

# *News from the* **GOLDSTEIN**

SUMMER 2007

## PRODUCTS OF OUR TIME



Brush #1  
Fredrikson/Stallard



Longhorn  
Mike Libby



Boxcutter  
Tobias Wong

THE GOLDSTEIN MUSEUM OF DESIGN

## CURRENT EXHIBITION

# friends of the GOLDSTEIN

## PRODUCTS OF OUR TIME

July 21–September 30, 2007

by Daniel Jasper, guest curator and Assistant Professor  
of Graphic Design

**P**roducts of Our Time combines works by an international array of designers and artists who comment on the current environmental, economic, cultural and political zeitgeist using a common medium—products.

For the last ten years or so, this growing cadre of designers and artists has been choosing the formal and conceptual language of products as a form of expression—and revenue generator.

Some of the works pose theoretical questions through the form of one-of-a-kind objects imagined as a prototype for future products, such as Dominic Wilcox's *Bird Cage for Exactly One Bird*. Other works, including those made in Mike Libby's *Insect Lab*, take a singular concept and create customized variations on the theme—for Libby, the combination of real insects with antique watch parts and electronic components. Still others have been conceived and engineered to actually go into mass production. There is an endless supply of Tobias Wong's chrome-plated *Box Cutter*.

A closer look at *Box Cutter* provides an opportunity to illustrate a salient theme of *Products of Our Time*—beneath seemingly ordinary objects runs a subtle subtext that belies the product's everyday appearance. New York City resident Wong made his box cutter in 2002, not long after high-jacked planes were flown into the World Trade Center on 9/11. Engraved on the side of *Box Cutter* are the words "Another Notion of Possibility".

All of which raises vague, yet relevant questions - why products? why now?

Design is a medium through which we shape our world. Given the spread of Western-influenced culture and the rise of consumer-based economies, designed products have become ubiquitous in our lives and increasingly function as the leading cultural indicators of who we are as a society and where we are going.

The idea that products and objects tell us about ourselves isn't a novel one. Archeologists rely heavily on the study of human-made artifacts to reveal complex histories of bygone civilizations. The Sumerian culture existed more than 5000 years ago, yet they produced the first known writing system. This writing, etched into objects such as tokens and clay pots, was used to record commercial transactions associated with the exchange of products, no less.



Table #2  
Fredrikson/Stallard

Singer/songwriter Bob Dylan was widely regarded as an artist who had his finger on the pulse of an entire generation's counter-cultural movement. In 1965, Dylan sang "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows." In 2007, we still don't require the services of a weatherman for our edification, nor would we look to a folk singer for that information either.

Design critic David Redhead wrote "The products that surround us provide an instant cultural history, a mirror in which our own preoccupations are vividly reflected." The quote is from the cover of Redhead's 1999 book *Products of Our Time*. I bought the book in 2001 and, like most designers, proceeded to look only at the pictures. While full of valuable insights into current design trends, my copy of the book is not destined to be a cultural artifact unearthed by future archeologists. Within a month of purchase, the cover completely separated from the spine. Days later, in lemming-like fashion, the pages followed suit.

A book entitled *Products of Our Time* that falls apart after purchase provides a metaphor too rich not to pursue. Even this mundane exercise in buyer's remorse can tell us a lot about ourselves. On the one hand, the content of Redhead's book suggests that we are a narcissistic society. Not satisfied to only buy products or look at them in catalogs, we also feel compelled to buy books about the products we purchase in order to learn more about ourselves and marvel at the ingenuity of our consumer culture. On the other hand, the physical construction of the book and the fact that it fell apart suggests that books, by and large, are just another disposable commodity no longer intended to become tomorrow's historical documents or treasured family heirlooms.

Continued on page 5

*Products Of Our Time* is sponsored by the University of Minnesota  
Summer Session, Summer Cultural Programs



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Lin Nelson-Mayson

*Is it important to become a member of the Friends?*

*How do friends memberships support the Goldstein Museum?*



PHOTOGRAPH BY JUDY OLAISEN

Recently, a new member asked these excellent questions and we took the time to explore the vital and positive impact made by the Friends. Friends are essential to the Goldstein! You contribute talent, time, and spread the word about the best design museum in the Upper Midwest! In addition, memberships and special event funds provide:

### Student support

- Approximately ten undergraduate work study students who serve as gallery staff and collections and office assistants
- The annual senior award (\$300)

### Education and research assistance

- Research Center support
- Public program support

### Membership and volunteer support

- Design, printing, and mailing membership information and invitations to Eastcliff Annual Member Reception, Close-Ups, and the Annual Meeting
- Postage and mailing of quarterly issues of *News from the Goldstein*
- Volunteer recognition

### Public relations opportunities

- Quarterly ads in *The Rake* magazine's *10,000 Arts*, distributed free throughout the Twin Cities.

