

Japanese Design Today 100

***Everyday Objects Embody Japanese Design Sensibilities
And Exemplify Contemporary Urban Life Around the World***

Japanese Design Today 100, an international traveling exhibition of approximately 100 of the finest examples of Japanese design. The exhibit will be in Toronto from **February 8 to April 29, 2007** at the Design Exchange, 234 Bay Street (at King & Bay).

“The objects showcased in Japanese Design Today 100 express a precision in size and detail inherent of good design. These are everyday objects that can make you feel good about the space you occupy or take up in the world. I want to take the small lamp, monitor, scooter and cutlery home with me!”
(Paola Poletto, Senior Director, Programs at Design Exchange)

Culinary tools and tableware, home furnishings from lights to chairs, bags, office supplies, electronics from cameras to computers, toys, vehicles from bicycles through scooters to hybrid cars, and unclassifiable items such as digital musical instruments, tiny portable ashtrays and a handheld transparent security shield. Some strike the viewer as humorous, others elegant, and several are ingenious.

All items in the exhibition have been designed to be both functional and accessible to real people in daily life. Most pieces were designed between 1990 and 2003, with a few from the 1980s. Featured designers include Isamu Noguchi, Sori Yanagi, Issey Miyake, Masaharu Ohno, and Hajime Sorayama.

In addition to the more recent pieces, 13 objects from early postwar years show the origin of today’s Japanese design. These include a 1960 TV8-301 portable television, a 1958 Super Cub 100 motorcycle, and a 1955 electric rice cooker, along with furniture pieces, electronics and other vehicles. These objects are from a time when everyday Japanese products were heavily influenced by the United States, a trend that reflected the overall cultural situation in postwar Japan.

“When seen as a whole, the objects featured in this exhibition are not just good examples of excellent product design, but a collection of living reference material that reveals the form of contemporary Japanese life.”
(Masafumi Fukagawa, Curator at the Kawasaki City Museum)

Japanese product design in the last decade has been influenced by revolutionary changes in the structure of Japanese society and industry, digital

design, the needs of the elderly and children as the population shifts, and the current environmental crisis.

Globalization in technology, culture, capital investment and production bases are causing the design of everyday objects to often be less culturally specific than in the past. Yet innovative new Japanese designers - both freelancers and those working for large manufacturers - are blending the traditional Japanese sense of form with modern design and new trends.

“Japanese design has been characterized by precision, attention to detail, emphasis on technique, inventiveness and creating new combinations of form, practicality and adaptation to the environment, and intelligent structure. Now designers are also responding to new requirements for universal and ecological design.”

(Nobuko Shimuta, Chief Producer at Nippon Design Centre)

The Toronto presentation of Japanese Design Today 100 is sponsored by Lexus Canada.

Japanese Design Today 100 is a co-presentation between the Design Exchange and the Japan Foundation. General admission is \$5, students & seniors admission is \$4. Information is available by calling 416-216-2160 or visiting the Design Exchange’s web site at www.dx.org.

ABOUT THE DESIGN EXCHANGE:

The Design Exchange (DX) is Canada’s National Centre for the advancement and promotion of all design disciplines. A registered charity, our mission is to promote the value of Canadian design through enriching and engaging programs. The DX offers over 40 programs each year. The DX is a showcase for the best in Canadian design, an education and resource centre and an attraction for the general public. A great way to get to know the DX is to explore our website at www.dx.org.

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