

# CONTRACT DESIGN

THE MAGAZINE OF COMMERCIAL INTERIOR DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE

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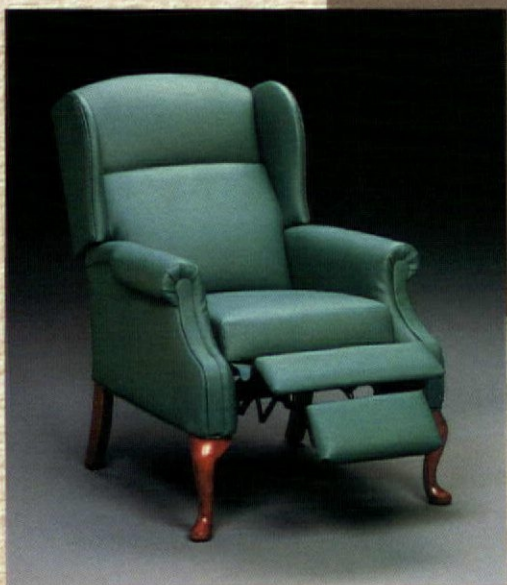
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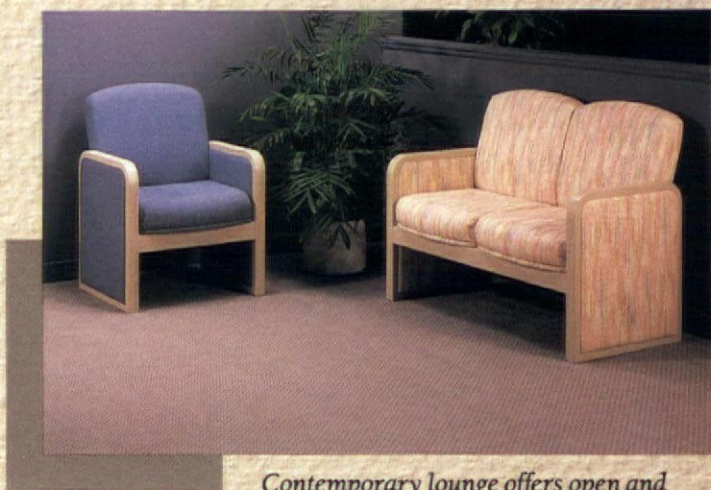
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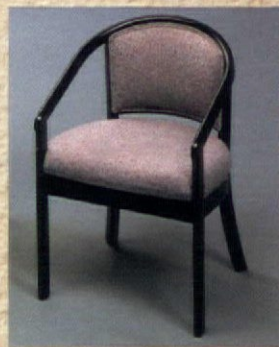
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# healthcare

## Those Exotic Machines in Your Client's Offices

Anyone who happened to follow two little old ladies down a supermarket aisle in Manhattan at the end of January would have learned about a commodity having little in common with the price of groceries.

"I understand Israel is being defended with American Patriot missiles," one said. "Would you believe each one costs \$600,000?"

"So much?" the other replied. "But I hear they can shoot down those terrible Iraqi Scud missiles."

Our nation is understandably preoccupied with military hardware while war rages in the Middle East. However, as United Nations forces have discovered, machines don't resolve problems. People do. The point was eloquently made at Designer's Saturday 1990, when Ralph Caplan, design consultant and critic, and Duncan Sutherland, vice president and chief technology officer of industrial designer Fitch Richardson Smith, raised the question of why people occupy offices—"power" spaces filled with furniture, computers, copiers and telephones—at all.

What Caplan suggested is that white-collar work places are created to satisfy other agendas than those imposed by data processing equipment, administrative procedures or a deep-seated urge to work in rooms equipped with desks and chairs. The office is seldom a matter of life and death; it certainly is not meant to spare us from serious occupational hazards lurking around outside.

Are interior designers and architects of offices truly aware of what they are creating? Suppose offices were described in the following terms? A place to hang out; circumstantial evidence that we are busy; a statement about who "we" the individual and/or organization are; a career in itself; a therapeutic workshop whose self-contained tasks give job satisfaction in themselves; turf to be displayed and defended; a paradox of paperless information that swiftly

converts into reams of paper; a theater for psychodrama; or an environmental design for working and tinkering?

Sutherland called for work to be "decoupled" from its work space to see how the relationship genuinely functions. He has an interesting point: The factory arose at the dawn of the industrial age to coerce Europe's 18th-century agrarian population to observe a work regimen, because employers wanted greater control over employees, who were previously taking piece work home. Control, according to Sutherland, rather than technology, was the driving force behind the work place.

He went on to say that there is nothing inevitable about the way we work today, from the location of the office and its physical form to the way work is conducted within its confines. Even the hours that most people work, toiling inside technologically controlled environments far removed from the agrarian world of sunrise, sunset, the elements and the seasons, are man-made. The office is not a sacred object to be held above scrutiny.

So what does society want of designers as we approach the 21st century? In the mid-1980s, the years when computers conquered America's drafting rooms, designers became obsessed about creating the Office of the Future. Since they had no more clairvoyance than

anyone else, their deliberations tended to focus on hardware and software. A satellite dish for every man and woman, right beside the desk, and so forth. Seldom did anyone ponder what people in the year 2000 were supposed to do on the job.

The tragedy in the Middle East is but another reminder that designers cannot go wrong if they concentrate on understanding the 21st-century needs of the most complicated piece of equipment we will always be asked to accommodate—people. ☞



*Roger Yee*

Roger Yee  
Editor-in-Chief

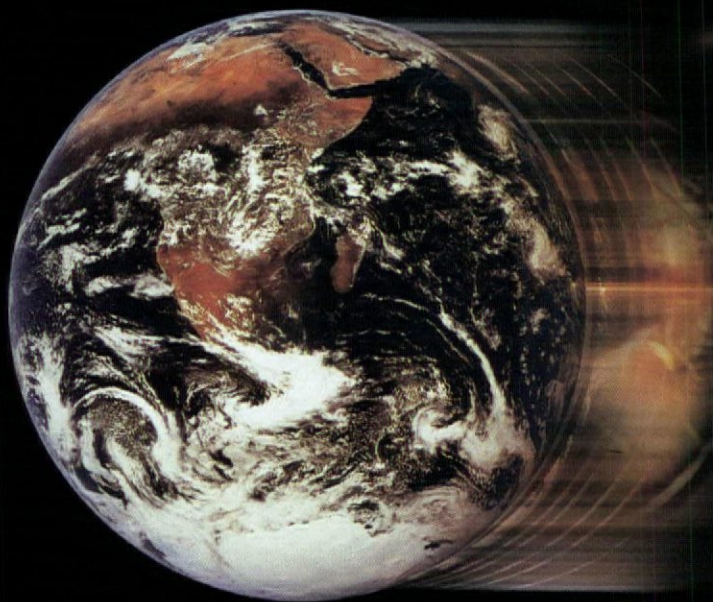


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Polymers

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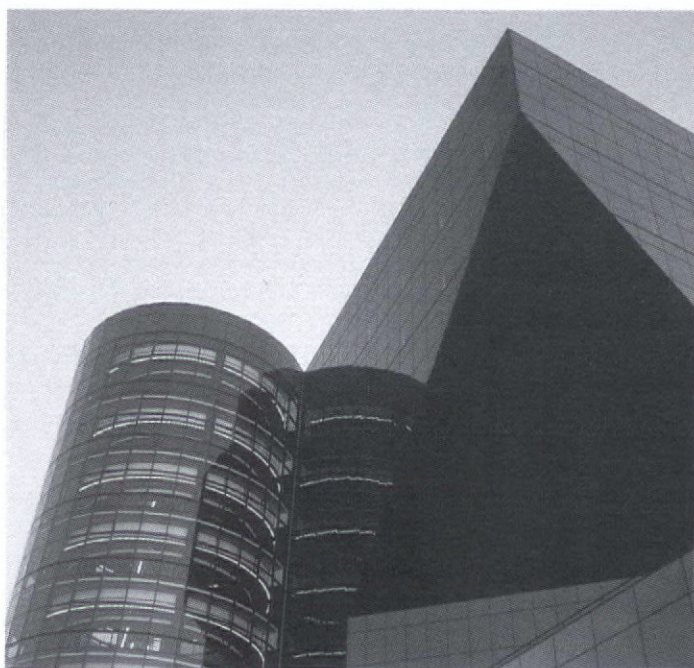
# TRENDS

## Welcome to WestWeek 91

### Explorations:

### Commerce, Culture and Design in the International Marketplace

Los Angeles - International design doesn't sound like a cliché if you happen to be a New York architect spending much of your time with developers in Singapore, a Chicago designer holding serious discussions



with restaurateurs in Osaka, or a San Francisco architect helping to create France's own version of Silicon Valley. WestWeek 91 at the Pacific Design Center (PDC), Los Angeles, will bring many of the key players in this transoceanic exchange of people, ideas and products to meet the design community this March 19-22, 1991. Designers planning to attend can contact the PDC at (213) 657-0800 for further information. Highlights of WestWeek 91 follow.

WestWeek 91 will be held March 19-22, at the Pacific Design Center (left), designed by architect Cesar Pelli; Photograph by Joe C. Aker.

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

#### TUESDAY, MARCH 19

10:00 pm  
**Gold Calibre Awards and Dinner**  
 Designers honor fellow project team members at the Century Plaza.

#### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

10:00 am-8:00 pm  
**PDC Showrooms**  
 Open for WestWeek.

11:30 am-11:00 am  
**Los Angeles:**  
**The New Aesthetic Goes Global**  
 Chris Lambert moderates a panel including R. Scott Anderson, AIA, Dr. Earl A. Wells, III and Lorraine Ald.

1:30 pm-4:00 pm  
**Discussions,**  
**International Zeitgeist**  
 Kurt W. Forster leads a discussion with Richard

Meier, Aldo Rossi, Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi.

6:00 pm-6:15 pm  
**Best of WestWeek Awards**  
 ASID, *Contract Design* and *Designer/Specifier*.

6:30 pm-8:00 pm  
**The New Internationalism in the Arts**  
 Sherry Rabinowitz and others participate in a talk with David Rosenboom.

7:00 pm-10:00 pm  
**L!ive!**  
 Fund raiser for Design Alliance to Combat AIDS. For information and reservations call DACA (213) 652-6601.

#### THURSDAY, MARCH 21

8:00 am-5:00 pm  
**Facility Managers Day**  
 Sponsored by the

International Facility Managers Association (IFMA).

9:00 am-8:00 pm  
**PDC Showrooms**  
 Open for WestWeek.

8:00 am-9:00 am  
**Quality in the Workplace**  
 IFMA keynote address by William A. Hogg.

9:30 am-11:00 am  
**Pacific Rim: Breaking Tradition, Shaping New Business Opportunities**  
 A group moderated by Linda Sherman includes Les Hamasaki, David C. Martin and Edwin M. Reingold.

11:00 am-11:30 am  
**Facilities Management Certification Update**  
 Arthur P. Hahn speaks.

12:30 noon-1:30 pm  
**Certified Interior Designer: The New Law and How It Will Affect You**

Panelists Norma Clark, Jhan Livingston, Neil Metal, Rayne Sherman, Robin Webster, Greg Ziol talk with moderator Walton Brown.

2:00 pm-3:30 pm  
**The Color Payoff**  
 Carol Soucek King considers the topic with Andrew Belschner, Leatrice Eiseman, Gere Kavanaugh, Dr. Nancy Kwallek and Peter Shire.

4:00 pm-5:00 pm  
**Icebergs, Creativity and the Future of Work into the 1990s**  
 David P. Lathrop speaks.

4:00 pm-5:30 pm  
**New Upholstered Furniture Standards**  
 Stephen D. Channer meets with Gordon Damant and Susan Perry.

5:00 pm-8:00 pm  
**Showrooms**  
 WestWeek receptions.

#### FRIDAY, MARCH 22

9:00 am-5:00 pm  
**PDC Showrooms**  
 Open for WestWeek.

9:30 am-11:00 am  
**Designing Today for Tomorrow's Environment**  
 David R. Brown hosts Tom Newhouse, Antoine Predock and Katherine Spitz.

9:30 am-1:30 pm  
**Student Conference on Design**  
 The ASID, AIA, ISID and IBD organize discussions on design careers.

11:30 am-1:00 pm  
**The Life of Lifestyles**  
 Li Edelkoort speaks.

2:30 pm-4:00 pm  
**International Design: Los Angeles Style**  
 Paige Rense conducts a talk with Val Arnold, Steve Chase, Sally Sirkin Lewis, Mimi London and Craig Wright.

## ASID Rides the Shuttle

**Washington, D.C.** - The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) has relocated its national headquarters from New York, the nation's business center, to Washington, the nation's capital. Its new home is within a three-story Georgian-style building on Capitol Hill.

ASID's national board reached the decision to move following a three-year study conducted by an ASID task force. After conducting a comprehensive socio-economic analysis of the merits of various possible location sites, the task force selected Washington for its ability to promote legislative initiatives. The cost of doing business in

the capital, considerably lower than those in its previous headquarters city, was an additional incentive.

New address: 608 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002, telephone (202) 546-3480.

## Herman Miller Sells Helikon

**Zeeland, Mich.** - Herman Miller agreed to sell the operations of the Helikon Furniture Company, a high-end producer of contract casegoods based in Taftville, Conn., to Pittsburgh investor Michael P. Carlow, who also recently acquired control of the Kittinger Company, a 125-year-old fine cabinetmaker specializing in

furniture in historic styles and historic reproductions.

Product lines produced by the Taftville factory and included in the transaction will continue to be available through Herman Miller dealers.

Helikon's capacity for building medium- and lower-end wood casegoods, based largely in Sanford, N.C., will remain part of Herman Miller's operations.

## Design Firm Salaries to Increase

**Oklahoma City** - The 1991 Salary Survey by Financial Managers' Group (FMG), the national associ-

ation of financial managers in the design profession, indicates that salary increases for design firms will be slightly less in 1991 than those experienced in the previous year—being 5.9% in 1991 versus 6.0% in 1990. Of 20 cities analyzed, 14 project an equal or lower increase by percentage. Regions projecting higher salary increases include the upper Midwest and central Southwest.

A sampling of average 1991 estimated salary increases among the 20 cities that were analyzed might include: Atlanta, 5.1%; Boston, 6.0%; Chicago, 5.9%; Houston, 6.0%; Los Angeles, 8.3%; New York, 5.5%; and San Francisco, 7.3%.

A complete copy of the report can be obtained from Michael Sturdivan, executive director of FMG, at (405) 848-1111 for \$95.

## Commissions and Awards

Two of Boston's prominent historic sites, Faneuil Hall and the Old State House, will be restored by architect **Goody, Clancy & Associates**, Boston, and general contractor **A.J. Martini**, Malden, Mass.

O'Keefe Ashenden Lyons & Ward has retained **Swanke Hayden Connell Architects/Chicago** to design its law offices at 30 North LaSalle, Chicago.

A commission has been awarded to **Image Design**, Marietta, Ga., by Howard Hughes Properties and TPC for the TPC Summerlin Clubhouse, Las Vegas, Nev.

The renovation of the Hyatt Regency, Houston, is being assigned to **Index The Design Firm**, Houston.

**M.K. Macaluso and Associates** has been given the 1990 Building Award for Excellence from the Queens County (New York) Builders and Contractors for Myrtle Motors in Maspeth, N.Y.

**Fitch RichardsonSmith**, a design consultancy, and **Robert G. Lyon Associates**, a retail architecture firm, have formed a consulting alliance, already resulting in the development of a retail prototype store for Rand McNally.

**J.T. Nakaoka Associates Architects**, Los Angeles, is adapting a design prototype for Cartier in Ala Moana Shopping Center in Honolulu, and unveiling a design prototype for U.S. Shoe's Easy Spirit store at North East Mall in Hurst, Texas, near Dallas.

Commercial real estate firm Maurice Gelina & Associates, Miami, has retained **Al-Five, Inc.**, Philadelphia, to design its offices.

Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry awarded its Good Product Design Award to Karimoku Corp. of Japan and **Davis Furniture Industries** for the Motion Chair designed by Burkhard Vogther and engineered by Manfred Elzenbeck.

The Hilton Inn Gateway Tower, Kissimmee, Fla., has retained the **Dolan Partnership**, Lauderdale by the Sea, Fla., to design its interiors.

A contract to design new corporate headquarters for American Travelers Corp. in Bensalem Township, Pa., has been granted to **Research Planning Associates**, Philadelphia.

The new Delta Crown Room Club at Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport, the Atlanta law offices of Jones, Day, Reavis & Pogue, and the Southern Operations Headquarters of

Apple USA in Atlanta are being designed by **Osgood & Associates**, Atlanta.

McHale, Cook & Welch has commissioned **Kasler & Associates**, Indianapolis, to design its new Indianapolis offices.

**Hendy Associates**, Irvine, Calif., has been selected to design interiors for a new campus of Western State University College of Law, Irvine.

## People in the News

**Richard Stoyles**, FCSD, international director of creative design and forecasting for Milliken and Company, La Grange, Ga., has been named a Fellow of the International Textile Institute.

Adler Group, Birmingham, Mich., has been formed by **Deborah M. Christ**, **Lawrence J. Webster** and **Catherine M. Caito** to specialize in contract interior design and CADD services.

Swanke Hayden Connell Architects, New York and Washington, D.C., recently appointed **Amanda Whitaker Frame** and **Theo H.M. Prudon** to principals; **Joseph Aliotta**, **Cynthia Phifer Kracauer**, **Richard L. Sewell**, **Ena Lee Sohn** and **Mark Brna** to associates; and **Holly Briggs** to senior associate. **Steven**

**P. Waehler** has joined the firm as director of business development.

**Frank Merlotti Jr.** was recently named executive vice president and chief operating officer of San Francisco-based Metropolitan Furniture Corp., a member of the Steelcase Design Partnership.

The staff of Environmental Concern Inc. has joined with WMFL P.S., Architects and Engineers to form Integrus Architecture, Spokane and Seattle, under **George Nachtsheim**, president.

**Andrzej Duljas** was recently promoted to director of design for Koch + Lowy, New York.

Eli Attia Architects, New York, recently appointed **Lynda Tepperman** as chief operating officer.

The Samsonite Furniture Co., Murfreesboro, Tenn., has announced the appointment of **Bill Echols** as president.

Copeland Novak Israel and Simmons, P.C. Architects, New York, has appointed **Daniel J. Barteluce** as senior vice president.

**Lori A. Wegman** has been promoted to vice president and design principal



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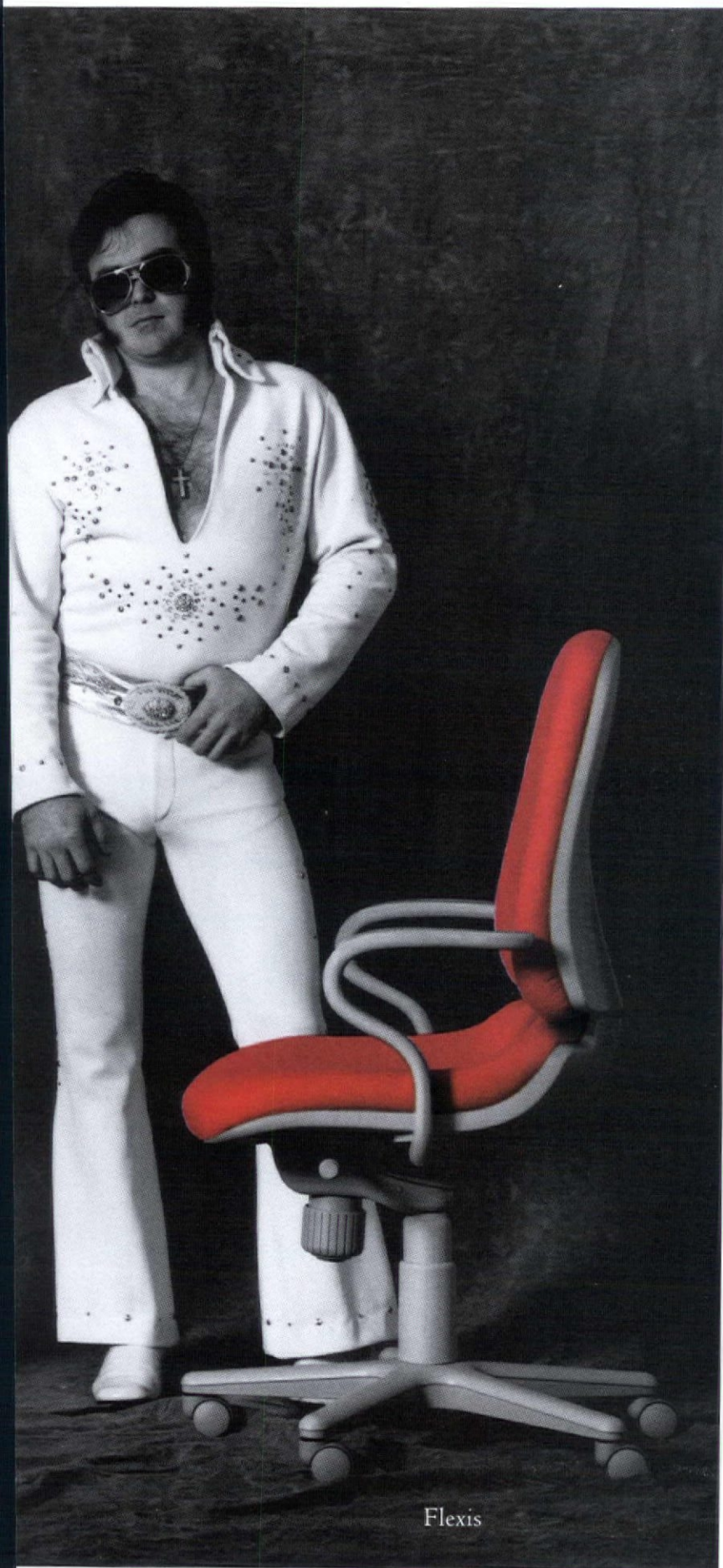
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Flexis

at Space Design International, an architectural firm in Cincinnati, Los Angeles and New York.

Two International Facility Management Association/Gensler & Associates Scholarships were recently presented to **Amy McAllister**, an undergraduate at Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Mich., and **James Powers**, a graduate student at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.