Members help the Goldstein reach students and adult learners, research and preserve the collection, and present exhibitions and programs that explore design and designers. This support and the generous gift of time donated by volunteers propels the Museum to greater accomplishments and enables it to touch a wider audience with the Goldstein sisters' message of good design.

When the membership renewal letter arrives in your mailbox, send it back with your check and consider giving a gift membership to a friend or colleague as well. Your membership helps support the Goldstein and its ongoing contribution to design education and preservation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Nelson".



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bill Bloedow

President, Friends of The Goldstein

The Goldstein Museum of Design's first year under the aegis of the College of Design is history—and what a year it was!

We hosted many unique exhibitions, speakers and events.

Memorable was the Close-up presented by Goldstein Friends Gloria Hogan and Dolores DeFore. They walked us through the work of Norman Norell, Bill Blass, Pauline Trigère and Geoffrey Beene and the journey was replete with fascinating anecdotes about the idiosyncrasies of the designers and their clients.

Next up was Dr. Valerie Steele, the Director of the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology. She delivered an amazing presentation that dealt with fashion history from a broader social perspective—fascinating.

And then there was Eames Demetrios, grandson of Charles and Ray Eames who discussed life with his famous grandparents and preserving their awesome legacy.

We ended our year with a Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration and fundraising event on May 31. Our guests enjoyed an alfresco cocktail hour that preceded a very humorous and enlightening presentation by mother/daughter team Allison and Harmony Kaplan.

And there's much more to come. On September 20, we'll be partnering with our friends at *The Rake* for a Gallery Grooves that will feature live music, wine and hors d'oeuvres in the setting of our exhibition *Products of Our Time*. Our previous Gallery Grooves was a huge success and we expect this one to be, too. Please don't miss it.

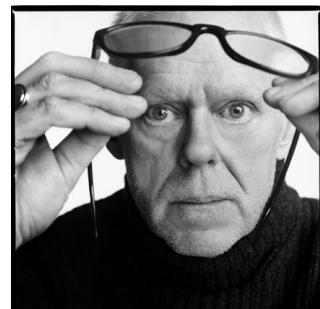
In October we will present *Here by Design III: Process and Prototype*, which will emphasize design as a process, through demonstrations, installations and workshops on prototyping as a way of manifesting design thinking and problem-solving. This exhibition will include panel discussions, tours to digital fabrication facilities and a keynote speaker.

And there's still more! Jumping ahead, our fashion friends Gloria Hogan and Delores DeFore will return in conjunction with Associate Dean Marilyn DeLong to bring us *Sportswear to Streetwear: American Innovation* in the fall of 2008.

I could go on....

The Twin Cities is home to many fine cultural institutions, but there is only one Goldstein Museum of Design. Please join us in savoring the uniqueness that is the Goldstein.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Bloedow".



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARC NORBERG

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## UPCOMING EXHIBITION



Small parts created using digital fabrication methods.

Photo by James Boyd-Brent.

## HERE BY DESIGN III: PROCESS AND PROTOTYPE

October 20, 2007–January 20, 2008

Third in an ongoing exhibition series exploring excellence in Minnesota design, *Here by Design III* (*HbDIII*) will be presented at two CDes venues—the Goldstein Museum of Design in McNeal Hall and the HGA Gallery in Rapson Hall. Curated by James Boyd-Brent, Associate Professor of Graphic Design, *HbDIII* will examine the ingenuity of Minnesota designers at the University and statewide who use digital fabrication for rapid prototyping of innovative and sustainable design solutions. A related symposium will explore these issues in greater depth through panel discussions with the designers, tours to digital fabrication facilities, and a nationally-known keynote challenge speaker.

Digital fabrication refers to the use of computers to create physical objects. Rapid prototyping refers to specific methods of digital fabrication, including 3-D printing and stereo-lithography. Rapid prototyping methods were originally developed to produce prototypes for the evaluation of form and fit prior to the final construction of equipment for large-scale manufacturing. Some digital fabrication methods are now used to manufacture objects in small numbers, resulting in a new rapid manufacturing capability.

