



reddot design award

Press release

Essen, 23 July 2009

With the spirit of harmony to one of the world's most influential design nations: for the first time, the red dot design museum presents one of the most varied collections of contemporary Japanese design

What seemed impossible in the 1970s now dominates our everyday life and significantly influences our aesthetic preferences: the role of Japan in the global market economy has transformed rapidly in the past. In particular the impact of Japanese products on the German economy has changed positively, not least thanks to groundbreaking design innovations, and has now become an integral part of the economy. With the exhibition 'Wa: The Spirit of Harmony and Japanese Design Today', the red dot design museum is as the first station in Germany showing one of the most varied collections of contemporary Japanese design. From 20 August to 20 September 2009, the red dot design museum in cooperation with the Japan Foundation will present a selection of Japanese design classics that still have a great influence on contemporary product design today, and have been identified as milestones in design history, as well as state-of-the-art design drafts from Japanese product designers: from Kenji Ekuon's classic Kikkoman soy sauce bottle from 1961 to Naoto Fukasawa's Infobar from 2003 and the most recent Toyota Lexus. Shin Maruo, the Consulate General for Japan from Duesseldorf, Kôji Ueda, Director of the Japanese Cultural Institute Cologne (The Japan Foundation), and Shû Hagiwara, the curator of the exhibition, are just some of the guests of honour at the opening of the exhibition on 19 August at 6 p.m. in the red dot design museum.

Traditional Japanese arts and crafts coupled with leading edge technology – today, Japanese design is an essential influence in the global market like never before. In the 21st century, which is characterised by digital technology and progressing networking of the society at home and abroad, there are contrasts in the world of Japanese design, which are combining with each other at a rapid pace. The traditional Japanese principle of harmony, 'Wa', aims to combine



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different values, different people, different points of view, and different positions, and unite them on a higher level. This principle of harmony is the basis of the vitality of modern Japanese design of the 21st century.

"We are delighted to present this unique exhibition at the red dot design museum," says Professor Dr. Peter Zec, head of the Design Zentrum Nordrhein Westfalen. "Asia is the region with the greatest economic dynamic in the world, and in recent years Japan has become a true design nation. With a remarkable variety and high innovative strength Japanese design has made it all the way to the top," explains the design expert.

Consisting of approximately 160 selected examples from different areas, the exhibition presents the dynamic and background of modern Japanese product design. The exhibition is to shed light on the Japanese, the "harmonious", in modern product design. To facilitate the viewer's understanding of Japanese design, the exhibition has been divided into sections with twelve categories with products that provide a broad picture of life in contemporary Japan, such as Tableware, Bathware, Consumer Electronics, Play Products, Stationery, Bags, and Transportation, combined with six characteristic key words, such as Cute, Crafted, and Minimal.

In addition, the exhibition begins with an introductory display of contemporary designs that create harmony between such opposing concepts as new and old, high-tech and low-tech, nature and artifice, and local and global. Curators of the exhibition are Hiroshi Kashiwagi, Professor, Musashino Art University, Masafumi Fukagawa, Chief Curator, Kawasaki City Museum, Shû Hagiwara, Design Director, and Noriko Kawakami, Journalist and Editor.

From 20 August to 20 September 2009 the exhibition will be on show at the red dot design museum, in the former boiler house of the Zeche Zollverein in Essen, Germany.

Address:

red dot design museum
Zeche Zollverein
Gelsenkirchener Straße 181
45309 Essen
Germany



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Opening hours:

Tuesday to Thursday: 11:00 am to 6:00 pm

Friday to Sunday and public holidays: 11:00 am to 8:00 pm

Admission:

8 euros, concessions 3 euros

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