Excerpt: "Antiques of the Future," by Lisa Roberts

Anyone could have a museum-quality collection, if they only knew how!

This book will introduce you to a collection of award-winning designer products, many of which are found in museums, and all of which are relatively affordable and accessible. But first, some background about the collection and the collector:

I started collecting designer household products about 25 years ago. I had just changed careers from architecture to home furnishing design. And I wasn’t the only one! Coincidentally, a trend was emerging in the early 1980s in which world-famous architects and industrial designers, such as Michael Graves and Philippe Starck, were asked to design all sorts of everyday objects for the home.

As part of the industry, I witnessed this explosion of extraordinary design of very ordinary objects and started collecting the ones I liked: corkscrews and vacuum cleaners, toilet brushes and tea kettles.

I knew that some of them would only be in the market for a short time since trendy designs often have limited production runs. So I jumped at the chance to get them while they were still available. At the same time, other objects caught my eye for the opposite reason. These had wide and enduring market appeal, becoming the “instant classics” of their time.

I collected more than 300 of these distinctively designed products during the next 25 years. Looking for the best designs around, I read magazines and books; consulted curators, store owners, and designers; went to exhibitions; and surfed the web.

The collection began to take on a personality. But how to describe it? It wasn’t fine art, because each of the items had a practical use. It wasn’t craft, since everything was mass-produced. And the term “collectible” didn’t seem to do the objects justice, since many of them had won distinguished awards and were in museums.

I finally named my collection and defined it as...

Rubber X-Bands were featured in the 2004 exhibition “Humble Masterpieces,” at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Antiques of the Future

Highly designed contemporary products that will rise in value once
they are no longer in production
because they represent the
best of design in their time.

www.antiquesofthefuture.com

Pipe Dreams watering can was designed by Jerszy Seymour, whose work has been exhibited at the Design Museum in London and the Salone del Mobile in Milan.

Criteria
To be included in my collection, an object had to have one or more of the following attributes:

1 Exhibited in museums or included in permanent museum collections
2 Designed by a notable architect or designer
3 Manufactured by design-oriented companies
4 Recipient of major design awards
5 Widely published in magazines or books

Since many of these objects are still being produced and sold, their future value is yet to be determined. But some of the earlier products in this collection, the ones that are no longer in production, have indeed gone up in value. See: The Future Is Now.

A chair is a very
difficult object to design,
a skyscraper
is almost easier...
Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe

Lisa S. Roberts
Foreword by Michael Graves
Photographs by Kelly Turso

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Title page:
Frank O. Gehry’s Cross Check Arm Chair (see page 176)
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Smart Design’s measuring spoons for OXO (see page 68)

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