The *Here by Design* series was developed and premiered by the Goldstein to recognize and explore the range and scope of design at the University and throughout the state of Minnesota.



*Here by Design III* is sponsored by the McKnight Special Events Fund

## ANNUAL MEETING

Happy 30th Anniversary to the Goldstein!

A wonderful time was had by all who attended the Friends of the Goldstein's Annual Meeting/30th Anniversary Celebration on May 31st. Old Friends, new Friends, and even Friends founder Margot Siegel gathered at McNeal Hall to enjoy a glorious Minnesota spring evening with hors d'oeuvres and a glass of wine on the patio. Later, FM107 radio team Allison and Harmony Kaplan regaled attendees with tales of fashion trends in the Twin Cities. The silent auction raised over \$5000 to help support programs and exhibitions at the Goldstein! Thank you Friends!



**Top Left:** Bill Bloedow, Board President, with event speakers Harmony and Allison Kaplan

**Bottom Left:** Tom Fisher, Dean (second from left), shares a moment with Board Member Dan Avchen (far left), Sue Bretheim (CDes Development), and guest.

**Top Right:** (From left to right): Bill Bloedow, Board President; with Board Members Judith Kinghorn, Roger Beck (welcome!) and Linda Boelter

**Middle Right:** Vice President of Finance Norm Steere and Friend Mildred Vacarella

**Bottom Right:** Friends' Founder Margot Siegel and guest Bob Hassan peruse items at the silent auction



## CHARLES JAMES LOAN

### Charles James Garments from Goldstein Are Featured in Kent State Museum Exhibition

Two garments designed by Charles James have been loaned to the Kent State Museum for an exhibition entitled "Charles James." A black satin evening coat lined in bright yellow, gift of Margot Siegel, and a black taffeta cocktail dress, gift of Marcia McCabe, will be featured in Kent State Museum's smallest and most prominent gallery—the Alumni Gallery—between May 31, 2007 and February 17, 2008.

The exhibition will feature artifacts and photographs of garments made by James under his own label as well as his work for other high fashion houses. Included are specific garments from four collections: Kent State Museum, The Ohio State University, Mount Mary College, and the Goldstein.

Kent State Museum's Costume Curator Anne Bissonnette was thrilled to be able to include the Goldstein pieces because of their characteristic Charles James shaping and their excellent condition.

The word "legend" is perhaps over-used in commentaries about fashion designers, but in reference to James the term is almost understated. James inspired Christian Dior, Norell, and many other designers. His complex shapes and abstract designs prophesied some of today's experimental runway designs.

In the introductory panel for the exhibition, Curator Anne Bissonnette describes James and his importance to fashion in this way: "Highly sensitive to beauty and guided by uncompromising idealism, Charles James made fabric obey his will. Always placing ideals before practical considerations, he padded, lined, interfaced, boned and wired cloth and devised numerous construction techniques to build fanciful gowns that transformed women into visions of gracefulness and elegance."

The Goldstein is pleased to be a part of an interpretive exhibition that examines the work of this passionate genius, a designer who was inspired by sculpture and architecture, who was never commercially successful, and whose designs will never be forgotten.



Evening Coat,  
Charles James (1926-1978),  
Gift of Margot Siegel

## PRODUCTS OF OUR TIME (CONT.)

Theorist Guy Debord characterized the philosophical underpinnings of the mediated environment in which we coexist with commodities in the following terms: "What appears is good; what is good appears." Products are typically concrete statements couched in positive terms, a celebration of themselves and the munificent culture that produced them. For instance, a handgun isn't advertised as a device for killing people, instead it is presented as a device for protecting oneself and one's family.

The works in the *Products of Our Time* exhibition aren't likely to be found at Target or even Design Within Reach anytime soon. Imagine, then, for the next three months, the Goldstein Museum as a temporary retail outlet offering salable items that question not only the culture, but the very impetus that produced them:

Tobias Wong's *Bulletproof Rose* brooch for evenings out on the town; Mark Franchino's roll of Quilted Northern toilet paper, painstakingly lathed from wood; for literal foreshadowing, Fredrikson/Stallard's kite that evokes Edgar Allan Poe's ominous raven; Marti Guix's *Brushkey* to clean keyholes, presumably for one's voyeuristic pleasures; because being born with a silver spoon in your mouth is no longer enough, Keith Farley's baby rattles, made of gold and silver, have precious jewels clattering inside; Kate Bingaman-Burt's detailed drawings of her monthly credit card statements; and Raby and Dunne's *Huggable Mushroom* cloud pillows, so you too, can learn to love the bomb.