Albert Kahn Associates, Detroit, has named the following as senior associates: **Donald Bauman**, **Keith Japowicz**, **Elloitt Krieger**, **George LaFontant**, **Peter Lynde**, **Alfonzo McClinton**, **William O'Donohue**, **Julie Sinnott**, **Ernest Yonkers**.

**Karen Bialy** was recently promoted to associate of Osgood & Associates, an interior design firm in Atlanta.

Ewing Cole Cherry Parsky, an architecture firm in Philadelphia, has appointed **Thomas A. Appelquist** director of design.

## Coming Events

**March 5-7:** Lightfair, sponsored by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) and the International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD), Chicago; (301) 662-9386.

**March 12:** Color Day, sponsored by *Contract Design*, IDCNY, New York; (718) 937-7474.

**March 14-19:** Furnidec '91, International Exhibition of Furniture, Decoration, Lighting Fixtures, Equipment and Machinery, Thessaloniki, Greece; (031) 239-221.

**March 27-28:** Presentations Northwest 91, Design Center Northwest, Seattle; (206) 762-1200.

**April 3-5:** American Design Drafting Association 32nd Annual Convention, Wyndham Paradise Valley Resort, Scottsdale, Ariz; (301) 460-6875.

**April 5-7:** Restaurant Hotel International Design Exposition Conference (RHIDEC), Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles; (212) 391-9111.

**April 11:** Preview of International Design Conference in Aspen, IDCNY, New York; (718) 937-7474.

**April 24-25:** Specifix3—Partners in Design, Architecture and Contract Interior Design Symposium, Washington Design Center; (202) 554-5053.

**April 25-27:** Surfaces, Western Floor Covering Association, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas; (213) 926-5861.

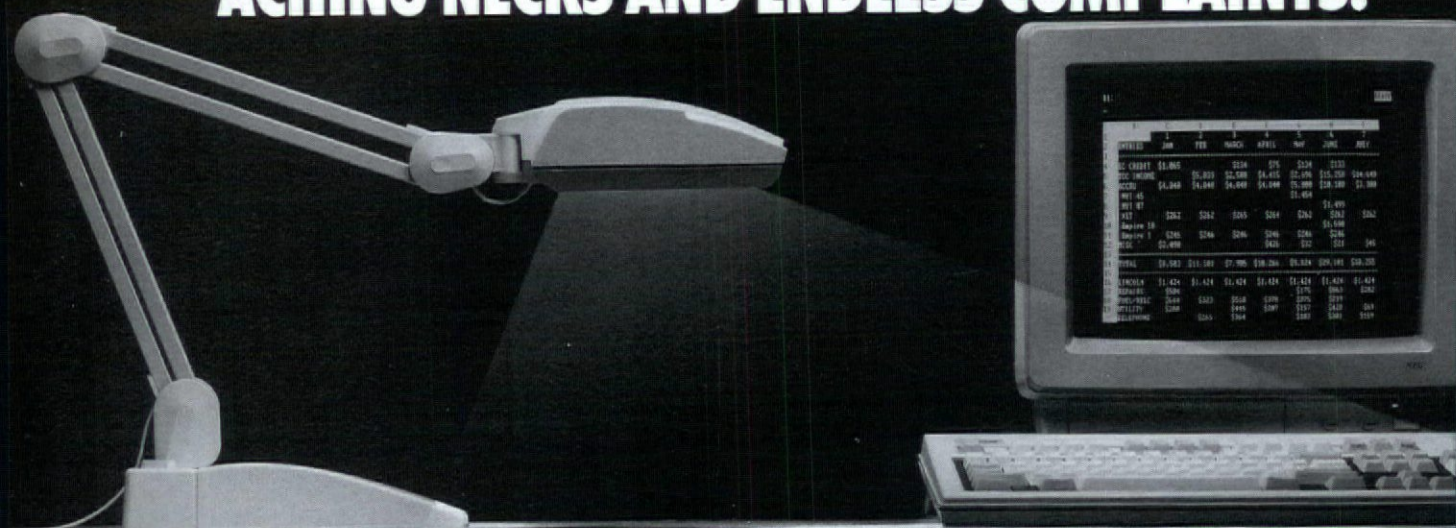
**April 25-29:** Artexpo, Jacob K. Javits Center, New York; (800) 331-5706.

**May 7-10:** A/E/C Systems 91, 12th Computer and Management Show for the Design and Construction Industry, Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C.; (800) 451-1196.

**May 16-19:** International Architecture Book Fair, American Institute of Architects (AIA) National Convention and AIA Expo, Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C.; (202) 626-7395.

**May 19-22:** International Contemporary Furniture Fair, Jacob K. Javits Center, New York; (212) 686-6070.

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# WE'RE TAKING STEPS

Sign me up for the Los Angeles Westweek March 22 Walk and breakfast at the Pacific Design Center. I've enclosed my \$15.00 tax deductible registration fee payable to: Natural Resources Defense Council c/o Maharam/Vertical Surfaces P.O. Box 6900 Rasons Court Suppage, New York 11788-9976 Attention: Barbara Skelly

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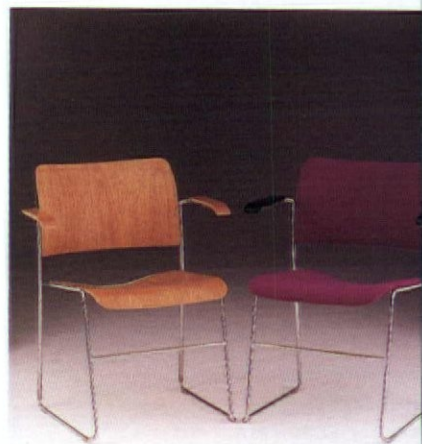
# MARKETPLACE

THE BEST OF THE WEST AT WESTWEEK '91



The 40/4 stacking chair by GF Office Furniture will be introduced in a new arm chair version at WestWeek. The new model with arms will also stack and will be available in fabric, painted steel and wood versions.

Circle No. 205



WestWeek will provide the setting for the unveiling of a new KnollStudio seating line, the de Armas Collection. Designed by award-winning architect Raul de Armas of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, the chair was created with fundamental architectural principles in mind. Horizontal back ribs and vertical stiles and legs form a strict geometrical composition that is offset by the curve of a U-shaped seat.

Circle No. 212



DesignTex introduces Kazimir, inspired by the painting of Kazimir Malevich, who worked within the Russian avant-garde from 1910 to 1930. Designed by Susan Lyons, the fabric is 54% cotton, 22% polyester, 24% rayon and comes in five colorways.

Circle No. 203



The Zones seating system by Hayes is comprised of three key elements: the seat, the arm and the J-shaped base. By manipulating these three components, Zones is expanded into 11 different seating pieces. Single chairs are convertible to multiple seating units; seven standard wood finishes, special finishes and over 400 standard fabrics are available.

Circle No. 211



Executive Office Concepts has expanded its Axiom furniture line to include modular systems componentry create coordinating wall systems. Classic beveled hardwood edge detailing, a choice of 15 wood finishes and a host of options and accessories distinguish the li

Circle No. 204

SCOPING FOR STYLE IN THE WILD, WILD WEST

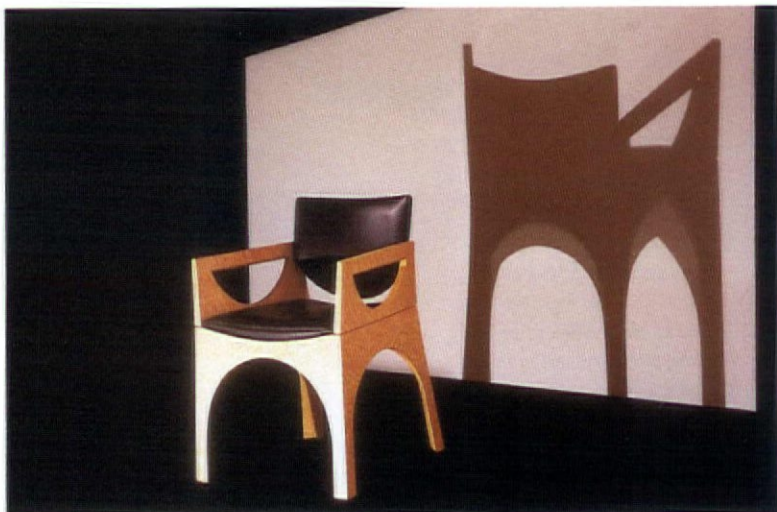


Offered by Karl Springer, Ltd., this "Art Deco" dining table is based on a design by Jean Jacques Ruhlman, the famed Parisian cabinetmaker of the Art Deco era. The table is available in exotic veneers in custom sizes, shown here in Bubinga veneer with black lacquer disc and end-cap details.

Circle No. 210

Taylor Chair will debut its Versa Seating Group, designed by Robert/Bernard Associates, at WestWeek. Versa features a pleasing form and expresses a straightforward design approach to cost-effective seating. The group includes models for swivel/tilt, pull-up guest, multiple and ganged seating applications. Variations of back, arm and leg or sled base styles are offered.

Circle No. 215



Brian Kane designed Metropolitan's new Berkeley Collection swivel chair seating line, combining fine upholstery detailing with the comfort of well engineered, ergonomic seating. The complete family of seven chairs ranges from administrative to executive high-back versions, with upholstery details increasing in sophistication in accordance with the scale and hierarchy of each chair.

Circle No. 201

Ward Bennett's new collection of seating, tables, credenzas and desks for Geiger International took three years to create and may well be Bennett's largest single design statement in his six-decade career. Consisting of 17 designs, the collection also includes hundreds of individually modeled variations, each patented with Bennett's personal trademark burned into the wood of every model.

Circle No. 207



Bentley Mills, Inc., introduces the "Firenze Premiere Collection," with Velv-A-Weave cut and loop-pile patterns, including leaf forms and geometrics of backgrounds of stripes, checks or grids. These tone-on-tone patterns are offered in the new "King's Road Premiere Editions" in 49 colorways and in custom colors as well.

Circle No. 209

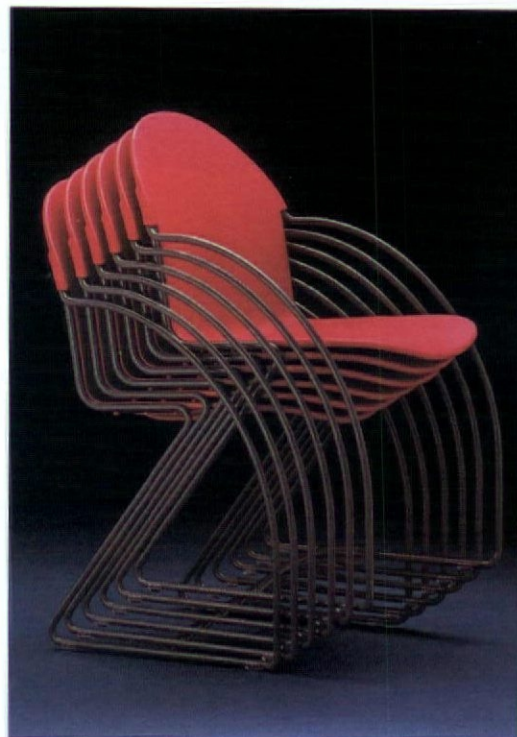
# MARKETPLACE

WISH THEY ALL COULD BE CALIFORNIA TRADE SHOW



Inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's experimentation with ornamentation for interiors, Arc-Com's new coordinated cotton/ rayon tapestry collection is offered in 16 colorways. Named for the Wright houses from which they were inspired, the collection includes Winslow and Fallingwater.

Circle No. 206



Parade!, a Steelcase stacking chair, serves well as a side chair, thanks to clean lines and quality materials. Both durable and lightweight, Parade! is available in a variety of upholstery fabrics and frame and shell finishes.

Circle No. 208

Soviet Architect Lazar Markovich Lissitzky designed the Machine Rug #1232 in 1920, and Palazzetti brings it to America this WestWeek. The 100% wool rug is manufactured by Gruber Design in Germany and is intended for high-traffic areas.



Circle No. 202

Ovolo Series tables from Mueller, a Haworth company, include an edge and base detail that is translated into both occasional tables and conference tables. Occasional tables are available in leg or cube base models, with vertical, fluted columns forming the legs and the corners of the cube. Conference tables are available with cube bases only. All versions feature a softly radiused edge with a subtle extended-bead detail.

Circle No. 213

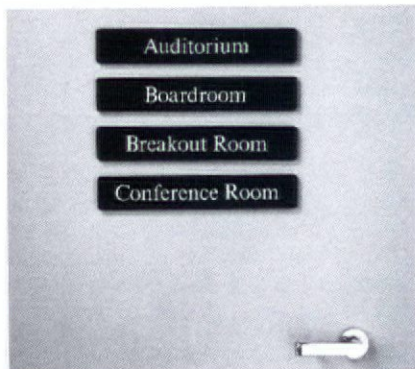


Fixtures Furniture's discovery seating collection has been expanded to include which introduces new styling in an inter sculptured concept. The support mechanism allows static posture settings in the horizontal and forward tilt positions and comfortable, firmly supported flow through infinite dynamic motion positions.

Circle No. 214

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# BROADLOOM CARPET DESIGNED FOR HEAVY TRAFFIC

To be plush and attractive on the surface yet resilient and tough within sounds like a character sketch for a movie heroine of the 1990s, but it is also the daily mission of broadloom carpet for such heavy traffic uses as hotels, restaurants, theaters, convention centers and transportation terminals. The wear and tear of continuous use in commercial and institutional facilities imposes extreme demands on broadloom. Among the punishments regularly endured are: abrasion, compression, soiling, staining, discoloration, cigarette burns, spilling and static electricity. Broadloom carpet designed to withstand this assault typically comes in textured loop or cut pile construction, and the best examples make survival under heavy traffic look incredulously easy.

## SCALAMANDRÉ

Guest Room, part of Scalamandré's Transformation Collection, is made of Allied's Anso IV Fiber Yarn and features a high degree of resiliency. Guest Room's multi-colored yarn in tweed style camouflages stains and soil. Its 12 vivid geometric colorations are coordinated with 29 solid cut pile colors from Invitation carpet, also part of the Transformation Collection. Invitation has a permanent built-in soil, stain and static wear protection.

Circle No. 223



## DURKAN PATTERNED CARPET

Durkan's Petit Point Floral paradise is textured loop engineered to perform in the highest traffic areas.

Circle No. 229



## BASF/MOHAWK CARPET

Utilizing BASF Zeftron nylon, Rockport solution-dyed loop texture from Mohawk features a distinct multicolor effect that offers a luminescent visual effect. Available in a spectrum of 13 lively colors, Rockport is a heavy duty, Class III commercial carpet that is colorfast and has static control built into the fiber.

Circle No. 231



## LEES COMMERCIAL CARPET

Pebbleweave from Lees Commercial Carpet combines a subtle textured loop construction with the Unibound Back System, which is ideal for heavily trafficked areas. The carpet retains its appearance despite heavy traffic. It is available in a wide range of colors in both broadloom and modular styles.

Circle No. 230





## MASLAND CARPETS

Masland's Nova Series of three patterns and one solid color style coordinate and interchange in a variety of ways. The small scale patterns feature enhanced yarn textures achieved through advanced technology in graphics tufting. The series is made of 100% solution dyed heatset Marquesa Lana ST with Scotchgard. Its heavy denier 42 oz., 1/10 gauge construction is recommended for heavy commercial traffic applications.

Circle No. 220



## THE HARBINGER COMPANY

Kenton and Winslow, two Harbinger loop pile products in Antron Precedent nylon, were designed for projects where performance and styling are of the utmost performance. Featuring coordinating patterns in a textured loop construction, both products are available in a range of colors with no minimum yardage requirement.

Circle No. 225



## MILLIKEN HOSPITALITY

Persian Panel is a new design offered as part of Milliken Hospitality's Grand Plaza Collection, which uses 36 in. square carpet tiles to create large bordered areas in large open spaces. The completed effect is a dramatic presentation of wall to wall design and color with the look of broadloom and the utility of carpet squares. Construction is for extreme traffic areas.

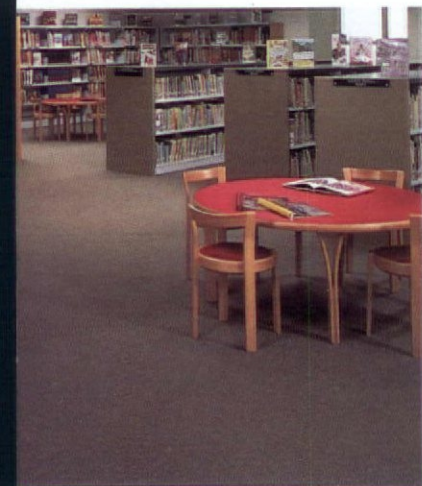
Circle No. 224



## ALLIED FIBERS/J & J IND.

Mainstreet, from J & J Industries, is made from Allied Fibers Anso IV HP Nylon. The heathered, level-loop quality offers superior resilience and appearance retention in addition to permanent, built-in soil, wear and static protection.

Circle No. 227



## MONSANTO/BENTLEY MILLS

Monsanto Contract Fibers' FiberSet represents a new dimension in the Ultron 3D fiber system. FiberSet combines with other Ultron 3D yarns to create exciting textures. Charing Cross by Bentley Mills is well suited to meet the specific needs of high traffic commercial areas where carpeting must have outstanding durability, aesthetic appeal and appearance retention.

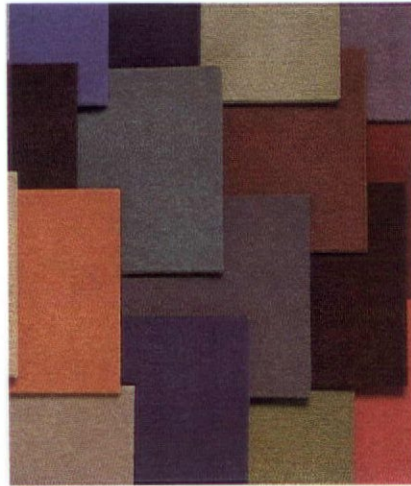
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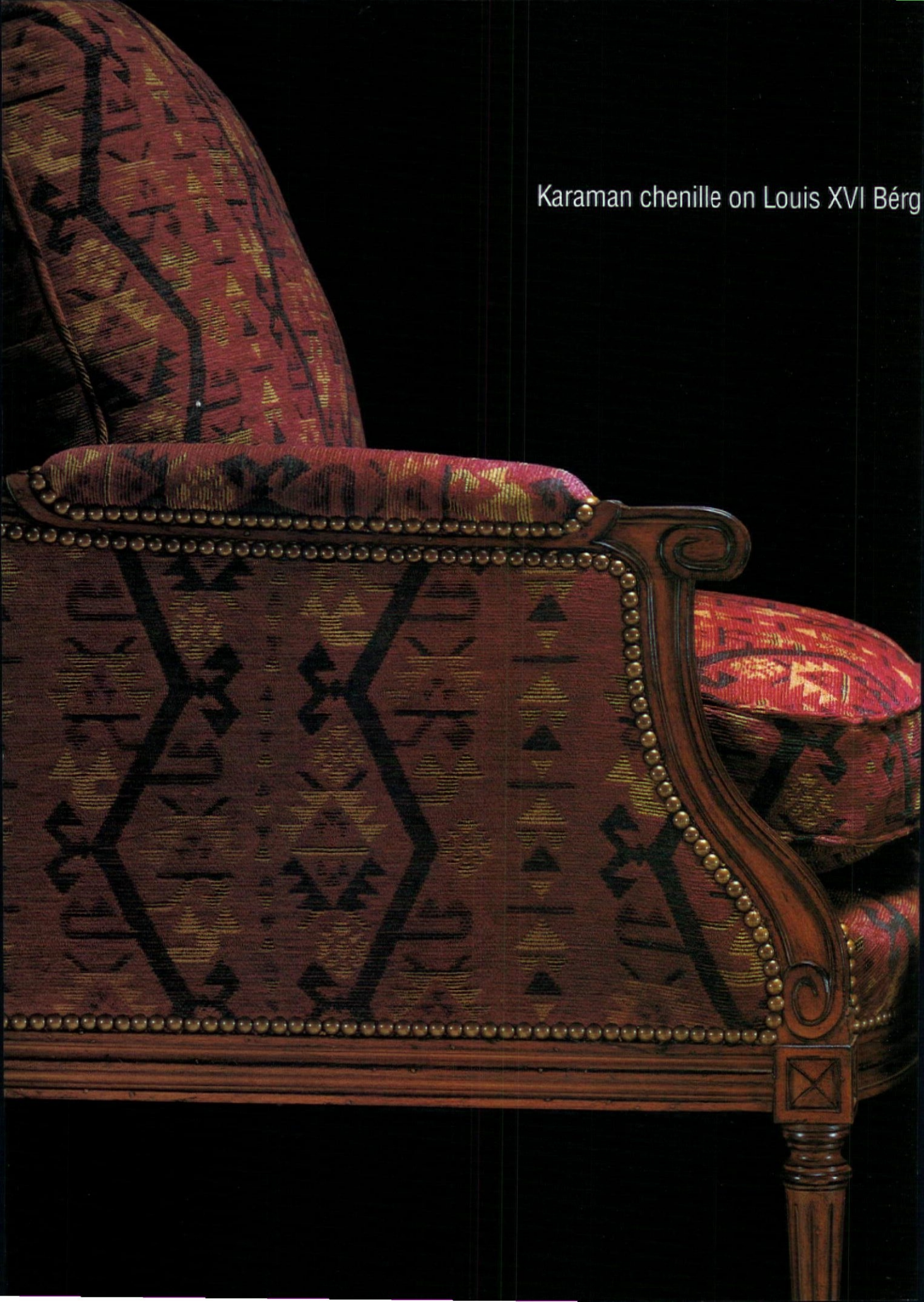
## DESIGNWEAVE

Designweave's Westbridge cut pile commercial carpet collection is characterized by 25 deep, rich colors including jewel tones, primary and neutral shades that offer a schematic array for design flexibility. Westbridge is constructed of 100% du Pont Antron continuous filament nylon, with superb appearance retention characteristics, static control and soil hiding properties.

