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AFTER SEVEN DECADES, GOOD DESIGN CONTINUES ITS ICONIC HISTORY AWARDING THE BEST AND MOST RECOGNIZED DESIGN PRODUCTS WORLDWIDE

The Modern Design Revolution Persists in a Steady Loud and Showy Innovative Pace as It Did at the Offset of the 1950s.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (JUNE 1, 2020) — Seventy years ago, a group of die-hard advocates for modern design banded together to brand a novel marketing campaign to showcase and trumpet new American home furnishings, household items, and industrial objects with a revolutionary passion and zeal.

Good Design® was founded in Chicago in 1950 by architects Charles and Ray Eames, Eero Saarinen, and Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., director of the Industrial Design Department, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and professor of Architecture and Art History at Columbia University with the first installation of Good Design at The Merchandise Mart in Chicago.

The first Good Design exhibition was sponsored by The Merchandise Mart and The Museum of Modern Art, together with the Society of Industrial Designers, the American Institute of Decorators, the Home Furnishing Industry Committee, Neiman-Marcus, Lord & Taylor, The Art Institute of Chicago, and the American Institute of Architects.

The Good Design exhibition opened at The Merchandise Mart on January 16, 1950 with the installation designed by Charles and Ray Eames. A reduced version of the exhibition, assembled by Eames, opened at MoMA in New York on November 21, 1950.

This was the first time that a wholesale merchandising center and a museum of art joined powers to present “the best new examples in modern design in home furnishings and appliances.”

The program called for three shows a year: one during the Chicago winter furniture market in January, another coinciding with the June summer market in Chicago, and a November show in New York based on the previous two exhibitions.

Each year, a different prestigious designer was selected to curate and design the installation. Charles and Ray designed the 5,300-square-foot space for the inaugural installation in 1950 in Chicago, followed by Finn Juhl, Paul Rudolph, and Alexander Girard.

In 1950, Chicago was the center for manufacturing in the United States, with thousands of factories in outlying areas producing anything and everything from furniture, cameras, electronics, musical instruments, radios and televisions, and with the headquarters of America’s top retail giants, Montgomery Ward, Inc. and Sears Roebuck & Company.

Chicago’s Motorola, Inc. and Zenith Radio Corp., too, were leaders in the new electronics industry as America emerged from World War II.

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SEVENTY YEARS OF GOOD DESIGN

Add One

There was also a burgeoning designer industry that emerged to service those Chicago-based factories particularly Anne Swainson's Bureau of Design at Montgomery Ward and with the relocation of the German Bauhaus to Chicago under the direction of László Moholy-Nagy and Sergei Chermayoff.

Swedish/American designer Anne Swainson also played an organizing role in Good Design.

Good Design was as revolutionary as other exhibits MoMA presented—a contrast to exhibitions on the new modernist works of Picasso, Matisse and Surrealism.

Good Design, however was more innovative because it presented a tantalizing new world of strikingly new ideas for furniture, lighting, housewares, and appliances, from the “spoon to the city”—objects that would harmoniously coexist with the everyday lives of everyone and objects so utilitarian that they would easily fit and be available to the masses on a very vast, large, and mass-produced scale.

Good Design was an ingenious marketing campaign to preach the gospel of modernism to a very reluctant American public still enamored by Chippendale furniture and Colonial-style homes.

And broadcasting that word was essential in the advancement of the 1950's idea for a new social, democratic order and to the modernist's fundamental mission of a design intended for the "people."

The idea behind Good Design was that mass-produced, low-priced objects of modern design could now be universal; affordable and available to the working-classes and the middle-classes, improving and enlightening the lives of everyone.

In 1950, Good Design was not just revolutionary *zeitgeist*, but the real birth of America's post-World War II manufacturing that had been infused by new technologies, new possibilities, new innovation, and the birth of mass-market consumption.

At the offset, Good Design attracted the best new designers from Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and the United Kingdom as enthusiasm spread for advertising the new fruits of Western freedom and ingenuity.

New designs by Dieter Rams, Alvar Aalto, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Georg Jensen, Poul Henningsen, Arne Jacobsen, Eileen Gray, Marcel Breuer, Finn Juhl, Isamu Noguchi, Verner Panton, Ettore Sottsass, as well as home grown designers, Eva Zeisel, Florence Knoll, Frank Lloyd Wright, Russel Wright, George Nelson, Warren Platner, Saarinen, and the Eames team became household names.

In the American home, avant-garde furniture by Knoll and Herman Miller started to replace Victorian stereotypes.

Neutral palettes, stark minimalism, clean lines, and organic silhouettes were some of the prominent characteristics of Good Design with new materials including nickel, steel, and chrome, combined with natural textures like hemp or jute.

In the 1980s, Finnish-American architect, Christian Narkiewicz-Laine, museum president and chief curator of The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design, reformatted and reset Good Design to become a global main event.

