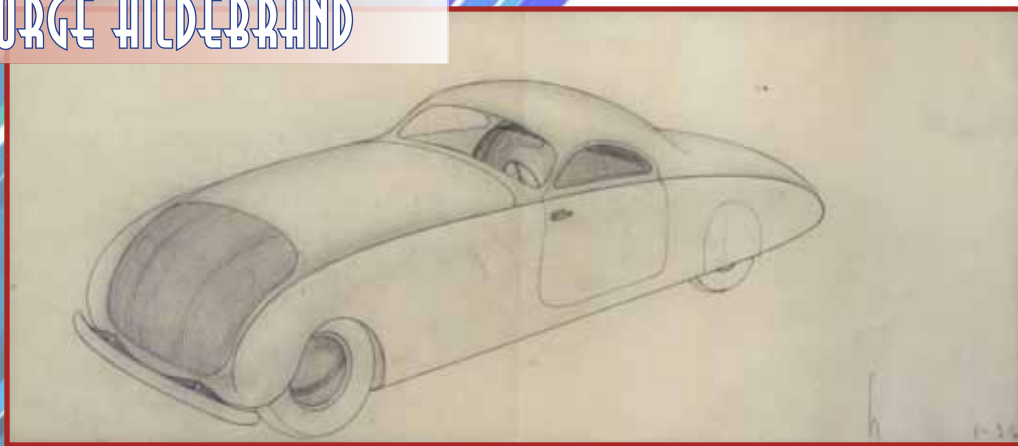


JOHN GABLE

John Gable was an Art Center grad, and worked at General Motors on 1970's Cadillacs and 1980's Pontiacs. He ultimately became a fine artist. Listed in *Who's Who in American Art*, Gable specializes in painting murals and large canvases of the automobile and its effect on society. As a former car designer, his sense of form and function is matched by a sensibility for his subject matter.

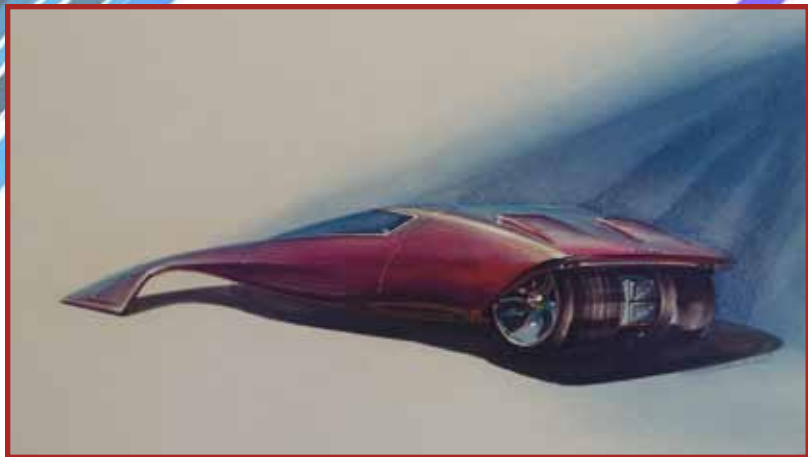


GEORGE HILDEBRAND



George Hildebrand (1910-1983) came with his parents to the United States from Paris, France, in 1915. An early interest in cars took him to all the auto shows and design studios, and soon he worked as an apprentice with such companies as LeBaron and Rollston, helping design the beautiful bodies of Duesenberg and Packard automobiles.

He also studied with master automotive artist Roland Stickney. In 1939, while working with legendary Cadillac design chief William Mitchell in Detroit, George saw a small want ad in a Detroit newspaper asking for "automotive designers to join the aircraft industry" and in 1940 George started his new job as a design engineer with Republic Aviation Corporation. Several of his designs were patented, including the cantilever canopy design of the F-84F and the F-105 rocket-powered ejection seat.