Circle No. 221



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# Taste and Imagination with No Fuss

Davis Allen's new Meetinghouse chair series for Hickory Business Furniture might seem innocently familiar to Shaker furniture makers—until they come up closer and sit down

By Jean Godfrey-June



**E**ven before Davis Allen revealed the Shaker inspiration behind his new Meetinghouse chair, Hickory Business Furniture (HBF) independently came up with the name. Allen, recently honored by the monograph, *Davis Allen, Forty Years of Interior Design* at Skidmore Owings & Merrill, written by Maeve Slavin and published by Rizzoli, served as senior interior designer for over 50 SOM projects from 1950 to 1990. Since 1985, Allen has consulted with Carol Groh & Associates on a number of furniture design projects, including his latest, the chair for HBF.

The clean lines and simple forms of Meetinghouse are nothing new for Allen, who says he began to eliminate superfluous elements from his design early in his career. "At that time," he observes, "I was dealing with buildings of enormous size. I worked very hard at simplifying them." How well he succeeded has been appraised by the legendary

SOM design partner Gordon Bunshaft, who once remarked, "There is no question that Davis Allen is the best there is. He has natural taste and the imagination to create some wonderful things and without much fuss."

While Allen admired the simplicity in such American design traditions as Shaker, he evolved a concept of total design involving space, furniture, art work and decorative objects while traveling around the world. "What struck me most was the integration of the arts that many other countries, particularly the Scandinavian countries, had achieved," he admits. "I have strived throughout my career to achieve the same unity of spirit in my work."

Intrigued by what he calls "the American point of view," Allen has designed a number of Shaker-inspired pieces over the years; he even owns several Shaker originals himself. However, the idea of creating a ladderback chair was new for him.

Davis Allen's new Meetinghouse chair (below) is available in a number of standard HBF hand-rubbed lacquers as well as special finishes. The classic, Shaker-inspired design integrates delicate scale and comfortable proportions in a way that our Shaker forefathers might never have imagined.

Chris Plasman, president of HBF, recalls: "We had talked casually about collaborating with Davis Allen about 12 months. Then he came to us with the drawings." The Meetinghouse chair turned out to be exactly what HBF was looking for: a classic, designed, lower-priced side chair. "It's lightly scaled yet generous in dimension," Plasman adds.

Though inspired by the utility and simplicity of Early American Shaker ladderback chairs, Allen emphasized comfort over the Puritanical aspects of the chair's heritage. The lightly-scaled modern pull-up chair is offered in standard HBF hand-rubbed lacquers as well as special finishes. Wooden slat arms may be upholstered in cloth, leather or HBF textile or left unadorned. The finials can be colored to suit any design. A multi-step finishing ensures the durability and resiliency required for long-term contract use.

Plasman believes designers are more enthusiastic about "American design than before, thanks to the residential furnishings market." "Mission, Shaker, Arts and Crafts," he notes, "have all come on strong in the residential market, heightening awareness of these styles among consumers, designers and clients alike." If the Meetinghouse chair is perceived to work equally well in residential and contract situations, as Davis believes, contract sales will undoubtedly thrive. "So far," says Plasman, "we've let it go into hospitality, office and meeting rooms."

Will there be a sequel to the HBF/Davis Allen collaboration? "It's impossible to be in the design business and not recognize Mr. Allen's contribution," states Plasman. "We are continuing to explore new options with him." In working with a designer who can conceive anything from a single chair to an entire building, HBF had better be prepared. ☞

Circle No. 235

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# Romancing the Strong

Health care makes demands on fabrics that are never encountered anywhere else, as Maharam has learned in rolling out Duratex 5

By Jean Godfrey-June

The new face of health care: Damasks, ethnic stripes, dobbies, jacquards and even an ikat-inspired style imbue Maharam's Duratex 5 line (above) with an unprecedented sense of design. The collection's 12 color families are more saturated than before, reflecting the overall contract trend.

"Health care has long been discriminated against in terms of fabric design," says Kathleen Tunnell, director of design for Maharam. Traditionally more substance than style, the health care fabric market has tended toward the super-bright or the sticky-sweet, partly because of technical constraints, partly for universal appeal. Now many physical roadblocks have been removed, leaving designer's stereo-

Duratex 5 conveys that excitement in Volume 2, a 100-unit collection of yarn-dyed, multi-colored fabrics which coordinate with Volume 1, 48 units of piece-dyed fabrics. Clear, more saturated colors, textural effects, bolder patterns and more intricate detail all reflect the larger contract market's interest in deeper tones and tapestry-inspired fabrics. Everything from a large-scale damask to a Josef Hoffmann-

polyolefin wallcoverings, which anti-microbial by nature.


(Tek-Wall, which cannot be ripped, is a durable option to vinyl on hospital hallways where gurneys crash into walls. Colors coordinate with the Duratex collections.)

In addition, Maharam addressed the health care industry problem with textural fabrics. Slubs of fiber have tended to show on bedspreads or other products that are washed or handled regularly. Duratex 5 is texturally subtle, relying on a properly heathered Trevira filling yarn. Trevira also adds depth and softness to the fabric, reducing the shininess in the fabric for a more natural look.

Maharam has established a collection with 10 color families. "Within each family there's an element of coordination," Tunnell explains, "with different pattern scales and price points to allow flexibility." She points out that color coding is extremely important for orientation or way-finding within health care facilities. "It's easier to ask someone to look for the blue family than to give lots of complicated directions in a tense situation," says Tunnell.

Color also influences patient moods and even doctors' diagnoses. Too much yellow, for instance, may make the patient look jaundiced. Some colors soothe while others stimulate. "You have to strike a balance," says Tunnell. "You want to be interesting but not threatening, healing but not boring."

By the same token, some patterns are more suited to particular health care situations than others. "For instance, in facilities where people are on a lot of medications," Tunnell continues, "you don't want patterns that may appear to move too much. I tend to build in irregularity so it's not too interesting, but to keep some color so patients can find something stable within it." She emphasizes that more research is needed on color for health care environments and its effect on patients.

Ultimately, of course, getting designers excited about health care textiles is not enough. "The end user is the most important," Turf asserts. "You have to think of how you would make someone feel better in a health care situation. You're here to heal someone, if you do it right." Maharam appears to have prepared a highly effective prescription: Duratex 5. 

Circle No. 236



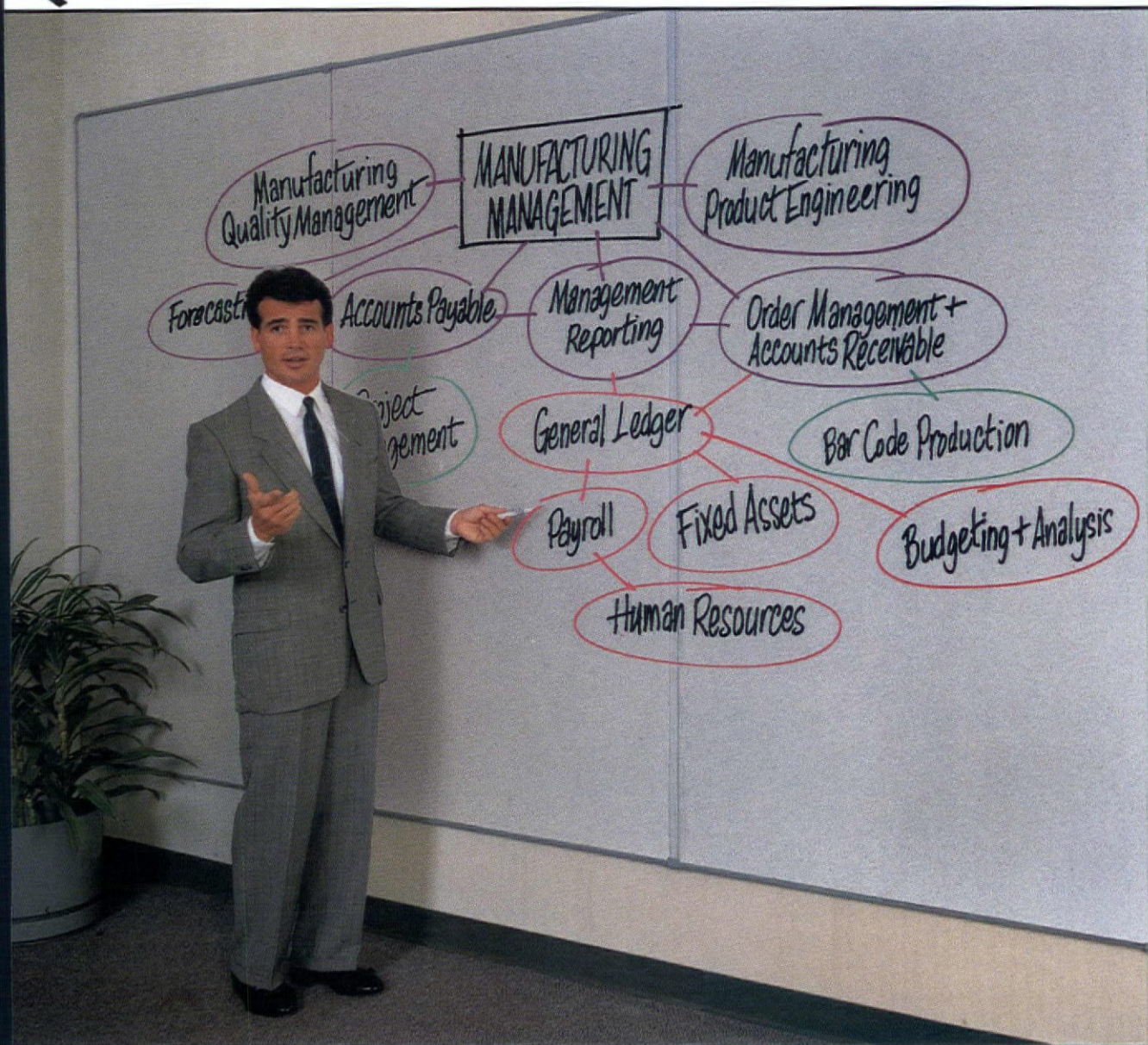
types about what health care fabric "should" look like—which Tunnell hopes to change with Maharam's Duratex 5 collection.

"People tend to think of health care colors and styles as pastel and feminine," points out Tunnell, "completely ignoring the needs of, say, a Veterans Administration hospital." Fabric strong on performance but weak in design doesn't belong in a hospital's VIP suite. The perfect fabric for a children's hospital would look ridiculous in a detoxification facility. "Today the market has become far more sophisticated and very exciting," says Tunnell.

inspired print comes in a proprietary 100% F/R Trevira<sup>®</sup>, which passes all flammability tests and is inherently flame-retardant.

What results is attractive—and tough. Designed not only for cubicle and drapery fabric, but bedspreads as well, Duratex 5 can pass the Weizenbeig test. Every fabric in the collection is constructed so that it can withstand regular washing at 160 to 180 degrees Fahrenheit, killing bacteria while maintaining colorfastness and non-shrinkage. The collection also coordinates with Maharam's upholstery collection, along with Tek-Wall and Vivanti

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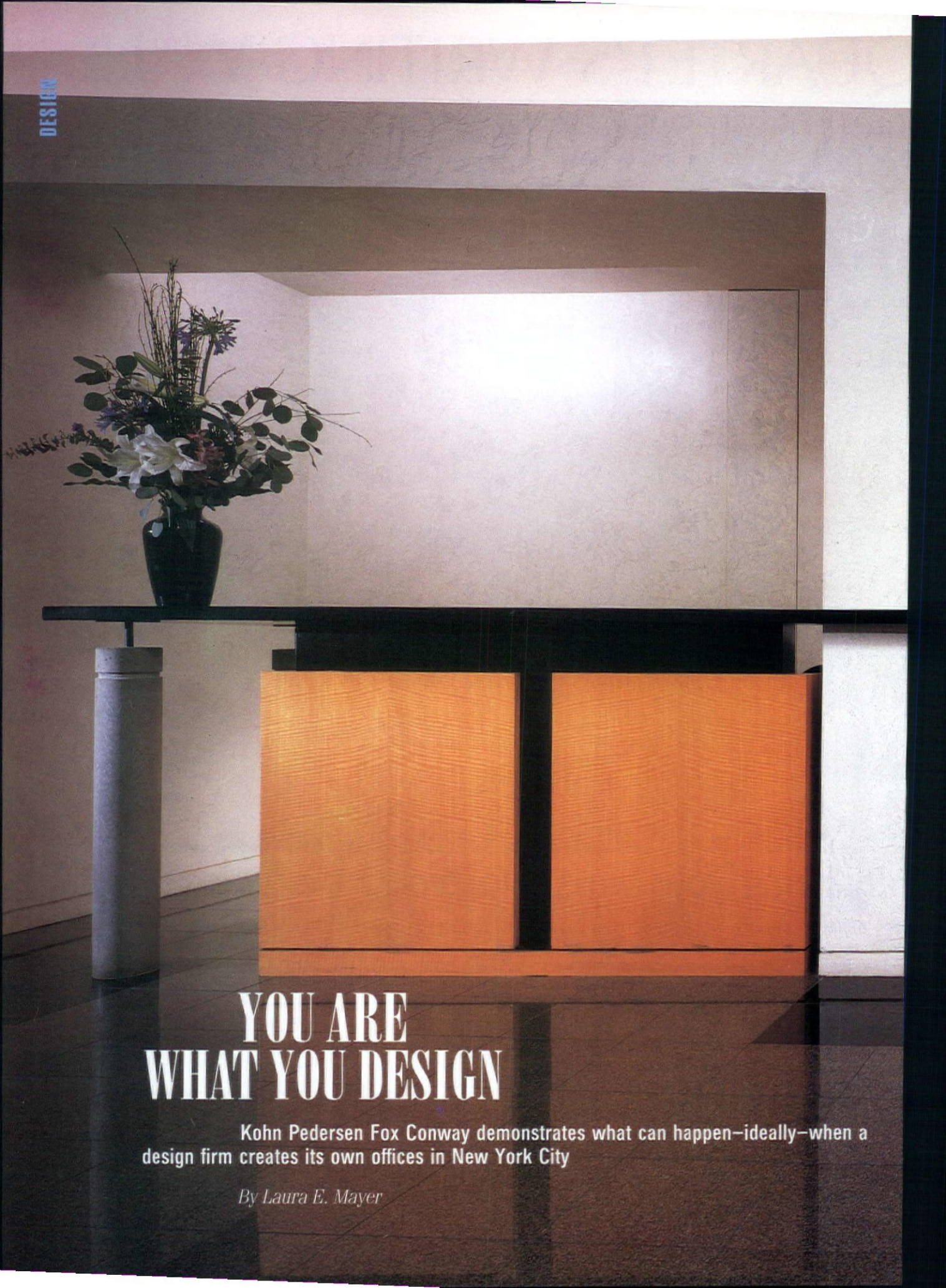
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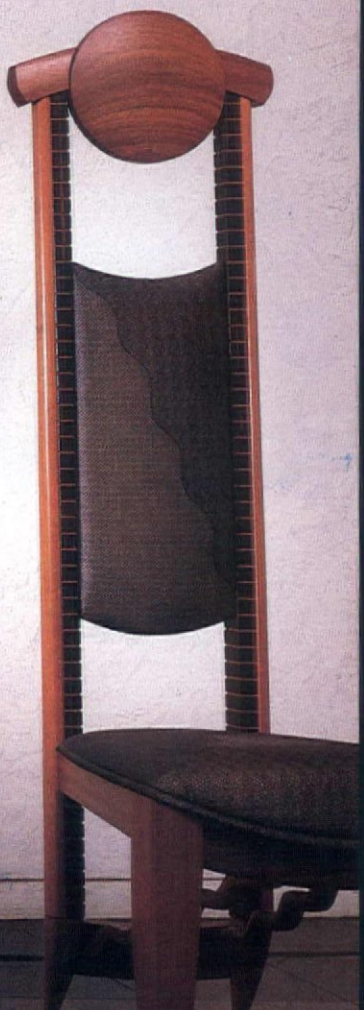
# YOU ARE WHAT YOU DESIGN

Kohn Pedersen Fox Conway demonstrates what can happen—ideally—when a design firm creates its own offices in New York City

*By Laura E. Mayer*



KOHN  
PEDERSEN  
FOX  
CONWAY



Patricia Conway's love of the crafts is immediately evident the moment you step into the new midtown Manhattan offices of Kohn Pedersen Fox Conway (KPFC). The gallery-like reception area boasts high-gloss tile flooring, arse, white-washed walls and a small alcove using a custom reception desk of anegre and onized wood supported by a concrete slab leg. This showcases just two pieces Conway mmissioned for the space: Rosanne Somerson's 2h-backed chair of bubinga and macassar ony, and James Schriber's wide ebony bench of zewood and macassar.

"We wanted something we could live in," plains design partner Judy Swanson, something beautiful, comfortable, lasting—not

The reception area of KPFC's new space resembles an art gallery with its highly polished tile floor and white walls. The wall containing the small alcove and custom reception desk by associate designer Jarvis Wong is angled across the room and handpainted with wax color pigments. A chair created by craftsman Rosanne Somerson for the project is highlighted in this space.



"Executive row," housing KPFC's perimeter partners' offices (above), is a study in anegre with black trim. Offices are open with gridded windows and doorless doorways that lead into detailed and personalized spaces. Secretary desks opposite private offices reflect corridor colors and the reception desk.

KPFC's two main studios are designed to resemble the working studio environment of a design school. Designers group into bays of six work stations each (right), separated by custom designed "streetlights." The dry-wall partitions reach 58 in., high enough for privacy yet low enough for team work.



ready yet affordable." KPFC's design focuses on how the evolution of furniture design has been invigorated by craft furniture. In conceiving its own space, the firm has drawn on the dual nature of design as commerce and craft.

And KPFC's offices are quite spirited indeed. From the classically inspired reception area to project designer Jarvis Wong's highly detailed, high-design and low-cost custom reception desk, conference tables, architectural library shelving, secretarial stations and partner offices, the space sings of remarkable attention to detail. A stone-patterned rectangular rug in the elevator lobby, also designed by the firm, is echoed again in the main conference room's custom table.

In planning offices in this 21,000 sq. ft. space for 92 employees, KPFC's project team created a studio environment that breaks the floor plan into uneven halves. Designers are grouped into two main studios, connected by the elevator lobby and a corridor of partner offices, with nine open-plan-style bays in the larger studio and six in the smaller. Each bay holds six "team members."

Because the same six people are not always seated in the same bays, the plan encourages a cross-pollination of designers and architects on KPFC projects—part of a larger scheme to contain the growing firm in a generous space without spreading everyone too far. "We are mentally still a small firm," Swanson asserts, "and the fact that we have two studios helps us cope." The two studio idea was also inspired by the building's awkward floor plan," she adds, replete with what Wong calls "little pieces here and there."

But the plan works. The transition from reception area to resource library is particularly smooth. The library itself incorporates a good

portion of perimeter windows with an expansive view of midtown Manhattan, including a prized glimpse of Central Park. From there, one can meander through the larger studio and continue down "executive row."

Here again is the sense of order and craft: the 9 ft. long secretary desks are directly opposite the private offices, none of which have doors. Each of the four partners' offices has its own flavor, designed to individual tasks and people. "The offices really reflect each partner's character and personality," Wong says.

No two of the partners' custom desks are the same, nor are office layouts, work tables or shelving. Swanson's office, for example, is equipped with a grooved shelf for displaying presentation boards and a wood table desk with standard measurements artfully delineated in a darker wood. (The dry wall ceiling installed here lacks the dimensions that designers typically refer to in acoustical tile ceilings.) Her desk is placed against the wall, the only common thread among partners' offices, and spans the width of the office with a divider of built-in office accessories. One side is for administrative paperwork, the other side for drawing and designing.

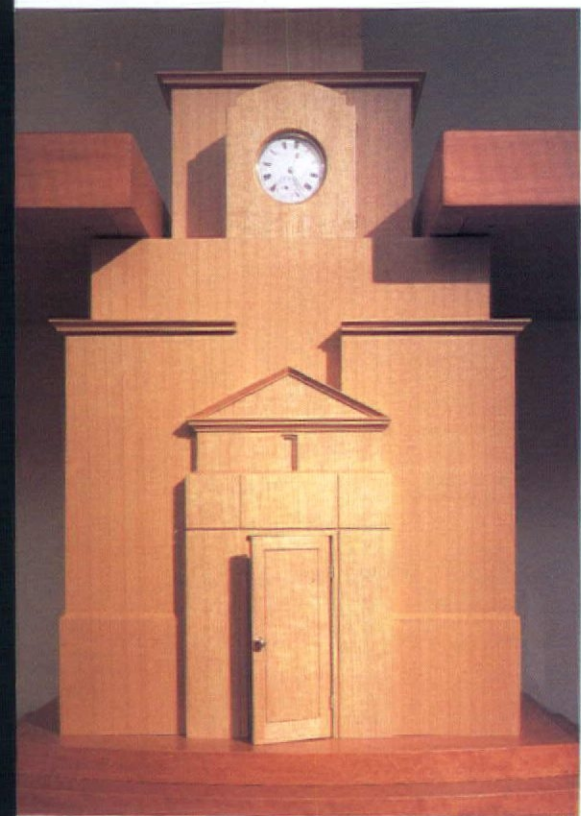
With such different private offices demonstrating the strong personalities behind them, the work of the project team seems nothing short of miraculous. "One of the problems of architectural firms doing their own spaces is getting a consensus," Swanson confesses, "but this was a very smooth project. We tried to coordinate schedules and presented alternatives to our ideas just as we would with a client."

