

NEWS FROM GOOD DESIGN

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART • THE MERCHANDISE MART

CHICAGO 54, ILLINOIS • WHITEHALL 4-4141
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Brief Background Outline of GOOD DESIGN

GOOD DESIGN is a series of exhibitions of home furnishings, organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, for The Merchandise Mart, Chicago. The Museum has appointed Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., Director of the activity.

At the beginning of the program, René d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum, and Wallace O. Ollman, General Manager of The Mart, issued a joint statement:

"It is the first time an art museum and wholesale merchandising center have co-operated to present the best examples of modern design in home furnishings. Now, at the mid-point of the century, these two national institutions, whose very different careers began just 20 years ago, believe and hope that in combining their resources they will stimulate the appreciation and creation of the best design among manufacturers, designers and retailers for good living in the American home. Thus the attention of all America will be focused on the good things being created by the home furnishings industry."

New items are selected for Good Design about six weeks before each main home furnishings market - Winter Market (early January) and Summer Market (mid-June). Full page announcements in important trade publications (and direct mail) solicit submissions for Good Design and give directions for submitting.

Selection Committees are appointed for each season by the Museum of Modern Art. They consist of one business man actively interested in art or design; one designer, craftsman or teacher; and the Director, who acts as permanent Committee Chairman. A majority vote of the Committee is final.

Basis of selection is: eye-appeal, function, construction and price, with emphasis on the first.

Items are selected from thousands sent by manufacturers and distributors and more requested by the Good Design research staff who shop wholesale and retail markets, scan trade and consumer publications. Furniture, textiles, lighting, floor and wall coverings, tablewares, kitchen and cleaning wares, decorative accessories are the main categories included. An item is eligible if it can be bought in the U.S.A. market, if it is new in this market since the previous show, and if it does not attempt to imitate the past. Home made or foreign, machine made or handcraft, all are acceptable.

Items selected remain on exhibition in Chicago for one year (January to January, June to June). Items not selected are returned to sources. About 500 items are shown in about 5,500 square feet.

A New York version of Good Design is presented in the Museum of Modern Art each autumn, usually on the ground floor, for about eight weeks. Some 3,000 square feet are available, and correspondingly fewer items are shown.

Catalogs with detailed information about each item are issued for every showing in both cities and are sold by mail as well as in the exhibitions.

Distinguished new settings are created for the exhibits each January in Chicago and each fall in New York by a designer or architect appointed annually by the Museum of Modern Art. So far, Charles Eames, Finn Juhl, Paul Rudolph and Alexander Girard have designed these installations.

Good Design originated in January 1950 and has continued regularly ever since. Mr. Kaufmann has been Director of Good Design from the start: he has been closely associated with related activities at the Museum of Modern Art since 1938.

Good Design shows are visited by great numbers of retail executives, wholesalers and press representatives who attend the important Chicago markets, by the public who visit The Merchandise Mart (the largest commercial building in the world) on tours conducted several times a day, and by the Museum's many daily visitors during the metropolitan fall season.

Good Design is financed entirely by The Merchandise Mart and selected and displayed entirely at the discretion of the Museum of Modern Art. Good Design labels are made available at cost to manufacturers and distributors for items selected, and free promotional material is organized for retail stores. These activities are conducted by the News Bureau of The Merchandise Mart. W. and J. Sloane, Bloomingdale's, Carson Pirie Scott and Co., Scruggs Vandervoort and Barney, L.S. Ayres, Georg Jensen are among the stores which have special good design promotions.

Good Design exhibitions in other museums of the U.S.A. and Canada can be arranged through the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Good Design is advertised by many manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers in connection with items exhibited. Any use of the name of the Museum of Modern Art should be cleared with the Publicity Department of that institution.

Photographs and News Releases of Good Design are available through the Museum of Modern Art and The Merchandise Mart News Bureau.