

PressRelease



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Jennifer Nyholm
Tel: +815/777-4444

MERCEDES-BENZ DESIGN CHIEF GORDEN WAGENER WINS PRESTIGIOUS AMERICAN PRIZE FOR DESIGN

Daimler AG Design Head Gorden Wagener, Creator of Mercedes-Benz's Design Philosophy of 'Sensual Purity,' is Honored at the Gala Awards GOOD DESIGN Night for his Design Achievements in New York City on January 27, 2017

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (December 22, 2016) — German designer, Gorden Wagener, who has emblazoned a new and profound design direction that has challenged and reshaped contemporary automotive design-thinking, carving out a new territory that pushes the envelope and the limits of how people are transported today and in the future, has been selected as this year's Laureate of the prestigious *American Prize for Design*.

As Chief Designer and Executive Vice President at Daimler AG., Mr. Wagener has headed the design unit of Daimler AG since the mid-2008s. For him, designing brands and a holistic approach are one in the same; synonymous. Not only the products, but also the brands of Daimler AG have been staged perfectly. He and his international team are therefore responsible for the design of all brands and products within Daimler AG, including all cars as well as the corporate design of all brands. The focus is on the brand Mercedes-Benz. Under his leadership, his philosophy of 'sensual purity,' created in 2009, is now being continually developed. The philosophy defines modern luxury and expresses an essential aspect of the brand – the bipolarity of "intelligence and emotion."

A variety of Daimler AG models shoulder Mr. Wagener's signature such as the new E-, C- and S-Class models, the GLE Coupé and GLC SUVs, the Mercedes-AMG GT as well as smart and the commercial vehicles of the company.

Each year, *The American Prize for Design* is awarded jointly by The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design and The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies

—MORE—

GORDEN WAGENER NAMED AMERICAN PRIZE FOR DESIGN
Add One

to designers who have made a commitment to forward the principles of design excellence within the context of our contemporary society and who elevated design to a more a profound humanist statement about how our modern contemporary society can advance and progress as a result.

Earlier this year, the American Architecture firm of Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture, architects of the world's two tallest skyscrapers in the world—Burji Khalifa in the UAE and Kingdom Tower in Saudi Arabia—were awarded with the *American Prize for Architecture*.

“This year’s public accolade to this visionary German designer is long overdue,” states Christian Narkiewicz-Laine, Museum President/CEO, The Chicago Athenaeum.

“The designs produced by Gorden Wagener are stunningly original and exuberant; masterpieces of a unique signature, and seamless and bold in a fusion of art and technology.”

“During his 10-year reign as Design Chief at Daimler AG., Mr. Wagener has produced a variety of models that bear his unique signature, such as the new E-, C- and S-Class models, the GLE Coupé and GLC SUVs, the Mercedes-AMG GT as well as smart and the commercial vehicles of the company.”

“His recent Mercedes-Benz F 015 Luxury in Motion is not only stunningly streamlined and sculptured, but is energy efficient advancing much in the design and sustainability of Green automobiles and Green transportation. The F015 was the recipient of The Chicago Athenaeum’s Green Good Design® Award earlier this year.”

“For Mr. Wagener, design is brand-defining, and a holistic approach to design is therefore essential. His philosophy of ‘sensual purity’ embodies every design with progressive, sophisticated characteristics that have made this Stuttgart-based automobile manufacturer, a leader, not a follower within the car industry.”

“In a sense,” continues Mr. Narkiewicz-Laine, “Gorden Wagener’s designs create something that lasts longer and with more substance, differentiating the brand from other competitors and a timeless hallmark that really constitutes Good Design.”

“Germany is often romanticized as a stronghold of leading modernist design, and the legacies of names like Dieter Rams and Max Braun of Braun, Walter Gropius of the Bauhaus, Adolf Dassler of adidas, August Horch of Audi AG, and Gorden Wagener of Daimler AG only serve to uphold the country’s international profound rapport.”

Gorden Wagener was born on September 3, 1968 in Essen. After studying Industrial Design at the University of Essen (1990-1993), he specialized his studies in Transportation Design at The Royal College of Art in London.

GORDEN WAGENER NAMED AMERICAN PRIZE FOR DESIGN
Add Two

Before he joined Mercedes-Benz in 1997, he worked as an exterior designer at Volkswagen, Mazda, and GM.

