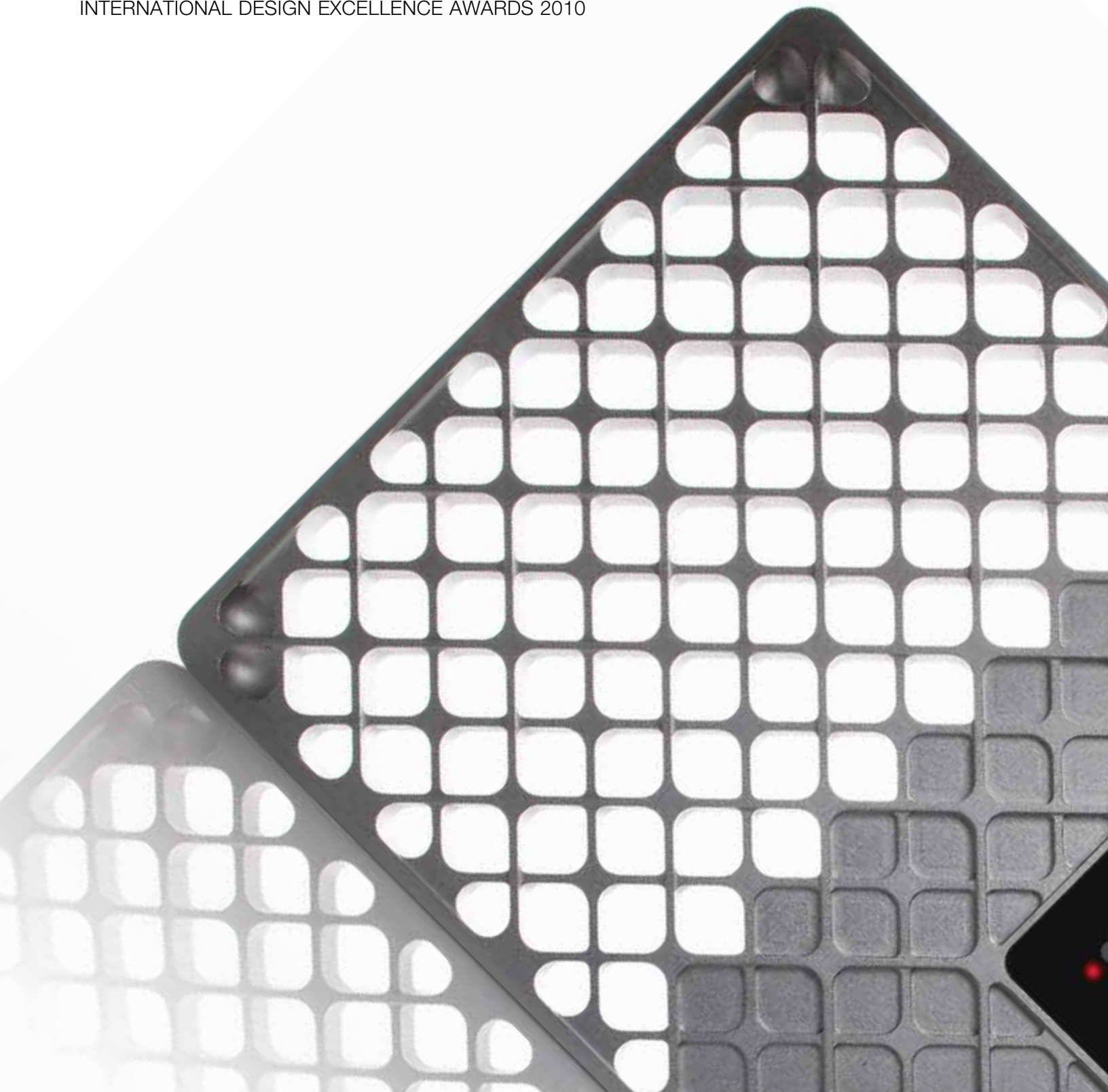


QUARTERLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA **FALL 2010**

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INTERNATIONAL DESIGN EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2010





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Cover: Slingbox 700U, Best of Show and Gold winner. Photo: Mark Serr.