ART GERSTENBERGER

WAYNE KADY

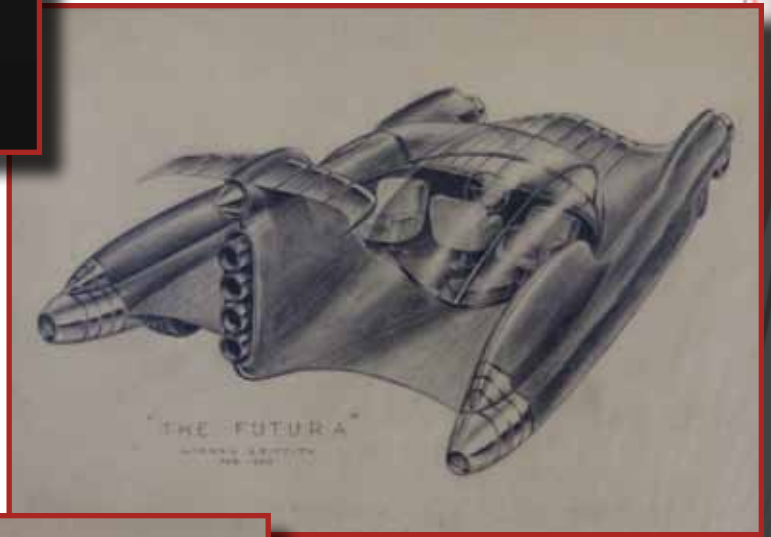
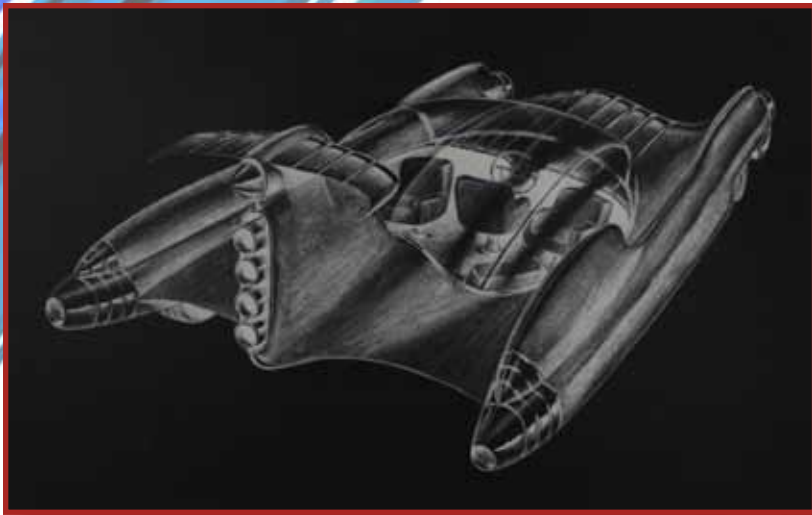
Wayne Kady studied at the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles. In 1961, he joined the Design Development Studio at General Motors; in 1963 he went to work for Cadillac where he was instrumental in creating the great Cadillac look of the 1960's and the 1971 Cadillac Eldorado.



JUNGWIRTH DESIGN

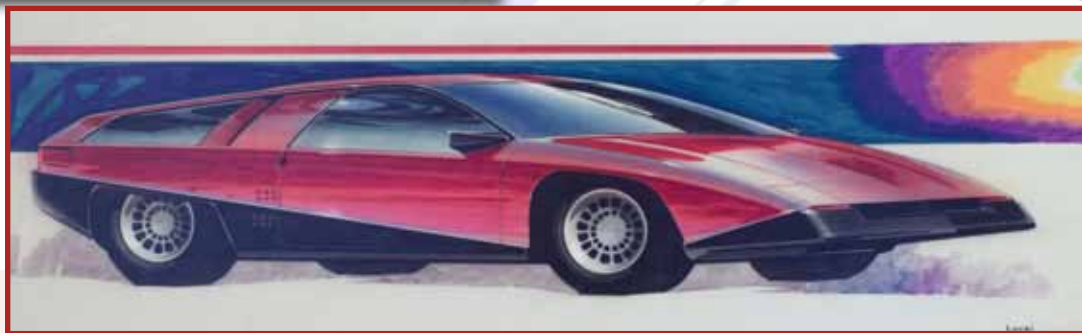






JOAN KLATIL CREAMER

Joan Klatil Creamer was the first female passenger-car designer working in the exterior design/styling department for General Motors. She was recruited to provide guidance in major appliance development and consumer electronics by Gorthan, now a division of Lenox, to become staff designer and then Product Manager of their gift and collectible division. Later she was brought to Burnes of Boston, the industry leading supplier of picture frames, to manage their eight-person design studio. She established Joan Klatil Creamer Design to provide a full service product design and development resources to the consumer gift, collectible and stationary arts markets, and has been successful in this business endeavor for 20 years.