In 2009 he received the title of Professor Honoris Causa from the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design in Budapest. In 2010 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Technical University of Sofia.

His previous positions within the Daimler company include: Vice President Design Daimler AG, Mercedes-Benz Cars, Vans & Daimler Trucks, 2008; Director Design Strategy and Global Advanced Design, California, 2007; Vice President DaimlerChrysler Research, Engineering and Design North America Inc., 2007; Senior Manager Mercedes-Benz Advanced Design North America, Inc., 2006; Manager Exterior/Interior Styling A-/B-/C-/E-/CLK-/CLS-Platform, 2002; Manager Exterior/Interior Styling R-/ML-/GL-Platform, 1999; and Transportation-Designer at Mercedes-Benz Design, 1997.

The design studios of Daimler AG are spread throughout the entire world and as part of its work the international team headed by Mr. Wagener consistently takes a comprehensive design approach. This is implemented to perfection by the interaction between the different design disciplines. The aim is to achieve design uniformity for all products perceived by the customer – from the vehicle models to a holistic corporate design for all the brands within the group. To this end, the specialists for interior and exterior design work closely with their colleagues in Advanced Design.

The worldwide Advanced Design Studios in China, the USA, Italy and Germany provide major impulses for continuous further development of the design idiom, initiating new trends with new ideas. The expertise of the digital graphic designers is also a major influence. The focus is always on the core Mercedes-Benz brand, the design of which has developed from classic to modern luxury.

Mr. Wagener states: “I think that the environment definitely influences creative thinking – I not only get inspired on my travels, but also by elements in day-to-day environments such as the forms of nature, architecture, art, fashion or good product design from outside the automobile industry.

The American Prize for Design coincides with a new book by Gorden Wagener, published by Condé Nast International, London entitled: *Sensual Purity*.

From the very first page, the book immerses the reader in the all-embracing world of Daimler design. The book takes an unprecedentedly in-depth look behind the scenes at the Design Studios and provides a comprehensive insight into the designers' creative work. It shows how the designers' dreams of a future world take shape as fascinatingly bold, yet realistic visions: a visionary lifeworld of the future is to be seen, with roads, bridges, villas and skyscrapers, cars, boats, and aircraft.

GORDEN WAGENER NAMED AMERICAN PRIZE FOR DESIGN
Add Three

Sensual Purity contains essays by renowned futurologists, philosophers, neuroscientists, and novelists illuminate the elusive nature of creativity. The book also shows Mr. Wagener in conversation with leading creative thinkers, such as the pioneer of modern architecture and urban planning, Patrick Schumacher from the office of Zaha Hadid.

“We are thrilled to celebrate the accomplishments of this world-renowned designer for Daimler AG and Mercedes-Benz,” states Kieran Conlon, Director/COO, The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies.

“Mr. Wagener is a source of great inspiration in the world of design and manufacturing; his achievements set a high-bar standard for every designer and manufacturer worldwide to improve and shape a society for its betterment and for all of humanity—from the ‘spoon to the city’.”

Gorden Wagener will receive *The American Prize for Design* at the 66th Annual Good Design Gala, Good Design Night, in New York City on January 27, 2017 along with recipients of the Good Design Awards from 46 nations.

Tickets are available by contacting The Chicago Athenaeum’s office at +815/777-4444 or by email jennifer@chicagoathenaeum.org.

Other exhibitions, events, and lectures are being planned in the United States and Europe during 2017 to celebrate Mr. Wagener and *The American Prize for Design*.

For press information and photographs, contact Jennifer Nyholm at jennifer@chicagoathenaeum.org.

NOTE TO REPORTERS AND EDITORS: Photos of the 2016 American Prize for Design are available for download. For more details on the award and previous winners, visit The European Centre’s website at www.europeanarch.eu.

About The Chicago Athenaeum (www.chi-athenaeum.org) is a global nonprofit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to provide public education about the significance of architecture and design and how those disciplines can have a positive effect on the human environment.

About The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies (www.europeanarch.eu) is dedicated to public education concerning all aspects of the built environment - from entire cities to individual buildings - including the philosophical issues of arts and culture that ultimately give the final shape to design. A high emphasis exists on contemporary values and aesthetics, conservation and sustainability, and the theoretical exploration and advancement of art and design as the highest expression of culture and urbanism.

The American Prize for Design © 2016 by The Chicago Athenaeum and The European Center together with Metropolitan Arts Press Ltd.