Narkiewicz-Laine is the second Finn to present Good Design. Prior to The Chicago Athenaeum, he was the architecture critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and director of design at The Merchandise Mart (1981-1988) where Good Design was born.

Since the 1980s, The Chicago Athenaeum has received applications for Good Design from thousands of designers and manufacturers from over 50 countries, premiering the latest in designs for new automobiles and transportation, robotics, electronics, airplanes and yachts, medical equipment, furniture, household

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appliances, lighting, items for the home and office, sports equipment, personal objects, graphics and packaging—all in pursuit of the valued Good Design logo to use in marketing campaigns, advertising, websites, and publicity materials.

The Good Design logo, designed by Chicago designer, Mort Goldsholl in 1950 for the Merchandise Mart, is the Museum's version of the "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval," which is one of the world's most recognized logotypes and a symbol widely coveted by global industry designers and manufacturers alike.

Over 40,000 Good Design Awards have been conferred to designers and manufactures from Vietnam to Austria, from Berlin to Hong Kong, from London to Beijing, from South Africa to Canada, Brazil, France, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Mexico, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom and the United States.

Over 50 countries in all—for designs from Tupperware containers, Corning glassware, Fitbit smartwatches, the Logitech mouse, Sony earphones, Apple computers, Grohe faucets, HP printers, Nike running shoes, Nokia phones to the latest sleek designs from Ferrari and Ducati and a Boeing 787 and a NASA spaceship.

In 2008, The Chicago Athenaeum began a collaboration with The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies to present Good Design realizing that the program had expanded to such an extent that it needed an additional European headquarters to serve the growing global base of designers and manufacturers.

In 2009, The Chicago Athenaeum added a Green Good Design® edition to highlight sustainability and to encourage designers and manufacturers to find more environmentally sensible and sensitive solutions for greener products and packaging.

Under the banner, "Build a Better World Now," the Green edition of Good Design also honors people, institutions, governments, cities, states, countries, architects, landscape architects, urban planners, research, and new innovative technologies.

Designs by some of the world's most prominent international manufacturers, designers, and architects have been awarded Green Good Design.

In 2016 and in conjunction with Good Design, The Chicago Athenaeum instituted The American Prize for Design® to be bestowed to any one designer who has made a commitment to forward the principles of design excellence within the context of our contemporary society and who elevated design to a more a profound humanist statement about how our modern contemporary society can advance and progress as a result.

The first Prize was presented in 2017 to Gorden Wagener, Chief Designer at Mercedes-Benz and Executive Vice President at Daimler AG. Subsequently, the Prize has been conferred to Sir Norman Foster in 2018; Flavio Manzoni, Senior Vice President, Ferrari Design in 2019; and Karim Rashid in 2020.

"The impact of Good Design," states Narkiewicz-Laine, "has evolved from introducing modern design to defining what is the best of design excellence, not just in the United States, but around the world."

"Throughout the decades, esteemed leaders in the design industry—architects, designers and manufacturers—have assembled as jurors to decide what is to be selected and awarded, not just the best in aesthetic criteria, but also the materials selected, the level of craftsmanship, the surface structure, ergonomics, and design functionality," he continues.

"From the thousands of submissions from a growing list of nations each year, juries make an intensive examination of the products and graphics in an open discussion to analyze the new products' groundbreaking design quality."

SEVENTY YEARS OF GOOD DESIGN

Add Three

“From Apple Computer, HP Inc., Dell, Inc., Logitech, Lenovo, and Google LLC. to Ducati, Ferrari, and Smeg, as well as Alessi, Rado Watch, Philips, and Electrolux, reputable brands have presented their most progressive designs.”

“Good Design recognizes the work of thousands of designers and manufacturers worldwide who have successfully undertaken the design challenge to produce the best and most outstanding design products across the globe to our large and expanding global consumers.”

“Good Design represents the world’s critical mass of the design and manufacturing industry representing the best consumer design ranging from the ‘spoon to the city’ for sustainability, superior design, and unparalleled function,” states Ioannis Karalias, Museum Vice President, The Chicago Athenaeum.

“Over the last decades, Good Design has become an internationally acknowledged benchmark and symbol of outstanding design that serves as a beacon for design-interested audiences in our global economies.”

“From 1950 forward, we sincerely congratulate all the laureates on their wonderful success,” continues Karalias.

“The fact that their products were able to satisfy the strict criteria of the program bears testimony to their award-winning design success.”

“These laureates have thus set key trends in the design industry and are showing where future directions may lead. Their achievements in design have defined the history of modern design in the 20th and now the 21st-Century.”

The deadline for Good Design 2020 is June 1, 2020.

More information about submissions guidelines for 2020 can be found, along with applications, at good-designawards.com.



The Good Design® Logo was designed by Mort Goldsholl for Good Design at The Merchandise Mart in 1950.