"The partners trusted me, so I had a lot of flexibility to design," Jarvis Wong recalls. "Not only

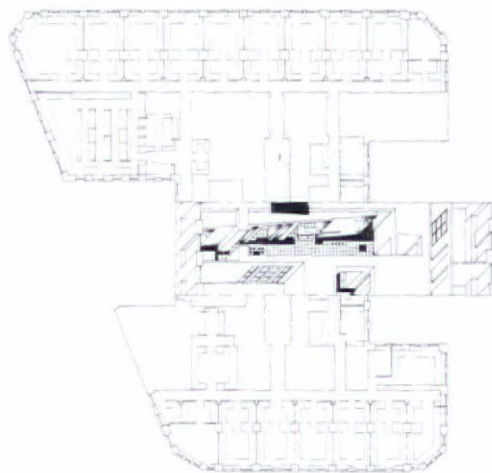
was I able to meet with the 'client' daily, I also had first-hand experience with the people I was designing for. It was very personal and very exciting." For KPFC, at least, the old tale of the shoes for the shoemaker's children has a new and happy ending. ☞

#### Project Summary: Kohn Pedersen Fox Conway

**Location:** New York, NY. **Total area:** 21,000 sq. ft. **No. of floors:** One. **Total staff size:** 92. **Paint:** Benjamin Moore, Evergreen Painting Studios in reception. **Flooring:** Marble Technics Ltd. **Carpet/carpet tile:** Bentley Mills Inc., custom designed by KPFC and produced by Edward Fields. **Ceiling:** Armstrong. **Lighting:** Lights Camera Action Inc., track; Peerless Lighting Corp., pendant fixtures. **Window treatment:** Mecho Shades System, Inc. **Work stations:** Spec' Built. **Work station seating:** Knoll International. **Conference room seating:** Atelier International. **Reception seating:** James Schriber, bench; Rosanne Somerson, chair. **Conference tables:** KPFC design produced by John Langenbacher Co., Inc. **Files:** Storwal International, Inc. **Shelving, resource library:** Inter Metro Industries Corp. **Architectural woodworking:** Pilot Woodworking, Inc. **Client and interior designer:** Kohn Pedersen Fox Conway Associates, Inc.; Miguel Valcarcel, partner in charge; Judy Swanson, design partner; Jarvis Wong, associate/project designer; Teri Figliuzzi, associate/resource designer. **Mechanical/electrical engineer:** Robert Director Consulting Engineers P.C. **Lighting designer:** Jerry Kugler Associates. **Photographer:** Paul Warchol.



A humorous detail from KPFC design partner Patricia Conway's custom-designed office is this clocktower (left), created for her by cabinetmaker Rick Wrigley. Built into shelving above her desk, the clocktower can be seen as a play on Conway's dread of being "always rushed for time."





# JUMP STARTING THE MOTOR CITY

Why established Michigan law firm Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone is investing in embattled Detroit with new downtown offices designed by ISD Inc.

By Jennifer Thiele

It's no secret: In any roll call of America's most troubled cities, Detroit has had its fair share of problems. Between the devastation of the automobile industry by foreign competition and the increase in violent crime due to the drug epidemic, it is no wonder that downtown Detroit has lost much of its business population in the last five years. Yet even in times of trouble there are always true believers. Counted among Detroit's faithful is Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone, an established law firm that determined to stay in Detroit when many other organizations had moved out—and moved into new downtown offices designed by the Chicago office of ISD Inc. to prove it.

Faced with what managing partner Stephen Palms calls a "hodgepodge" of offices in a downtown building that the firm had occupied since 1963, Miller Canfield had already concluded that it needed new offices when a handful of investors, led by Denver-based developer John Madden, announced encouraging plans for a new office building in downtown Detroit—the first to be built there in 15 years. The law firm's dilemma about overhauling existing facilities or moving to new space was quickly put to rest when it grabbed the opportunity to become the anchor tenant in the new 25-story, riverfront office tower.

Miller Canfield retained ISD to help determine space requirements and functional needs, to work with the base building architect to insure that those needs were met, and to design the interior space. Interestingly, ISD's designer and senior project manager Diana Blum (who has since left the firm), had a personal as well as professional interest in the project. A Detroit native whose father was a distinguished local architect, Blum was pleased to become the third generation of the family to leave its mark on the city's skyline.

Having tolerated poorly organized office space for some time, Miller Canfield specifically chose ISD because of its experience with law firm design. ISD responded by developing a concept of separated specific function floors from typical work floors for maximum efficiency. The building is basically a square tower with a bowed front in which Miller Canfield occupies floors 14 and 20 to 25, with options for 15 to 19.

In the ISD scheme, the 14th floor houses all support services with the aid of a dumbwaiter



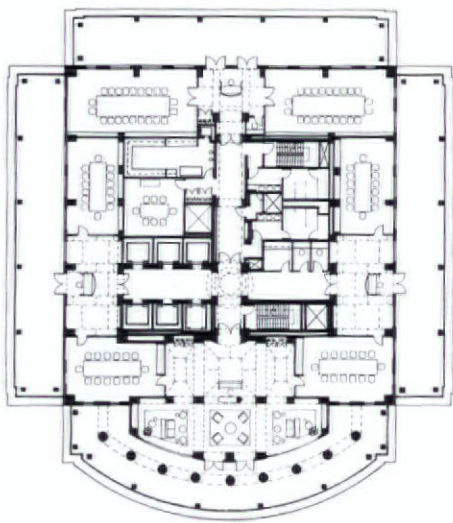
that transports materials to and from floors 14 to 25. The law library accounts for about one half of the usable space on the 22nd floor. And reception and meeting facilities are concentrated on a recessed 25th floor, a feature which Palms applauds because it improves visitor traffic control and minimizes the number of receptionists needed.

At 140 years old, Miller Canfield prides itself in being Michigan's oldest law firm, but the partners were determined that their new offices reflect the timely nature of its business practices. "We wanted something solid, but with a contemporary notion," recalls Palms, who led a committee of partners responsible for overseeing the interior design. "We were looking for a way to indicate that we are not old-fashioned—that we are a 20th-century business doing business in a modern way." And "modern" was not to be misconstrued as "space-age."

Budgeting for the project was stringent. "There has been a strong feeling that economics are so bleak," states Blum. "Miller Canfield is not an extravagant group of people in terms of monies spent on design and materials chosen."

Secretarial work stations at Miller Canfield (opposite) are located directly opposite private offices, across 6 ft. wide circulation corridors. ISD built ample filing space into the firm's offices, by placing filing systems in the core and along the walls of the circulation corridors. Clerestory windows in the corridor walls allow natural light to filter into the core from the perimeter offices.

Miller Canfield's reception area (above) fronts a dramatic conference center with generous views of downtown Detroit. By concentrating all reception and meeting functions on one floor, the firm maintains better control over visitor traffic. The mahogany finishes invoke tradition while the crisp, bright white backdrop and contemporary furnishings give the space a more modern atmosphere.



Miller Canfield naturally wanted its new offices to be affordable, but it also wanted the offices to look affordable.

"We wanted to convey the idea that we are a solid, substantial, successful firm, but we didn't want to appear to be spending too much of our clients' money on our own surroundings," Palms explains. So after a series of budget scuffles with the ISD team (the designer's first presentation to Miller Canfield was "frightfully expensive" admits Palms), client and designer finally settled on an effective design that satisfied both requirements.

Thus, Miller Canfield's new offices reflect the firm's traditional values and long standing in Detroit in an upbeat and up-to-date manner. "We took the firm from traditional to transitional," says Blum. Extensive use of dark mahogany woodwork is balanced by contemporary detailing and furnishings, all set against a crisp, white



ISD used bold-toned marbles and granite to accent the Miller Canfield offices. This 28-ft. granite slab conference table (above) was one of the few luxury items in the design, according to ISD project director Diana Blum. The corporate art collection consists of the works of Michigan artists, and highlights both the natural beauty and the industrial side of the state.

background that gives the design a clear, straightforward appearance.

Some partners' offices are located in the bow of the building's floor plan, while others are interspersed among associates' offices along the sides of the building. Concentrating partners' offices in one area was not very appealing to Miller Canfield, which considers itself to be a democratic firm. "We didn't really want to concentrate partners in the so-called 'high rent district' of Palms says. "We weren't trying to set ourselves apart." ISD was not responsible for furnishing the partners' private offices, as the firm has "passed down" a collection of traditional office furniture over the years. Secretarial work stations are located in the core opposite the private offices and across generous 6 ft. wide circulation spaces. Filing lines portions of the circulation space as well as the core.

In keeping with the optimistic spirit of the 19th West Jefferson building, Blum subtly focuses Miller Canfield's design to pay tribute to Detroit. The recessed 25th floor, which houses the reception area and a dramatic conference center, showcases views of downtown Detroit through picture windows. Blum also helped the law firm purchase and coordinate its art collection, which comprises the works of Detroit and Michigan artists and celebrates both the natural beauty and industrial nature of the state.

ISD also took advantage of the recessed 25th floor to surround the conference center with a balcony on all four sides. The balcony is often used by Miller Canfield to entertain during receptions, benefits, and local celebrations, such as its Fourth of July bash and Detroit's annual grand prix race. ("The fireworks are the most fun," says Palms.) With Miller Canfield keeping a bird's eye view on its hometown, Detroit prospects are already looking up. ☺

#### Project Summary: Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone

**Location:** Detroit, MI. **Total area:** 120,575. **No. floors:** 7. **Average floor size:** 14,000 sq. ft. **Number of employees:** 230. **Paint:** Benjamin Moore. **Carpets:** Brintons Carpets. **Ceiling tiles:** Armstrong World Industries. **Lighting:** Light Control, Peerless Lighting, Halo Lighting. **Doors:** Imperial Woodworking. **Door hardware:** Detroit Door Hardware. **Glass:** Custom. **Window treatments:** Levelor. **Millwork:** Imperial Woodworking, Parenti & Rafelli Inc. **Drywall:** McNulty Dry Wall. **Workstations:** Custom by Parenti & Rafelli Inc. **Workstation seating:** Steelcase. **Lounge seating:** Niedermaier, Nienkamper. **Cafeteria seating:** Krueger. **Conference seating:** Brickel, Cartwright. **Cafeteria tables:** Howe. **Files:** Storwal. **Shelving:** Library Bureau. **Architectural woodwork:** Imperial Woodworking Co. **Planters and accessories:** Tropical Plant Rental. **Signage:** ASI. **Art:** ISD Inc. **HVAC:** Limbach. **Electrical:** Motor City Electric. **Client:** Miller, Canfield Paddock & Stone. **Interior design:** ISD Inc.; Mel Hamilton, officer-in-charge; Diana Blum, senior project manager. **Architect:** Helle Leake. **General contractor:** R.E. Daley. **Structural engineer:** B.E.I. Engineering. **Construction manager:** ISD Inc. **Developer:** John Madden Co. **Furniture dealer:** Contract Interiors, Silvers Inc. **Photographer:** Hedrich Blessing; Marco Lorenzetti.

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# A SMALL TOWN FOR THE BIG BLUE

Some IBM executives thought a renovation of the IBM-ISG/North Central Marketing Division Headquarters in White Plains, New York, was a lost cause—but not James Stewart Polshek and Partners

By Jean Godfrey-June

room to breathe. Awareness of the outdoors. A strong sense of community. Sound like good old, small-town values? They did to James Stewart Polshek and Partners when it began work on a \$48 million renovation and expansion of IBM's North Central Marketing Division Headquarters in White Plains, N.Y. These values could easily have been inspired by IBM's corporate ethos; the company tries to imbue what amounts to a small-town spirit in each of its hundreds of facilities around the world. Ironically, many of the employees who worked in the White Plains building were in favor of scrapping it entirely—until Polshek recently completed its radical transformation.

It was equally ironic that the marketing division, so frequently visited by clients and out-of-town executives, was housed where it was. Marketing is one of IBM's most important divisions, and its sheer visibility sets an example in more ways than its working environment alone. The facility housing this quintessential group of IBM employees consisted of a dark maze of poorly organized corridors, some dead-ends, others 900 ft. long, running the entire length of the building.

"The headquarters were, by IBM standards, cluttered at best," says Ron Swann, IBM's in-house, advisory architect. "Over the years it had become this horrific maze. Most of its occupants were quite negative about it." Polshek's firm was originally retained to write a design feasibility study of the entire facility, with plans to increase population from 1,700 to 2,600 employees.

"We did nine studies, each showing the implications of phasing," says James Stewart Polshek, senior partner in the firm. Eventually the project was scaled down to create an executive briefing center, reception and lobby offices, all served by a new cafeteria. About 100 employees were added.

Many of the building's occupants wanted to abandon the facility altogether. "They thought there was no saving it," Polshek admits. Most spaces opened onto dim, heavily trafficked exterior corridors. "If you had your door open, it was difficult to work because you were on such a tight schedule for thoroughfare," he recalls. "And it was practically impossible to find your way around."

Polshek's solution brought a small-town



perspective to the existing 600,000 sq. ft., 1968-vintage facility at the same time it added 280,000 sq. ft. of new space. After gutting the entire structure, the architect laid out a horizontal circulation scheme complete with a Main Street, side streets, alleyways and even town square-like meeting areas. In this hierarchy, one major corridor rings the exterior of the building, with smaller clusters of offices on "side streets" perpendicular to the main corridor. "Main Street," as it became known, both clarifies movement and exposes the maximum number of people to the naturally lit perimeter. "From any office, you can look out the door and see outside," says Polshek, "which is vital in orienting people within a large building." Employees can also meet to talk informally along the window.

A new, three-story atrium space creates an entrance to the building and symbolically connects the three floors. Each floor had previously been, in the words of senior Polshek associate and project designer Tyler H. Donaldson, "a separate pancake, with no

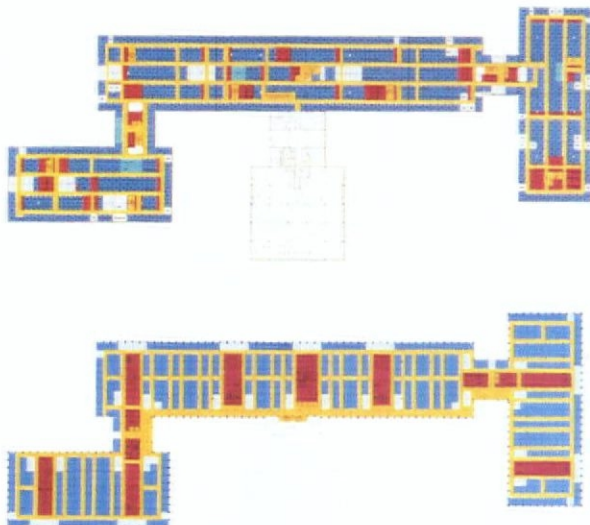
A big space for a small town: A three-story atrium (opposite) integrates IBM's previously separate floors and imbues the entire facility with a sense of community.

Outside, Polshek created a new focus for the building with a dramatic new entry (above).



Polshek transformed IBM's interior corridors with visual cues to suggest the outdoors. Skylight-like overhead lighting (top) illuminates a contrasting carpet which creates "shadows" where there is no sun. New light fixtures designed after a garden pergola (above) throw light up onto the ceiling, while a double-wall system displays corporate art.

The original floor plan (right, top), with its disorganized maze of hallways and dim offices contrasts sharply with Polshek's "small town" circulation plan (right, bottom); a dramatic demonstration of the importance of strong planning in interior design.



interaction between floors." Now glazed exterior stairways allow for further interaction, along with the new cores.

"We took a truly unbearable environment and transformed it with an innovative approach to circulation," Duncan Hazard, senior Polshek associate and project manager, points out. Superimposing that new circulation plan became an issue of phasing, by far the most difficult problem the firm faced. "Creating a meeting between the architecture, construction and building users was difficult," he says. "We tried many phasing strategies before coming up with the final one."

Phasing was complicated by the need for massive asbestos removal. "IBM has a corporate policy of mandated removal of asbestos—encasing it all," explains Polshek. "And the plan was full of it." The asbestos reduced the number of dollars available to use on the design, which influenced the mechanical systems design as well. Work proceeded along phase lines to create good, safe seals between areas.

Though phasing was inevitably inconvenient to IBM employees, Donaldson reports that the transformation was so dramatic that as various phases were completed, higher-up executives were eager to work there. "There are now more high-level executives working at the facility than before the project began," he says.

Polshek's actual client was IBM's Real Estate Construction Services (RECS), though the architect heard frequently from the marketing group that would occupy the building. "We work through RECS," emphasizes Hazard.

To work with RECS is an exacting experience, as many designers are well aware. Its decisions, for example, are final. Notes Polshek: "They never go back to the executive level after beginning a job—particularly with budget changes. Designers who fail to meet the budget are never asked back. Indeed, the success of Polshek's IBM facility rests on the concept of the small town and a rigorous application of its principles, rather than opulent materials.

"It's classic IBM modernism," Polshek believes, "which we do enrich in the executive briefing areas, for instance." Office sizes and other design specifications are outlined in IBM corporate standards manuals, to which designers must refer. "The manuals are quite good to work with," observes Polshek. "They establish standards without specifics."

Practice certainly makes IBM nearly perfect. Says Donaldson, "IBM is used to building and using consultants. Their decisiveness is definitely a help in the design process. They were positive at every step after we hit upon the organization scheme."

In fact, both RECS and the marketing executives loved the metaphor for the small town right from the start. "Large as it is, IBM is a very family-oriented business," observes Polshek. "The small-town concept seemed to speak to their need for a sense of community among their workers."

Swann points out that IBM workers watched the facility go through its six-year metamorphosis first hand, reinforcing their understanding of the project. On-site employees became enthusiasts about the changes going on after the first phas-



A workstation overlooks the atrium and stairway (left) that Polshek used to create a sense of community at IBM. Previously, the building's three floors had functioned as virtually separate units.

A room with a view: The cafeteria at IBM, seen from the inside (below) and the outside (bottom), was one of the first parts of the job to be completed, and its success generated enthusiasm for the rest of the project.

in which the cafeteria was completed. "The site is beautiful, and the new cafeteria encourages more interaction with the outdoors," Swann says. "In good weather, there are always lots of people out on their lunch hour." The cafeteria links the building to the site with plenty of glass and an outside series of white columns, which give the cafeteria's slender glass curtain wall more substance.

While the technology used in the facility is not exceptionally sophisticated by 1990 standards, all new mechanical and electrical systems were required. Wire management was the primary technological problem, according to Donaldson.

The architect built in greater accessibility and in more light by using low, open wall panels.

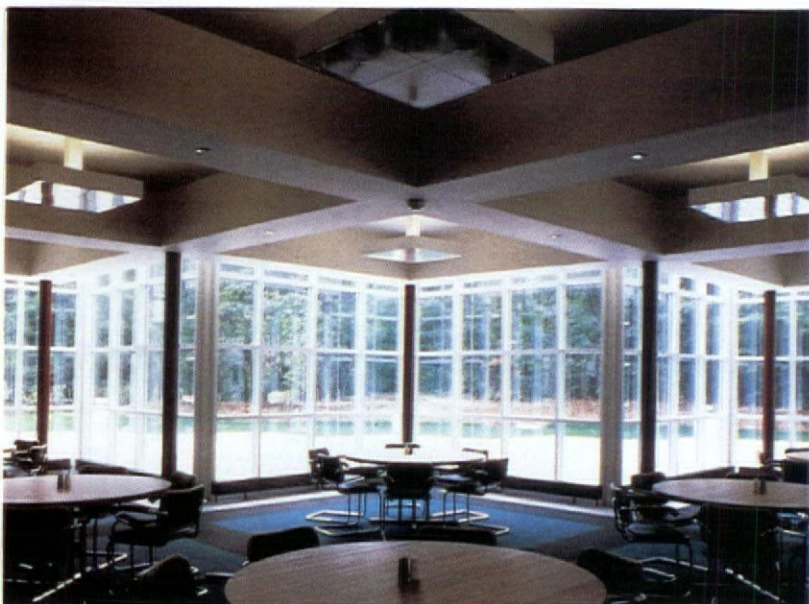
Light is transmitted virtually everywhere. Polshek has taken the lighting fixtures out of ceiling and made new ones that throw light up the ceiling. The architects have also created a two-part wall along the hallways: one section incorporates air conditioning and heat systems, and the other serves as a gallery for Square overhead luminaires reminiscent of skylights enhance the rhythm of the floor. Where there is no direct sunlight, carpet is used to create shadows in the halls.

Key colors help identify different regions of the core—north, south and central—and run through all three floors of the building. Polshek, in conjunction with consultant Art Options, controlled final decisions about the use of color and applied it in conjunction with the coding, placing predominately red-hued work areas in red-coded areas and so forth.

While Polshek's floor plan establishes specific spatial identities, it will nevertheless be adaptable to changing use. "We had our marching orders in terms of projected population and what they'd be using the building for," says Donaldson. "But the facility still had to be extremely flexible, since executives do move around within the company and departments. Realistically, it's likely to be reorganized a number of times."

Nor has IBM found any need to wait. Building usage changed in some areas even over the course of the job, though not dramatically. According to Hazard, "Most use changes were due to the phasing."

"A lot can happen in six years," says Swann, "which is what is so wonderful about Polshek's design. It was flexible enough to accommodate all of the changes without altering the basic integrity of the design. He admits that he enjoys his view to the building because of all the positive feedback from employees. "The comments have been tremendous," he says. The same IBM employees who said it couldn't be done are now calling it Our Town. ☛



**Project Summary:**

**IBM U.S. Marketing and Services Division Headquarters**

**Location:** White Plains, NY. **Total floor area:** 620,000 sq ft. **No. of floors:** 3.5. **Average floor size:** 175,000 sq ft. **Total staff size:** 2,000. **Wallcoverings:** Carpet, paperbacked or Stretchwall application. **Paint:** Glidden. **Laminate:** Nevamar; Wilsonart. **Carpet/ceramic tile:** Collins & Aikman. **Ceiling:** Armstrong. **Window treatments:** Miniblinds. **Work stations:** Knoll. **Work station seating:** Comforto. **Lounge seating:** Knoll. **Cafeteria, dining, auditorium seating:** existing Celesse chairs. **Upholstery:** Knoll, Comforto. **Conference tables:** Hardwood House. **Cafeteria, dining, training tables:** existing Nouve tables. **Files:** Steelcase. **Architectural woodwork:** Haggerty. **Planters, accessories:** Intero. **Client:** IBM RECS. **Architect/interior designer:** James Stewart Polshek and Partners. **Structural engineer:** URS Company Inc. **Mechanical/electrical engineer:** Jaros Baum & Bolles. **Construction manager:** White Turner Contracting Co. **Lighting designer:** Howard Brandston Lighting Design. **Photographer:** Goldberg/ESTO.

