

TEACHER EXHIBITION NOTES

DESIGNER MAKER USER

PERMANENT GALLERY

INTRODUCTION

Designer Maker User presents the museum's collection to look at the development of modern design through these three interconnected roles.

The exhibition is laid out in a fluid manor that focuses around the roles of the designer, maker (manufacturer/hacker/maker) and end user often in the same object. Some sections focus on more heavily the Designer, the Maker or the User. The notes below are laid out to reflect the flow of the exhibition, listing the objects in their chronological order as they appear in the gallery.

A number of digital interactives that allow students to see immediate effects of their design choices can be found in the gallery. From choosing the best materials for products through to typography that fits the purpose. Visitors may participate in the interactives in the middle section of the gallery.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Designer Maker User features almost 1000 items of twentieth and twenty-first century design viewed through the angles of the designer, manufacturer and user, including a crowdsourced wall. The exhibition covers a broad range of design disciplines, from architecture and engineering, to the digital world, fashion and graphics. Designer Maker User features a bold, colourful and engaging display designed by Studio Myerscough, with digital interactives by Studio Kin.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EXHIBITION

CROWD SOURCED WALL

The response to a brief set out by the Design Museum via social media, print and web to capture the public nominations of favourite designs. The crowd sourced wall displays some of the thousands of nominations received. Anything from a bucket, universal adapters, OysterCards and the pushbike alongside high tech solutions such as drawing tablets, computers, robot hoovers and hoverboards can be found on this publicly curated wall.

TIMELINE OF DESIGN

Where does the VW Beetle feature in the history of design and was it before or after Bauhaus? In the entrance way of the Designer Maker User exhibition is a way for your students to see the chronology of the last 100 years or so. Use this resource to help your students place key designs in their knowledge of design history.



Image: Crowd sourced wall outside Designer Maker User

DESIGNER

The 'Designer' segment of the exhibition is based on the phrase by the Italian architect Ernesto Rogers: from the spoon to the city. It explores the ways in which the thought-process of the designer informs projects at every scale, from the smallest to the largest. David Mellor's traffic light, Kinneir and Calvert's British road signage system and a 1:1 scale prototype for the new London tube train designed by PriestmanGoode will be on show.

Tube Map by Harry Beck (1931)

The schematic map shows graphic design as a tool to help the masses. Electrical engineer Harry Beck was a London Underground employee who realised that because the railway ran mostly underground, the physical locations of the stations were largely irrelevant to the traveller wanting to know how to get from one station to another only the topology of the route mattered.

Frankfurt Kitchen by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (1926)

Considered the forerunner to modern fitted kitchens and providing an efficient and low cost kitchen, the Frankfurt kitchen was designed by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky for architect Ernst May's social housing project 'New Frankfurt'.

After the World War I the German economy was at a low and an affordable housing modal was sought. Ernst May's solution was to create housing that could have mass produced layouts and fittings in order to cut down costs. Space was also at a premium in order to keep down costs. The Frankfurt Kitchen used these restrictions along with principles from Taylorism (a system that works to give the best workflow to the user) to ensure that the kitchen's user could access everything in close quarters in the sequence that they would most likely need to use. The system treated the task of domestic cooking like a factory line and also included a stove in the kitchen as standard, a novelty in Germany at the time.



Image: Frankfurt Kitchen

Su'p Spoon by 4C Design (2015)

Grant Douglas' cerebral palsy meant that certain foods would have to be fed to him. Sitting in his front room and being fed soup by his mother one day would be the inspiration for the S'up spoon. The phone rang and his mother left the room to answer it. As Grant looked at his soup going cold he thought that he could feed himself with the right utensil. He contacted design company 4C Design with the idea. The S'up spoon is born out of user need and has become a design solution that has had life beyond its original intended target demographic. Other users with mobility problems such as Parkinsons have also used the S'up to empower them and give them the independence that others enjoy.

Several prototypes are on display to show part of the process that goes into the iterative process of design. A mixture of carved foam handles and 3D printed heads along with adapted existing products are on display by the Frankfurt Kitchen.

USER

A display on the 'User' explores the interaction between people and brands that have come to define the modern world. Features include a vinyl player from Dieter Rams, landmark pieces from Sony including the Walkman and the Minidisc, the Apple iPhone and the Olivetti Valentine typewriter; all demonstrating how design has changed how we communicate. Objects listed below can be found in the middle section of the gallery.

'Blair' placard by David Gentleman (2003)

Illustrator David Gentleman's response to the UK's imminent declaration of war against Iraq in 2003 was to put out posters with the word 'No' with the 'o' made from a drop of blood. Gentleman offered the poster to the Stop the War Coalition on advice from Tony Benn. They began printing Gentleman's posters as placards and the partnership continued with 'No more lies' and 'Blair'. The blood splat was made with red watercolour dripped from a ruling pen held at shoulder height on to high grade, hand-made watercolour paper. The image was later computerised for reproduction. This technique was used to powerful effect when prints of 100,000 blood splats were laid out on the grass on Parliament Square.



