

***SAFE: DESIGN TAKES ON RISK* SHOWCASES OBJECTS THAT PROTECT THE BODY AND THE MIND**

**Exhibition Includes More Than 300 Contemporary Products Designed in Response to Psychological and Physical Threats**

***SAFE: Design Takes On Risk***

The International Council Gallery  
October 16, 2005–January 2, 2006

**NEW YORK, September 13, 2005**—*SAFE: Design Takes On Risk*, the first major design exhibition at MoMA since its reopening in November 2004, features a carefully selected array of more than 300 contemporary design objects and prototypes from all over the world designed for a variety of reasons: to protect body and mind from dangerous or stressful circumstances; respond to emergency situations; ensure clarity of information; and provide a sense of comfort and security. The objects displayed in the exhibition address the spectrum of human fears and worries, from the most exceptional to the most mundane, from the dread of earthquakes and terrorist attacks to fear of darkness and loneliness. *SAFE* covers all forms of design, featuring such diverse items as refugee shelters, baby strollers, demining equipment, protective sports gear, and new intercoms for the New York City subway. The exhibition, on view in The International Council Gallery on the sixth floor from October 16, 2005, to January 2, 2006, is organized by Paola Antonelli, Curator, and Patricia Juncosa Vecchierini, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Architecture and Design, The Museum of Modern Art.

Safety is an instinctive need that has guided human choices throughout history and it has in recent years become even more of a focus. Risk, on the other hand, is mankind's propelling fuel. While civilization craves discovery and inspiration, designers have to balance risk with safety. Good design must address personal needs, providing protection and security without sacrificing innovation and invention. Ms. Antonelli states: "Beauty and usefulness alone were not enough to justify inclusion in this exhibition. Each object had to transcend the outcome of the equation of its form and function by displaying meaning—to an individual, to a community, to the world at large—and, last but not least, ingenious beauty."

The initial concept for this exhibition was developed by Ms. Antonelli prior to September 11, 2001. Originally titled *Emergency*, it focused mainly on emergency-response equipment and tools. After 9/11, the exhibition was greatly expanded to address not only how designers respond to a wider definition of risk, but also to include how they respond to emotions about safety. The objects in *SAFE* are grouped according to the circumstances that prompted their creation and the type of protection or solace they are meant to provide. According to Ms. Antonelli, these categories "serve as guidance rather than as a guide, and personal interpretation can easily erase

the borders between categories.” **Shelter** features temporary housing for refugees and disaster victims and examples of psychological protection against anxiety and stress. **Armor** includes examples of objects designed to protect the body from visible and invisible threats. **Property** focuses on the things we do to safeguard our belongings and our identity. **Everyday** deals with mundane and serious problems people from different parts of the world encounter in their daily routines—from blisters caused by new shoes to the need to make arsenic-contaminated water drinkable. **Emergency** features a collection of objects devised for urgent use in exceptional conditions. **Awareness** centers on the belief that knowledge and clarity beget safety.

### **Shelter**

Shelter is synonymous with safety, both physical and psychological. The objects in this section respond to situations that differ greatly in intensity and probability, from the primal necessity to help people in real emergencies to the more emotional need for a domestic cocoon to lock out the dangers of the outside world. Examples of objects in the section include:

- Some shelters deal with extremely dramatic situations, like the forced displacement of people due to natural or manmade catastrophes. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (est. 1950) began providing temporary emergency shelter in 1985 by adapting preexisting plastic sheeting, which is stored in warehouses around the world for deployment by the UNHCR emergency-response service within 72 hours of a crisis.
- While conducting preliminary research about portable homeless shelters, the designers Cameron McNall (American, b. 1956) and Damon Seeley (American, b. 1976) of Electroland (USA, est. 2001) found that invisibility is one of the worst enemies of the homeless. They created **Urban Nomad Shelters** (prototype, 2004), inflatable, brightly colored structures ensuring that the homeless be visible and providing a highly portable and inexpensive means to protect the homeless from cold, rain, and hard sidewalks.
- Clothing is a type of shelter, and the **Final Home 44-Pocket Parka** (1994), designed by Japanese fashion designer Kosuke Tsumura (b. 1959), is a recyclable coat with 44 pockets that can store food, medicine, and tools; in cold weather, the pockets can be stuffed with newspaper or any other insulating materials. The coat, bought in stores around the world, can be returned and donated to nongovernmental organizations that will distribute the used parkas to refugees or disaster victims.
- An individual’s sense of identity is the ultimate psychological shelter. The **Boezels** are a series of fuzzy, human or animal-like toys designed to help the mentally challenged regain a sense of self. The toys were designed by Twan Verdonck (Dutch, b. 1979) of Neo Human Toys and are based on sensory stimulation in a controlled ambience. Each Boezel has unique characteristics that appeal to at least one of the senses and can be hugged or wrapped around the body, encouraging a strong feeling of physical contact.
- After his sister lost her fight against cancer, leaving behind a seven-month-old daughter, Hill Jephson Robb (Scottish, b. 1970) created **Cries and Whispers** (2003), a womblike structure made of felt that is intended to restore a child’s feeling of security.

