furniture project

furniture and artwork in the collection of the art + architecture library
Isamu Noguchi expanded the traditional notion of sculpture to include the creation of dance sets, gardens, playgrounds, fountains and furniture. Within this range of spatial environment Isamu Noguchi's Akari lanterns hold a unique place, expressing his Japanese-American heritage in works designed to enhance the quality of everyday life. Noguchi spent his childhood in Japan before returning to the United States for his education. As a young man he traveled to Paris to work with sculptor Constantin Brancusi, before going on to develop his own unique career as an artist in New York. After visiting Japan in 1931 Noguchi began to integrate elements of Japanese art with Western modernism. Throughout the 1950s Noguchi spent a great deal of time in Japan, embracing Japanese forms of gardens and sculpture. In 1951 Isamu Noguchi visited the Japanese town of Gifu, know for its manufacture of lanterns and umbrellas from the mulberry bark paper and bamboo. Inspired by the lanterns illuminating night fishing on the Nagara River, Noguchi designed the first of his lamps that would be produced by the traditional Gifu methods of construction. He called these works Akari, a term meaning light as illumination, but also implying the idea of weightlessness. Extending the concept of illuminated sculpture that he developed during the 1940s in New York, Noguchi employed abstract shapes to unite the simplicity of Japanese aesthetics with the principles of contemporary art and design.
This was Breuer’s first tube chair and is sometimes referred to as the first tubular steel chair. However, Gerhard Stützgen presented a cantilever in 1923 and U.S. Patent was granted to someone named Harry Nolan for a tubular steel cantilever in 1922. Nevertheless, this tubular steel chair of Breuer’s is certainly the oldest tubular chair still in production. It is called the Wassily Chair because it was allegedly designed for Wassily Kandinsky’s Bauhaus apartment. The chair underwent a number of revisions from its first appearance in 1925. The current version is from 1927. It was first produced by Standard-Möbel, a company founded by the Hungarian architect Kalmar Lengyel and Breuer with the specific intention of marketing Breuer’s metal furniture. In 1929, Standard-Möbel was absorbed by Thonet. Marcel Breuer was a student at the Bauhaus for four years before taking the lead of the Furniture Workshop in 1925. In 1928 Breuer left the Bauhaus and moved to Berlin and then to England in 1935 when the Nazis made it impossible for anyone who had been a part of the Bauhaus—a "hotbed of Bolshevism"—to practice architecture. In 1937, he joined Walter Gropius in his architectural practice and also at Harvard as a professor. Breuer moved to New York in 1946 to found his own architectural firm.
The bedside table was designed by Eileen Gray as breakfast table for the guest room of E-1027, the villa which she and Jean Badovici designed at Roquebrune in 1927. Badovici, a Romanian intellectual, was a friend of Le Corbusier and apparently the person most responsible for convincing Eileen Gray to turn to architecture. He was the editor of "l'Architecture Vivante" which published a special number on the house at Roquebrune entitled "E-1027 Maison en Bord de Mer." The name E-1027 was a cryptogram containing the initials of the two designers. The E was for Eileen. The numbers 10, 2, and 7 stood for the letters for the alphabet, J, B, and G (Jean Badovici, Gray).
This table was presented as a part of the "Equipment Intérieur d'une Habitation" at the Salon d'Automne des Artistes Decorateurs, Paris 1929. It was constructed with an elliptical steel tube which was used in airplane construction. It is obvious that the material was chosen not only for its inherent beauty but also as gesture to the machine with which Corbu was fascinated. Very little is known of the origins of this table. According to Heidi Weber, Le Corbusier made it clear in 1959 that the table no longer interested him. Perhaps, in 1928 the table was a pretext for using a futuristic material and, perhaps, the material lost its fascination when it ceased to be used to build airplanes. At any rate, Corbu was generally not given to the clever use of unusual materials. The table was not put into production by Thonet in 1929. This was probably due to the fact that the tube was relatively difficult to obtain and the execution of the table required a great amount of skilled welding and polishing. In addition, the design was very advanced for its time and one can understand how Thonet did not anticipate a commercial success with the general public from such a radically new design statement.
Le Corbusier, born Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, was not only an architect, but also a painter. Together with Amedée Ozenfant he founded the so-called "purist" school of painting in reaction to certain tendencies in Cubism. It was during this period that Charles-Edouard Jeanneret adopted the name Le Corbusier, "the crow". The purist paintings of Jeanneret and Ozenfant were based on a well-defined system, which, varied somewhat from one period of time to another. The basic canvas size is 81 cm x 100 cm. Inside this canvas two equilateral triangles, facing in opposite directions, were drawn. The two intersections points of the triangles determined two "places of the right angle", which in turn determined the vertices of two right triangles with a second vertex coinciding with a vertex of the equilateral triangle. "Le Corbusier's pictures represent objects seen from in front, but their depth is implied in the lines." The fertile conflation of properties enables him to reassemble the dismembered Cubist subject matter into usually recognizable objects, to preserve their 3-dimensionality, and yet to unite them in a 2-dimensional plane. By linking depth to silhouette, Le Corbusier freed form from the conventional accidents of lighting that obscure it.
Le Corbusier
Prints (possibly from
the Heidi Weber collec-
tion)

