I started using a 6” combination square when I worked as a boatbuilder in the Bronx at a nonprofit called Rocking the Boat.

They were the go-to tool for our teenage apprentices, who used them to space out fasteners or mark plank thicknesses. I’d been using a 12” combination square but found that the 6” square suddenly doubled in utility. Small enough to tuck in an apron or back pocket, the square could now be kept at hand to quickly pencil out cuts and transfer marks.

When I burned out on buying cheap squares from hardware stores, which would always fail when the ruler lock screw wore out, I turned to eBay to search for vintage Starretts. What I found was a rich variety of styles, conditions and prices. I’ve now bought four, and my favorites are the old models with the waffle weave body surface. Some of them are close to 100 years old, but they are still as true and satisfying to use as ever.

For our second annual Everyday Objects gift guide, we asked 35+ architects, interior designers, makers, photographers, and curators to take a moment to consider what object evokes deep loyalty in them.

The objects they selected are the objects that enable our everyday. They are beloved because they’re pleasing to use, because they do their job completely.

It took me a while to pick an object for this year’s guide, and in the end I chose another measuring instrument, the Starrett 6” combination square, like last year’s Tajima 25 tape measure. One might conclude from these choices that I possess a deep need for precision and accuracy, but I would argue that it’s less about precision than creation. When an object fulfills its potential, it enables you to fulfill your own.

This gift guide is an offering of similar objects from people all over the country who work with space, color, light, and objects themselves.

Happy gifting.

- Brendan
Contributors

Amber Earl
And And And And Studio
Andrei Pogany
Bailey Hikawa
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Laure Joliet
Lauren Geremia
Leah Ring
Linda Sivrican
Linda Taalman
Nicole Hollis
Pat Kim
Rapt Studio
Ron Finley
Sheila Bridges
Sing-Sing Studio
Spencer Wright
Will Castleman
Yoshihiro Makino
Iron Turtle Paperweight.

“It has a function but it also sits as a little piece of art on the desk.”

Submitted by Molly Purnell

Lemon Squeezer.

“The simple act of squeezing a single wedge of lemon suddenly feels whimsical and fanciful.”

Submitted by Linda Sivrican

Duralex Glass.

“Virtually unsmashable, they feel great in your hand. Bonus: The standard size can sub in for the top of a cocktail shaker.”

Submitted by Laure Joliet

Buy here

Buy here

Buy here
Koh-I-Noor Clutch Pencil.

“I need to have a big hunk of lead in my jacket pocket at all times in order to not lose my pencil. I write on walls, paper, everything with this guy!”

Submitted by Lauren Geremia

Buy here

Classic Machined Pen.

“Simple, minimal and extra heavy. I have had it for about 8 years and use it everyday.”

Submitted by Hunt Architecture

Buy here

Hagoromo Fulltouch Chalk.

“It’s so nice to draw on wood with or any surface to map out shapes. It’s pretty dust free and leaves a nice line.”

Submitted by Patrick Kim

Buy here
Postalco Key Holder.

Submitted by Yoshihiro Makino

“I use it literally everyday.”

Buy here

Starrett 6” Combo Square.

Submitted by Brendan Ravenhill

“I buy these vintage on eBay. I look for ones engraved with the previous owner’s initials because you know they were cared for.”

Buy here

Wera Hex-Plus Keys.

Submitted by Spencer Wright

“For the kind of work we do, these Wera wrenches are both the most effective and the most cost effective option we know of.”

Buy here
Everyday Objects. Vol. 2

**Ti Cobb Titanium Pipe.**

Submitted by Coryander Friend

“Designed for outdoor recreation. I also just love it as an object I keep on my desk among other things that soothe my visual self.”

Buy here

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**Dolphin Studio Calendar.**

Submitted by Block Shop Textiles

“Part of life in LA is never knowing what season it is. This is our tool of choice for remembering just that. Made by hand.”

Buy here

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**Tanner Goods Standard Mug.**

Submitted by Meegan Beddoe

“I bought a set of mugs as a present to myself when I became a registered architect. I love that I get to use something I love everyday.”

Buy here
Hori Hori Knife.

“A great all around tool to use in the garden. It’s a tool you can have and use forever.”

Submitted by Ron Finley

Buy here

Single Service Coffee Maker.

“Perfect for those who love traditional ground coffee in the morning. Most importantly it’s very easy to clean.”

Submitted by Will Castleman

Buy here

Imacasa Machete.

“An absolute everyday necessity for life in the jungle.”

Submitted by Ian Collings

Buy here
Ceramic Mortar and Pestle.

"I make a salad every day & use it to pound the garlic for my dressing. Designed in collab with my mom (Alice Waters) & made by Colleen Hennessy."