### **Armor**

As with shelter, armor can address physical or psychological needs and provide protection from many threats, such as the sun, mines, police batons, and bombs. Armor has historically embodied both craftsmanship and symbolism. Selected for the intensity and innovation of their designs, examples in this section include:

- Gayla Rosenfeld (Israeli, b. 1977), from the Industrial Design Department of the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Israel (est. 1906), designed a headscarf (2003),

reminiscent of the Muslim *hijab*, made of knitted stainless steel and secured with knitting needles, providing protection to a woman while maintaining her religious identity.

- Ralph Borland's (South African, b. 1974) **Suited for Subversion** (prototype, 2002) is a civil-disobedience suit made of nylon-reinforced PVC and padding designed to protect street protestors from police batons. The suit includes a small speaker in the center that amplifies the heartbeat of the wearer, creating tension and excitement in a protest setting, and a wireless video camera mounted over the head that acts as a witness to events.
- Med-Eng Systems, Inc. (Canada, est. 1981) offers advanced personal protection ensembles and tools for mine clearance and demining. The **CHP100 Conical Hand Protector** (2001) provides shields for the upper limbs of those searching for mines.
- The **Mojo Barrier** (1998), designed by John Mulder (Dutch, b. 1955) and Rob de Boer (Dutch, b. 1943), is a freestanding, modular, aluminum crowd-control barrier used at concerts. The weight of the crowd prevents the barrier from sliding and tipping over, yet it collapses in the event of a stampede. Manufactured in Holland, this system has become the world standard for big concerts.

### Property

Safeguarding property—from buildings to purses—is an inherent human need. The fear of theft and destruction of property have stimulated the invention of many archetypical devices. A few objects in this section are:

- Sulan Kolatan (American, b. Turkey, 1958) and Bill Mac Donald (American, b. 1956) of Kolatan/Mac Donald Studio (USA, est. 1988) created the **INVERSAbrane** invertible building membrane (concept 2005) to protect buildings from the elements and from other attacks. Made of vacuum-formed DuPont Corian and Sentry impact-resistant glass, the membrane circulates air, filtering out pollutants and other allergens; contains bladders that collect rainwater for daily use; uses solar energy to regulate humidity and temperature both inside and out; and is fire-resistant.
- **Sweet Dreams Security** series, designed by Matthias Megyeri (German, b. 1973), takes an ironic look at security in the domestic environment. With products such as iron railings with bunny rabbits for posts, barbed wire woven with butterflies or fish, and heart-shaped ring chains with teddy bear padlocks, Megyeri merges the need for protection with the desire for beauty.
- The iconic chairs in the Stop Thief! Smart Antitheft Furniture range have specific features that allow for the safety and comfort of customers in a restaurant or café by securing their belongings to the seat. The **Stop Thief! Ply Chair** (prototype, 2000), an "improved" version of Arne Jacobsen's Series 7 chair, along with four other chairs in the series, were tested in restaurants in Central London. As part of the Design Against Crime Initiative located at Central Saint Martins College of Art (UK, est. 2000), Smart Antitheft Furniture aims to put anticrime design into the public spotlight and to give it a stylish edge.
- The **Guardian Angel Handbag** (2002), designed by Carolien Vlieger (Dutch, b. 1975) and Hein van Dam (Dutch, b. 1964), features the outline of a knife on the outside of the bag, creating a three-dimensional illusion that a knife is actually being carried in the bag, with the intent to make the wearer feel secure against thieves.
- Recognizing the issues of identity and community in a business setting and the difficulty of protecting identity in the contemporary world, the IDEO team (American, est. 1978) has created 20 cards to date in its conceptual series **Identity Card Exploration**. The Hair Card and the Blood Card (concepts, 2000), for example, each contain an individual's DNA as proof of identity.

