



reddot design award

Curriculum Vitae

Essen/Germany, January 2018

Founder and CEO of Red Dot: Professor Dr. Peter Zec

Peter Zec, born in 1956, is an internationally acclaimed design expert and author, who became known worldwide for initiating and leading the Red Dot Design Award. Since 1991, he has been president of the Design Zentrum Nordrhein Westfalen in Essen, Germany.

From 1986 to 1988, Peter Zec was head of the specialist field "image" and was highly involved in the planning of the Centre of Arts and Media Technologies (ZKM) which had been established in Karlsruhe, Germany. Shortly before he started working for the Design Zentrum Nordrhein Westfalen, he was president of both the Federation of German Graphic Designers (Bund Deutscher Grafikdesigner) and the Association of German Industrial Designers (Verband Deutscher Industrie Designer). In 1993, he accepted a professorship of Business Communication at the University of Applied Sciences Berlin, where he lectured for the following 17 years.

In April 1991, Peter Zec took over the lead of the Design Zentrum and its design contest which was established in 1955. Until then, the competition listed mostly participations of products from German designers and manufacturers. Zec developed the award to an international platform for the evaluation of design and established its global orientation, which is reflected both in submissions from around the world and in the from then on multinational jury.

Until 1991, the logo of the Design Zentrum contained a black dot. Peter Zec believed that the dot should be red to work as a distinction: in galleries a red dot indicates that a picture is sold – and characterises a symbolism that is also conducive to a product. Moreover, in 2000, he re-named the competition to "Red Dot Design Award" and thus created an entire brand world, consisting among other things of a scientific institute, the publisher "Red Dot Edition" and several Red Dot online portals. Red Dot GmbH & Co. KG is organising the competition since 2018.

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The Red Dot Award is the only design competition in the world that presents its winning objects in its own museums: In 1995, Peter Zec decided to move the Design Zentrum to an old industrial site, today's UNESCO World Heritage Site Zollverein coal mine. Two years later the first exhibition of award-winning products opened there. With about 2,000 exhibits, the Red Dot Design Museum Essen currently shows the world's largest exhibition of contemporary design. Other museums emerged in Singapore (2005) and Taipei (2013). In 2018, an exhibition venue will open in Xiamen.

In 2005, Professor Dr. Peter Zec became president of the international umbrella organisation of design, the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (Icsid, today World Design Organization). He was the first person who held this highest position in the design world for a German institution. By initiating the programme "World Design Capital", he created a title whose assignment became one of the most important tasks of the design association. Until today, it is awarded to cities that have made outstanding contributions to good design.

For over 25 years, Peter Zec has been working as a design consultant for numerous companies at home and abroad. In October 2006, the largest German magazine for economy, WirtschaftsWoche ("BusinessWeek"), elected him one of the "20 creative unconventional thinkers worldwide changing the appearance of their companies and creating completely new markets". In 2016, he was honoured as "Kopf des Jahres" (Brain of the Year) by the Marketing Club Ruhr for his services to the region. Moreover, in the same year, he was awarded honorary citizenship of the City of Seoul because of his commitment to the South Korean capital.

Being an expert on the German as well as the international design scene, Peter Zec is the publisher of the Red Dot Design Yearbook and the International Yearbook Communication Design. Moreover, he has published a number of books, among others the following in English: German Design Standards (1997; 2005), Designing Success. Strategies, Concepts, Processes (1999), Good Design. Lifestyle and Product Culture (2000), Hall of Fame. Companies Searching for Excellence in Design (2003; 2007), Return on Ideas – Better by Design (2006), Who's Who in Design (2003; 2007), The Design Value – a Strategy for Business Success (2010). Peter Zec lives in Essen and Berlin.

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