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# True or False: Design Promotes Healing

If the physical environment can indeed promote healing, the 1990 winners of Health Environment Awards from the National Symposium on Health Care Design should have waiting lines for admission

Americans want to be treated as individuals with inviolable rights, but what goes on in many American hospitals and clinics tells a distinctly different story. Health care facilities can be part of the problem because they may actually disturb the patient—creating an anonymous, disorienting and even inefficient setting that pleases no one, not patient, healer nor visitor. Happily, health care facilities can also be part of the solution, as can be seen in the 1990 winners of Health Environment Awards from the National Symposium on Health Care Design, which *Contract Design* is proud to sponsor. On the following pages, readers can judge the merits of last year's two honorable mentions for new construction: Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, designed by Hancock & Hancock, and Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock, designed by the hospital's own staff. (An award for remodeled construction was granted to the Child Development Center, Children's Hospital in Oakland, designed by The Ratcliff Architects.)

Of course, the bonds between design and healing are anything but simple, as the summer 1990 meeting of the National Symposium's board of directors made clear. For example, design's impact is far more apparent in some branches of medicine than others. David A. Guynes, president of Guynes Design, notes that "In rehabilitative medicine, patients recovering from major injury or dysfunction are highly motivated by the physical space. Experiencing it is a psychological event that they are involved in."

Is there an inevitable divergence between life inside and outside of health care facilities? The disparities can be beneficial in a health care setting, the board heard. Wayne Ruga, president of the National Symposium and a practicing architect, felt that the symbolic nature of health care design supports a transitional culture that reminds people, "This is an environment you are supposed to behave differently in, staff and patients alike."

Various board members were troubled by the degree of regimentation and lack of individual choice forced on typical patients. Placing more individual environmental and procedural controls over lights, meals and so forth in patients' hands might give them a stronger sense of control over their own lives. Yet this raises profound, practical problems as well.

"Hospitals are run like military ships," declared Jain Malkin, principal of Jain Malkin Inc. "From the hospital's perspective, everything must be done according to protocol. Protocols assure that patients get a minimum level of care, and that there is consistency each time a procedure is executed. With thousands of clinical staff, you need to know that there is a specific protocol for dealing with each kind of medical treatment." However, protocol could be at odds with the options that would restore a fuller sense of control to patients.

Compromises between due diligence for all and specialized treatment for individuals are not categorically bad, nevertheless. James L. Ray, executive vice president of Saddleback Memorial Medical Center, believed that "There will be sacrifices made, compromises which you hope will not hurt the patient in any way because there is no perfect system." To him, the bottom line is: Did the patient get better?

Barbara J. Huelat, chief, health care interiors for Ellerbe Becket, pointed out, "There really is a lot of universal choice that we need to make in health care design. When a patient can control his environment, he buys into his own healing." Trouble is, health care designers need a better understanding of the environment's impact on behavior. While much research has already explored this relationship, the findings have not always been absorbed by professionals in either design or health care.

And the shortcomings extend beyond the facilities themselves. In the opinion of Robin Orr, executive director of Planetree, medical staff must be educated to encourage a level of empathy and understanding that tells patients how important they are. "The environment alone doesn't change behavior," he said. Patients want to know what is going on; they want to participate in their own healing.

In fact, the promotion of healing through design may have to be rethought more profoundly

in the coming years. As Saddleback's Ray suggested, "People who look to the hospital to be the focus are wrong. We have them such a short period. Even in rehabilitation it is getting less." Solving a patient's problems may have to be done at home or in some other environment. The growing financial burden of illness will certainly reward American consumers who find new ways to obtain health care services.

Meanwhile, what can health care designers do to educate their clients? Building pressure for change by sharing news of environmental design breakthroughs with consumer groups and expert physicians might seem like Ralph Nader-style citizen advocacy. To board members, on the other hand, Nader got results. What else is health care all about?



With artistic allusions to Mondrian and Kandinsky adding to the overall sense of whimsy and discovery, the Child Development Center at Children's Hospital in Oakland (above), designed by The Ratcliff Architects, welcomes children with what National Symposium jurors described as "a delightful solution."

# The New Look of Healing

Skeptics who doubt that new floor plans, millwork, furniture and finishes can actually improve healing have not been to Boston's Massachusetts General Hospital with Hancock & Hancock

By Jennifer Thiele



A dramatic visitor lounge with all-glass exposure and sweeping view of downtown Boston (left) allows patients at Massachusetts General and their families to escape for awhile from the clinical realities of hospital environment.

The nursing stations in Massachusetts General's new Ellison Building (opposite) were designed Hancock & Hancock to be flexible enough to accommodate future technology. Since form storage is not currently computerized at the hospital, a multitude of storage slots were required at each station. When computerization takes over in the future, the slots can easily be converted to other types of storage.

**W**hat would you want most during a stay in a health care facility? State of the art technology and competent staff, of course. But more and more, institutions are realizing the key roles that comfort and aesthetics play in increasing the effectiveness—and competitiveness—of a healing environment. The directors of Boston's Massachusetts General Hospital have had this in mind in retaining Hancock & Hancock, a Chicago design firm specializing in hospital design, to design interiors for the Ellison Building, a new "inpatient replacement facility" on the hospital's expansive medical campus. From millwork and furniture to finishes, the designers have prescribed new and exciting concepts for the facility.

As one of the nation's oldest (since 1821) and best respected medical facilities, Massachusetts General enjoys an exceptional reputation in the community it serves. But the hospital's senior

vice president, Larry Martin, is quite forthcoming on the need to justify that reputation. "Our physical plant was way out of date," he admits. "We have a loyal clientele, but you can only stand lousy facilities for so long. Now we have these brand new facilities, and we have received very favorable comments from the patients."

Apparently the patients are not the only ones who know a good thing when they see it. At the second annual Health Care Environment Awards, co-sponsored by the National Symposium on Health Care Design and *Contract Design*, Hancock & Hancock picked up an honorable mention award for its design for the typical patient floor at Massachusetts General.

The Ellison Building was completed in 1990 as the first phase of a major construction project at Massachusetts General. The 25-story structure has 22 occupied floors housing three intensive care units, radiology and dietary





departments, an emergency department expansion, a chapel, three pediatric patient floors, three VIP patient floors and nine standard patient floors. Its triangular shape was dictated by the size and shape of the construction site, so careful interior space planning was required to gain maximum functionality from the restricted space. In particular, the nursing function and nursing stations have been considerably expanded and upgraded.

The triangular shape actually lends itself well to the design of a centralized nursing station that gives staff members easy access to all patient

## Why can't hospitals be fashion trend setters?

rooms. Located in the core of the facility on each patient floor, the nursing station takes the form of an interior triangle that is open to the floor's two patient room corridors. Hancock & Hancock designed all the millwork, including customized mail slots installed beneath the transaction counters and vertical form and chart storage slots on inside walls.

According to Carl Johnson, Hancock & Hancock's project director, the form and chart storage areas are particularly critical to the design of the nursing station because Massachusetts General does not currently have a computerized system for maintaining that information; the storage areas had to accommodate up to 90 forms. Since the hospital does anticipate the computerization of form storage—and possibly chart storage—in the future, it is also important that the current file systems be highly flexible; form storage modules can be slid out of the millwork for conversion of the space into other types of storage areas.

With the advent of technology edging ever closer at Massachusetts General, "The hospital is as up to date as possible in terms of ability to convert into other systems," assures Johnson. Additional drawers and file systems have also

been incorporated with maximum flexibility. freestanding, below-the-surface furniture components are totally movable.

Since patient rooms must conform to standard requirements and restrictions, space allocation has been a top concern, according to Nina Hancock, Hancock & Hancock principal-in-charge. Circulation within the rooms allows maximum access to patients by staff members. Window treatments exploit the hospital's breathtaking view of downtown Boston whenever possible. To regulate the natural light entering patient rooms without depriving patients of view, Hancock and Johnson equipped all patient rooms with two sets of shades: one see-through shade blocks direct light and minimizes glare, while permitting visibility, the other is completely opaque to block out natural light.

In the same spirit, the visitor lounge on each floor of the Ellison Building boasts dramatic views of the city. Taking full advantage of the structure's height and location, the design team directed the architects to open the lounges to the outside through spandrel-to-ceiling glass. The choice of contemporary, sturdy but upholstered lounge furnishings was intended, in Hancock's words, "to provide relief from a typical patient room"—a non-clinical refuge where patients, families and friends can escape to a less institutional environment. Seat heights were tailored to patient comfort and wheelchair-bound patients have been accommodated through each lounge's generous circulation space for maneuvering.

Neutral colors played an important role in the overall design scheme, with accent colors carefully chosen to constitute a "timeless solution," Hancock describes it. Standing the test of time has been particularly important; a second phase of construction project conforming to the same aesthetic standard is soon to follow.

"We tried to anticipate what colors would be coming out over the next few years," says Johnson. At the same time, the design team deliberately avoided colors that might be considered too fashionable. Says Hancock, "We not want it to be a trend setter, but a distinct healing environment."

Against two neutral colors, the design team's color scheme contrasts three accent colors: blue, purple and a reddish terracotta. The neutrals remain consistent from floor to floor, while the accent colors alternate. Although the stark, light neutrals visibly dominate the floors and walls, the accent colors are simply applied to mark the entrances to patient rooms and distinguish the nurses station on each floor. The accent colors also come into play in the patient rooms in the treatment of the cubicle curtains and the customized tiled bathroom floors.

This limited use of color has a practical as well as aesthetic consideration. "A limited color palette was selected for easy maintenance," says Hancock. The extensive use of neutrals means that finishes can be easily changed without upsetting the entire color scheme of the facility.

Are the results what Massachusetts General expected? Dr. J. Robert Buchanan, the hospital's general director, uses decidedly upbeat adjectives to describe his initial expectations

A typical patient floor at Massachusetts General (below) is dominated by light, neutral colors, with carefully chosen accent colors marking the entrances to patient rooms and distinguishing the nurses station. After considerable research to create a "timeless" design solution, Hancock & Hancock specified accent colors that should remain popular for years to come.





design. "We were looking for an environment that was pleasant, cheerful, clean, crisp and functional," he says. "It had to be amenable and comfortable for both the patients and the staff." The existing facility was spread throughout multiple buildings of various vintages and design schemes, Hancock & Hancock was also concerned about providing the new facility with a cohesive and unifying aesthetic that would set a standard for the hospital.

Overall, "It's a simple, straightforward, clean solution," says Hancock. "The idea of embellishment was avoided." Simplicity of design was foremost in the minds of the hospital staff.

"We didn't want the hospital to radiate luxury, because people don't want to feel like they're paying for luxury," says Buchanan. The second phase of construction, scheduled to begin in late this year, will essentially incorporate the same aesthetic. Though Buchanan maintains that "The basic standards and principles will have to be reinterpreted" when they are applied to various functions in the next phase, he is confident that Hancock & Hancock's design scheme for Massachusetts General Hospital is flexible enough to have been given a long bill of health well into the future. ☞

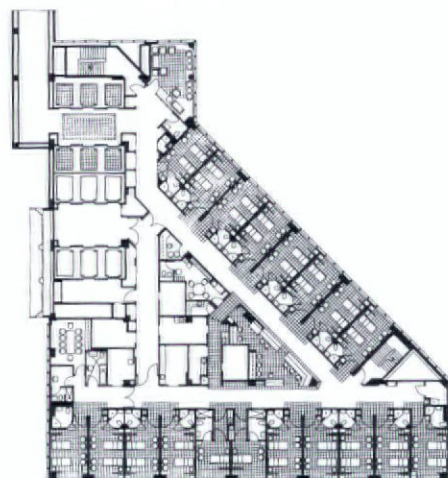
**Project Summary:**  
**Location:** Boston, MA  
**Building:** Massachusetts General Hospital, 7th floor patient floor

**Location:** Boston, MA. **Total floor area:** 461,000 sq. ft.  
**No. of floors:** 25. **Average floor size:** 18,440. **No. of beds:** 1,000.  
**Wallcoverings:** Lanark, Color House Wall-

covering. **Paint:** Sherwin Williams. **Laminate:** WilsonArt, Formica. **Dry wall:** U.S. Gypsum. **Flooring:** Tarkett, American Olean. **Ceiling:** Armstrong. **Lighting:** Linear, Forum. **Doors:** Algoma Hardwoods Inc. **Door hardware:** Sargent Mfg. Co. **Window treatments:** MechoShade Systems. **Railings:** Custom by Valley City. **Patient room seating:** Krueger. **Patient room casegoods:** Valley City. **Patient beds:** Hill-Rom. **Patient room lighting:** Kurt Versen, Kenne, Prescolite. **Lounge seating:** Cartwright, Knoll. **Other seating:** Steelcase. **Upholstery:** Pollack Associates, Spradling, Majllite, Anton Maix, Naugahyde, Kaleidoscope. **Conference tables:** Chicago Hardware Foundry, Kinetics. **Coffee and side tables:** Contemporary Mica, Metropolitan Furniture. **Files and shelving:** Steelcase. **Woodworking and cabinetmaking:** Valley City. **Accessories:** Peter Pepper Products, Bay State. **Signage:** ASI Sign Systems. **Cubicle curtains:** Maharam. **Architectural millwork/environmental graphics/artwork:** Hancock & Hancock Inc. **Elevators:** Dover. **HVAC:** J.C. Higgins, Fred Williams. **Fire safety:** Honeywell. **Security:** Advanced Signal. **Building management system:** Honeywell. **Plumbing fixtures:** Kohler, American Standard, Crane, Just, Elkay. **Client:** Massachusetts General Hospital. **Interior designer:** Hancock & Hancock Inc.: Nina Hancock, principal-in-charge; Carl Johnson, project director; Cathy Gregory, environmental graphics. **Master planning, programming, space planning and architecture:** Hoskins Scott Taylor & Partners. **Structural engineering:** McNamara/Salvia. **Mechanical and electrical engineering:** Thompson Consultants. **General contractor and construction manager:** Walsh Brothers. **Furniture dealers:** Offices Unlimited, Peabody Office Furniture. **Photographer:** Warren Jagger.

Standard patient rooms at Massachusetts General (above, left) were designed to maximize circulation space for staff access to patients. Each room boasts a picture window with a spectacular view of Boston.

The custom tiled floor of a patient room bathroom in Massachusetts General (above, right) shows how Hancock & Hancock used accent color tiles to liven up an otherwise stark space.



# Rolling on an Ooey Gooley Wheel

With children in a corridor learning and laughing with parents and even physicians, something unusual is going on at Arkansas Children's Hospital's Parker Lane, designed by the Hospital S

By Laura E. Mayer



Suppose you were an anxious youngster arriving at a hospital to "go to the doctor." Turning down a corridor, you discover what appears to be an indoor street beckoning you to explore it. Want to forget the doctor—even for a moment—and dive in? Fortunately, no one seems to have pointed out to Harry Loucks how incompatible these two activities could be. In Parker Lane, a unique waiting area for child patients, the design director of Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock and his colleagues have created a world that functions

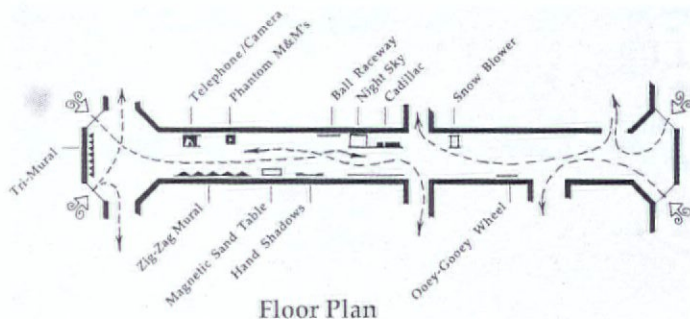
like a child's companion. "The corridor plays on children's physical and visual strength and curiosity," Loucks explains.

Parker Lane, named after Dave Parker, a local Cadillac dealer who contributed most of the funds for the project (as well as a children's version of a red Caddy complete with rumble seat), is much more than a corridor. Within its 10 ft.-wide by 100 ft.-long hallway with 15 sq. ft. vestibules on either end, it houses an environment of "participatory activities that entice subliminal response and the involvement

A long view of Parker Lane at Arkansas Children's Hospital (above) shows design director Harry Loucks' phone booth/camera, a play on the necessity of having a telephone in the corridor as well as the design theme. "We didn't want to put a telephone in this hallway, so we made it playful, a telephone booth without the enclosure," Loucks explains. A large lens in the front of the "booth" acts as a camera obscura and simulates a backward-looking through a viewfinder—by inverting the image.

and shadows" (below) at Parker Lane is named after the classic game of creating shapes in the shadow of a figure. The difference with Loucks' version, however, is the combination of red, green and blue lights, which blend into white light with colors on the edges of the shadow figure's "shadow."

At one end of the hallway at Parker Lane, the "Tri-Mural" (bottom) offers visiting children the chance to play with an entirely different wall: the huge red number "2," the silhouette of a child's hand in an adult's hand or bright red and white zebra stripes. "A lot of the design is as functional as it is decorative," Loucks says.



blank wall lit by red, blue and green filtered lights that blend to produce white, complemented by the shadows of children in red, blue and green when they play before the light. And there's "Ooey Goey Wheel," a wall-mounted container of thick, syrupy liquid that produces strange shapes when turned slowly.

Striking yet inexpensive motifs extend this visual playfulness vertically as well as horizontally. The corridor's ceiling, for example, is draped with billowy canopies of fabric, fall colors on one end and blue and white "clouds" on the other. Colors are relatively subdued in the hallway itself, allowing objects and puzzles to create their own decoration.

Loucks, hospital design director since January 1987, admits he has long prepared for his current role. Before arriving in Arkansas, he served several nationally prominent museums as a staff designer, in addition to a three-year internship under the legendary Charles Eames in the early 1960s. He admits he has never formally studied child behavior or sociology. "I guess I just didn't grow up," he laughs. "I've always enjoyed tinkering with toys that represent scientific principles. I try to figure out a way to present it that is not encumbered by the intellectual pursuit in getting there."

And does Parker Lane work. Loucks believes, "The games and puzzles help to alleviate stress and relax the kids. If you can relieve stress, the body will help heal itself better. But you can't be satisfied to help only the child—you must play to the parents and siblings as well."

What happens to families along the 100 ft.-long corridor is a phenomenon well known to walkers of dogs and parents with children in strollers. Since the exhibits cause everyone to laugh and smile together, strangers as well as

family members willingly talk to and reassure one another. "Children anticipate coming back early and they inevitably stay later after their appointment," Loucks reports. "I even see doctors out there playing with the kids."

General Hospital may never be the same.

#### Project Summary: Arkansas Children's Hospital/Parker Lane

**Client:** Arkansas Children's Hospital. **Location:** Little Rock, AR. **Total area:** 1,000+ sq. ft. **Seating:** Krueger International. **Woodworking and cabinetmaking:** Nabholz Construction; Mark Reeves and Kyle Walker. **Signage:** Suzanne Kittrell. **Murals:** Anton Smith and Cindy Troutman Ehren. **Interior design:** Arkansas Children's Hospital Staff; Harry D. Loucks, design director; Anton Smith, department of imageing. **Photography:** Joe Smith.

mental and physical capabilities of children and adults." The space already existed as part of the hospital's Sturgis Clinic when Loucks decided to use it for entertaining children, hence the unusual dimensions.

Budget constraints initially forced Loucks to work with the hospital's maintenance budget, which did not represent an insurmountable obstacle. "We could have had more money," he admits. "It was just a matter of designing with the skills and materials we had." Parker Lane had been evolving about a year before its official completion in November 1989.

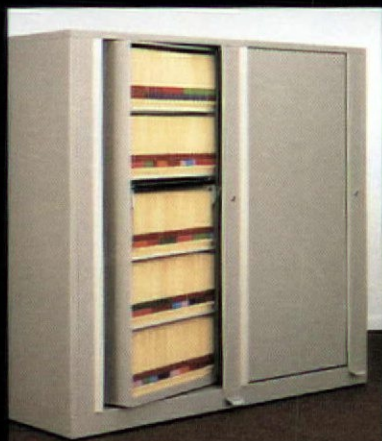
What really stands out today is the inspired use of simple materials that have been combined to build Parker Lane. Children head straight for the space's appliances, games and gadgets. With Loucks continuously updates. There's the magnetic sand table/box in which children create their own designs by moving hand-held magnets underneath the table like an oversized A-Sketch. There's "Hand Shadows," a



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# How Design Firms Survive Recession

Design firms battling the collapse of the Texas economy in the 1980s found out how good their survival skills were—in an important new study for the IBD Foundation that seeks to help design professionals in the 1990s

*From the IBD Survival Report edited by Evagene H. Bond*

professional designer's first job is survival. You need to keep your firm going—to buy time to take measures that keep the firm afloat. Lucy Hubbard Holmes, Ziegler Cooper in Houston, says, "When you're in the middle of a recession, you just keep going. Your goal is survival, but you can't stop to reach the goal yet. Pretty soon you get a break." Maybe.

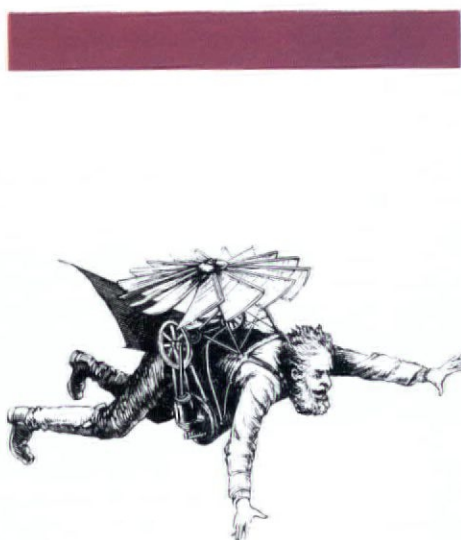
With a generous grant from the Joel M. Fossler/Fixtures Furniture Endowment, The Institute of Business Designers Foundation (IBD) produced *The Survival Report*, a detailed examination of how 11 Texas design firms coped with the disastrous decline of the Texas economy in the 1980s—and what today's designers can do to effectively survive and prosper—edited by Evagene H. Bond. What follows is the second of a three-part serialization by *Contract Design*, made possible through the cooperation of IBD. It deals with Part I, Chapter 1, "What Happened;" Chapter 4, "What To Do First;" and Chapter 5, "The Importance of Attitude."

Firms that participated in the Report include: Blakeman Design Associates, Austin; Bommarito Group, Austin; LFI, Austin; George Goodwin Alexander & Linville, Houston; Frank Sanford/Southwest, Houston; Moore, Owings & Merrill, Houston; Felbach Designs and Associates, Dallas; Fran/Nichols, Dallas; Weber Design Associates, Dallas; The Whitney Group, Houston; and Ziegler Cooper Inc., Houston.