### Everyday

Throughout the world, danger and anxiety are a part of daily life. The causes for unease are dramatically different depending on political, socioeconomic, and geographic conditions. There

are many fears we encounter in our daily lives: for example, the fear of getting hurt in a car accident; the fear of unsanitary conditions; or the fear of what smoking can do to the body. The objects in this section offer a sampling of creative responses to these fears:

- Within the current trend for larger, heavier cars, Pininfarina's **Nido** (prototype, 2004) concept reexamines the safety of small automobiles and proposes a safety alternative that is comprised of three main parts: a chassis that supports the mechanical components, which includes a rigid safety cell that surrounds the occupants; a shell that holds the driver and passenger and works like a sled; and two energy-dissipating absorbers consisting of honeycomb sections that connect the chassis and the sled. In the event of a frontal collision, the sled shifts forward and compresses the honeycomb absorbers, allowing for a gradual and controlled deceleration of the passenger compartment.
- A child's safety is a parent's primary concern. The **Stokke Xplory** baby stroller [2003, Bjørn Refsum (Norwegian), Hilde Angelfoss Øxseth (Norwegian), K8 Industridesign (Norway, est. 1998), and Bård Eker Industrial Design (Norway, est. 1994)] situates the child high off the ground away from everyday dust, heat, and fumes.
- Cindy van den Bremen (Dutch, b. 1972) created **Capsters Sports Headgear for Muslim Women** (1999) to give girls and their gym teachers in the Netherlands a safe alternative to the traditional *hijab* during gym class. This range of head accessories can be worn for different sports activities as well as to protect against wind or cold weather.
- In some areas, drinkable water is hard to come by. The **Watercone** (1999) is a simple, inexpensive way to make contaminated water drinkable. Invented by Stephan Augustin (German, b. 1967), the Watercone is able to float on water or rest securely on moist ground. With the sun shining on it, salted water evaporates beneath the cone and condenses on the inside surface. Water droplets gather in a drain rail, allowing the user to either pour the water out or drink the water right away. This condensation process automatically purifies the water in a single-stage distillation procedure.
- Fakhrul Islam (Bangladeshi, b. 1939) invented the **Shapla Arsenic Removal Filter** (2001) for International Development Enterprises (Bangladesh, est. 1981) to remove arsenic from drinking water in India. The low-cost filter, which contains a mixture of crushed brick and ferrous sulphate, can supply 32 liters of drinking water per day.

## Emergency

Objects designed for use in emergency situations are the epitome of functional design. Conceived with efficiency and economy in mind, they must be as sturdy, light, clean, and intelligent as possible in order to minimize errors and ensure well being. Designs include:

- In 2001, the French Red Cross redesigned their **First-Aid Bags** to be more eye-catching and make the message of the institution more timely and universal. French architect Frédéric Ruyant (b. 1961) got the inspiration for this design from a Saint Bernard dog's barrel. The bag displays a reflective red cross and contains 39 objects, including a whistle, a life blanket, scissors, and bandages.
- Sudden cardiac arrest is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. The **Philips HeartStart Defibrillator** (2002) was designed for the average person to use in emergency situations. Weighing just 3.3 lbs., this small defibrillator uses clear, natural voice instructions, guiding the user through each step of defibrillation and CPR.
- In Israel, every citizen is provided with a protection kit that includes a gas mask, which can only be opened when the Ministry of Defense gives permission to do so in a time of emergency. Bezalel Research and Development, an initiative within the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem, worked on a protection system whose main feature is an air blower that makes it easy to communicate while wearing the device. The **Mini Mamat Protection System for Babies** up to six months old (1990) consists of a transparent enclosure in which the baby can lie down, and an air blower that pumps in filtered air. For children up to three years, the **Shmartaf Protection System for Toddlers** (1988–91)

covers the head, arms, and upper torso, allowing for full visual and tactile communication and interaction between mother and child. **Children Bardas** (1985–90) is a head-protection system for children two to eight years of age and has a blower that is tied around the child's waist, ensuring easy movement. The **Bardas System** (1985–90) is available for adults and covers the entire head, allowing a wider range of vision and better communication.

