

THE GOLDSTEIN MUSEUM OF DESIGN

241 McNeal Hall, 1985 Buford Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108  
Phone: 612.624.7434, Email: [gmd@umn.edu](mailto:gmd@umn.edu), Web: <http://goldstein.design.umn.edu>

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Russel Wright: Living with Good Design***

New Exhibition

February 9, 2008 - April 20, 2008

“Good design is for everyone.”—Russel Wright



**Left:** Selection of water pitchers from the American Modern line, the most widely recognized Wright design, in production from 1939 to 1959. Photo by Masca, courtesy Manitoga, Inc./Russel Wright Design Center.

**Center:** Exterior view of the Dragon Rock studio, nestled into the surrounding grounds of Manitoga. The pergola leads to the main house at left. Photo by Masca, courtesy Manitoga, Inc./Russel Wright Design Center.

**Right:** Vignette of Statton Easier Living Chair and Double Drop Leaf Dining Table designed by Russel in 1950. Accessories designed by Russel Wright. Collection of William Straus, New York, NY. Photo by Simon Russell, courtesy of the Decorative Arts Center of Ohio.

On February 8, 2008, the Goldstein Museum of Design will open the exhibition *Russel Wright: Living with Good Design*. America's first celebrity designer, Russel Wright's designs and logo signature were found in nearly every American kitchen and dining room during the 1940s and '50s. Wholeheartedly believing that good design was for everyone, Russel Wright was truly the first designer committed to creating high designed functional items for everyday living. *Russel Wright: Living with Good Design* traces the Ohio native's career development as his designs and concepts for a new, relaxed style of living emerged and subsequently transformed a generation of Americans following World War II. The exhibition will remain on view through April 20, 2008. *Russel Wright: Living with Good Design* is organized by Arts Midwest and the Decorative Arts Center of Ohio and sponsored by Target.

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### ***Russel Wright: Living with Good Design***

February 9, 2008 - April 20, 2008

For more information, contact Lin Nelson-Mayson at 612.624.3292 or [lnelsonm@umn.edu](mailto:lnelsonm@umn.edu)

#### **OPENING AND RELATED PROGRAM:**

Opening Party and Lecture by exhibit curator Robert Stearns  
Friday, February 8, 2008; 7:00-9:00pm  
Goldstein Museum of Design Gallery

#### **LECTURE**

Carol Franklin, Principal, Andropogon Associates, Ltd.

#### **Russel Wright's Woodland Landscape: History and Perspective**

Monday, February 11, 2008; 5:45pm

100 Rapson Hall

Carol Franklin, a principal of Andropogon, a Philadelphia-based landscape architecture firm, worked with Russel Wright to conduct an in-depth study of the ground of his home, Manitoga, in upstate New York. Franklin is a national leader in ecological landscape design and gardening with native plants.

Manitoga, Wright's historic home, studio and woodland garden was an abandoned quarry and logging site when Wright purchased it in 1942. He developed its landscape design over more than three decades ending with his death in 1976. Manitoga became a National Historic Landmark in 2006. Franklin's 1982 study, "Design and Management Guide for Manitoga," served as a guide for maintenance of the 80-acre estate.

#### **VISITOR INFORMATION:**

##### **Goldstein Gallery Hours**

Monday-Wednesday, & Friday	10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Thursday	10:00 am - 8:00 pm
Saturday-Sunday	1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

##### **Admission and Parking**

Admission to the Goldstein Museum of Design is free. The Goldstein Gallery is room 241 on the second floor of McNeal Hall on the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota. Parking in the nearby Gortner Ramp at 1395 Gortner Avenue is \$2.50 per hour (daily maximum of \$12.00). Parking on Sundays is free (except for special events). The parking ramp and the Museum are both handicapped accessible.

##### **Tours**

Groups are invited to schedule a tour of the exhibition at least three weeks in advance. Tours generally last one hour and can be tailored to meet your group's needs. Tours may include gallery activities or a visit to the Goldstein Museum's Research Center. Contact us at (612) 624-7434 or [gmd@umn.edu](mailto:gmd@umn.edu) to schedule a tour or for additional information.

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February 9, 2008 - April 20, 2008

### **EXHIBITION DETAILS:**

This comprehensive exhibition of designs by Russel Wright (1904–1976), the first to be seen beyond the East Coast, will travel to five American cities including the Goldstein Museum of Design. Among Wright's innovative designs for housewares, furniture, appliances, and fabrics were many "firsts:" aluminum serving accessories, "blonde" furniture, stainless steel flatware, aluminum blinds, and plastic dinnerware for the home. He created exhibits for the 1939 New York World's Fair, and his designs were celebrated by the Museum of Modern Art. Between 1939 and 1959 a quarter billion pieces of his *American Modern* dinnerware were produced by Steubenville Pottery in Steubenville, Ohio, and purchased by millions of Americans, making it the most widely produced of its kind in history.

The exhibition explores five themes: Wright's early years; his exploration of new forms and materials; the creation of a new American lifestyle; Wright's broadening horizons in Asia; and his return to the land at Manitoga. The exhibition is accompanied by a brochure publication and an informative Web site with essays by Stearns; Wright historian Robert Schonfeld of New York; and Japanese design historian Hitoshi Mori of Tokyo.

Born and raised in southwestern Ohio, Wright was intimately familiar with his natural surroundings as well as middle-American life. Serving as a tradeware design consultant in Asia in the 1950s, Wright was exposed to traditional Asian and Japanese design. He was captivated by the clean, functional objects he found that were made of natural materials. Wright returned to the United States with nearly 2,000 Asian handcrafted housewares that he presented at department store trade fairs, kindling the on-going American taste for casual yet dramatic Asian style. This style is clearly seen in the innovative designs for his house and 80-acre woodland garden, Manitoga, in Garrison, NY, located 50 miles north of New York City, and recently designated a National Historic Landmark. Manitoga's ground-breaking design and concepts will be emphasized for the first time in this exhibition through wall-sized photographs and a 9-foot by 12-foot floor map of Manitoga's trails.

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#### **EXHIBITION ORGANIZERS AND SPONSORS:**

*Arts Midwest* connects the arts to audiences throughout the nine-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest connects people throughout the Midwest and the world to meaningful arts opportunities, sharing creativity, knowledge, and understanding across boundaries.

*The Decorative Arts Center of Ohio* is located in Lancaster, Ohio, just southeast of Columbus. It is a statewide organization that fosters knowledge, enjoyment, and appreciation of the decorative and design arts and celebrates the architecture and heritage of the Reese-Peters House. The Center provides exhibitions, public programs, art classes and workshops for all ages, and a focus for research and communication about the decorative arts of Ohio.

Knowing that the arts are an essential part of a vibrant community, *Target* actively supports arts organizations from coast to coast. With its company-wide commitment to good design, Target is proud to sponsor the national touring exhibition of *Russel Wright: Living with Good Design*, showing how creativity and innovation can lead to extraordinary products. Since opening its first store in 1962, Target has partnered with nonprofit organizations, guests and team members to help meet community needs. Target gives back more than \$2 million each week to strengthen families and communities across the nation, with a focus on education, the arts, social services and other vital community partnerships.

*The Ohio Arts Council* is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically.

The exhibit was designed for the Goldstein Gallery by students in the University of Minnesota course DHA 5170 Special Topics in Design, Housing, and Apparel: Exhibit Design, taught by Lonnie Broden of the Science Museum of Minnesota.