While you wait for the break, do two things immediately. First, stop spending or, at the least, spend very carefully. Second, develop a plan. Then act fast on the courage of your plan and your convictions.

• Stop spending. Not all Texas firms did. Julie Fossler, of LFI, recalls, "Most of us thought there would be a slow, bad year. We didn't think it would last. We kept spending to keep our motivation going. It was short-lived."

• Develop a plan. Gary Whitney, of The Whitney Group, says, "Stop, think, reorganize and plan." Most plans will be based on tightening up the firm's finances; you can cut staff and/or expenses, divest assets, cut fees,



**"I can't stress enough how important a positive attitude is. Success comes to positive, enthusiastic people."**

**—Marla Bommarito-Crouch,  
Bommarito Group**

or think smaller on what constitutes the minimum sized job acceptable to the firm. Broadening a firm's outlook can help too; you can increase efficiency, market aggressively, improve productivity with CADD, create a broader client base, develop new specialties, initiate projects, merge or sell the firm, form joint ventures to enter new markets, improve managerial talent or decentralize.

• Act fast on your convictions. As Michael Cooper, of Ziegler Cooper, believes, "The key is to move fast. I think we responded rather well. Our assessment of the situation was accurate, and we made quick adjustments. We added an interiors department; we brought in the best people to get it off the ground, and it succeeded beyond our wildest expectations. We're the size we are now because we took that gamble. It was probably a bigger risk than we realized, but we were blinded by the conviction that it was the right thing to do. That's important—do what you believe in. In retrospect, I would do it almost the same, but I might do it even more boldly—make a larger capital investment with more CADD stations and more key players.

Not all firms will have the resources to add a new department and CADD stations. But all can adopt the strategies implicit in Ziegler Cooper's move: Assess the situation accurately, adjust accordingly, develop a strategy, look for active markets, hire or train top-notch people to implement your plans, and act boldly on your convictions.

One of the most damaging aspects of a recession is psychological. Understanding that may be one of a designer's best defenses. In Texas, the unrealistic high of the boom gave way to something near despair. The designers in this report fought depression every day, and all attribute their staying power to a positive attitude.

Marla Bommarito-Crouch, of the Bommarito Group, says, "I can't stress enough how important a positive attitude is. When the recession came, we didn't talk about the bad things, we stayed away from negativism, and we didn't reinforce paranoia. Success comes to positive, enthusiastic people."

A positive attitude strengthened designers

personally with their own firms, friends and colleagues. It strengthened firms by increasing teamwork and commitment. It strengthened relations with clients, who reacted positively to their enthusiasm and energy.

It takes time for reality to sink in. Debra Lehman-Smith, reflecting on the recession after her move from Houston to the Skidmore Owings & Merrill office in Washington, D.C., remarked,

## No time for goals—until you run off the road?

"When you come to an economy that is really healthy, you see how bad it was in Houston. But at the time, we had to believe in it and make it work."

At the same time, there was denial in all the responses. The hope of a quick recovery was not altogether unrealistic; in the recent past Texas had recovered quickly from slumps. When designers did believe it, it was "the pits." The community as a whole was ravaged.

Among design firms, individuals lost jobs, changed jobs or left the industry. Survivors felt the shockwaves: sadness about lost colleagues,

fear that jobs were in danger, guilt over surviving. Several characteristics—realism, optimism, commitment, determination, self-belief, a sense of community—sustained them.

•Realism. These people looked hard and unemotionally at their situations, viewing problems as challenges, considering options, taking action and avoiding self-pity. Leslie Fossler says, "Realistic scenarios give me confidence. I can build and work toward realistic goals."

•Optimism. In Austin, the vacancy rate in 1988 was 35.6%. Some designers saw only the empty space. Marla Bommarito-Crouch saw the same glut and thought, "There's all that empty space to be built out."

•Commitment and determination. Many of the people in this story considered and rejected the idea of leaving the industry or Texas. Michael Cooper and Scott Ziegler assert, "It was our intent not only to survive but also to thrive."

•Self-belief. Says Gary Whitney, "I develop the attitude that it's exciting, fun to innovate. I'd rather write a book than read one. I have conviction. I will take it on the chin if I'm wrong. I have put my money where my mouth is; it's all on the line. But I have come to realize—I'm the only

limit to seeing this system work.

•A sense of community. "Texans like winners," states Jo Heinz, of Staffelbach Designs & Associates. To escape the inevitable finger pointing and decline of trust, the design community rallied to its own. "People got tired of being down, so they'd give parties." Bob Sanford, of Schenck Sanford/Southwest, recalls. Leslie Fossler adds, "I feel a sense of obligation to the community. I'm involved in AIA, IBD, ASID, the Texas Association of Interior Design and Laguna Gloria (a local museum). It sustains my career to be there for other designers."

Besides, negative talk backfires. Marla Bommarito-Crouch says, "Designers cry to clients about how bad business is, then clients demand lower fees from everyone. They say, 'You'll cut your fees to get this work.' I say, 'No way.'"

In a recession, a firm must have a clear direction so as not to waste resources on unproductive activities. What follows are comments on goal setting from the Texas designers in this study.

•Leslie Fossler notes, "Once a year we have an office retreat. I bring my personal goals and ideals, as well as my ideas about the firm's, to that meeting. For instance, I want the firm to get slightly bigger with more technical capability in the office. We have an informal discussion and try to mesh individual and firm goals."

•For Lucy Hubbard Holmes, of Ziegler Cooper, "Goals for the firm are set and evaluated informally at meetings of the principals outside the office. It's a combination of real world analysis and aspirations—where would we like to be? We discuss long and short term goals, like where the markets are. One of our goals was to work for Fortune 500 companies. Bigger corporate interiors are now a goal. After we decide, we go after that work."

•"In bad times," Jo Heinz reports, "people said, 'All we need is more projects. Forget goals—we haven't got time to set goals.' I said, 'We'll set them anyway. At least they will give us documentation, an evaluation mechanism and a way to keep track of how we are doing.' That's a good consideration when you experience the lack of control of the environment, and it helps get everyone totally concerned."

In next month's third installment of the three-part serialization, *Contract Design* considers *The Survival Report's* Part II, "Work More Efficiently," Chapter 9, "Diversification;" and Part III, "Sell More," Chapter 14, "Image Building." ☞

*Contract Design* is privileged to present this serialization of the full report, which has already been issued to IBD members. Copies of the full report are available to IBD members and nonmembers for \$20.00 each plus \$5.00 shipping and handling by writing to IBD, 341 Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL 60654, Attention: Lisa Torgerson; or by calling 312/467-1950 with a Visa number.

**"The key is to move fast. We added an interiors department; we brought in the best people to get it off the ground, and it succeeded beyond our wildest expectations."**

**—Michael Cooper, Ziegler Cooper**



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# APRES MOI

**When it's time for the founder of a design firm to depart, there is a real possibility that the firm will vanish too**

*By Roslyn Brandt*

**O**nce upon a time, you started a design business by borrowing a few dollars from your parents. You sold your design services, paid your bills and put what was left over in the savings and loan. When you retired, you took your money out of the savings and loan and gave your business to your son.

That's what sons were for.

In today's world, however, your son—and daughter, too—have run off to Wall Street to become stock brokers. Corporate raiders are amassing your stock in a hostile takeover. The Japanese are making offers you can't refuse. You're trying to service your leveraged buy-out. All this so you can retire and move to Phoenix on or before your 65th birthday.

This fable of the Eighties is not confined to Fortune 500 corporations. In less dramatic ways the design community has changed how architects and designers conduct their business. Small design firms are combining to form conglomerates, large furniture manufacturers are buying smaller ones, and foreign capitalists are finding American design firms to be attractive investments. A recent Lou Harris survey commissioned by Steelcase found that 40% of all American interior design firms have reorganized their companies and 31% have been involved in a merger or acquisition.

With merger mania, many predict that the large firms offering a diverse range of services and the very small boutique firms emphasizing personal service will survive the '90s and beyond. Many predict the virtual demise of the mid-size firms. While this may overstate the case, mid-sized firms are struggling to compete and many are contemplating mergers as a way to diversify and meet the demands of the marketplace.

In any case it's clear that architecture and interior design firms must develop a strategic plan for the future of their companies. Without planning, principals may find themselves at a severe disadvantage when the time comes for



transfer of design firm ownership. For many founders of postwar firms, the time has arrived.

A design firm marks certain stages in its life. In the entrepreneurial stage, the founders are full of ideas, ambitions, energy and visions of success. Money is not the motivation, and every available penny goes into the growth of the firm. Little thought is given to long term continuity: Everything is moving too fast.

In the mature stage, success has been achieved. The emphasis shifts to professionalism, profitability and solidifying the firm's position. Talented employees are given responsible jobs.

As time passes, the founders begin looking towards retirement. Risk-taking decreases as the desire for financial security increases. It is at this point that the future success of the firm will be determined. Will prosperity continue under new management? Or will the firm decline and eventually disappear as the founders retire?

Ownership transition means transferring control. This can be frightening to owners who built the practice from the ground up. They may harbor a multitude of fears: Dare they let go? Can successors fail? Will trusted disciples follow

different stars? But there is hope too, that the founders' names and ideas will survive them to attain some sort of immortality. Successors move on to even greater accomplishments.

Successful ownership transition requires what can amount to a complex and time consuming planning. Legal issues of ownership and professional liability are involved. Even so, many experts recommend that planning for a transfer of ownership should be at least 10 to 15 years before founders intend to retire.

Numerous reasons strongly justify planning for a transfer of ownership in a design firm.

- To provide cash compensation to the founders in a fair and orderly manner at the proper time with financial damage to the firm.

- To provide professional fulfillment through seeing the firm survive as an institution.

- To identify, motivate, train and reward the valuable employees who will be the eventual owners of the firm.

- To provide a means of raising cash capital improvements or other needs.

- To permit favorable tax consequences.

An ownership transition plan cannot be constructed alone. Attorneys are required for counsel and documentation, accountants and insurance advisors for taxes and other financial matters, and bankers for credit and loan assistance. Management consultants may be helpful in addressing questions of organizational structure.

An ownership transition plan must be drawn up regardless of whether the firm is a sole proprietorship, a partnership or a corporation. By definition, a sole proprietorship has no active successors to carry on the business, so that planning must provide for the case of sudden death or disability of the proprietor. There will be projects to be completed, assets to be disposed of and interests of the heirs to be protected.

Ownership transition for corporations

quires addressing the issue of ownership shares in the corporation. This stock needs to be realistically valued and a methodology established for transferring it from one party, the owners, to another, the successors.

In any ownership transition a value needs to be put on the firm. When the transition is accomplished by sale to an outside buyer, the value may be negotiated between the two parties. When the stock of the firm is publicly traded, the value will be determined by the marketplace. For most design firms, however, valuation can be very difficult.

Independent valuation specialists may be retained for this process. A variety of factors can affect the value of a closely-held firm.

- The firm's nature and history, client base, ability to compete, reputation and quality of staff.
- The quality and trend of earnings, cash flow, revenues and backlog.
- The physical facilities and capital equipment of the firm as well as necessary projected expenditures for CADD Systems and other major items.
- The history of professional liability claims, and debts and project overruns.

Often several different methods are used to develop the final figure for a design firm's valuation. Three commonly used methods include book value, which equals total assets less total liabilities; capitalization of earnings, a multiple of average yearly earnings; and capitalization of gross revenues, a multiple of annual gross revenue. Once adjusted for various qualitative factors, the resulting values can determine the amount of stock to be distributed to employees or to assist the owners in negotiations with outside buyers.

Once the firm's value has been established, a funding method for an internal ownership transfer must be established. Several options are available; selecting the right one depends a great deal on timing as well as the size, profitability and philosophical disposition of the firm.

Ultimately, the only source of funds for an internal transition is the firm itself. Profitability is the key. Unprofitable firms have far more difficulty in implementing ownership transition plans than do profitable ones. Here are ways to handle an internal ownership transfer.

- Cash payment. The designated successors buy the firm from the founders with cash from personal savings accumulated from salary and bonuses or bank borrowings. The advantage of this method is simplicity, the disadvantage is using the cash. Since young individuals usually allocate most of their money for current expenses, they have low disposable income and limited capital available. Bank loans may often be obtained at favorable rates using various guarantees by the firm. Funds from pension or profit sharing plans may also provide the required cash, although there may be complex tax implications that should be carefully considered.

- Incentive stock options. A right granted to employee to purchase stock at some future date at the fair market value of the stock when

the option was granted.

- Non-Qualified Stock Option. A right granted to an employee to purchase stock at a price below fair market value at some future date.

- Employee Stock Purchase Plan. An opportunity on a non-discriminatory basis for an employee to purchase stock from the firm at a price not less than fair market value on the date of grant or on the date when stock was purchased.

- Private Stock Purchase. An arrangement which allows an employee to purchase stock from another stockholder.

- Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). A mechanism that allows a company to buy back



**It may surprise  
design professionals to  
know that many experts  
recommend that  
planning for the  
transfer of ownership  
begin at least  
10 to 15 years  
before the founders  
intend to retire.**



the stock of departing owners or issue new stock, and to put those shares in trust for the benefit of the company's employees over a period of time. The company adds shares of stock and/or cash contributions to this fund annually. An ESOP creates an in-house market for shareholders, preserves cash flow, finances company growth with pre-tax dollars, preserves company voting

control and promotes employee incentives.

- Recapitalization. A mechanism that replaces old common stock with fixed dividend preferred stock for retiring owners and growth oriented common stock for new owners.

Surprising as it may seem, a merger with another firm or acquisition by an outside party can be advantageous. The new owners may make a lump sum payment to the principals, bring improved operating, management or production techniques into the firm, provide a specialty or new client base or provide capital for needed expenditures. However, the primary disadvantage of external ownership transition is its affect on existing personnel and clients.

New owners represent an immediate loss of control by previous management. They may have a different philosophy and method of operation. At the very least, they bring an uncertainty which can adversely affect morale and lead to defections of staff and clients. The pluses and minuses of each situation that falls within the definition of external ownership transition can be readily discerned.

- Sale of the Firm. Sell the firm to an outside party, possibly a larger design firm. Retiring partners are paid off and the remaining staff is merged into the purchasing firm. Agreements may be made for the continued services of the retiring partners for a defined time.

- Mergers. Merge with another firm of roughly equal size and similar philosophical approach. This may be done for the purpose of expanding areas of expertise, expanding market share or geographical territory, pooling resources or improving access to capital.

- Splitting Off Assets. Trade off certain assets of the firm such as the CADD department or facility management services to provide capital or improve profitability.

- Venture Capital. Allow an outside party to provide funds required to finance new equipment or new disciplines within the firm in exchange for ownership in the firm. This option may involve loss of control.

- Public Offering. Sell the firm to the public through the issue of publicly traded stock. If the company is acceptable to the marketplace, its securities may command a higher price than a private evaluation would place on them. However, there are significant consequences in terms of shareholders' expectations which are often in conflict with the cyclical nature of the design business.

Simply marketing services and collecting fees is no longer adequate for design firms as a way to insure long term financial success. Today's world is too complicated, full of opportunities as well as dangers. Failing to plan is planning to fail! If we constantly exhort our clients to plan ahead, we can at least heed our own advice for one, very special occasion: when our own future is at stake. ☞

*Roslyn Brandt is principal of Barnes and Brandt Inc., a New York-based consulting firm to the design community.*

# VAP-ING THE COMPETITION

Milliken, Herman Miller and Du Pont create a value added partnership to compete—Japanese-style

By Jean Godfrey-June

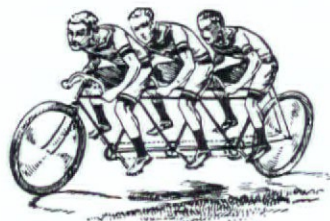
**D**oing business Japanese style—encouraging monopolies, cartels and all manner of protectionist policies to keep out foreign competition—is hardly the American way. But American companies are slowly discovering that some Japanese business strategies look surprisingly attractive in the current climate of increasing competition and skyrocketing product development costs. One such strategy is the value-added partnership (VAP), which is based on the Japanese system of keiretsu. Partnering has already won converts in the interior design industry, as shown by Momentum, a recent project of Du Pont, Milliken and Herman Miller.

Princeton economics professor Allan S. Blinder, writing in his column for *Business Week*, calls keiretsu the "ultimate vertically integrated megacompany," a chain of independent companies that work closely to manage the flow of goods and services along the chain in much the way that a construction company sub-contracts other companies for different aspects of a job. Manufacturers get components from their regular (not necessarily lowest-cost) supplier, known as their keiretsu. The winning bidder is the most reliable, trustworthy and reasonably priced.

It is easy to understand how such a producer-oriented system works in Japan, where teamwork is valued over individual competition. However, Americans traditionally prefer to focus on the customer. A further barrier to partnering is the distrust stemming from the hostile takeovers and buyouts of the 1980s. Nevertheless, economic necessity has already driven a number of U.S. corporate giants such as Chrysler, GM, and Ford, practically all the movie studios and numerous other industries to experiment with VAPs.

What advantages do VAPs offer the interior design community? Du Pont, Milliken and Herman Miller combined efforts to produce Momentum, a 1990 ASID product award-winning contract fabric that became one of Herman Miller's most successful introductions ever. Product development took two years from beginning to end, a far faster development period than might be expected for new fabric technology.

The partnership began with a fabric design



**"We all built  
on each other's  
successes."**

**—Catherine Creamer Bragdon,  
Herman Miller**

by Mary Buckley, an artist and professor at New York's Pratt Institute. "Mary proposed ideas about light and time movement," reports Catherine Creamer Bragdon, textile program manager at Herman Miller, "particularly for those office environments that are isolated in static spaces without exposure to natural light." While Buckley's drawings and a painting were well received at Herman Miller, they remained on the back burner until Milliken

entered with its new Laura technology, developed with Du Pont. Says Bragdon, "With the Laura concept, we were able to translate Mary's pattern in detail."

The technology itself creates patterns by repositioning yarn structures after a fabric has been woven and dyed. Warp and fill are physically moved around to create pattern and three-dimensional effects. The lighter colored yarns appear raised, while the darker ones recede, creating depth. Designed on a computer, the resulting fabric's depth is similar to a jacquard weave, but goes beyond what a jacquard loom does in its limitless pattern repeat.

Momentum represents a movement away from monochromatic, flat fabrics to multi-dimensional, textured ones. "People always try to touch it," notes Raymond Kennedy, product manager of color and finish at Herman Miller. "You can see their eyes tracking across it, trying to figure out the multi-dimensions."

Would the fabric have been realized without Milliken? "While Mary's pattern was one of many proposals," Bragdon recalls, "Milliken's technology got the ball rolling." Without Du Pont's yarn-making capability, of course, the final product would not have been possible either. "As Dacron weaves and dyes extremely well, it was critical in creating Laura," states Bill Gresham, business manager for contract textiles at Milliken.

Du Pont had worked with Milliken for some time before the partnership came about, laying a foundation of trust and knowledge. "We had already established some computer hookups and had worked on several information exchanges," says Kaye Crippen, marketing manager for Du Pont's contract fibers division at the time. "Du Pont has an enormous stable of fibers, and Milliken knows and understands them. They did most of the engineering in terms of getting the right fiber for Herman Miller's design. Everything clicked."

"Clicking" depended on each company's unique strengths complementing the partnership as a whole, sometimes in unexpected ways. "You'd think that Du Pont's contribution would have been technical, and to some degree it was," says Crippen. "However, we provided a great deal of marketing expertise

Three makes a crowd of happy companies: Momentum (below), the end result of all the hard work by Milliken, Herman Miller and Du Pont, won a 1990 ASID award for excellence. The fabric was one of Herman Miller's most successful introductions ever. Offered in 14 colorways, Momentum is constructed of 100% Du Pont Dacron polyester, and uses Milliken's "Laura" patterning technology.

out textiles. We have found that people are curious about diles—they like to know how they are made, what the design inspiration was, et cetera. I showed Herman Miller the tagonia (sportswear) catalogue, which is a wonderful example of using education about textile design and technology as a selling tool. Herman Miller, oriented more toward chairs and systems, had not really marketed textiles in that way before."

All agree that the key to the partnership lay in each partner's stake in the others' success and sharing the ultimate goal: creating a winning fabric for Herman Miller's systems furnishings. "We all built on each other's successes," Bragdon believes, "but the win-win situation depended on a very specific goal. For instance, a manufacturer rarely celebrates a vendor. Information about vendors is generally proprietary—something manufacturers try to keep from competitors. In marketing our final product, though, it has turned out that three of us can support one other."

"Herman Miller has displayed Milliken's product in its showrooms all across the country, which has created an awareness for Milliken's technology and in turn, Du Pont's yarns and technology," Kennedy says. "Marketing efforts were three-fold instead of one, and we've learned a lot from each other."

Milliken and Du Pont were also pleased to profit in Herman Miller's keen knowledge of the design market. "Herman Miller is innovative—very designer-oriented," emphasizes Milliken's Gresham. "There's one area where we welcome more expertise, it's the design end of the market. Milliken is strong in technical development, but wouldn't be known what part of the market to apply it to without Herman Miller."

Crippen concurs, declaring that partnering fundamentally changed the way Du Pont



develops product. "It used to be that Du Pont would try to invent something, and then find the right market for it," she says. "Now, we're finding that the opposite is more cost-efficient and effective. And your partners can help you find those markets."

Milliken's quick-shipping (within 15 days of an order) capacity delivers the fabric to Herman Miller systems and into offices in record time. "With the short lead times the market demands, you can't wait 12 weeks for fabric to be produced to upholster the systems," emphasizes Gresham. In-place order entry computer hookups with Du Pont further speed the process.

A sense of urgency does seem essential to partnering in today's fast-paced marketplace—the fact that everyone must cooperate to get the product out in a reasonable amount of time. Crippen believes. "If a project gets put on hold for too long, companies can lose incredible amounts of money because development costs so much. A partnership helps soften the

financial blow, but it's important to know that your partners are going to come in on time."

It's equally important to know the level of quality a partner can guarantee, and the volume the company can physically handle. Cautions Gresham: "Does your partner have the financial resources to respond if the product is really a hit?"