### **Awareness**

Information, when clear and understandable, can provide a measure of safety. From prescription bottles and computer screens to airline safety cards and maps of minefields, designers make sure information is delivered clearly and can thus be used promptly in critical situations:

- New York City's Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) commissioned Antenna Design (USA, est. 1997) to develop an intercom system that would aid in the relay of travel and emergency information in the subway. The **Help Point Intercom for the NYC Subway** (2004) makes it possible to contact security personnel around the clock, and the compact design is resistant to vandalism and breakage. The blue LED light provides a sense of safety and is recognizable in an emergency.
- Located in the lot adjacent to the Museum and accessible from 53rd Street is a **Life-Saving Station** (1999) by BBP Arkitekter A/S (Denmark, est. 1992) [Peter Mortensen (Danish, b. 1954), Eva Jarl Hansen (Danish, b. 1960), Gunner Hansen (Danish, b. 1951), and Torben Bregenhøj (Danish, b. 1943)]. This red and white three-dimensional structure is used on Danish beaches as shelter for lifeguards in bad weather and for the storage of their equipment. The unmistakable shape and color of the lifeguard station is easily recognizable from great distances, putting swimmers at ease.
- The volunteer group Doctors Without Borders uses many different devices to help save lives. In their fight against malnutrition, they use the **Middle Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC)** or **Bracelet of Life** (1994), which helps to identify the severity of malnutrition in children ages six months to five years. The band is wrapped around the child's upper left arm, and the circumference of the arm corresponds to a color, ranging from green (normal) to orange (moderate malnutrition) to red (serious malnutrition and risk of death). Information about the degree of malnutrition helps the doctors choose the appropriate nutrient compound to treat the condition.
- Doctors Without Borders is also committed to helping with the AIDS crisis in Africa. The **One-Day-At-A-Time Weekly Medication Organizer Tray** for HIV/AIDS medication (1990), by Terry Noble (American, b. 1945) is a tool used to teach patients when to take their medication to ensure the effectiveness of the AIDS "drug cocktail." The planner contains seven separate snap-out pill reminders, one for each day of the week. Each daily pill reminder also contains four compartments to help organize medications, making it easy to remember the necessary dosage.
- Reading information on a prescription bottle can sometimes be difficult and confusing. **ClearRx** (2004) is an innovative system that helps the user read and understand this information, minimizing the likelihood of taking the wrong medications due to unclear labeling. The bottle, designed by Deborah Adler (American, b. 1975) and Klaus Rosburg (German, b. 1963) and in use at pharmacies in Target stores, is designed with a flat surface for the label, allowing for all the important information to be read in one glance. The prescription information has been hierarchically reorganized, with the drug name and dosage at the top.

### **PUBLICATION:**

The accompanying publication includes an introductory essay by Ms. Antonelli and other essays by leading experts on such topics as security in the domestic environment, automotive safety, innovative materials and technologies, and facilities for refugees and for those in developing countries. Published by The Museum of Modern Art and sold in MoMA Stores and online at

www.momastore.org. Available to the trade through Distributed Art Publishers (D.A.P.) in the United States and Canada and through Thames & Hudson internationally. Price: \$29.95.

**PROGRAMS:**

Programs for the general public consist of a full-day symposium at MoMA on November 4, conversations with designers in the exhibition, gallery talks by Museum lecturers, and a Brown Bag Lunch Lecture.

**ACOUSTIGUIDE:**

A free Acoustiguide program features Ms. Antonelli and designers discussing the ideas and functionality behind the innovative objects and prototypes featured in the exhibition. This tour is available with all other MoMA Audio tours and is accessible on one guide.

**WEB SITE:**

Beginning October 16, the Web site [www.moma.org/safe](http://www.moma.org/safe), designed by Ordinary Kids, will feature all the objects in the exhibition and offer an in-depth exploration through thematic groupings, including the types of dangers or fears the products respond to.

**SPONSORSHIP:**

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