Submitted by Fanny Singer

Buy here

Fabrique en France Desk Pad.

"Simple in its construction and functionality, perfect for jotting notes and remembering important things."

Submitted by John Park

Buy here

Cork Pops Wine Opener.

"I love this object because it makes quick work of the cork and it’s also a crowd pleaser. I have it in a fun color that makes me smile."

Submitted by Joy Street Design

Buy here
Growlerwerks uKeg 64.

“We buy nitro cartridges, put our usual homemade cold brew inside, and we have our very own homemade nitro. It’s incredible.”

Submitted by Amber Earl

Buy here

Manos del Uruguay Mate.

“Our everyday companion, the mate, from a Uruguayan co-op founded by women for women.”

Submitted by Estudio Persona

Buy here

Fake Fried Egg.

“The best fake egg I’ve found. Sit it on the table or put it on the wall, you would be surprised how much joy a fake fried egg can bring.”

Submitted by Bailey Hikawa

Buy on Amazon (sorry!)
Pacific Handy Cutter Knife.

"I use this bad boy everyday. Its neon green hue is not only my favorite color, it’s pretty hard to lose track of even when the studio gets chaotic."

Submitted by Leah Ring

Buy here

Hobonichi Daily Planner.

"This planner is the perfect size, it fits in my back pocket. EVERYTHING goes into this book. It has become both a planner and an archive for me."

Submitted by Andrei Pogany

Buy here

Zwilling Kitchen Shears.

"They work better than any other kitchen scissors we’ve tested and open bottles to boot!"

Submitted by Design, Bitches

Buy here
Iris Hantverk Dough Scraper.

“I’ve never once used this thing to scrape dough, but I do employ it multiple times a day to clean off countertops.”

Submitted by Claire Mazur

Haws Watering Can.

“Sure you can use a less beautiful object to water your plants but what fun is that. Unchanged for 130 years.”

Submitted by And And And Studio

Stanley No. 36 Level.

“A Stanley level, whether new, this Stanley No. 36 mechanics level, or my vintage Stanley wood and brass level.”

Submitted by Sheila Bridges

Buy here

Buy here

Buy here
When we travel, we go to local hardware or kitchen stores to find ubiquitous objects to collect and use as souvenirs.

“I use these for everything—hanging window coverings, actual cups, plants, my eye mask off my nightstand.”

“A small but mighty vessel for all my snacks, sauces, and dips. I love the depth of the glaze color.”

Submitted by Jean Lee

Submitted by Rachel Bullock

Submitted by Jordy Thomas
**bX Ceramics**

8.5” Pasta Bowl.

“We eat most meals out of these. Makes it feel like you’re at a special restaurant whenever you eat at home.”

Submitted by Sing-Sing

Buy here

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**Vintage Little Forks.**

“*They’re great for snacking, but they’re even better for getting olives and pickles out of their jar.*”

Submitted by Erica Cerulo

Buy here

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**People’s Pottery Spoon Rest.**

“A kitchen essential. Proudly produced by formerly incarcerated members of People’s Pottery Project.”

Submitted by Ikla Perkins

Buy here
Olfa Snap-Off Utility Knife.

"I use it almost everyday at least once. To cut, slice, scrape, sharpen, tighten the screw, as leverage. I love well made tools like this."

Submitted by Eunbi

Buy here

Mason Pearson Bristle Brush.

"Here is one of my most beloved everyday objects. It continues to be the best way to tame the mane, so to speak."

Submitted by Jean Liu

Buy here

Chapman MFG Screwdriver Set.

"This little toolset has saved my life so many times."

Submitted by Linda Taalman

Buy here
Magno Stationery Set.

“Utilitarian and crafty. Beautiful walnut grain and exceptional precise carving while being compact and able to travel well.”

Submitted by Joel Chen

Buy here

Bialetti Espresso Maker.

“We have a collection of well used ones in every size depending on how many people we are trying to caffeinate.”

Submitted by Frances Merrill

Buy here

Friedr. Herder Folding Knife.

“I love my rounded handle folding knife from Da Knife Guy in Waimea Hawaii. To purchase, call Dennis directly”

Submitted by Nicole Hollis

Call 808-936-0799
Morinoki Bread Knife.

“We break bread for Toast Tuesdays weekly, it’s a ritual. We also cut open packages and chop flower stems when scissors won’t do the job.”

Submitted by Rapt Studio

Buy here

Goodies Mini Sugar Pot.

“I recently came across this shop and love all their products. Everything has a great material quality and it’s all under $25!”

Submitted by Jacob Payne

Buy here

Sue Pryke Teapot.

“This is used everyday in our house.”

Submitted by Kalon Studios

Buy here