

The Museum of Modern Art

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE DESIGN COLLECTION

The Museum of Modern Art has acquired for its Design Collection eleven objects from the current exhibition Two Design Programs: The Braun Company, Germany; The Chemex Corporation, U.S.A. Eight are gifts of the Braun Company -- a hand mixer, a kitchen machine with five attachments, an electric grill, a transistor radio, a portable combination radio-phonograph, a slide projector, and two loudspeaker units. The three gifts of the Chemex Corporation are a wine cooler, a cork ice vault, and a filterjet fan. The works date from the late 1950's through 1963. They will remain on view in the new east galleries on the main floor of the Museum through September 20.

When The Museum of Modern Art was founded in 1929, it was proposed that standards be defined and history written for architecture and design as well as for painting and sculpture. Today, the Museum is the only institution with a department devoted to the qualitative selection, exhibition and collection of architectural, industrial and graphic design. The Design Collection now comprises almost 4,000 objects selected for their quality and historical significance.

Other objects already in the Museum's Design Collection on view in the Braun-Chemex exhibition are a radio-record player, portable transistor radio T-24, transistor portable radio and phonograph TP-1, desk fan HL-1, thermo blower, toaster HT-1, and "Multipress" (juicer) by Braun; and a water kettle, coffee maker, tea maker, and an earlier filterjet fan by Chemex.

The products of the Braun Company and Chemex Corporation are outstanding for their consistent qualities of design. The Braun "house style" relies on purity of shape and proportion, and a refined, even exquisite, adjustment of elegant detail, resulting in a product that is neat and unobtrusive in appearance and function. The Chemex wares are essentially based on laboratory equipment -- flasks, cork insulation, paper filters -- adapted for home use, yet, retaining the simple geometric beauty of chemical ware.

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The Braun style, to which all the company's products now conform, originated in 1951 when Arthur and Erwin Braun assumed the management of the Max Braun Company (founded in 1921) after their father's death. With the direction and guidance of the designers, including Dr. Fritz Eichler, Dieter Ram and a design staff, they undertook a modernization program. It was their conviction that their product design had to be based on good form and performance.

The Chemex Corporation, founded by Dr. Peter Schlumbohm, was a one-man firm. Dr. Schlumbohm was a scholar, a graduate chemist and a successful inventor who came to the U.S. in 1931. Until his death in 1962, Dr. Schlumbohm was an inventor, designer and manufacturer who held over 300 patents on inventions ranging from a propane-fueled car to a conical garbage can.

Both the Braun Company and the Chemex Corporation make an effort to acquaint the consumer with the merits of their respective design philosophies. All Chemex ware is accompanied by instructive brochures explaining the importance of invention and design as well as the technical reasons for its successful functioning. The Braun Company, fully conscious of the importance of the functional character of graphics, has produced brochures as lucid and orderly as their products.

Chemex ware was first exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art in 1942. Braun designs have received six international awards since 1957 for design excellence; their products were first displayed by The Museum of Modern Art in 1959.