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High-resolution Images available upon request.

Midcentury to Today: New Traveling Exhibition Celebrates Modern Design

Washington, DC (February 6, 2020) — International Arts & Artists (IA&A) is pleased to announce a new traveling exhibition, *Modern Design: Midcentury to Today*, organized in partnership with The Stewart Program for Modern Design, Montreal, Canada.

Known for its sleek lines and functional simplicity, the style of midcentury modern’s mainstream appeal has propelled it from a fleeting trend to the preferred design aesthetic of today’s millennials and Gen Zs. While the enduring interest in this ubiquitous style—popularized by period dramas like TV’s *Mad Men*—has transitioned from exclusive high-end boutiques to mass accessibility through big box retailers, how do we reconcile our complex relationship with contemporary design?

Drawn from the renowned Stewart Program for Modern Design, *Midcentury to Today* charts the captivating story of modern design—from the growing affluence and consumerism of the post-World War II years (and wholesale pursuit of “the good life”) to today’s diverse, technology driven world defined by globalization—reflecting and clarifying the ever-evolving needs, trends, and values of society and culture itself.

Through the essential design movements of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, *Midcentury to Today* focuses on the groundbreaking work of such visionaries as Eva Zeisel, Charles and Ray Eames, Dieter Rams, Philippe Starck, Isamu Noguchi, Zaha Hadid, and Olafur Eliasson.

With 120 objects from Italy, Japan, France, Germany, the United States, and Canada, the exhibition features an extraordinary selection of designers, whose pioneering work in a range of media—furniture, ceramics, metalwork, graphics, textiles—has helped to define the look and zeitgeist of our modern world.

“Today, with evolving perceptions making most designs prior to 2000 seem dated, collecting contemporary design is increasingly important in order to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world,” says David A. Hanks, Curator of The Stewart Program. “In 1980, when Liliane Stewart

began to collect midcentury international design, there was little competition from other museums and collectors and certainly little public appreciation. Since then, to keep the collection current and recognize the creativity of young designers, contemporary design has remained a part of The Stewart Program's collecting focus."

Examining its many roots and resonances, *Midcentury to Today* will take audiences on a visual journey through seven decades of innovative design highlighting its profound ability to creatively solve problems and transcend cultural boundaries. This exhibition traces the shift from the simplicity of midcentury Good Design to the plurality of 1970s and 80s Postmodernism, when "less is a bore" replaced "less is more." *Midcentury to Today* also explores the conscientious approach of Responsible Design, from the birth of the "green movement" that gained traction in the 1990s, to Universal Design which continues to focus on accessibility and social inclusion today.

"Delving into the remarkable origins of iconic objects such as the 1941 CHEMEX and 2002 iMac, *Midcentury to Today* traces the impact and significance of design in the everyday through this unique selection of exciting objects," says Edward Hayes, Director of IA&A's Traveling Exhibition Service. "By viewing familiar designs in a museum context, today's audiences will see 'ordinary' objects in a remarkable new light, sparking a deeper awareness of the daily choices we make as consumers."

IA&A is proud to collaborate with The Stewart Program for Modern Design to tour a selection of objects drawn from the renowned collection of Liliane Stewart including recently acquired works from the George R. Kravis II collection. *Modern Design: Midcentury to Today* will tour nationally and internationally from January 2022 through December 2024. The exhibition is curated by David A. Hanks and will be accompanied by a companion book published by Scala Arts Publishers, Inc.

For more information about *Modern Design: Midcentury to Today*, visit ArtsandArtists.org/tes

ABOUT THE STEWART PROGRAM FOR MODERN DESIGN

The Stewart Program for Modern Design, based in Montreal, collects international design and decorative arts from 1900 to the present. Developed by Liliane Stewart, the collection includes a broad range of work from mass-produced, industrial products to unique crafted objects, limited editions and prototypes. In assembling the collection, Liliane Stewart developed relationships with established international designers while remaining open to work by young, lesser-known designers. Currently, the collecting focus is on contemporary design. The Stewart Program makes the collection accessible to the public through traveling exhibitions, publications, films, and digital initiatives that present groundbreaking new scholarship on twentieth and twenty-first century design. The core mission has always been to educate the broadest possible public about design and its role in contemporary society.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ARTS & ARTISTS

International Arts & Artists (IA&A) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting cross-cultural understanding through the arts. Since 1995, IA&A has fulfilled its mission by providing programs and services to artists, arts institutions, cultural organizations, and the public—reaching over 2.1 million people.

IA&A's **Traveling Exhibition Service** develops and circulates a broad range of premiere visual arts exhibitions in the US and abroad. With over 100 unique exhibitions and over 730 presentations, IA&A's exhibitions have toured all 50 US states as well as 24 countries, helping organizations to engage their community, increase public awareness, develop meaningful programming, and foster enhanced support.

IA&A's **Cultural Exchange Programs** support the next generation of creative leaders by providing exchange opportunities and visa assistance for students, professionals, artists, and researchers from around the world participating in programs across the US. IA&A has connected over 1,850 exchange visitors from more than 95 countries to over 650 host organizations.

IA&A at Hillyer is a contemporary art center based in Washington, DC. Committed to serving the public and supporting artists at all stages of their careers, Hillyer has presented over 300 exhibitions featuring local, regional, and international artists, reaching over 97,000 visitors.

IA&A's award-winning **Design Studio** offers a full scope of print and design services specializing in exhibition book design. Design Studio has published 90 exhibition catalogues as well as various projects for individual artists and collectors.

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