

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUSEUM TO HOLD SYMPOSIUM ON "THE ESTHETICS OF AUTOMOBILE DESIGN"

The Department of Architecture and Design will present a symposium on THE ESTHETICS OF AUTOMOBILE DESIGN in the Auditorium of the Museum on Wednesday evening, April 12, at 8:30 p.m.

Moderator: Philip C. Johnson, Director of the Department

Speakers: J.M. Crawford, Vice President, General Motors Corporation

Wilder Hobson, car owner and licensed driver

Raymond Loewy, design consultant for the post-war  
Studebaker

George Nelson, architect and industrial designer

D. Cameron Peck, collector of fine automobiles; President,  
Antique Automobile Club of America;  
President, Sports Car Club of America

Admission: Members, \$1.80; public, \$2.40, tax included.

Mr. Loewy and Mr. Crawford will speak of the problem of designing the American automobile, discussing some of the ground rules for its appearance. Mr. Loewy, as the design consultant for the post-war Studebaker, will talk realistically of the problems involved, and Mr. Crawford will act as technical expert for any questions that arise during the discussion. Mr. Loewy's slides will illustrate the approach used by his office in studying the re-design of the Studebaker. Mr. Hobson, who has written many articles on the appearance of both foreign and American cars, will illustrate his talk with slides of the handsomest automobiles produced here and abroad. Mr. Peck, who owns a collection of over 200 automobiles, will discuss the appearance of today's automobiles in terms of the historical development of car design, using pictures of examples from his own collection. Mr. Nelson will show a series of color slides illustrating the radiator grills and decorative detailing of American automobiles.

After the presentation of these prepared, 12-minute talks, the moderator will open the discussion for rebuttal of the points made by the speakers, and for contributions from the floor.

The symposium will be sponsored by the Lectures Committee of the Junior Council: Mr. Thomas W. Braden, chairman; Mrs. Richard Deutsch; Mrs. Walter Maynard; Mrs. Thomas Noyes; Miss Ann C. Resor; Mrs. Donald Straus; Mr. Helge Westermann. Photographs from slides are available..

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FOR RELEASE IN MORNING NEWSPAPERS OF THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 1950

New York--Both engineers and designers of modern automobiles bend an attentive ear toward reactions of the customer toward their efforts, and strive for progress in the improvement of the transportation product, according to J. M. Crawford, vice president of General Motors in charge of engineering.

Mr. Crawford participated in a symposium on "The Esthetics of Automobile Design" Wednesday evening at the Museum of Modern Art.

Stating at the outset that he recognized some comment has been directed at the automotive industry in respect to present-day car appearance, Mr. Crawford refused to take a defensive role.

"Rather, I feel that a better understanding of the problems of the engineer is necessary before we can properly appraise the esthetics of today's automobiles," he said.

"On the historical side, it has always been the engineer's responsibility to lay the ground work for safe, comfortable and efficient transportation. A little later, with a sense for the stimulating effect of appearance on sales, stylists were employed in various capacities, in an effort to secure an improved appearance."

However, Mr. Crawford went on to point out, this effort for better appearance did not relegate responsibilities and duties of the engineers to the scrap heap. They continued in their efforts to attain increased safety, comfort and efficient operation. Knowledge of the essential ground rules in the industry, among engineering, design, sales and production staffs, have resulted in the highly satisfactory cars being offered to the public today, he said.

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Mr. Crawford reviewed advances in safety devices, better protection to the car body itself as well as its occupants, better visibility, lowering of gravity centers and weight distribution that has been shown over the years to be most advantageous, both from the point of view of safety and handling. The latter factors are estimated so closely that the variable load, passengers and luggage, have the minimum influence on the best calculated weight distribution.

"I recognize that some criticism has been leveled at the industry on entrance room of present-day automobiles. However, we feel that some sacrifice of comfort in entering a car is justified on the basis of increased safety when the passengers are once seated."

Mr. Crawford then brought into the discussion his point on the attention given to customer reactions, citing as an example the extensive research carried on by General Motors in that direction, for information and benefit of all concerned, not only the customers, but the management, engineering and design staffs of the company.

"A manufacturer cannot expect the customer to design his products for him. The average user is an expert on use, but the designing and engineering for the most efficient use must of necessity remain in the hands of trained specialists. The buyer, however, can and does tell his likes and dislikes based on what he has seen and experienced. In reckoning the user's viewpoints, a more acceptable product results."

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