NOTE TO REPORTERS AND EDITORS: Photos of the 70 Years of Good Design are available for download. For more details on the award and previous winners, visit The Chicago Athenaeum's website at www.chi-athenaeum.org.

About The Chicago Athenaeum (www.chi-athenaeum.org) is a global nonprofit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to provide public education about the significance of architecture and design and how those disciplines can have a positive effect on the human environment.

About The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies (www.europeanarch.eu) is dedicated to public education concerning all aspects of the built environment - from entire cities to individual buildings - including the philosophical issues of arts and culture that ultimately give the final shape to design. A high emphasis exists on contemporary values and aesthetics, conservation and sustainability, and the theoretical exploration and advancement of art and design as the highest expression of culture and urbanism.

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SEVENTY YEARS OF GOOD DESIGN
Add Four



Charles and Ray Eames Working on Aluminium Group Lounge Chair, 1957



Good Design at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago, 1950



Eero Saarinen, circa 1959



Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. MoMA Curator



John Fitzgerald Kennedy Jr., Christian Narkiewicz-Laine, Ioannis Karalias, and Rowena Kelly at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago Celebrating Good Design, 1988

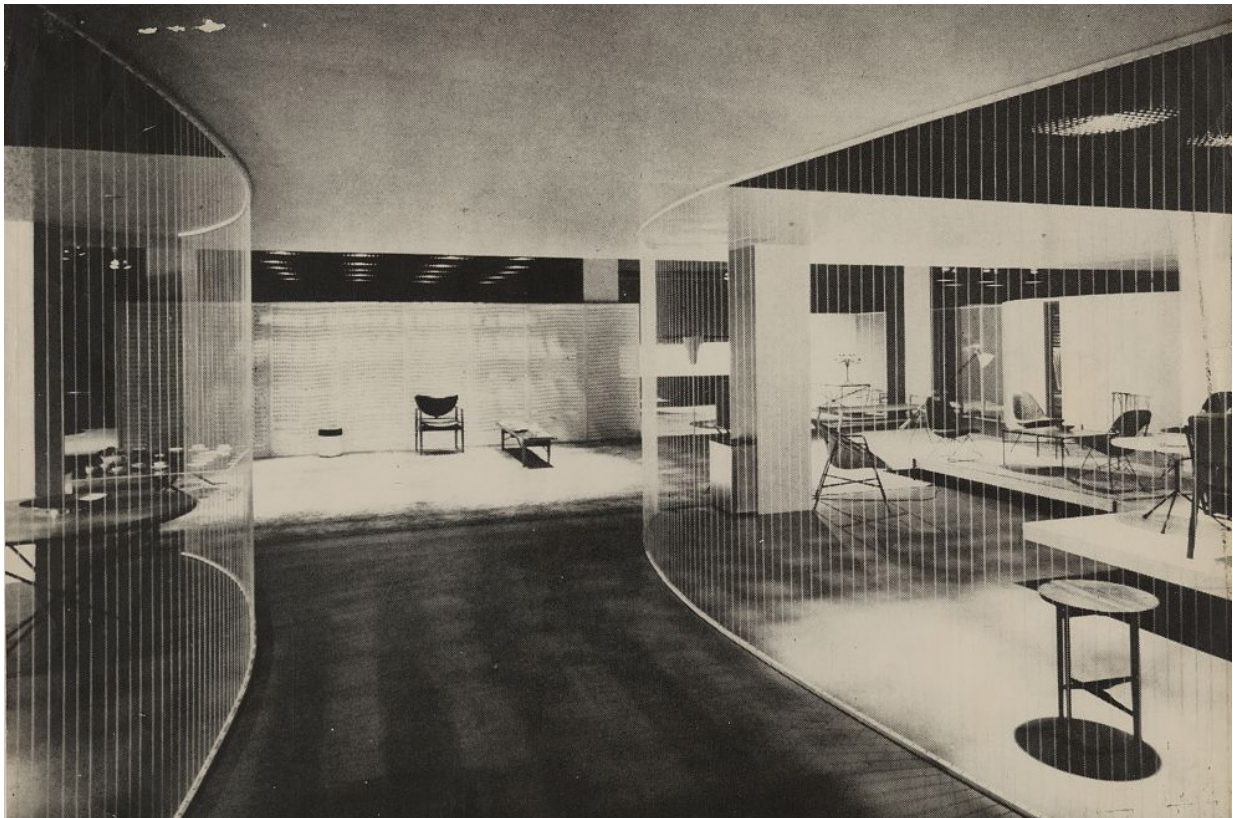
SEVENTY YEARS OF GOOD DESIGN
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Christian Narkiewicz-Laine at the Knoll Showroom in London, 2010



Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. (Right) and Alexander Girard at Good Design, 1954



Good Design Installation by Paul Rudolph at MoMA, 1953