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IDEA2010

BIGGER & BETTER

Three decades into awarding the best in design, IDSA's International Design Excellence Awards (IDEAs) are more popular than ever. With 1,855 entries, 2010 is the biggest year in IDEA history. This outpouring of applied creativity sends an encouraging signal about the design community's passion for making the world a better place and its ability to influence companies toward this goal. In nurturing this development, IDSA granted a total of 191 awards, recognizing the sensibility, ingenuity, compassion and sheer brilliance of today's top design talent.

Adding to the overall richness of the IDEA event, IDSA continued its promotion of international design talent with IDEA/Brasil, held in collaboration with Objeto Brasil. Winners of IDEA/Brasil advance to the general IDEA competition. The vibrant Brazilian design community made a strong showing, winning nine IDEA accolades with projects tailored to meet present and future needs, both in Brazil and beyond.

We've long been told that size doesn't matter, that it isn't a good indicator of quality. But let me assure you, this year's competition was bigger—and better as a result. Year after year, IDSA and IDEA have increasingly set higher standards for design excellence, and remarkably our industry has risen to the challenge time and again. 2010 was no exception. Of the 407 finalists, 38 took home Gold, while 65 received Silver and 88 earned Bronze. Submissions poured in from across the globe, from South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Japan, India, Canada and everywhere in between and beyond. All in all, 29 countries competed for a coveted IDEA.

The competition kicked off in Brazil, the third consecutive year IDSA has teamed with Objeto Brasil in the form of IDEA/Brasil. Seeing the Brazilian work firsthand was inspiring, as was the country. Dynamic, vibrant and emerging as

a cultural and economic force, Brazilian design exuded a burgeoning sense of pride in its work. Heavily influenced by their craft-based heritage, Brazilians clearly have a unique understanding of the design craft. Vibrant use of color, form and wonderful interior design, housewares and graphics will remain in my memory.

To further enhance the international flavor of the competition and increase global cooperation, two of the 2010 IDEA jurors also participated in the Australian International Design Awards. Based in Sydney, the competition was impeccably organized and juried with detail rarely seen in design competitions. During the three-day tour de force, jurors quickly disassembled and reassembled products to better understand their functional qualities numerous products were tried out and some even tried on!

The final round of IDEA judging took place in the U.S. at The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Mich. This is also the first year the museum will house the IDEA winners in its permanent collection. Few people think "Detroit" when they consider the design epicenters of the world and fewer likely think of nearby "Dearborn," but they may want to reconsider. The Henry Ford was the perfect location to judge the IDEA com-



petition. The museum houses an incredible collection that showcases the people and ideas that have fired our imaginations and changed our lives over the last century. It's full of "stuff." Not stuff in the negative sense, but the stuff that we surround ourselves with, the stuff that makes us who we are: homes, cars, furniture, computers, pens, planes—the stuff that when well designed, actually improves our lives. I can't think of a better backdrop to judge one of the world's most anticipated design competitions.

The 2010 jury was made up of 18 world-renowned designers and design thinkers. We aspired to have the most diverse jury this year—and succeeded. Of special note, women represented nearly half of the 2010 jury. During just 36 hours, we came together to critique, examine, debate and finally award the best designs of 2010. It wasn't easy. The pressure was on. Knowing that your choices will signal to the world what's important in design now and into the future is a bit stressful, but also very rewarding.

As a jury we recognized a few key themes:

Professionalism: There was a very high level of professionalism and polish, greater than we've seen in the past. It even extended through the student submissions where at times it was impossible to differentiate the student work from its professional counterparts. Across the board, the work was resolved and immaculately presented in model, visual and written form.

Nationalism: A new sense of national pride seemed to be emerging in the design work of countries such as Brazil and China. No longer content as producers of the world's goods, China is forcefully pursuing the development of its own brands, but notably doing so in a way that's authentic to its culture. Similarly, Brazil, with its great craft tradition and unique geographic isolation, has an emerging style that is as bold, colorful and expressive as the country and its people.

