

The Museum of Modern Art

1 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

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PRESS PREVIEW:
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The Museum of Modern Art's contribution to the current discussion of the safe car is an exhibition of automobiles, models and large scale photographs on view in the Museum galleries from September 27 through November 27.

The Racing Car: Toward a Rational Automobile attempts to demonstrate that excellence of design and performance -- major factors in determining safety -- are inherent in racing cars and that, therefore, these cars provide important guidelines for developing safe and handsome touring cars.

"Racing cars accelerate faster, have higher speeds, steer and hold the road better, and stop more quickly than any other motor vehicles. Their standards of performance are inherently safer than most of the touring cars available to the general public. That an automobile should be safe is a fact of which no one needs to be persuaded. What is less obvious is that the first step in designing a safe automobile is to make certain that its performance characteristics will correspond to those of racing cars, making all due allowance for the comfort appropriate to a touring car," the exhibition wall label states.

The 29 automobiles selected for the exhibition range from such pure racing forms as the single passenger Lotus 32 through two-passenger sports racing prototypes, such as the Ferrari Dino and the Porsche Carrera 6, to touring cars and experimental studies. Most of the touring cars included have been successfully raced.

Five actual cars are on low gravel-surfaced platforms: the De Tomaso Vallelunga sports car, never before shown in this country; the Lotus 32 Formula racing car from England, which raced at Marlboro, Maryland, the day before the exhibition opened; a Porsche Carrera 6, a sports racing prototype whose owner has inscribed it with the name "Strong Mother"; an Austin Mini-Cooper S touring car, and the handsome Pininfarina PF Sigma experimental safety car designed in Italy.

(more)

Detailed scale models of two touring cars, the Citroen DS-21 and the Oldsmobile ^{one} Toronado, of/experimental car, the Fiat, and of the Jaguar XK E sports car are on pedestals in the galleries. Large scale photographs show a variety of other cars from this country and abroad.

David Ash, former racing driver and authority on automobiles, is Technical Director of the exhibition and has selected the material with Arthur Drexler, Director of the Museum's Department of Architecture and Design.

This is the Museum's third exhibition devoted to automobiles. In the first two (1951 and 1953), concerned primarily with the esthetics of automobile body design, no car was included unless its mechanical performance was considered satisfactory. This exhibition is equally concerned with esthetics, but it attempts to trace to their origin the forms most automobile designers (and most of the public) consider beautiful. The forms are inseparable from automobile technology, and that technology is found at its purest in the racing car.

SYMPOSIUM - Tuesday, November 15, 8:30 p.m., Auditorium.
Design and Safety: Toward a Rational Automobile. A panel discussion based on the current exhibition, "The Racing Car: Toward a Rational Automobile." Panelists: Commissioner Harry H. Brainerd, Bureau of Traffic Safety, Harrisburg, Pa.; Dr. B. J. Campbell, Director of the Highway Research Institute at the University of North Carolina; James Hare, Secretary of State from Michigan; Roy C. Haeusler, Chief Engineer, Safety Engineering Department, Chrysler Corporation; William F. Milliken, Director of the Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory; Dr. Henry H. Wakeland, Director of the New York State Safety Car Program; David Ash, Technical Director of the exhibition; and Arthur Drexler, Director, Department of Architecture and Design.
Members: \$2.25; non-members: \$3.

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Linda Gordon, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. Circle 5-8900.