

**For More Information:**  
Kate Storey - (313) 982-6124  
Carrie Nolan - (313) 982-6126  
[mediarelations@thehenryford.org](mailto:mediarelations@thehenryford.org)

**Explore Inspiring Design with Good Design: Stories from Herman Miller,  
February 6-April 25, 2010 at Henry Ford Museum**  
*Exhibit Showcases Iconic Designers, Innovative Processes and Products  
from Legendary Furniture Company Herman Miller*

**Published in the January-March 2010 issue of The Henry Ford's *Living History* magazine**

*Henry Ford Museum is filled with design. Autos, toys, furniture — even our beloved Wienermobile. In each case, someone designed it to look and perform the way it does for a very specific reason.*

*For 11 weeks, February 6-April 25, we'll celebrate the world of design, from the magnificent to the mundane, from things that startle us to things we barely notice. In exhibits, tours and even a lecture series, we'll explore how designers continually reshape the world around us.*

The Herman Miller name is hardly new to visitors at The Henry Ford.

Work by Herman Miller designers such as Gilbert Rohde, George Nelson and Charles and Ray Eames have long been integrated into our furniture exhibit. Charles and Ray's work on chair design for Herman Miller is the subject of a new mini-exhibit in Henry Ford Museum. Earlier this year, the design archive of the late Bill Stumpf — co-creator of the renowned Aeron chair — was donated to the museum by his family.

But our connection to Herman Miller runs even deeper than that. In 1988, we became the lead institution in The Herman Miller Consortium, a group of 13 art and historical institutions that share approximately 800 artifacts collected by Herman Miller, Inc. As the lead institution, The Henry Ford maintains the database of the collection and is the first museum offered new additions.

So while the exhibit *Good Design: Stories from Herman Miller* is a natural extension of what we have been pursuing for decades, it also takes us into some areas we haven't explored greatly in the past.

This exhibition offers a number of perspectives on the Herman Miller achievement — an achievement rooted in a combination of extraordinary vision and practical realization. The company's commitment to addressing real design problems — always with an insistence on achievable, affordable and durable solutions — continues to this day.

Herman Miller is a company with an august heritage, but a heritage that points it to the future rather than mooring it in the past. In his introduction to the new edition of John Berry's book *Herman Miller: The Purpose of Design*, Eames Demetrios said, "The chair that Charles and Ray were designing was the chair that Herman Miller makes tomorrow. The future is implicit in every piece." He continued: "As Ray said, they wanted to do chairs where the act of mass-production made the chair better."

The Henry Ford is proud to present this innovative touring exhibition that explores the problem-solving design process employed at the world-renowned West Michigan-based furniture company Herman Miller, Inc. Developed in collaboration with The Muskegon Museum of Art, the exhibition draws upon The Henry

Ford's Herman Miller Design Collection, a comprehensive archive of the company's innovative processes and products, most of which have never been on public view.

The exhibition was developed by guest curator and design authority John R. Berry, who presents viewers with four case studies that embody the problem-solving ethos of Herman Miller — stories that tell how good design explores, inquires, engages and endures.

"These stories are intended to provide inspiration to us as individuals and as organizations to find new ways to re-generate, adapt and grow in these times of economic and environmental change," Berry wrote in his curator's statement.

"Additionally, 'art' and 'design' are often interchanged when they actually represent different purposes. Art is a form of self-expression. Artists choose subject matter, materials and media to share their reviews with others. Design is about meeting needs and is focused on serving others. Art and good design share the same concerns for positive aesthetics."

Berry has organized the exhibition around four areas of exploration in our living and working environments: ergonomics, white collar work, graphic communications and the home.

Berry's background made him an ideal resource in putting together this exhibition. He was involved with Herman Miller for 16 years, including a period of time as vice president of communications and liaison with the Eames Office as well as through his interaction with George Nelson and other major designers.

Berry founded a national professional design association, led the public relations introduction of the Aeron chair and generated recognition for Herman Miller as one of Fortune magazine's Most Admired Companies in America.

Today, Berry is the director of Design West Michigan and a national and international authority on the work of George Nelson and Ray and Charles Eames.

# # #

Henry Ford Museum is open seven days a week, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$14 for seniors and \$11 for youth; members and children under five are free. For more information please call (313) 982-6001 or visit [www.TheHenryFord.org](http://www.TheHenryFord.org).

*Good Design: Stories from Herman Miller* was organized by the Muskegon Museum of Art, Michigan, in collaboration with The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan, through the support of Herman Miller, Inc. The exhibition is curated by John Berry, Holland; coordinated by Timothy Chester, Grand Rapids; designed by Judy Hillman and Barb Loveland, Hillman Associates, Saugatuck; and fabricated by Vincent Faust, Kalamazoo.

### **About The Henry Ford**

The Henry Ford, in Dearborn, Michigan, is the world's premiere history destination and a National Historic Landmark that celebrates American history and innovation. Its mission is to provide unique educational experiences based on authentic objects, stories and lives from America's traditions of ingenuity, resourcefulness and innovation. Its purpose is to inspire people to learn from these traditions to help shape a better future. Five distinct attractions at The Henry Ford captivate more than 1.5 million visitors annually: Henry Ford Museum, Greenfield Village, The Ford Rouge Factory Tour, The Benson Ford Research Center and The Henry Ford IMAX Theatre. The Henry Ford is also home to Henry Ford Academy, a public charter high school which educates 485 students a year on the institution's campus and was founded in partnership

with The Henry Ford, Ford Motor Company and Wayne County Public Schools. For more information please visit our website [thehenryford.org](http://thehenryford.org).

# # #

*Good Design: Stories from Herman Miller was organized by the Muskegon Museum of Art, Michigan, in collaboration with The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan, through the support of Herman Miller, Inc.*