

The Museum of Modern Art

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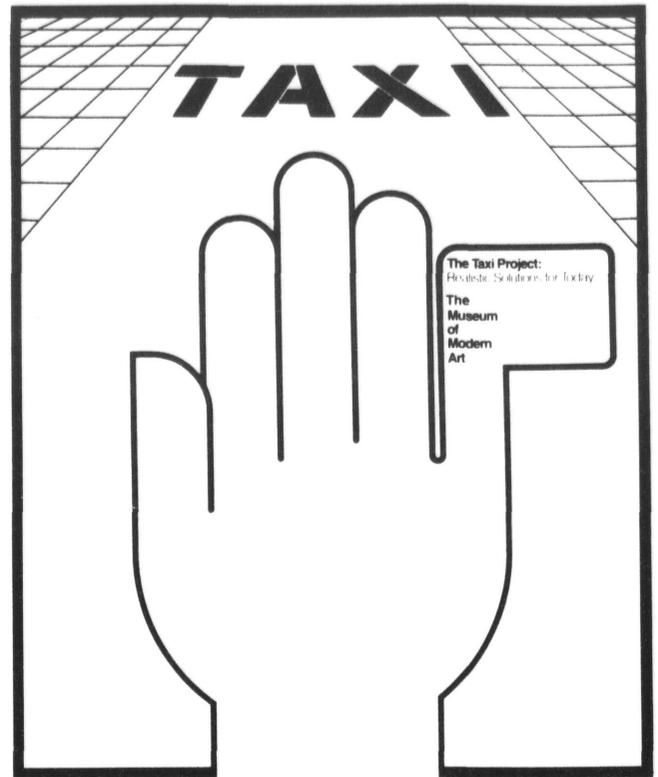
HISTORY OF DESIGN DEPARTMENT

The Museum of Modern Art has had a long history, dating back to 1936, of working with industry and government to improve the quality of industrial and architectural design, and to increase public awareness of the importance of environmental needs. Competitions and exhibitions organized by the Museum's Department of

Architecture and Design have resulted in such classics of contemporary design as the chairs designed by Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen. Experience has shown that this form of cooperation has made it possible for many new design ideas to enter public consciousness, thus helping to make them a reality.

THE TAXI PROJECT: REALISTIC SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY is the fourth Museum of Modern Art exhibition devoted to automobiles. **8 AUTOMOBILES**, the first car exhibition to be held in an art museum, was organized in 1951. It dealt with the aesthetics of the automobile as a work of art as well as the problems of passenger-car design. The eight automobiles selected were: the 1931 Mercedes SS (German); the Army Jeep, manufactured by the Willys-Overland Motor Co. (American); the MG, built by Morris Car Co. (British); the 1939 Bentley (British); the 1949 Cisitalia, designed by Pinin Farina (Italian); the Talbot sport and touring car (French); the 1937 Cord (American); and the 1941 Lincoln Continental (American).

In 1953, The Museum of Modern Art presented 10 AUTOMOBILES in the Museum's garden. Included were postwar American and European cars designed for mass-production, revealing a strong Italian design influence. The cars selected were: the Lancia and the Siata, designed and manufactured in Italy; the Cunningham and Nash-Healey, both



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manufactured in the United States; the British MG; the 1953 Studebaker, designed by Raymond Loewy Associates, American designed and manufactured; the English Aston-Martin; the rear engine German Porsche; the French Simca; and the Comète, Ford Motor Company's French Ford.

In 1966 the exhibition THE RACING CAR: TOWARDS A RATIONAL AUTOMOBILE demonstrated that excellence of design and performance -- major factors in determining safety -- are inherent in racing cars, and could provide guidelines for touring cars. The 29 automobiles selected for the exhibition ranged from the single passenger Lotus 32 -- a pure racing form -- through 2-passenger sports cars such as the Ferrari Dino and the Porsche Carrera 6, to touring cars and experimental studies. The five actual cars in the show were: the De Tomaso Vallelunga sports car (Italian); the Lotus 32 Formula racing car (British); the Porsche Carrera 6 (German); the Austin Mini-Cooper S touring car (British); and the Pinin Farina PF Sigma experimental safety car designed in Italy. Models of 24 other automobiles, along with large-scale photographs, completed the exhibition.

Another of the Department's projects was a five-year series of exhibitions, GOOD DESIGN, sponsored jointly by The Museum of Modern Art and The Merchandise Mart for buyers which took place twice a year in Chicago. The design products, selected for the exhibitions by specially appointed juries, were chosen for their excellence in appearance and advanced functional design. The exhibitions ran continuously throughout the year at The Mart in Chicago and were displayed for the public each autumn at the Museum.

The precedent was set in 1941 for sponsoring competitions which led to the manufacture of prize-winning designs in a project entitled ORGANIC DESIGN IN HOME FURNISHINGS. Some noted results of this project were chairs designed by Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen.

Several symposiums sponsored by the Museum through the years have also demonstrated the Museum's concern with urban life and transportation. In October of 1967 a day-long symposium -- "Transportation Graphics-Where Am I Going? How Do I Get There?"-- was held for designers, transportation experts, transit executives and federal, state and city officials. They examined signs, maps and symbols in 3 dimension, both electronic and

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printed. The symposium was reminiscent of another exhibition sponsored on the transportation theme SIGNS IN THE STREET, in 1931.

In 1967 THE NEW CITY: ARCHITECTURE & URBAN RENEWAL, an exhibition co-sponsored with the City of New York and directed by Arthur Drexler, Director of the Department of Architecture and Design, intended to help the public visualize some changes that architectural planning could offer life in New York City.

URBAN ANTICIPATION: EUGENE HENARD, an exhibition sponsored by the Museum in 1969, recognized the progressive proposals of Henard, the official architect for the City of Paris between 1900 and 1913, whose ideas are relevant to today's modern city planning. The exhibition was directed and installed by Emilio Ambasz, present Curator of Design and director of THE TAXI PROJECT, who also coordinated an international symposium in 1972, "Institutions for a Post-Technological Society: The Universitas Project" that dealt with the problems of evaluation and design of urban environment and examined the idea of a new experimental university.

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