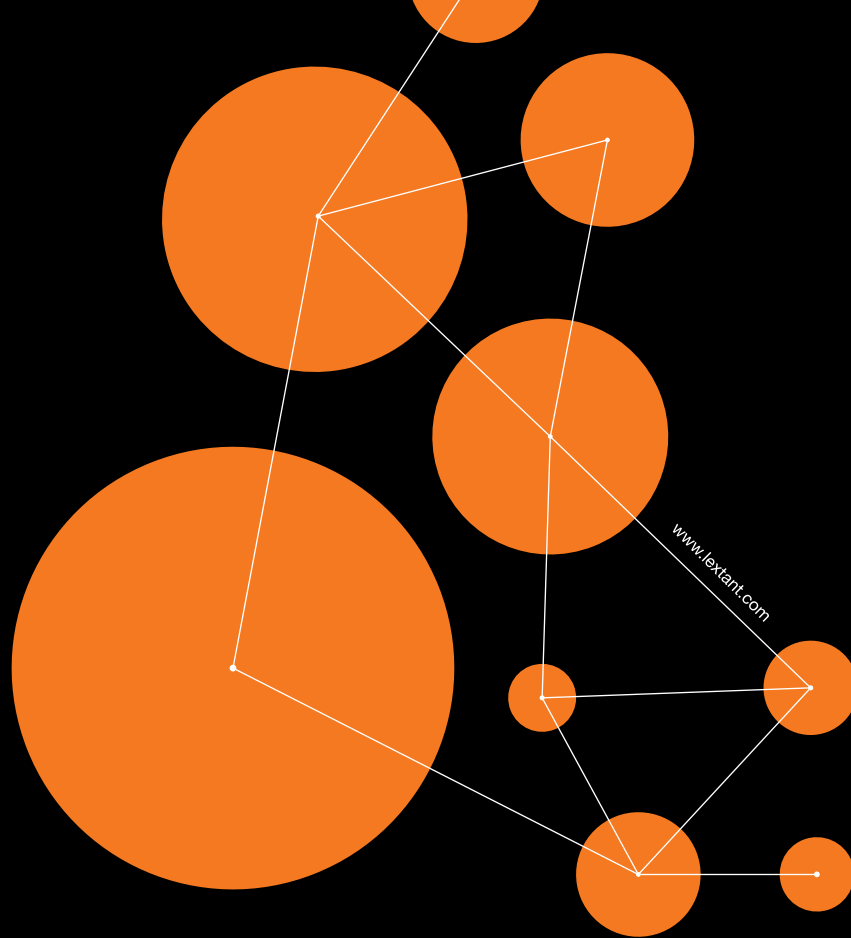
Convergence: At last, convergence is truly upon us. Several jury discussions focused on whether or not it's possible to really divorce an interaction design from the global experience of using a product. Given the evolution of our industry, it's fair to assume these types of discussions were much less likely five years ago—before the true convergence of hardware and software solutions that we're familiar with today.

Sustainability: On its own, sustainability isn't new to design, of course. Consistent with years past, environmental concerns were large and evident, but it seemed in 2010 those concerns were expressed in a more mature and knowledgeable way.

This discussion about sustainability epitomized the dynamic and progressive spirit of the 2010 jury. There was consensus that the seismic evolutions of the design profession over the past five years needed to be better captured in the IDEA judging criteria. Clive Roux, IDSA's CEO, was on hand and very supportive of reviewing and improving the IDEA competition to maintain its relevance. As a result, the jury and IDSA agreed that moving forward the ecodesign category will be replaced by a broader set of environmental, cultural and economic responsibility standards that every submission will be judged against. Changes like this, small yet significant, are a positive for the design profession—confirming the industry's shift toward a broader, more holistic approach to design.

In closing, I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to IDSA for its tremendous support throughout the process. I'd also like to thank the 2010 IDEA sponsors—Dow Corning, The Henry Ford and *Fast Company*—as true champions of design I commend you. Last, but certainly not least, many congratulations to the 2010 finalists and winners; your work represents the best in design and underscores our industry's commitment to the future. ■

—John Barratt, IDSA, 2010 IDEA Jury Chair



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