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**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*

Exhibit Highlights

Aeron Armchair, Designed by Don Chadwick and Bill Stumpf
Photo Courtesy of The Henry Ford

Introduced in 1994, the Aeron chair was an immediate success. Chadwick and Stumpf designed the chair to be built in three different sizes, to best address the seating needs of the broadest range of people. The chair's curvaceous shape and see-through mesh was initially greeted with surprise – this was a distinctive statement for a chair designed for the office environment; but its accommodating fit and flexible functionality made it an instant best-seller.

The design's beginnings were rooted in Chadwick and Stumpf's work on a Herman Miller research project called Metaform. Both designers had already collaborated on the earlier Equa office chair which, like Aeron, drew on their ergonomic research and investigation of new materials.

Action Office Executive Office Group (EOG) Communications Center, Designed by George Nelson
Photo Courtesy of the Muskegon Museum of Art

Herman Miller's Action Office furniture system challenged the traditional office space setup and was comprised of pieces that were compact, portable and easy to assemble, remove or replace in order to best fit the needs of each particular office.

Nelson's Executive Office Group (EOG), which was first introduced in 1947, created office furniture that allowed multiple activities such as writing and typewriting, supplies storage and meeting space, yet still met each need in a specific way. By the late 1980s, the EOG was called "the first example of what came to be called a workstation" by Lance Knobel, a historian of modern design and office furniture.

This communications center featured sound-absorbing panels to accommodate a range of electronic recording equipment of its time – primarily telephones and tape recorders.

Action Office Executive Office Group (EOG) Roll-Top Standing Desk, Designed by George Nelson
Perch, Designed by Robert Propst
Photo Courtesy of the Muskegon Museum of Art

George Nelson's roll-top desk is considered by many to be one of the most efficient and useful elements of the Action Office collection. Designed to provide workers with the healthy benefits of switching between sitting and standing at their workstation, the classic element of a roll-top was applied to a modern design and helped quickly tidy up the workspace at the end of the day. At the back of the desk, hanging files kept necessary paperwork out of the way but within easy reach.

Propst's perch – a hybrid of a stool and a chair – gave standing workers a stylish and functional place to rest.

Eames Red Lounge Chair, Designed by Ray and Charles Eames
Photo Courtesy of the Muskegon Museum of Art

Ray and Charles Eames began their relationship with Herman Miller after meeting the company's founder, Dirk Jan (DJ) De Pree and his son, Hugh, during the Eameses' 1946 exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art. George Nelson had seen the duo's private showing of their furniture at New York's Barclay Hotel in December 1945 and convinced the De Prees that these items were "the future of your company."

The Eameses' molded plywood chair was named by *Time* magazine as the best design of the 20th century, and has been lauded by designers and owners alike for its elegant, useful and comfortable features. It was originally created using what the Eameses called the "Kazam! machine," which was named for the magic it would produce by forcing up to 11 layers of veneer and glue together to create plywood. This was then forced against a heated plaster mold with a balloon – inflated by a bicycle pump – to create pieces with compound curves.

Herman Miller Summer Picnic Posters, Designed by Steve Frykholm
Photo Courtesy of the Muskegon Museum of Art

Michigan artist and Cranbrook Academy of Art graduate Steve Frykholm served as Herman Miller's first on-staff graphic designer. During his career, he created a series of 20 picnic posters for the company, creating designs that reflected the company's intriguing and surprising approach.

The full series has been screen-printed and have become part of the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Danish Museum of Art and Design, the National Museum of American Art, the Smithsonian, the Library of Congress, and thousands of private collectors around the world.

Marshmallow Sofa, Designed by George Nelson
Photo Courtesy of the Muskegon Museum of Art

Good design not only meets the user's needs and comfort, but also stands the test of time – a description that fits many of Herman Miller's furniture pieces, for both home and office settings. As mid-century design came back into fashion in the late 20th century, the company's most classic designs were once again in demand. No updates or changes were needed for these stylish, quality pieces heading into the new millennium.

Herman Miller still maintains a robust corporate client base, so a new consumer distribution channel, Herman Miller for the Home, was created in 1994. Nelson's plush and thoroughly modern-looking Marshmallow Sofa was originally introduced in 1956, and became available for purchase once again in 1999 by Herman Miller for the Home.

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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.

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.

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