GÉZA LÓCZI

Géza Lóczi, a Hungarian American car designer, started drawing cars at the age of nine. When he was twelve, he carved cars out of wood and started painting them. He entered the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild, a model car competition sponsored by General Motors, and after building seven models in seven years for the competition, Lóczi learned a lot about designing, proportion, painting, craftsmanship and managing projects. These 1/12 scale models won him a scholarship to the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA, where he studied transportation and product design. In 1980, Lóczi became a Design Manager at Volkswagen, afterward establishing his own consulting design company. In 1983 Lóczi worked as a consultant to Volvo in California, then moved to Sweden to work with the company. He moved back to California in 1985, and a year later, when Volvo started a studio in California, he became the Chief Designer. Lóczi taught Transportation Design at the Art Center from 1986 to 1999.



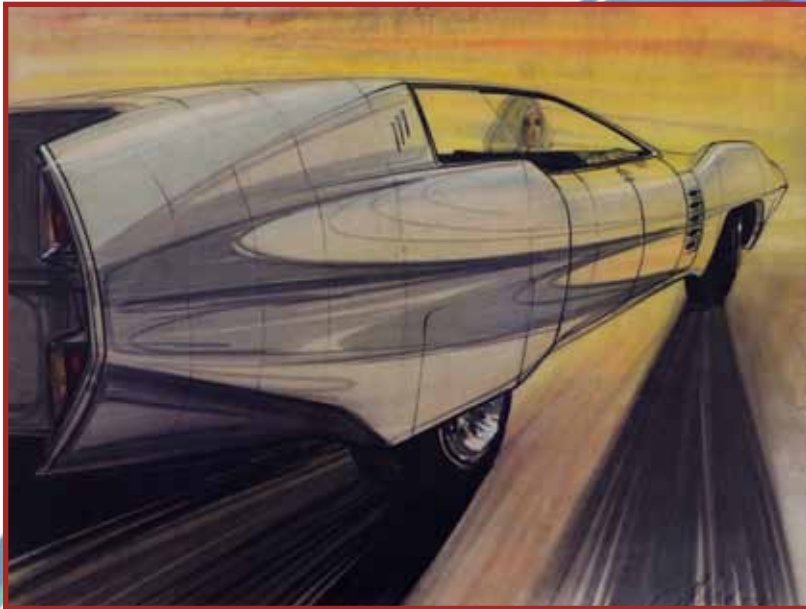
CHUCK MASHIGAN

Chuck Mashigan was manager of the Advanced Styling Studios at AMC. He worked on the 1964 AMC Rambler Tarpon, the precursor to the Rambler Marlin, which debuted in 1965 and was developed to compete with the Plymouth Barracuda.



JOHN PERKINS

John Perkins was born in 1940. He became Chief Designer at General Motors in 1962, a position he held until 1999. He worked in the Cadillac Studio on the Eldorado and in 1967 he moved to Pontiac to work on the Bonneville. By 1970 he was promoted to Assistant Chief Designer in the Buick Studio and later became Chief Designer of Oldsmobile.



David McIntosh's career at General Motors Design spanned nearly forty years, from 1964 to 2003. He graduated from Art Center College of Design in 1964, and worked on Corvair, Buick Riviera and Skylark, Corvette, Pontiac Grand Prix, Firebird, Monte Carlo and LeSabre, Saturn, Chevrolet Lumina, Cadillac, Opel, and many others. He is currently Administrator for the League of Retired Designers.



CARL RENNER

Carl H. Renner (1924-2001) was a Corvette Hall of Fame inductee and part of the original "Project Opel" Corvette Motorama design team. In 1945, after leaving Walt Disney's design studio where he worked as a cartoon animator, Renner took his portfolio filled with automotive designs and headed for General Motors Styling, where he landed a job as a junior designer in the Orientation Studio. He was promoted to Senior Designer in 1946 and transferred to the Chevrolet Studio. From 1950 to 1955, Renner took an active part in the entire design process of the Chevrolet models. In 1954, he was promoted to assistant chief designer in the Body Development Studio, as part of the "ninth floor" crew, the group responsible for the basic shape of the first Opel - the future Corvette.



Ken Vendley was an Art Center grad who chose a career as an architectural illustrator over automotive design.

KEN VENDLEY



THE "WOOD-RIDGE"



THE "PRINCETON"



ALLEN YOUNG

Allen Young graduated from Art Center College of Design and worked for General Motors on 70's Cadillacs and Corvettes.