As someone who is inherently mistrustful of authority figures, it causes me some discomfort to position myself as an authority on this collection of work. For this reason I will not propose a grand narrative of what it all supposedly means. Instead, I invite the viewers to become their own authorities. I invite the viewers to perform their own analyses, draw their own conclusions and construct their own narrative as to what the objects say individually or collectively about the proverbial "interesting times" in which we live.

In conclusion, if you too, are reluctant to accept that you are an authority on this topic, let me suggest the origin of your authority:

We are all sentient beings—living, breathing and consuming in the seventh year of the 21st century. By and large we listen to the same tonally sequenced music. We watch on television the same preternaturally attractive people selling us goods and dispensing tidbits of information in the guise of "news." With increasingly slight variations, the globalized economy ensures that we can eat the same foods, drink the same liquids and wear the same clothes. We experience the same invasive searches as we pass through one another's airports. When riding public transportation we sometimes wonder, if only for an instant, what that fellow traveler has in his backpack. The winters of our youth seemed to be more cold and the summers less unbearably hot—but we still don't need a weatherman to tell us which way the wind blows. The shadows on our shared Platonic wall seem to be cast by inorganic objects of uniform design produced in endless multiples. We sometimes wonder if the shadows aren't our own.

**We are all products of our time.**



## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

### It's Membership Time!

It's time to renew your membership in the Friends of the Goldstein!

Our membership year runs from July 1 to June 30, following the University's fiscal year. Your membership dollars support exhibitions, research, collections and educational outreach at the Goldstein Museum of Design.

Basic member benefits include invitations to openings, Collections Close-ups and special Friends events—the Annual Membership Reception at Eastcliff in the fall and the Annual Meeting in the spring. Members also receive *News from the Goldstein* four times a year, keeping you informed about museum events and activities.

This summer you will receive a personalized renewal invitation in the mail, but you can also use the membership form below or renew through the web site (<http://goldstein.cdes.umn.edu>).

### *friends of the GOLDSTEIN*

#### BECOME A MEMBER

Basic Membership includes:

- Invitations to exhibitions
- Announcements of programs
- Invitations to special events
- Quarterly newsletters

#### Membership Benefits

	Student \$10	Senior \$20	Individual \$35	Household \$50	Sponsor \$150	Patron \$250	Benefactor \$500	Director's Circle \$1,000
Basic Member Benefits	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
One Gift Membership			x	x	x	x	x	x
Set of 10 Notecards				x	x	x	x	x
Parking Passes					1	1	2	4
Behind-the-scenes Tour for Two						x	x	x
Complimentary Publications							1	2
Inclusion on Recognition Panel in Gallery						x	x	x
Tour and lunch with the Director								x

THE GOLDSTEIN MUSEUM OF DESIGN  
[goldstein.cdes.umn.edu](http://goldstein.cdes.umn.edu)

College of Design

2008 GOLD STEIN

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\* Membership at the shaded levels entitles you to give one individual membership for free!

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## CALENDAR

### Saturday, July 21

#### *Products of Our Time*

Open to the Public

### Thursday, August 23

New Friends board member orientation; McNeal Hall

Collection Scavenger Hunt event, details to follow  
Space is limited!

### Thursday, September 20

#### *Gallery Grooves*; 7—9PM; McNeal Hall

Atrium

Join us for *Gallery Grooves*, *The Rake* magazine's monthly art, jazz, and wine event.

### Friday, September 21

*FG Board Meeting*; 9:00—10:30AM; 225 Rapson Hall

### Sunday, September 30

#### *Products Of Our Time*

Last day to view the exhibition



## CONTACT AND HOURS

**PHONE** 612.624.7434

**FAX** 612.625.5762

**WEB** <http://goldstein.cdes.umn.edu>

**EMAIL** gmd@umn.edu

**HOURS** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Thursday

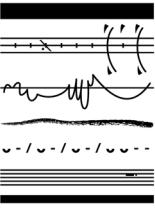
10:00 AM – 8:00 PM

Saturday, Sunday

1:30 PM – 4:30 PM

College of  
Design

This activity is made possible in part by a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.



MINNESOTA STATE ARTS BOARD

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