"Know your partner well," Jordan D. Lewis, author of *Partnerships for Profit*, advised the Wall Street Journal on October 30, 1990. "If you expose an important customer to a partner, you run the risk of it not working out and hurting your own relationship with your customer."

In the end, it all boils down to trust. Trust means spending thousands of dollars or more on developing a new product that a partner will be entrusted to position in the market to generate enough volume to make healthy profits. However, each partner in

Momentum handled its relations with the others in its own, distinctive way.

"We had a handshake, and that was about the only guarantee, aside from confidentiality agreements," says Gresham. "There has to be an extremely high degree of integrity." Milliken's management system is designed for confidentiality, since it works with several competing manufacturers. "Each account manager is kept completely separate," explains Gresham. "They can't share information. They're on their own."

Despite all the current obstacles inherent in the American system of doing business, Crippen thinks that partnering will help American furnishings manufacturers prosper. "The United States has a strong synthetic textile industry, and that can be an advantage for a lot of manufacturers over their foreign competitors," she points out. The Herman Miller/Milliken/Du Pont partnership clearly demonstrates the power of partnerships. Who knows? American business may VAP its competition yet. ☛

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# OFF THE HOT SEAT?

Is polyurethane, the choice cushioning material of furniture manufacturers, a dangerous hazard in the event of fire, or are its critics foaming at the mouth?

By Jennifer Thiele

**Y**es. Urethane foam is flammable...but so is wood. That's what manufacturers of the foam or the furniture it is used to cushion might say if you question the safety of this popular and economical furniture component. Flaming by faint praise, perhaps, but they would be largely right.

On the other hand, if there is any individual furniture design component that has come under close scrutiny—prompting serious efforts to improve its safety—urethane foam is it. Scientific research has tested its safety; legislators have regulated its use; and the furniture industry has fought to improve its performance in fires. (In the United Kingdom, there is even a movement to ban its use altogether, although this option is considered premature and unwarranted in the U.S.)

Why then, is urethane foam recognized as the cushioning material of choice? Urethane foam offers superb comfort along with proper support. It is highly resilient, versatile in styling adaptability and readily reproducible—all at a very economical cost.

The foam first appeared in the late 1950s, and eventually replaced such cushioning as feathers, springs and especially latex. It was not the first material to be linked to fires. Jim Williams, manager of code compliance with the Knoll Group, recalls that latex, though a superior cushioning material, was phased out by the early 1970s because of its extreme flammability.

Urethane foam's vulnerability is conceded by Gordon Damant, chief of the California Bureau of Home Furnishings (the organization also deals with the contract furnishings industry), who is a principal proponent of legislation to require a certain level of fire retardancy for interior furnishings. "These foams can be some of the most combustible materials available," he emphasizes. "Urethane foam that has not been treated for fire retardancy shouldn't be used under any circumstance where fire is a slightest concern."

In fact, urethane foam is easily and routinely modified with chemical substances that automatically increase its fire retardancy properties. According to Dick Bukowski, manager of technology transfer for the Building & Fire Research Laboratory (formerly the Center for Fire Research), "With the addition of fire retardant chemicals, urethane foam can be altered to create a substantial increase in safety." The use of combustion-modified foams is uniformly required

by code in cases where installation is in a "high risk" area—hospitals, nursing homes, prisons and the like—where escape times in a fire tend to be much slower. For more typical furnishing applications, the use of urethane foams that have not been chemically modified for fire retardancy is still widespread, according to Damant.

Except in California, that is, where Damant has led a successful effort to restrict the use of flammable urethane foams in interior furnishings. California Technical Bulletin 117 requires furniture sold in California to be both flame retardant and smolder resistant. Cover fabrics must also meet a screening test for flammability. Damant claims that in the 15 years since



California 117 became law, there has been a 50% decline in domestic fire deaths in the state, suggesting that furniture ignition is indeed a serious problem in the residential market. That kind of effectiveness has prompted further legislation that specifically pertains to contract furnishings. The more recent California Technical Bulletin 133—not yet passed into law but with a tentative effective date of January 1, 1992—requires all seating furniture in public buildings to pass an open flame test indicative of

A worker at Knoll's East Greenville, Pa., plant upholsters a Bulldog Chair that is cushioned with urethane foam (above). Knoll is one manufacturer that has chosen to uniformly meet strict urethane foam flammability test standards, reflecting what California's Gordon Damant labels "a transition within the industry."

a typical fire source in public buildings. It is important to note, however, that furniture ignition is seldom implicated as a cause of fire in public buildings, according to Susan Perry, manager of technical services for the Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association (BIFMA).

A handful of other states, including Illinois, Minnesota and Massachusetts, have recently passed similar laws, and Damant anticipates that additional states will soon follow. BIFMA has voluntarily adopted an approach similar to California's. While Perry is quick to point out

happens to a composite," says Lou Peter, executive director of the Polyurethane Foam Association. "A lot depends on how materials are assembled and how components are put together. The synergistic effect can make each individual component perform worse or better."

Fran Lichtenberg, executive director of the Polyurethane Division of the Society for the Plastics Industry (SPI), concurs. "What you have to look at in furniture is the overall composite construction," she says. "You can radically alter the fire performance of a foam depending on the upholstery fabric." The composite approach to flammability is widely recognized as a valid point. In California, where early legislation on the flammability of upholstered furniture took a component approach, the most recent studies and recommendations consider the overall fire performance of the product.

Some proponents of urethane foam argue that fire retardant interliners, such as coated glass fiber, and upholstery materials can also be used to prevent urethane foam from igniting in the first place. This shifts the focus of the flammability issue away from the foam itself. In fact, studies have shown that the best course of action in reducing the risk of furniture combustion is to use a combination of preventive techniques.

In a 1989 report published in the *Journal of Fire Sciences*, polyurethane experts John Schuhmann (a 28-year employee of the Polyurethane Foam Technical Service and Development function of the Dow Chemical Co., U.S.A.) and Dr. Gordon E. Hartzell (former director of the Department of Fire Technology, Southwest Research Institute and editor of *Journal of Fire Sciences*) drew some sensible conclusions: "The ease of ignition of upholstered chair is influenced by the choice of fabric; improved foam, designed for severe service application, can reduce the magnitude of the fire risk; and interliners, employed between the fabric and the foam, are effective in reducing the magnitude of fire risk."

Still, a high level of concern over foam as a focus of the flammability issue remains. Bukowski of the Building & Fire Research Laboratory comments, "The fabric can make a difference in ignitability, but once [the foam] gets burning, the fabric doesn't really play that much of a role."

As long as urethane foam remains susceptible to improve its fire performance will continue. The research and development emphasis remains on chemical modification rather than on finding an alternative to polyurethane foam. "Urethane foam really has a niche there to stay," says Ultracel's Gabelman.

Companies like Ultracel market improved chemicals to foam manufacturers that not only promote fire retardancy, but are intended to diminish the loss of comfort that occurs with urethane foams that are chemically modified. Keeping up with current environmental trends, these chemicals are also formulated to replace auxiliary blowing agents, or CFCs, used in the manufacture of urethane foam that have been associated with depletion of the ozone layer. Perhaps, as the environmental movement advances, this latter issue will become more of a burning question. ☞

## Combustion-modified foam doesn't answer every prayer

that casualties suffered from fires in offices or public places account for only a small percentage of annual fire deaths (the majority being residential), she says that BIFMA does promote the burning cigarette standard for flammability of contract furnishings. "Manufacturers that test their products to that standard have a safe product," she believes.

Where no legal requirements exist, manufacturers are free to use untreated or treated foams at their discretion. Some, such as The Knoll Group, have elected to meet the California standards in all cases, reflecting what Damant calls the "transition taking place within the industry."

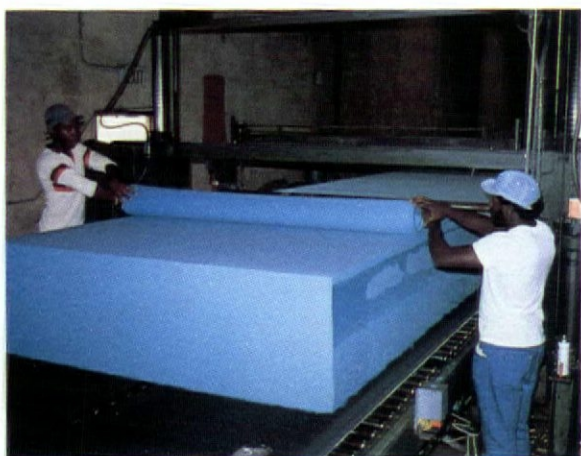
In many cases, the use of untreated urethane foams is a question of compromise. Combustion-modified urethane foams have their drawbacks in terms of cost and comfort. In the opinion of Steve Gabelman, worldwide marketing manager for Ultracel, a company that sells fire retardant chemicals to foam manufacturers, "The more things you add, the further it is away from being foam, and it starts to lose its comfort properties."

"You do not get exactly the same seating comfort [with combustion modified urethane]," agrees Knoll's Williams. "There is a trade off."

Furthermore, combustion-modified foams are unavoidably more costly to produce—and sell. Williams also adds that some foams are so chemically modified that they absolutely will not burn, but will create enormous amounts of smoke, creating yet another kind of hazard.

In terms of toxicity, no substantial evidence exists that treated or untreated polyurethane foams will emit more toxic gases when ignited than any other organic material, including wood, leather and natural fabrics. It does, however, emit the same toxic gases that any other organic material emits when ignited. Emissions include carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide and hydrogen cyanide, as well as non-toxic carbon dioxide, which can cause asphyxiation.

In other cases, concern over urethane foam is mitigated by the composite approach to flammability: It questions the degree to which a specific furniture component can be singled out as a particularly potent hazard in the event of a fire. "Historically, flammability testing has tended to look at individual components of a product, but that will not necessarily be indicative of what



Urethane foam, the choice cushioning material of furniture manufacturers, is a chemical "dough" that is mixed together and rises as it moves along the production conveyor. Varying the chemical mix to reduce flammability will also affect the firmness and density of the final product.



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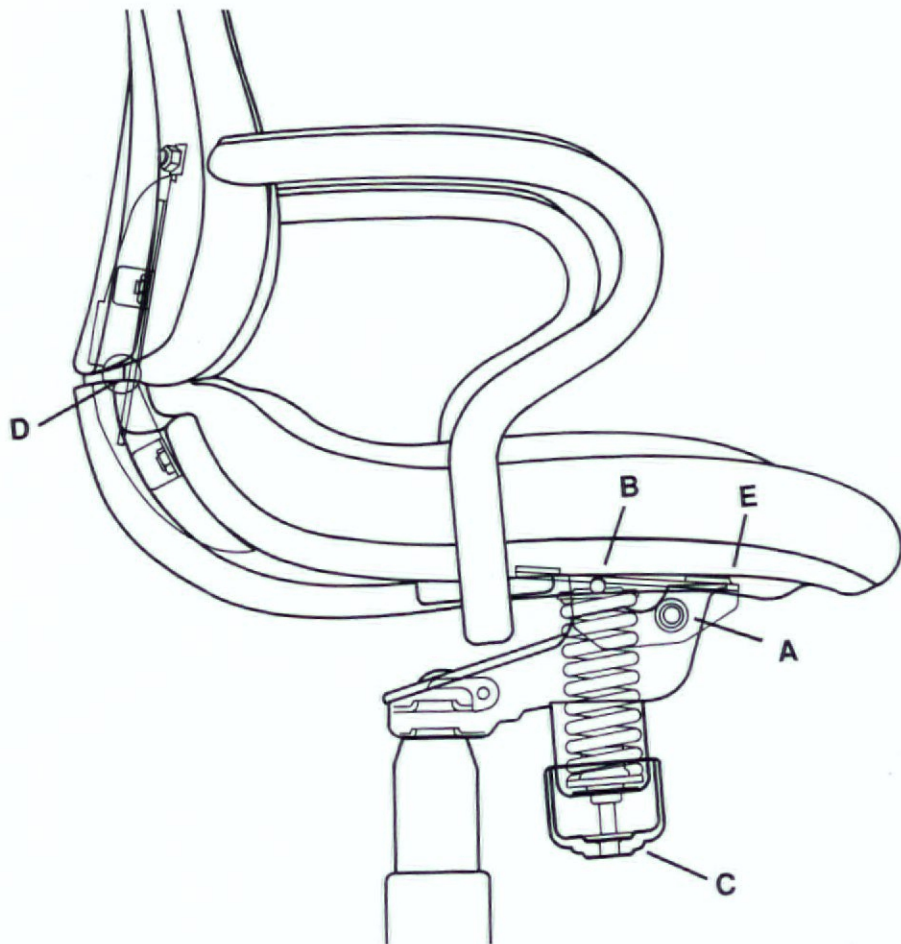


Design: Manfred Petri

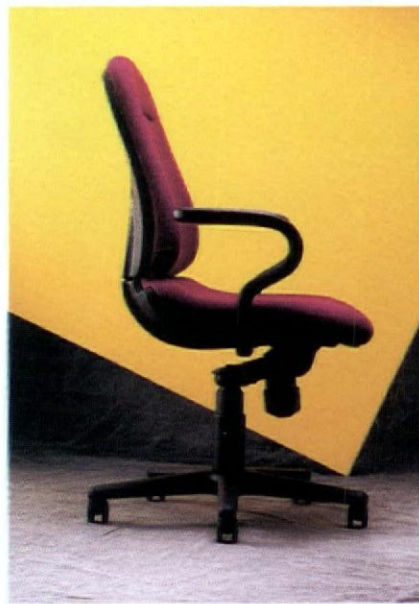
# TILT !

United Chair's patented knee-tilt mechanism for Flexis puts a new spring in office seating

By Laura E. Mayer



Flexis' patented knee-tilt mechanism (left) differs technically from others. The distance of the pivot point (A) from the front of the seat is minimized, which helps limit the distance the front of the seat can rise. A ball bearing at the top of the spring assembly (B) and an oversized adjustment knob provide smooth, easy adjustment for even small hands. A true pivot in the Flexis back, instead of merely a flexible shell, allows a wider range of back recline. The pivot point (D) is positioned to correspond to where the human back flexes most (the lumbar area). To cushion the seat as it reaches both the upright and full recline positions, the chair incorporates a damper system (E).



**A** spring tells it all. When United Chair recently unveiled the Flexis office chair, you had only to tilt back in the chair to understand why it was granted a patent. The knee-tilt mechanism beneath the seat pan of Flexis, part of the overall design by Jonathan Ginat, centers on a large spring that is an advanced take on the knee-tilt concept first explored by Germany's Wilkhahn and subsequently America's Vecta. Ginat's design develops the knee-tilt concept through a combination of dual pivot points that allow the user a greater range of body movement.

"We looked at the knee-tilt concept and realized that there's more than one way to attack an idea," says United Chair vice president Don Emmons. "In a lot of seating, the forward tilt

action comes from the design of the frame. We decided to control the design by tying the seat to the base. This eliminates frame restrictions and allows a lot more flexibility with the design of the chair itself."

United Chair took what Emmons calls a "systems approach" in designing the chair, integrating the location of controls, operation of the chair and location of the waterfall and back bar. The large spring is positioned vertically rather than horizontally, so that the knee-tilt mechanism controls the entire 20 degree recline or "power zone" of the chair—the concept that enabled the company to receive its patent. The spring itself is made of an advanced, special-purpose continuous filament

fiber glass that is housed in steel; it has been tested beyond six million cycles (120,000 standard). Overall, Flexis has met or exceeded all BIFMA standards.

United Chair is aggressively marketing new technology for less than \$500 per chair. "Even the biggest in our line—the high-back executive—will run \$495 with the lowest-price fabric," Emmons says. United Chair is airing this strategy of high performance at competitive cost directly at the end user through direct mailings and its membership in the International Facility Management Association (IFMA). Given the innovation represented by Flexis, United Chair has good reason to think IFMA members will spring for it. ☞

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# Almost Indestructible Floors with Goose Bumps

If rubber flooring is one of the world's toughest coverings, why does it fail?

By Roger Yee

**A**merica's most stylish commercial, institutional and residential floors were overrun some two decades ago by rubber flooring studded with approximately one-inch diameter circles when Italy's Pirelli introduced the product to architects and interior designers here. Since then, more European and domestic manufacturers have entered the U.S. market, and rubber flooring has become commonplace in such diverse settings as shops, schools and airports. With familiarity, however, has come what appears to be the occasional failure of a material widely held to be indestructible. Rubber flooring installations have been seen forming bubbles, working loose, developing tears or becoming stained and soiled.

Have designers been oversold on the merits of rubber flooring? Or is the problem similar to the sudden acceleration that troubled Audi owners in the 1980s—the result of human failure to use a product correctly? Discussions with manufacturers suggest that some design and construction professionals may be taking the product's fabled invincibility for granted. "Rubber withstands almost all substances save for certain chemicals," observes Volker Siems, president of Nora Rubber Flooring, a subsidiary of Germany's Preudenberg Building Systems. "Problems with rubber flooring can usually be traced to problems in installation and maintenance rather than the material itself."

In other words, rubber flooring—which resists wear, slippage, cigarettes, abrasion, puncture and most oils, grease, acids and alkalis—shares much the same fate as other applied, resilient flooring materials. A finished floor such as rubber tile is only as stable as its subfloor of wood or concrete. Among the adverse conditions typically encountered in failing installations today are movement of substrate, trapped moisture, substrate surface irregularity and fragile substrate materials.

- **Movement of substrate.** Wood floors always move, so a typical strip floor must be covered by plywood sheet underlayment with staggered joints and tight fastening, especially at the perimeters of sheets, to minimize movement.

- **Trapped moisture.** A subfloor of wood on concrete, wood on sleepers on concrete or concrete alone that is on or below grade is likely to allow moisture to accumulate between the subfloor and the rubber tile, which can result in excessive hydrostatic pressure, bubbles and other forms of physical damage. For this reason,



A one-piece rubber flooring stair tread and riser system makes level changes exciting yet safe beside a breaching humpback whale at the Baltimore Aquarium (above), designed by Cambridge Seven Architects. Photo courtesy of Preudenberg Building Systems.

a concrete subfloor should be protected by an adequate moisture barrier, while a suspended wood subfloor must have underfloor ventilation.

- **Substrate surface irregularity.** Rubber flooring can be successfully applied over wood or concrete substrate that is clean, dry, smooth without being slick, free of protruding nails, loose boards and gaps. What is readily overlooked is that surfaces of paint, varnish, old adhesive and the like may require stripping or coverage by a layer of polyethylene plastic sheeting; slick concrete must be sanded for adhesion; protruding objects have to be hammered down or removed; and gaps should be filled to avoid hills and valleys that distort tiles and preclude precise joinery of these die-cut squares.

- **Fragile substrate materials.** All materials are not created equal in compressive strength or resilience; particleboard, hardboard and light-weight concrete or perlite floors are some that would fail as subfloors for rubber flooring due to brittleness, softness or other structural insufficiencies. Light- to medium-weight concrete and concrete plank floors must be prepared as

substrate with a topping of concrete mix.

- **Improper installation methods.** Rubber flooring requires careful installation. How much adhesive is used, how and where it is troweled on, and how long it is permitted to cure? How thoroughly are laid tiles rolled with heavy roller? What temperature prevails during installation? Deviations from correct methods can sabotage rubber flooring.

By contrast, maintenance is quite straightforward, according to manufacturers. "There is no reason to be particularly careful with rubber flooring," claims Francesco Comis, general manager of Pirelli Industrial Products. "Damp mopping with a cleaning solution is only normal maintenance needed." The stress is on cleanliness. Sweeping or vacuuming followed by application of a recommended cleaning solution, scrubbing, wet vacuuming of residue and polishing are sufficient for a thorough cleaning. Wax, acrylic and other coatings are neither required nor advised.

Rubber flooring manufacturers are endeavoring to strengthen their products' appeal in the United States, where they are still regarded as exotic, sophisticated accessories rather than the workhorse commodities they are in Europe. Different tiles have been created for normal and heavy traffic and other special environmental conditions; supplemental components are now available for stair treads, risers and nosings, and baseboard straight edges and corners; colorways are expanding regularly to give designers greater choice. Demonstrating that manufacturers are not afraid to define the limits of the material, Al Glassman, senior architect in technical services for the Floor Division of Armstrong World Industries, says, "Rubber flooring goes over practically anything, but we don't recommend our rubber tile product for such uses as commercial kitchens and food processing, hospital operating rooms, or spa areas subject to heavy, rolling loads or refrigeration."

Most important of all, a concerted effort is under way to educate construction and maintenance personnel, interior designers and architects in the correct use of this distinct high-end product. The look of rubber flooring is clearly not appropriate to every interior. Installations ranging up to one million sq. ft., 20 years of age with little sign of wear suggest that the material can handle any job—if the designer can. ☞

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The elevator doors open, and you step into a gallery-like space with high-gloss tile floor, sparse, white-washed walls, and a small alcove housing a custom reception desk, the reception area for the new midtown Manhattan offices of Kohn Pedersen Fox Conway (KPFC). It takes but an instant to realize that

all these minimal planes and surfaces are present to act as foil to two very distinguished pieces of handcrafted furniture that partner Patricia Conway commissioned from Rosanne Somerson and James Schriber. Conway's love of the crafts, recently celebrated through the publication of her survey of contemporary crafts artists, *Art for Everyday, The New Craft Movement*, published by Clarkson Potter in 1990, is evident throughout KPFC's facility.

