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Museums show merchandising talent at 2010 California Gift Show

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It's often a hidden side of the museum world that curators prefer not to talk about. But surveys show that the top ranked favorite activity of museum visitors is -- yes, you guessed right -- SHOPPING!

The right purchase can keep the experience of an excellent exhibition vibrant long after the exhibition has closed or that favorite work of art is part of a traveling exhibition far away. The savvy professionals at the [California Gift Show](#) are doing their part to make sure museum visitors have more choices than ever before.

Here are a few examples from Thursday's preview at the [Los Angeles Merchandise Mart](#). First, New York's [Museum of Modern Art](#) has been keeping its licensing staff busy to bring affordable art to consumers on a budget. Picture frames based on original Frank Lloyd Wright Designs and sets of note cards featuring paintings by popular artists like Claude Monet are being featured with wholesale prices from just six to nine dollars. How do they keep the prices so low? Volume, volume, volume. Second, mid-Century works are coming into their own. Second, Art of the rock & roll era inspired by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's "Summer of Love" retrospective and "Happy Days" perspectives on Americana are establishing a foothold in museum shop display cases. And also worthy of note, art glass reminiscent of masters like Lalique and Galle is now being mass produced in durable acrylics.

Another trend worth your attention is also on view. Recent museum exhibitions are setting trends of their own in the world of retail. [Art Center of Pasadena](#) has been expanding the borders of museum quality art with its [current exhibition of the art of scientific and engineering drawings](#). Dozens of original vintage drawings have been salvaged from deep storage and are now being offered at wholesale to museum shop buyers.

This is a rare opportunity to go behind the scenes and see how the professional buyers from leading museum shops stay ahead of the most important trends. The California Gift Show continues through Monday, July 19 at the L.A. Convention Center and Los Angeles Merchandise Mart.



See Fashion + Art at the L.A. Mart.
Photo by Max Donner.

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