

Herman Miller and Geiger Present Ward Bennett: Making Sense with Various Projects

Working with The Herman Miller Collection and Geiger, the design studio Various Projects has conceived a public showcase of the late New York designer Ward Bennett, whose refined minimalist approach and masterful appropriation of materials were applied to jewelry, glassware, sculpture, furniture, and interiors. *Ward Bennett: Making Sense* will be open to the public at Project No. 8, 38 Orchard Street, from 15-22 May, 12-7pm daily.

Visitors to the installation are invited to appreciate Bennett's designs in a wholly new way. Sensual materials transform archival furniture designs into tactile discoveries. A range of vintage objects and reading material selected by Various Projects clarify the breadth of Bennett's range and highlight his work with clients such as Sasaki and Tiffany & Co.

When Elizabeth Beer and Brian Janusiak, cofounders of Various Projects, were invited to collaborate with Herman Miller and Geiger on an exhibit, they were immediately drawn to Ward Bennett. "It instantly seemed like he should be much more known than he is to our generation and generations after. It was a great opportunity for us to tell the story and show why we think it's so worth knowing," explains Janusiak.

For *Making Sense*, Beer and Janusiak specified Ward Bennett furniture pieces in a range of custom materials and finishes, produced by Geiger just for this installation. The Landmark Chair in dark stained ash and charcoal alpaca mohair or raw waxed wood with luminous red leather are transformed from conference room staples to tactile delights. Two pieces originally introduced in 1966 are entirely modern in natural materials: The Envelope Chair in vegetable-tanned Vachetta leather, and the Sled Chair in Japanese denim. Perhaps the most unexpected piece is the beloved Scissor Chair, enveloped in long-haired sheepskin that draws the eye, and the hand.

Echoing Bennett's desire to create furniture and spaces that could be lived in and on, *Ward Bennett: Making Sense* is an environment to engage the senses and fully experience the quality and craft of a master designer.

About Ward Bennett

Hailed by the American Institute of Architects for "transforming industrial hardware into sublime objects," Ward Bennett was one of the earliest American designers to introduce industrial materials into the home, well before the high-tech look of the 1970s. In 1964, he undertook a collaboration with Brickel Associates, designing furniture and textiles; in 1987, he began working with Geiger directly. A prodigious designer of objects, Bennett also designed for Tiffany & Co, Sasaki, and Hermès. His designs are represented in the Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection as well as in the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum. In 2004, one year after Bennett's death in 2003, Geiger re-introduced several iconic Bennett designs, including H Frame storage and the I Beam table.

About Various Projects

Elizabeth Beer and Brian Janusiak formed Various Projects, Inc as a multidisciplinary design collaboration in 2005. Their retail arm, Project No. 8, opened in 2006 and currently has two locations in New York. The studio practice specializes in collaborations that often cross back and forth over the thin line between art and design. Various Projects has had the pleasure of working with RO/LU, Print All Over Me, Urban Outfitters, The New Museum, The Walker Art Museum, Dexter Sinister and the Serving Library, *Aperture Magazine*, and Barneys NY Japan, among many others.

About Geiger

Since 1964, Geiger has inspired the A&D community by pioneering the design and manufacture of architectural furniture for private offices and commercial interiors. Today, Geiger's excellent reputation for craftsmanship, ecology, design, and engineering continues to enhance business interiors with an elegant and intelligent portfolio of designs for the modern workplace. Founded in Toronto and headquartered in Atlanta since 1979, Geiger International is a wholly owned subsidiary of publicly held Herman Miller, Inc.

About The Herman Miller Collection

In 1948, George Nelson created the first Herman Miller Collection, with the goal of "a permanent collection designed to meet fully the requirements for modern living." He understood that the Collection would evolve as

human behavior changed and new materials and manufacturing technologies emerged. Today's modern living embraces the blending of life and work, with greater appreciation for contemporary design and mobile and ubiquitous technologies offering new freedom of choice in where and how people express their lifestyles and pursue their professions. The Herman Miller Collection welcomes and enriches this new era, as we endeavor to realize Nelson's vision for the modern home, office, and public spaces.

About Herman Miller

Herman Miller's inspiring designs, inventive technologies and strategic services help people do great things and organizations perform at their best. The company's award-winning products and services generated approximately \$1.9 billion in revenue in fiscal 2014. A past recipient of the Smithsonian Institution's Cooper Hewitt National Design Award, Herman Miller designs are found in the permanent collections of museums worldwide. Innovative business practices and a commitment to social responsibility have also helped establish Herman Miller as a recognized global leader. In 2014, Herman Miller was again included in the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index. The company trades on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol MLHR.

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