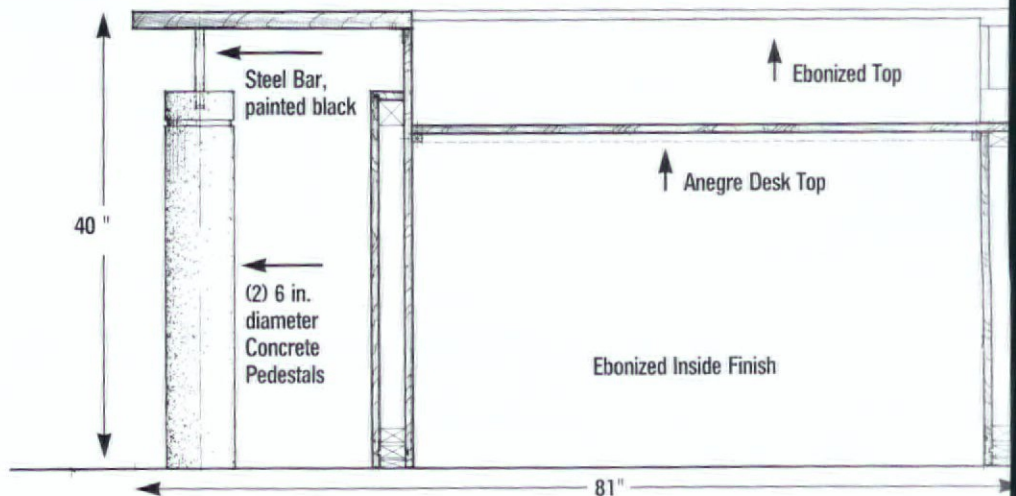
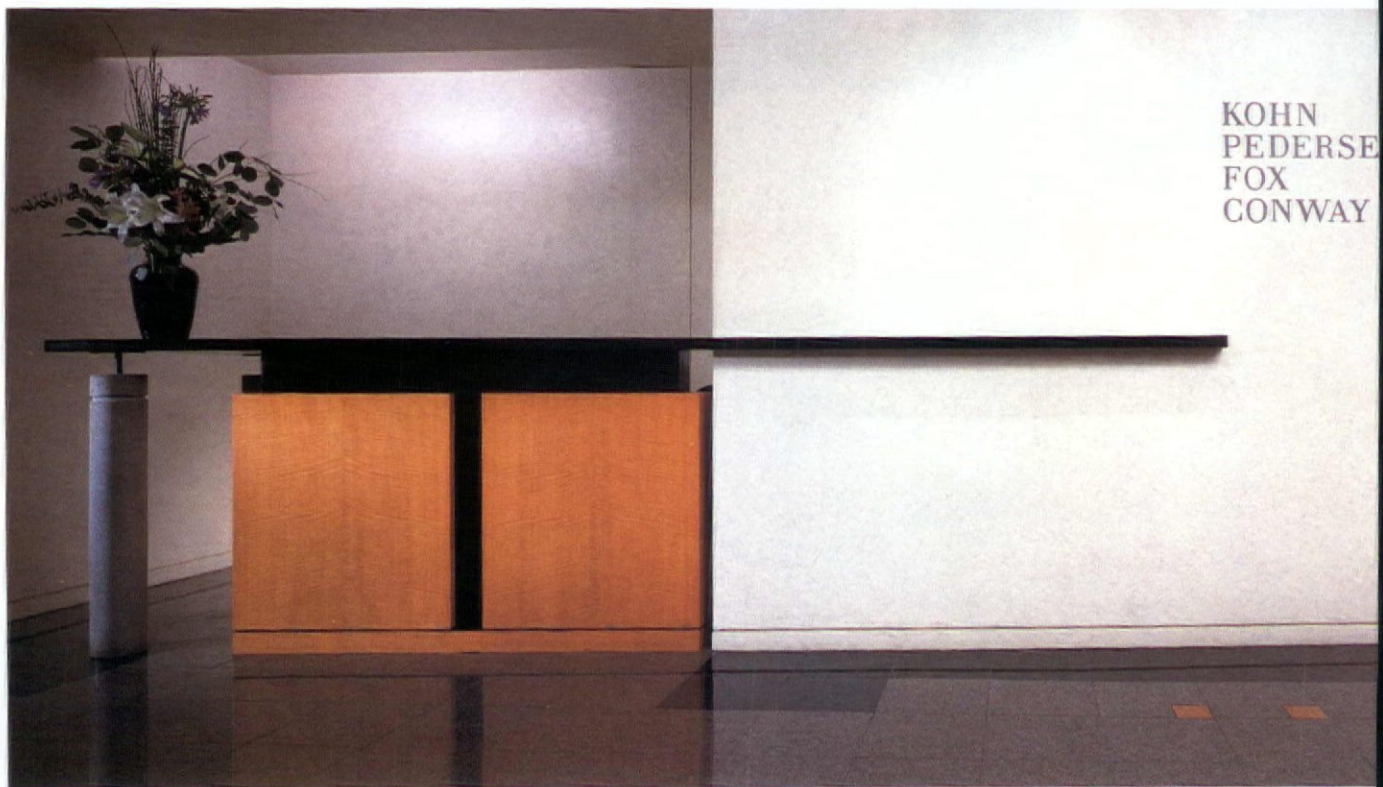
One of the quiet triumphs of the space is of course the classically

Modern custom reception desk created by KPFC project designer Jarvis Wong. The subtly detailed, high-style, low-cost desk, sized 40 in. high by 81 in. long, appears to hover above the polished floor, its components gliding in what appear to be graceful, independent horizontal paths. Like the famous Red-Blue chair by Gerrit Rietveld, the desk has made a virtue of perpetual motion.

KPFC's desk is firmly anchored to the floor, to be sure. What imparts its unusual sense of balance is the deliberate play of asymmetry

between smooth, polished and ebonized wood tops against massive, 6 in. diameter concrete pedestals capped by slender steel bars that barely seem to touch the primary top. As the longitudinal section shows, the desk's structure is quite sturdy. From the visitor's vantage point, however, the desk serenely defies gravity as a matter of daily routine. ☞

Photograph by Paul Warchol



Longitudinal cross section of reception desk at Kohn Pedersen Fox Conway (right).

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# PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE



Hamilton Sorter

## Wyandot Seating

Wyandot Seating's brochure on its Gold Cup Quality line of task seating and 8000 Executive Series seating is filled with facts and figures on the company's patented AMP Cushion, signature card program, quality control process, full seat pan tilt concept, and a host of other features. **Circle No. 243**

## ACI Glass Products

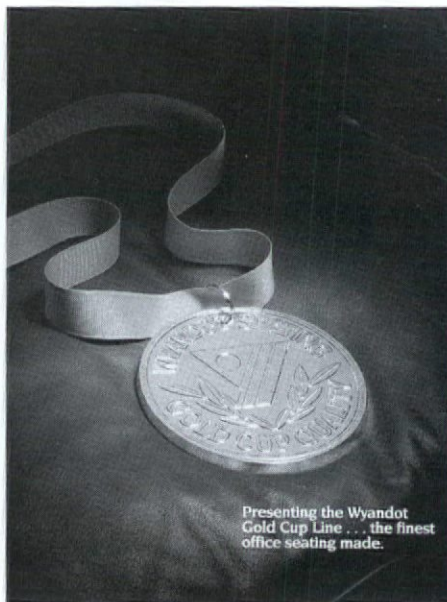
The "Classic" Handrails from ACI Glass contains complete specifications on the various handrail systems available from the company, along with examples of outstanding installations. **Circle No. 240**

## Musson Rubber Co.

Musson Rubber's brochure on commercial mats and matting features a complete selection of floor covering products designed especially for institutional, commercial and industrial buildings. Included are indoor/outdoor carpet, anti-static, anti-fatigue and interlocking mats, along with runner, entrance and special application matting. Specific uses of each product and how it contributes to durable floor maintenance is covered. **Circle No. 241**

## Smith System Manufacturing, Inc.

The 28-page Computer Furniture Collection catalog from Smith System features three different lines of modular workstations and accessories



Wyandot Seating

as well as workwall units, Desk Wraps panels, cabinets, crank adjustable tables, mobile PC stations and computer lab stations. The catalog includes photographs of individual pieces and complete office settings, scale drawings, model numbers, specifications and prices. **Circle No. 242**

## Acacia Corporation

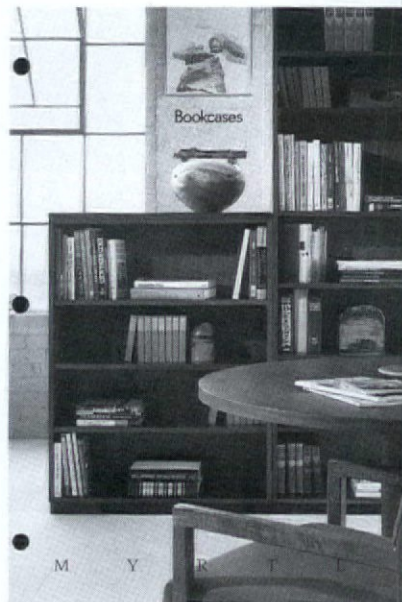
SWEET's Catalog File brochure introduces the Colortrak Linear Ceiling and Wall System manufactured by Acacia Corporation. Colortrak is an aluminum, linear ceiling and wall system featuring snap-on, snap-off installation. The system's features, functions and benefits are described. **Circle No. 244**

## Congoleum

Congoleum's 1991 Specifier's Guide outlines the features, benefits, colors, designs and installation requirements of all Congoleum commercial sheet vinyl. **Circle No. 249**

## Hamilton Sorter

Hamilton Sorter Co. offers an eight-page brochure on BIOTEC Freestanding Workstations, ergonomically designed to reduce tension and stress and increase productivity. The BIOTEC Workstations offer flexibility and interchangeability in configuration, so they can easily be adapted to the specific needs of any environment. **Circle No. 248**



Myrtle Desk Co.

## Myrtle Desk Company

Myrtle Desk Company's descriptive four-color brochure describes its complete collection of bookcases. These products complement items in existing Myrtle wood or furniture groups or can be used as stand-alones. The bookcases are constructed of quality wood veneers and feature a recessed plinth base. They are available in eight finishes. **Circle No. 247**

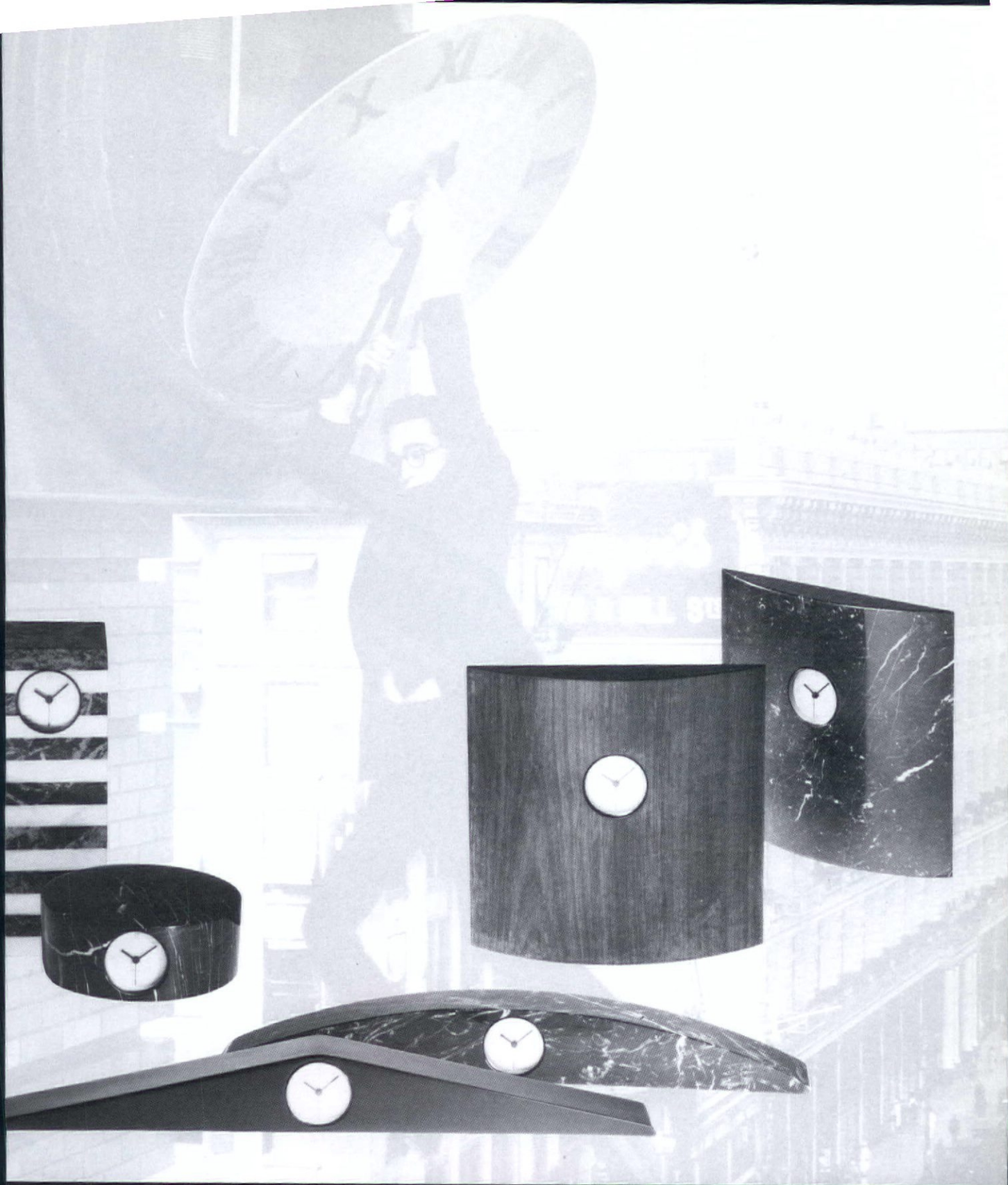
## Outwater Plastic/Industries

Outwater Plastic/Industries' color Orac Decor catalog includes hundred stock cornice panel moldings, ceiling lions, niches, corbels, columns and pilasters, chair rails, wall lighting soffit door/window surrounds and pediments in torical and classical styles. The brochure features a designer showcase with a collection of popular Orac cornices, an Orac box, and Orac's own adhesive. **Circle No. 245**

## Best Manufacturing Company

A 24 page, full-color catalog #990 on interior and exterior signage from BEST Manufacturing Systems includes detailed specifications and dimensions to help in the signage selection process. The brochure also includes information on the company's Graphic Blast process, which will carve the specifier's copy and art into practically all man-made materials and natural stone. **Circle No. 246**





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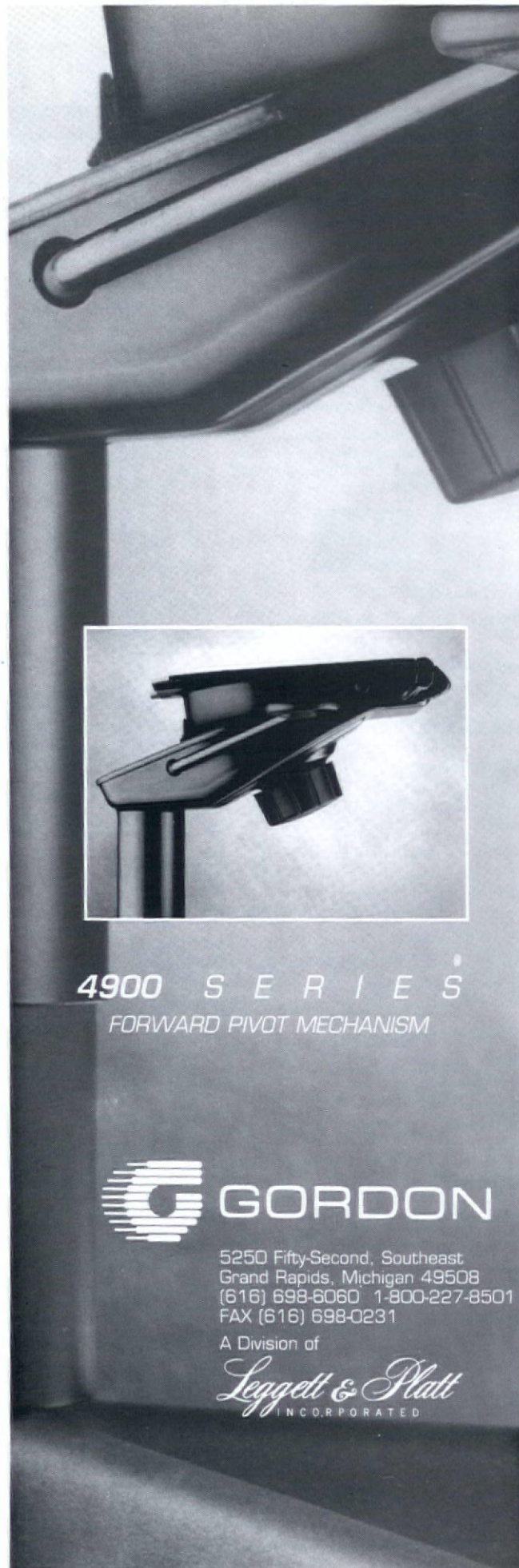
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# PERSONALITIES

## A non-food menu for a restaurant designer?

**Jordan Mozer**

Add two more restaurants to the Jordan Mozer roster. In 1990, the acclaimed Chicago-based designer created Chicago's Vivere and San Francisco's Cypress Club. But striking restaurant designs are barely half the story: Mozer also developed the Jordan Mozer Collection of seating with Shelby Williams; and on top of that, gained a business/design partner, John Bolchart.

Mozer is currently working on product collections with seven different manufacturers and hopes to



**Jordan Mozer**

open a West Coast office soon. As if that weren't enough, he is also busy with numerous design commissions, not all of them restaurants: Jordan Mozer Associates handles retail and office projects as well. Does a Mozer office look anything like a typically Mozer restaurant? "It's a little more straightforward," he insists.

Like Philippe Starck, Mozer is gaining a solid reputation for designing every aspect of a project, from graphics and logo to furniture and accessories. "We are inventing our own architecture and the components of that architecture," he says.

Mozer's conceptual collages combine numerous references. Encouraged by his painter/sculptor mother, Mozer studied fine art, English and history in college—which helps to explain why much of his work is imbued with a strong sense of history.

But Mozer also looks ahead for design inspiration: "Architecture in the future needs to become warmer, more human," he states.

"We should see more use of natural materials, more attention to lighting, more idiosyncrasy." Clients, what are you waiting for?

## Building stage sets you can sit on

**Tim de Fiebre**

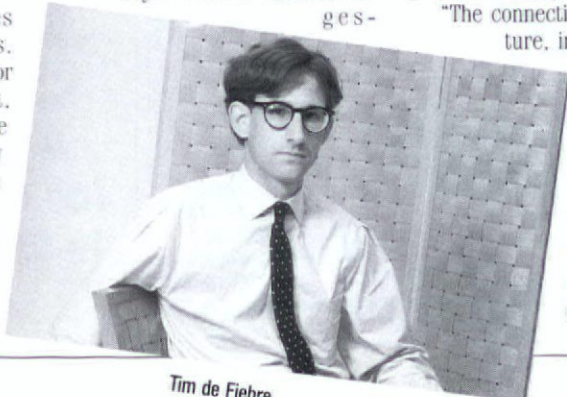
How did Yale School of Drama prepare Tim de Fiebre, director of design for Brickel, for a career in furniture design? "Faking it," de Fiebre responds. "So much of the theater and set design in particular involves getting something to look the way you want it to, creating an illusion."

That talent for faking it stood by him after he dropped out of Yale, went to work at a frame factory in Long Island City, N.Y., and eventually landed a job making chair mock-ups for legendary designer Ward Bennett. Brickel had been laboriously building wood models from elaborate drawings. With a handful of tools, some chipboard, foam and a few existing frames, de Fiebre turned

Bennett's thumbnail sketches into finished chairs much faster.

Brickel had been a one-designer company under Bennett for 23 years, but a new era dawned in 1987, when Brickel launched an atelier system. Today, young, unknown talent is welcome at Brickel. "I will literally talk to anyone who comes with an idea," de Fiebre says. "We won't always produce it, but unknowns can get through the door."

What type of design is de Fiebre encouraging? "I am fascinated by the manipulation of the known," he says. "I like to see how the



**Tim de Fiebre**

ture of some small vanity chair in an art gallery can be translated into something more practical." He gets his inspiration by studying the work of Charles Eames, Marcel Breuer and Russell Wright, watching old movies and gallery hopping in Soho—sometimes with his two-year-old daughter in tow. When Tim de Fiebre calls for young talent, he isn't kidding.

## Hanging around in electricians' shops

**Janna Ugone**

Entrepreneur/designer Janna Ugone started her lighting fixtures design business in Easthampton, Mass., six years ago to create pieces that were "flexible in form and function—not just decorative." Her highly original designs in ceramic have taken off—from New York City's Bloomingdales and Cooper-Hewitt Museum to Los Angeles' Museum of Contemporary Art.

Not bad for a designer who decided that lighting fixture design would be "fun," but knew virtually nothing about the industry when she left her job at a graphic engineering/architectural product manufacturer. "I would buy lighting fixtures and take them apart, hang around electricians' shops and try to learn the lingo," she laughs now. In addition, she shrewdly researched the market to find out what retailers were missing.

Ugone fires each piece up to four times to attain a rich, frescoe-like surface to which she adds funky, graphic detailing and special effects.

"The connections with architecture, interior design and retail are just the bridge I wanted," Ugone admits. Spanning and illuminating the world with lighting fixtures—an idea that could brighten anyone's day.

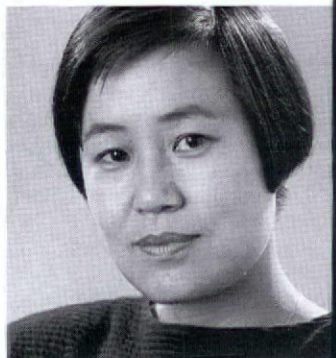


**Janna Ugone**

## Designed in the U.S.A.—with an Oriental accent

**Tsui-Yen Wang**

If textile designer Tsui-Yen Wang is influenced by her Chinese heritage, it is largely from nostalgia. Wang grew up in South Korea, her parents fled China when the communists took over, so Wang grew amid a community of Chinese expatriates. Although her primary



**Tsui-Yen Wang**

language is Chinese, Wang has never been to China.

After receiving a fine arts degree from the National Normal University in Taiwan and teaching art in a small Taiwanese village, Wang came to America on a scholarship to State University to earn an MFA.

Wang is introducing her first collection of contract fabrics through her new business, Brentano. Aided by textile consultant Kristin Strasen, Wang has created fabrics that recall her heritage without looking overtly Chinese.

Any plans to see the Middle Kingdom? "I'd like to go, but not now, not a good time," she says. Not only is she busy with her new business, but her husband E'Kwan Chen are trying to raise a three-year-old and a five-year-old. China must wait.