

# DESIGN MUSEUM

DESIGN MUSEUM, SHAD THAMES,  
LONDON SE1 2YD TICKETS: Adults £8.50; Concessions £6.50;  
Students £5.00; Under 12s free  
OPENING: 10.00 -17.45 Daily. Last Admission: 17.15  
PUBLIC INFORMATION T: 020 7940 8790  
W: designmuseum.org  
ADVANCE BOOKING T: 020 7940 8783  
W: ticketweb.co.uk

Media Announcement

## Less and More

### - The Design Ethos of Dieter Rams

18 November 2009 - 9 March 2010

Media View 17 November 12pm – 2pm

For 40 years, from 1955 until 1995, Dieter Rams designed or oversaw the design of over 500 products for the German electronics manufacturer **Braun**, as well as furniture for **Vitsoe**. Audio equipment, calculators, shavers and shelving systems are just some of the products created by Dieter Rams, each item holds a special place in the history of industrial and furniture design and has established Dieter Rams as one of the most influential designers of the late 20th century.

This exhibition is the first UK definitive retrospective of Dieter Rams' career in over 12 years. Showcasing landmark designs for both Braun and Vitsoe, this exhibition will examine how Dieter Rams' design ethos inspired and challenged perceptions of domestic design and assesses Dieter Rams' lasting influence on today's design landscape. Archive film footage, models, sketches, prototypes and images taken by international photographer **Todd Eberle** will be displayed alongside specially commissioned interviews with Dieter Rams' contemporaries, which include **Jonathan Ive, Jasper Morrison, Sam Hecht and Naoto Fukasawa**.

Dieter Rams' elegant products challenged original concepts of design thought by reducing electrical switches to a minimum and arranging them in an orderly manner, transparent plastics and wooden veneers were mixed and colour schemes were limited to tones of pure whites and greys, the only splash of colour being allocated to switches and dials.

Dieter Rams defined an elegant, legible, yet rigorous visual design language, identified through his 'Ten Principles' of good design, which, amongst others stated that good design should be innovative, aesthetic, durable and useful. Heavily influenced by the Bauhaus and Ulm School of Art in Germany, Dieter Rams pioneered a design spirit which embraced modernity and placed functionality above everything else, resulting in designs that were free of decoration, simple in function and embodied a cohesive sense of order. Born in Germany in 1932, Dieter Rams trained in architecture and interior design before joining Braun in 1955 where he took advantage of electronic and engineering advances made during the Second World War to realise a sophisticated re-interpretation of domestic appliances.



Ends



#### Images from top left:

1. 620 Chair Programme and matching footstool, Vitsœ, 1962, design by Dieter Rams
2. SK 4, radio-phono combination, 1956, Braun, design by Dieter Rams and Hans Gugelot
3. 606 Universal Shelving System, Vitsœ, 1960, design by Dieter Rams
4. T1000 world receiver, Braun, 1963, design by Dieter Rams

#### Title images: from top

1. SuperHet VHF and medium wave radio, Braun, 1961, design by Dieter Rams
2. SK 4, radio-phono combination, 1956, Braun, design by Dieter Rams and Hans Gugelot

#### Notes to Editors:

**1. Media View 17 November 12pm – 2pm** Dieter Rams will be available for interview at the Media View. Interview slots maybe requested in advance.

**2.** The Design Museum Shop will stock a selection of exclusive exhibition merchandise.

**3.** Exhibition design by graphic consultancy Bibliothèque.

**4.** Veuve Clicquot Champagne will generously support the Dieter Rams – Less and More Private View

**5.** Design Museum would like to thank Vitsœ for supporting this exhibition.

**6.** The exhibition was originally organised by Suntory Museum, Osaka, and Fuchu Art Museum, Tokyo.

#### **7. Dieter Rams' 'Ten Principles' of good design:**

- Good design is innovative.
- Good design makes a product useful.
- Good design is aesthetic.
- Good design helps us to understand a product.
- Good design is unobtrusive.
- Good design is honest.
- Good design is durable.
- Good design is consequent to the last detail.
- Good design is concerned with the environment.
- Good design is as little design as possible.

#### **8. PANEL DEBATE - The Ten Principles of Dieter Rams**

**Tuesday 2 March 7.15pm £15, £10 Members**

**Goethe Institute, 50 Princes Gate, London, SW7 2PH**

Design specialists from both Germany and the UK will discuss the impact of the work of Dieter Rams. This debate will refer to the acknowledged influence this major figure has had on industrial design as well as exploring what can still be learnt from his methods and philosophy. To bring his Ten Principles of good design up to date the audience will be asked to submit their ideal 11th principle at the end of the debate. The Design Museum proudly presents this informative discussion in partnership with the Goethe Institute where the event will be held

#### **8. Biography**

- 1932 Born in Wiesbaden, Germany.
- 1947 Enrols on the architecture and interior design course at Wiesbaden School of Art, but interrupts his studies the following year to complete a carpentry apprenticeship.
- 1953 Graduates from Wiesbaden and joins the architectural offices of Otto Appel, then working with the US firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill, in Frankfurt.
- 1955 Employed by Braun as an architect and interior designer.
- 1956 Works on the development of the SK4 record player – dubbed 'Snow White's Coffin' because of its radical transparent plastic lid – with Hans Gugelot.
- 1957 Develops the modular Atelier 1 series with L1 speakers separated from the receiver unit, an innovation that soon became an industry standard, and the KM3 food mixer which remains in production for twenty years. Begins work on the design of the modular 606 storage system for the furniture manufacturer Vitsœ+Zapf. Braun wins the prestigious Grand Prix at the 11th Triennale in Milan.
- 1958 Another industry standard is set when the L2 loudspeaker is mounted on a metal stand. Launch of the T3/4/41, the first pocket sized transistor radio in Germany, designed in the form of a slim flat cube.
- 1960 Develops the electrostatic LE1 loudspeaker and the 606 Shelving System for Vitsoe
- 1962 Appointed director of design at Braun.
- 1963 Design of the T1000 World Receiver as the first "all wave" portable radio with unlimited reception and the TG60, Braun's first tape recorder.
- 1965 To mark the development of high fidelity technology, Rams replaces the white and grey colour coding of Braun's products with a new black base in the Studio 1000 hi-fi system.
- 1968 Development of one of Rams' favourite products, the Cylindric T2 cigarette lighter with a newly invented magnetic ignition device.

- 1970 Completes work on the TG 1000 tape recorder
- 1971 Designs the Phase 1 desk alarm clock for Braun, the first of a series of clocks, watches and clock radios to be developed for the company.
- 1977 Works with Dietrich Lubs on the design of the ET22 pocket calculator, which will be refined as the ET33, ET44, ET66 and ET88.
- 1979 Development of the Studiomaster 2150 loudspeaker column of six speakers together with Peter Schneider and Peter Hartwein.
- 1980 Exhibition of Dieter Rams' work Design: Dieter Rams and publication of the book with the same title.
- 1985 Collaborates with Angela Knoop on the design of a set of door handles in alu cast and thermoplast for FSB.
- 1995 Rams retires from Braun and is succeeded as director of design by Peter Schneider.
- 2007 Selector for 25/25 - Celebrating 25 Years of Design exhibition at the Design Museum
- 2009 Dieter Rams – Less and More exhibition at the Design Museum, London.

**To request further information and images please contact Ashley Woodfield at the Design Museum Press Office on 0207 940 8787: email [ashley@designmuseum.org](mailto:ashley@designmuseum.org)**