

**PR-09-AG -1-E****Synopsis of the Research Project (Head : Anne Gossot)****Starting date : Spring 2009****The Birth of Industrial Design in the Period between the Wars: The Invention of the Conceptual Tools of Modern Design**

The industrial engine of the 1920s gave birth to a new productive sector, that of durable consumer goods. This occurred first in the field of domestic appliances, in the context of the government campaign to westernize daily customs and practices and modernize lifestyles, especially with respect to the home. Developing a local version of “western” products, previously unknown in local manufacturing, gave rise to a new science and practice of engineering and product creation, in fact, “industrial design.” At a time of mass consumption, this necessarily involved developing methods for mechanized reproduction, starting with standardization.

Our study intends to trace the process of the emergence of industrial design and the development of standardization, particularly in the area of western style furniture, the first durable domestic consumer goods that Japan attempted to mass-produce.

**Key concepts**

- The invention of industrial design in Japan: The development of scientific methods of standardization and product ergonomics.
- The pre-war history of the durable consumer goods industry.
- The works of the Industrial Art Institute of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (*Shôkôshô Kôgei Shidôsho*).
- The reception of western avant-garde approaches : Deutscher Werkbund, *Siedlungen/Neues Bauen*, Bauhaus, and French modernism (C. Perriand, Le Corbusier, etc.)
- The reform of lifestyles (*seikatsu kaizen undô*) and the movement for a “cultivated” lifestyle (*bunka seikatsu*).
- Structures and infrastructures of mass consumption in the pre-war period.
- Modernization of the home and the use of the chair in Japan.
- The construction of concepts of appliances and interior decoration.
- The evolution of the pre-war market for domestic and household appliances.
- Bauhaus, modernisme français (C. Perriand, Le Corbusier, etc.)