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**The Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum Presents  
"Design USA: Contemporary Innovation"**

In fall 2009, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum will present "Design USA: Contemporary Innovation," an exhibition celebrating the accomplishments of the winners honored during the first 10 years of the prestigious National Design Awards. Organized by Jeannie Kim, National Design Awards manager, and Floramae McCarron-Cates, associate curator, Drawings, Prints and Graphic Design, the exhibition features the work of the more than 60 award winners for outstanding contemporary achievements in architecture, landscape design, interior design, product design, communication design, corporate design, interaction design and fashion. On view in the first-floor galleries from Oct. 16 through April 4, 2010, the opening coincides with the fourth annual National Design Week, held Oct. 18–Oct. 24.

First launched at the White House in 2000 as a project of the White House Millennium Council, the National Design Awards were established to promote excellence and innovation in design. This is the first time that an exhibition has been devoted exclusively to the National Design Award winners.

"The exhibition explores the ways that design has transformed our lives over the past decade, one that witnessed the advent of the iPod and iPhone, the completion of Frank Gehry's seminal Walt Disney Concert Hall, the domestication of Photoshop and the ubiquity of Google," said Paul Warwick Thompson, director of the museum.

"Design USA" explores the sweeping and personal impact of design by displaying the work of a diverse roster of winners that includes everything from Tom Ford to Tupperware. Rather than a survey of the work of the past, the exhibition is a celebration of design innovation, examined through the lenses of technology, material, method, craft and experience. These themes reflect the multiple scales of interaction between design and the way we experience the world around us.



Smithsonian  
*Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum*

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Developed in collaboration with the renowned firm 2x4—a 2006 National Design Award winner—the exhibition design uses a prefabricated shelving system that provides a unique modular platform for the drawings, products, fashion design and audiovisual work on view. 2x4 has also designed a digital component and guide to the exhibition, featuring supplemental works, videos and interviews with the honorees, which will be available to all museum visitors through the free rental of an iPod Touch at the admissions desk, courtesy of Apple.

“Design USA” begins with an exploration of innovation through craft, which has had a renewed importance in design during the last 10 years. The persistence of craft, attention to detail and exquisite production has influenced numerous designers, from the graceful manipulation of light in the architecture of Steven Holl to the intricately detailed garments of Ralph Rucci. Other works on view in this section include the projects of landscape architects Peter Walker and Partners, which are grounded in extensive knowledge of history and tradition, understanding of contemporary needs and mastery of construction; and Aveda, which develops solutions to problems by insisting on strong design standards expressed within shifting parameters of materials and design processes that leave a minimal “footprint” on the planet.

The impact of design on people’s day-to-day environment is highlighted in the next section of the exhibition. Due to the unprecedented access to information over the past decade, the innovations of many disciplines can be applied to imagine what design can be, ultimately transforming the way it is experienced. On view will be work by environmental designer Ned Kahn, who explores natural phenomena through his projects that incorporate fluid dynamics, optics, acoustics and other features of physics; the Power Flower installation by Antenna Design, a firm that incorporates new media and interactive, thought-provoking components to engage the user; and Toledo Studio, whose designs mix an appreciation of machinery, practicality and comfort with playful, incisive and intensely surreal observations on fashion, beauty and life.

The exhibition addresses how new materials have caused designers to rethink and redesign products. It also explores how familiar materials have been used to construct radical products or repurposed to respond to new needs. On view in this section will be the Caper chair by Bill Stumpf, who approached design as a process of improvisation and discovery and is known for his ergonomic and materially efficient designs; clothing by Patagonia, which works with manufacturers to develop new high-performance fabrics such as Capilene and H2No Storm to meet athletes’ strict performance demands; and interior design work by architect Richard Gluckman, who emphasizes basic architectural components of structure, scale, proportion, material and light while working in historically sensitive contexts.

The “method” category explores multifaceted approaches to the design process as a response to the dialogue between an individual and a need. Designers seek long-term solutions to social and cultural concerns, while educating the consumer in new ways of design thinking. Examples of the works on view in this area include the Macrowave series by Whirlpool, a company that uses design as a strategic tool to produce high-quality, innovative appliances that meet the needs of a broad range of American households; the products of Google, which continue to transform the way millions of Internet users around the globe access information every day by marrying a simple, easy-to-use interface with complex engineering and innovative channels of dissemination; and the projects of Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis, an architecture and design partnership recognized for their attention to detail and craft, inventive use of materials and close involvement in the installation process.

The exhibition also examines the influence of technology on design, as manifested in everything from Burt Rutan’s SpaceShip One to Apple’s PowerMac G4. In the past decade, design has embraced new technologies, new processes of fabrication and new methods of production and delivery. Among the honorees featured in this section are John Maeda, artist-mathematician and president of the Rhode Island School of Design, whose “Ribbon 3D” work emerges from a rarified mix of geometry problems and algebraic equations to create intensely detailed, infinitely mutable patterns of information, and fashion designer Rick Owens, who uses a minimalist palette to accentuate his sculptural designs and is noted for his masterful use of draping and asymmetrical cut.

“Design USA” will also feature works by National Design Awards winners in the Lifetime Achievement category, including Milton Glaser, Eva Zeisel and Charles Harrison. On view in the Nancy and Edwin Marks Gallery, these works reflect the museum’s mission to present the work of designers in the context of the past and present, but also in anticipation of the future.

The exhibition concludes with an interactive gallery wherein visitors can express their views on good design and its impact on daily life.

“Design USA: Contemporary Innovation” is made possible in part by Target.

Interactive technology is made possible by generous support from Apple Inc.

### **About Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution**

Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum is the only museum in the nation devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. Founded in 1897 by Amy, Eleanor, and Sarah Hewitt—granddaughters of industrialist Peter Cooper—as part of the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, the museum has been a branch of the Smithsonian since 1967. The museum presents compelling perspectives on the impact of design on daily life through active educational programs, exhibitions and publications.

The museum is located at 2 East 91st Street at Fifth Avenue in New York City. Hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 6 p.m. The museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Public transit routes include the Lexington Avenue 4, 5 and 6 subways (86th or 96th Street stations) and the Fifth and Madison Avenue buses. General admission, \$15; senior citizens and students ages 12 and older, \$10. Cooper-Hewitt and Smithsonian members and children younger than age 12 are admitted free. For further information, please call (212) 849-8300 or visit <http://www.cooperhewitt.org>. The museum is fully accessible.

### **About Target**

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