Image: Blair design by David Gentleman

Before going to press with the 'Blair' image David Gentleman considered the impact this could have on him professionally. 'It took me a while to dare to use it,' he said, 'because Blair was still prime minister at the time, and I thought: "is this really a good career move?"'

Olivetti, Braun, Sony and Apple products (1960s – 2010s)

Focusing on domestic appliance companies known for their design ethic, this section highlights Olivetti's graphic design as well as showcasing their Valentine typewriter before progressing on to Braun's minimalist design, Sony's technology rich products, and Apple's marriage of the two. All in all, these four companies can claim to be the biggest players of the industrial design world for large periods from 1960s through to the modern through several baton passes.

Objects to look out for include;

Olivetti – Poster collection that helped make Olivetti the fashionable choice.

Braun – SK5 (1958) An updated and improved version of the SK4 (1956) record player that revolutionised home sound systems with its

use of a metal body and a plexiglass lid that allowed the workings to be seen even when the lid was down. The record player was no longer a piece of furniture to be hidden away when not in use.

Sony – My first Sony (Mid-1980s) range gave technology to a new audience, gave the company a new market and helped build lifelong customers. The range uses a Memphis styling to make the devices attractive to younger users.

Apple – iMac G3 (1998) computer was the first consumer product released after Steve Job's return to the company as CEO. Jobs had slimmed down the company's product line offer the customer a smaller selection of Apple products. The iMac G3, designed by the now head of design Sir Jonathan Ive, was the first computer to drop the floppy disk drive and Apple's own 'Desktop Bus' connector in favour of rewritable CDs and USB ports. The handle on the top gave the iMac G3 portability, twin headphone inputs gave it sociability and the CD player and built in modem gave it protection against imminent format obsolescence.

MAKER

In the 'Maker' section, the exhibition traces the evolution of manufacturing, from Thonet bentwood cafe chairs and Model T Ford cars to robotic arms, mass customisation and 3D printing. Everyday objects such as tennis balls as well as notable designs including the London 2012 Olympic Torch are presented at different stages of production.

BigRep One by Big Rep (2014)

German based company BigRep wanted to take affordable 3D printers from printing small palm sized objects in the world of large object printing. The Big Rep One was the solution. Able to print large scale prints in a few hours, the Big Rep One can create moulds as well as print objects. The printer can be seen in action printing different objects from vases to tool trays.

Mould for the no. 14 chair by Gebrüder Thonet (1850s)

Made using a unique steam-bending technology, known as bentwood, that required years to perfect the Thonet No.14 has become known as the 'bistro chair'. With its affordable price and simple design, it became one of the best-selling chairs ever made. Some 50 million No. 14s were sold between 1859 and 1930, and millions more have been sold since.

Technology wall

The technology wall shows the progression of technology from items that fulfil a single function through to modern multiple use items such as smartphones.



Image: Mould for the no. 14 chair by Gebrüder Thonet

WORK IN PROGRESS TABLE

Attempt some of the design briefs at the work in progress table and try out recreations of famous chairs from design history. From the Frank Gehry Wiggle Side chair made of cardboard to the Thomas Heatherwick Migus Spun chair that allows the user to spin around like a spinning top.

The Work in Progress table features six briefs covering Fashion, Product, Service, Architecture, Graphics and Transport. Visitors are invited to take a pencil and piece of paper, sit at the Work in Progress table, select a brief that they like and create their own design solution. Designs are displayed on the Work in Progress shelves next to the table. Books are available for inspiration as well as folders including mood boards.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

There are many different aspects of the exhibition that can be explored – Each commission prompts the visitor to ask questions about the way that we interact with the world around us through the medium of design.

The use of sketchbooks and pencils is welcomed in the gallery, and will support all of the suggested activities listed below. Students are also encouraged to take photographs (without flash) to record their visit.

The following activities are starting points for school and sixth form groups visiting the exhibition:

Design your own

Create your own Crowd Sourced wall. Get every student to nominate two objects; one up to the cost of five pounds and the other with a no limit. The objects must be items that the students already own.

Get students to draw 3D pictures of the objects and annotate their sketches if possible. They should say why they nominated the objects. These objects can then be curated into your own crowdsourced wall in the classroom.

Discover Design

A generic free downloadable gallery activity worksheet for students, can be downloaded from the museum's online resource:

Discover.designmuseum.org

EXHIBITION GUIDANCE

Objects in the exhibition are on open display rather than in cases. Care should be taken when moving around the exhibition and most objects should not be touched. Any objects that can be touched will

be clearly signed. We would be grateful if you could brief your students accordingly.

Depending on your group and your itinerary for the visit, we would recommend that you set aside approximately 40 minutes to explore this exhibition.

Photography is permitted without flash; however filming is strictly prohibited in the exhibition.

Please ensure that you read our school visit Terms and Conditions document before making your visit.

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