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Blue Ribbon Designs

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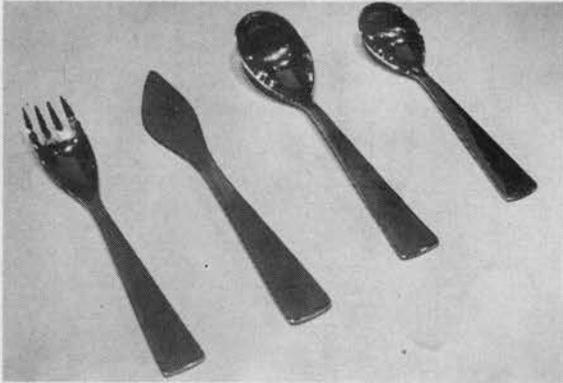
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The Good Design Show Selects—

Blue Ribbon



Stainless steel flatware, designed by Gio Ponti, in the new abbreviated place setting with only four pieces.

ILLUMINATED MODERN OBJECTS mounted on virtually invisible backgrounds formed the setting of the latest Good Design Show in Chicago. This unusual method of display matched the unique household items that the Museum of Modern Art selected for the biannual show in the Merchandise Mart.

The exhibit features the latest trends in modern home furnishings and wares, such as a new abbreviated silver place setting with only four pieces. Gio Ponti designed the set with a dinner knife, fork, teaspoon and soup spoon.

Also, a new paper fabric was displayed on the tops of small upholstered and padded tables, giving the appearance of a bed of mushroom plants. The plastic-coated paper is sufficiently durable for furniture coverings and is called a fir fiber.

Purpose of Exposition

The Good Design Show was originated in 1950 by the Merchandise Mart and the Museum of Modern Art. The purpose of the exposition is to stimulate the appreciation and creation of the best designs among manufacturers, designers and retailers. This is accomplished by the recognition Good Design gives to outstanding furniture, textiles, lighting fixtures, floor and wall coverings, tablewares, kitchen and cleaning wares and decorative accessories.

Buyers look to the show as a guide in purchasing good salable merchandise. Also retailers and housewives can look for the Good Design labels as a distinguishing mark when they buy. A shower head that regulates the water force and gives an even spray was selected by the judging committee for the show. The manufacturers of the shower head can now purchase labels for their product to emphasize its recognized superior design qualities.

The 1954 Good Design Show in June will be a collection of design and will mark the exhibit's fifth anniversary. At that time the display pieces will be identified to show, through sales records, whether or not the public agreed with the judges of Good Design pieces.

Judging

The judging committee is permanently headed by Edgar Kaufman, Jr., from the Museum of Modern Art, who is a director of the Good Design Show. The two members of the committee chosen each year are a businessman actively interested in modern art or design and a designer, craftsman or teacher. These three base their display selections on eye appeal, function, construction and price, with emphasis on the first. A smooth pipe-framed chair, covered with a seamless nylon tube, was one rhythmic and attractive piece chosen. The black wrought-iron frame was shown in a previous show, but the large stocking-like cover in varied hues is new.

A floor lamp and two table lamps made of metal and paper, designed in Japan. Three freely carved wooden bowls are shown with the lamps.



Designs

by *Gwen Olson*

Technical Journalism Sophomore

Any item may be entered in the Good Design Show if it is not related to the past, if it can be purchased in the United States and if it has not appeared in a previous show. Although the pieces are supposed to be modern, there are two distinct trends this year.

The first is the formal, modern trend which stresses the classic, clear-cut shapes, precise details, smooth surfaces, definite colors and black and white. This trend can be seen in one of the exhibit's pieces of furniture. It is a coffee table made of a white marble slab supported by shining brass pipelegs. The simple plastic dinner ware with its smooth, shining surface, designed by Russell Wright, also reflects the classic.

The second trend is the informal modern which has softer lines, flows from one shape to another and makes use of rough homespun textures and muted natural tones. Pottery, stoneware, cane chairs and woven textured rugs are all items in the show that follow this feeling. The current national survey of handicraft indicates the importance of the trend towards native arts.

Isolated Trends

Some isolated trends can be seen in the work of individual artists and specific items. George Nelson created a storage unit which consists of a metal frame and drawers. When a drawer is opened, it reveals the contents of the drawer below. Mr. Kaufman, director of the Good Design Show, said, "This unit marks a step in logical storage cabinet design."

The bold wallpaper patterns displayed are designed to enhance the lines of the wall rather than to create an illusion. This is a slightly new slant on wall coverings.

Perforated wrought iron is an easy material to use. However, dipping a molded shape of the metal into plastic gives the object a new use — that of a diffusing bowl for a lamp.

Oriental Influences

There were oriental influences in household accessories presented by Good Design. Enameling on both sides of a copper ash tray was a new feature, and Chinese red appeared in an unusually pleasing intensity.

Japanese lanterns were supported on stands of various heights to form floor and table lamps. The cheap labor used for the round lantern shades made the lamps available at comparatively low prices. Bamboo curtains also tended to add foreign intrigue.

Thus the Good Design Show, in its dramatic setting, revealed the latest modernistic household items. An art museum and a wholesale merchandising center have now collaborated to focus the attention of the nation's buyers and buying public on good design in the home.



A dining chair with steel frame and spun nylon cover. The cover comes in varied hues, the frame has a black wrought-iron finish.

A gunmetal-glazed pottery bowl and pewter tumblers are displayed on a redwood slat-top table with iron tube frame.