SHRIMPSON DESIGN





El Dorado Arts Council's mission to promote, connect and empower arts and culture throughout the county is achieved by targeted programs and services, a vibrant gallery exhibition series, and a focus on policy-making and initiatives which support and sustain the cultural life of the region.

Terry LeMoncheck, Executive Director

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SPECIAL THANKS

Leo Brereton

Stephanie Emerson

Elizabeth Hansen and the Mt. Democrat

Caroline Kelley

Christopher Mount

Ian Reynolds

Caitlin Thompson

VERY SPECIAL THANKS

Patrick Kelley

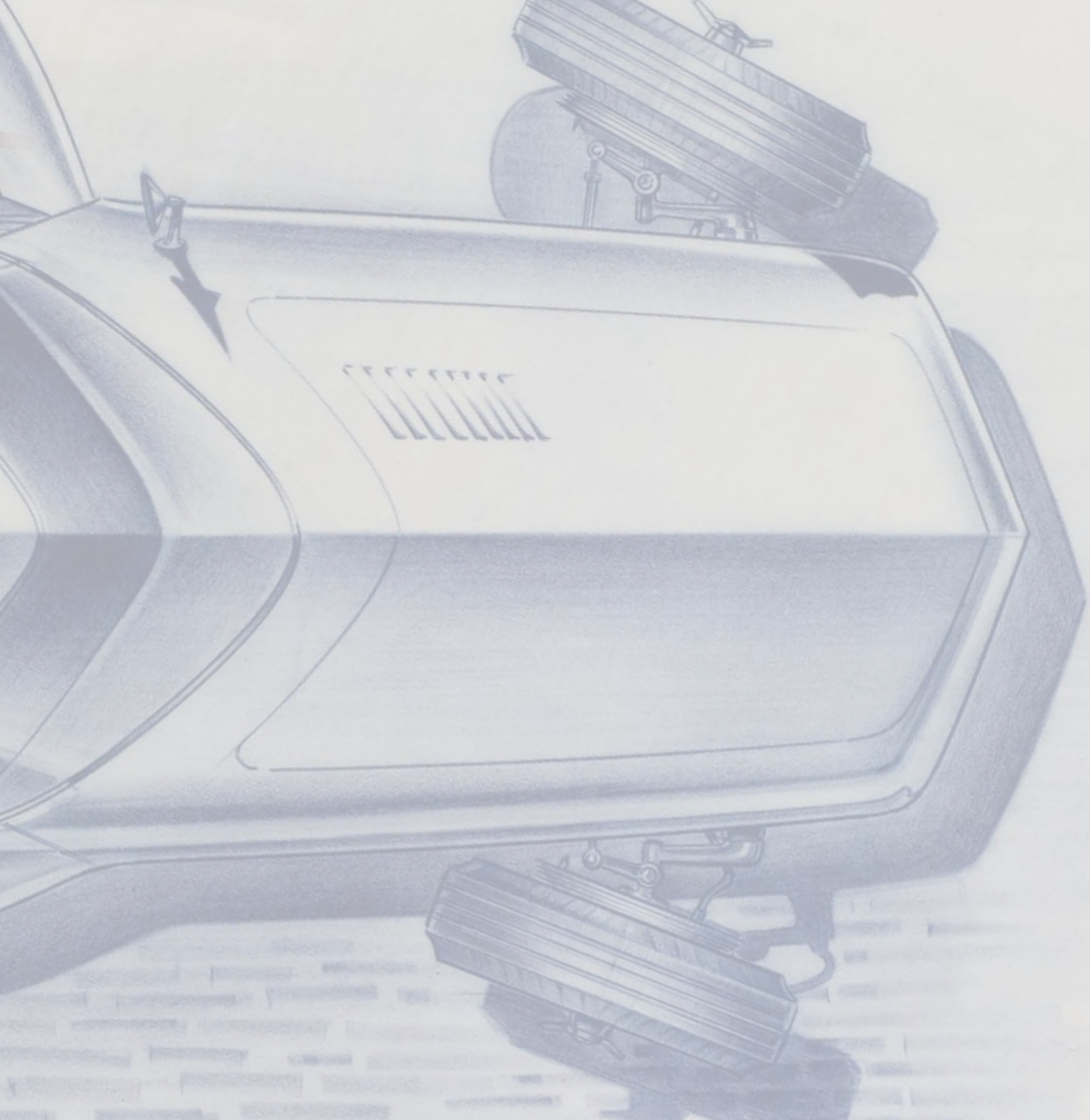
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