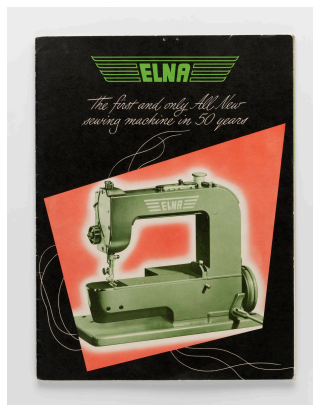




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- 1 Nähmaschine, Elna, 1940, Entwurf: Ramon Casas Robert, Donation: Reta Sonderegger Dudli. Abbildung: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK.
- 2 Titelseite Werbeprospekt, Nähmaschine Elna, The first and only All New sewing machine in 50 years, Auftrag: Elna International Sewing Machine Company Inc. New York, US. Abbildung: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK.

With the first portable sewing machine, *Elna*, in the 1940s the machine aesthetic entered modern households. Like the industrial sewing machines, *Elna* has a free arm that facilitates sewing sleeves or pant legs.

The Spanish precision engineer Ramon Casas Robert (b. 1905) set out to combine the benefits of his mother's pedal-operated sewing machine with those of the free-arm electric sewing machines used in industry. Fleeing the chaos of the Spanish Civil War, he emigrated to Switzerland in the late thirties and worked in his Geneva hotel room on the prototype for a portable electric sewing machine with a free arm. The Geneva firm Tavano S.A., a supplier to the armaments industry, was seeking to expand its product range to the civilian sector and acquired Casas's patents. It was able to produce the sewing machine on the assembly line using the principle of interchangeable parts common in weapons manufacturing. Tavano brought out the *Elna* as a world first in 1940, advertising it specifically as a product for the modern housewife. The first portable free-arm sewing machine, it could be stored in its space-saving carrying case and quickly set up when needed.

The lid of the case became a sewing table, and a built-in, glare-free light completed the temporary workspace. The sewing machine's unusual sharp-edged body and color reflect a machine aesthetic. The different functions can be read in the design: a vent shows where the motor housing is located and a plastic belt indicates the position of the drivetrain. The sliding lever for regulating stitch length and the foldout knee control are clearly distinguished from the main body of the machine. The moving parts are chrome-plated and reflect the light, while the body is painted in an industrial green that is easy on the eyes and exudes calm and stability. (Renate Menzi)

Nähmaschine, Elna, 1940  
Entwurf: Ramon Casas Robert  
Herstellung: Tavano S.A., Genf, CH  
Material/Technik: Aluminiumlegierung, Druckguss, lackiert (Einzelteile)  
31 × 17 × 35 cm  
Donation: Reta Sonderegger Dudli  
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK

<https://www.eguide.ch/en/objekt/elna/>