

I.D.

The International Design Magazine

\$30 US/\$37 CAN AUGUST 2001

2001

Design Review



CONSUMER PRODUCTS GRAPHICS PACKAGING ENVIRONMENTS
FURNITURE EQUIPMENT CONCEPTS STUDENT WORK



WITH A HANDS-ON APPROACH TO JUDGING, jurors Susan Yelavich and Sonja Schiefer swung hammers, tried out bottle openers and jumped up and down in running shoes. Although it wasn't possible to test every entry in the consumer Products category, jurors placed a definite premium on functionality. Many an item fell by the wayside when real-world testing didn't live up to the promises made by an accompanying brochure.

"Innovation is a big deal for me," Schiefer said. "Have they really made a step forward in the usage? Did they follow it through in the design details?" Both jurors agreed that the Mac G4 Cube does it all. As this year's Best of Category winner, it wowed the jurors with extremely elegant details that continued right down to the machine's cords and screws. The Cube's perfect union of form and function beat out other entries that excelled in one, but not both, of these key criteria. "The Future glasses are truly very beautiful, but it's just the shape," Schiefer said. "There's no functionality attached."

The Cube also avoided a trap that knocked other technology entries out of the running: faceless designs that don't express themselves as industrial products. "Design related to digital technology is in transition," Yelavich said. "It's experiencing growing pains and borrowing visual language." Schiefer agreed, noting that the shape of these items is often overdone and unrelated to function.

Other noticeable trends in this category included universal design and objects for extreme physical conditions. Jurors found both inclinations intriguing but were especially excited by the experiments in ergonomic, user-oriented design. One overall disappointment expressed by the jurors, however, was a lack of risk-taking. "We're such skilled and jaded consumers that it's hard to be surprised," Yelavich said. "The bar has been raised high for designers."

JURORS: Sonja Schiefer and Susan Yelavich

design distinction

FUTURE 001.006 GLASSWARE RANGE

Praising its simplicity, the jurors found this collection of contemporary glassware products “beautiful and extremely sexy.” The set includes four types of glasses: rock, wine, shot and flute. Although the exterior shape of each piece is a basic cylinder, the internal cavities form the stereotypical profiles of the respective drinking glasses, giving each its own distinct identity. “It’s a great family of glasses. I love the way they play with the volume and emptiness of the glass,” Schiefer said.

CLIENT/COMPANY Future Creative, Middlesex, England **IN-HOUSE DESIGN** FutureCreative, Middlesex, England; Chris Christou, principle; Raun Forsyth, designer **HARDWARE/SOFTWARE** Silicon Graphics Indigo2, Power Mac G3, Alia|Wavefront Studio, Adobe Photoshop, QuarkXPress



FUTURE 101.013 KITCHEN HAND TOOL SET

This line of handheld electronic kitchen tools-- which includes a blender, whisk, knife and can opener--has character and class. Aided by a visual design that reflects elegance and simplicity, the sales-positioning strategy of the kitchen tools includes "cocoon" packaging made from recycled pulp. The tools look and feel good. Schiefer described the appliances as friendly, sweet and approachable. "It's definitely a product you want to touch," she said. A combination of materials, including soft-touch rubbers, metals and plastics, make the tools comfortable and intuitive. And according to Yelavich, the appliances even look easy to clean.

CLIENT/COMPANY Kenwood Ltd., Hampshire, England
CONSULTANT DESIGN Future Creative, Middlesex, England: Chris Christou, principle. Kenwood Ltd., Hampshire, England: Johan Sarter, director of design; John Harding, project manager
HARDWARE/SOFTWARE Silicon Graphics Indigo2, Apple Power Mac G3, Alias|Wave-front Studio, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, QuarkXpress