Prints attained for the
college by Olivio
Ferrari

prints le corbusier

Purist Composition comes from Cubist Composition; but one knows that in Cubism the object which has served as starting point becomes changed with regard to its organization in the picture, often very much so. Purism, on the other hand, finds it important to keep the natural appearance of objects. It does not presume the right to change objects more than up to certain point, so it selects objects which make it possible to arrange them with-out any deformation, so that their type will not be changed. This explains, for example, the fusion of objects through a common contour, the connection of elements in or-
der to create one single object in the picture. What Cubism often re-
solves with a change in the specificity of object, Purism accomplishes by organic arrangement. "I am an untiring painter. For a long time I have painted every day, although I only started painting at the age of 31. But painting has become suddenly a holy thing for me... Art leads to perfection via paths with obstacles, which for the philistine are not passable."
A chair that looked like a potato chip. Another that resembled a "well-used first baseman's mitt." A folding screen that rippled... With a grand sense of adventure, Charles and Ray Eames turned their curiosity and boundless enthusiasm into creations that established them as a truly great husband-and-wife design team. Their unique synergy led to a whole new look in furniture. Lean and modern. Playful and functional. Sleek, sophisticated, and beautifully simple. That was and is the "Eames look." That look and their relationship with Herman Miller started with molded plywood chairs in the late 1940s and includes the world-renowned Eames lounge chair, now in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Charles and Ray achieved their monumental success by approaching each project the same way: Does it interest and intrigue us? Can we make it better? Will we have "serious fun" doing it? They loved their work, which was a combination of art and science, design and architecture, process and product, style and function. "The details are not details," said Charles. "They make the product."
Born in Mendrisio, Switzerland in 1943, Botta trained as a technical draftsman before he studied at the Liceo Artistico in Milan. From 1965 to 1969 he studied at the Istituto Universitario di Architettura in Venice. During this same period he worked as an assistant to Le Corbusier and, then, to Louis I. Kahn. He opened his own practice in Lugano, Switzerland in 1970. Essentially Modernist in approach, Mario Botta has been strongly influenced by both Carlo Scarpa and Louis Kahn. Although his later works increasingly accept existing forms and styles as the starting point of design, Botta still adheres to a philosophy of historical determinism in which architecture acts as a mirror of its times. Botta's works characteristically show respect for topographical conditions and regional sensibilities and his designs generally emphasize craftsmanship and geometric order. Because he attempts to reconcile traditional architectural symbolism with the aesthetic rules of the Modern Movement, Botta is often identified with the Italian neo-rationalist group, the Tendenza. Botta built exclusively in Switzerland during his early career, gaining international acclaim for such buildings as the Capuchin convent in Lugano, the Craft Centre in Balerna and the Administration Building for the Staatsbank in Fribourg. Since the second half of the 1970s, his houses have become more classical in plan and elevation, and in the 1980's he has secured international commissions such as the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, California.
paimio armchair no. 41 alvar aalto

Although this chair is generally referred to as the "Paimio Chair," it was not produced specifically for the sanitorium at Paimio as the name would indicate. It received its name because it was developed during the period when Aalto was working on the design of the sanitorium. In 1929, Aalto met a Finnish furniture manufacturer. The collaboration that followed, in which architectural design skill came together with practical, industrial know-how created the condition in which the first wooden furniture of Aalto was produced. "Alvar Aalto's furniture designs are a superb example of the uncompromising spirit that has managed to overcome the barriers of style and taste, fashion and social class. Many of his creations are in greater demand now than ever before. His pieces of furniture are at once modern and traditional, elegant and cozy. Though mass-produced they convey the pleasing imprint of handicraft and are equally at home in the domestic surroundings of everyday life as the magnificent buildings of cultural renown," Juhani Pallasmaa.
This stool is part of a collection of furniture designed for the Municipal Library of Viipuri (now in Russia). The collection is characterized by a bentwood leg for which Aalto is justly famous. The leg is formed of a solid piece of wood into which cuts have been made at one end and thin glue covered wood strips inserted. The resulting laminated end is bent at a sharp angle. This was Aalto's brilliantly simple solution to the problem of attaching a vertical leg to a horizontal plane. Contemporary design is often criticized for its social exclusiveness and inability to harmonize with contexts beyond its own narrow aesthetic field. The strained artistic ideas of our own time have failed to create a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. Design today has made a sharp difference between high culture and popular taste, concerning itself so much with novelty that it quickly loses its fashionable appeal. Alvar Aalto's furniture designs are a superb example of the uncompromising spirit that has managed to overcome the barriers of style and taste, fashion and social class. Many of his creations - some approaching their first half-century - are in greater demand now than ever before. His pieces of furniture are at once modern and traditional, elegant and cosy. Though mass-produced they have the pleasing imprint of handicraft and are equally at home in the domestic surroundings of everyday life as the magnificent buildings of cultural renown.
Giovanni Battista Piranesi was an Italian graphic artist famous for his engravings and etchings. He created more than 2000 prints of real and imaginary buildings, statues, and ornaments. He contributed to 18th-century neoclassicism by his enthusiastic renderings of ancient Roman monuments, which included both accurate portrayals of existing ruins and imaginary reconstructions of ancient buildings in which alterations of scale and juxtaposition of elements enhance the sense of grandeur. One of Piranesi's earliest and most lastingly renowned collections is his Carceri d'Invenzione in which he transformed Roman ruins into fantastic, immeasurable dungeons dominated by immense, gloomy arcades, staircases rising to incredible heights, and bizarre galleries leading nowhere. These engravings became an important influence on 19th-century romanticism and also played a role in the development of 20th-century surrealism.
When I began to explore ply-bending, it pleased me to learn that veneer technology yielded 6-10 times more usable wood from a log than traditional saw milling techniques. For a young man concerned about human impact on the environment, and interested in creating wood furniture, ply-bending wood was the perfect medium to explore. Although ply-bent furniture has been around a little over 100 years, its availability to the general public has been probably half of that, and its potential has been explored by a mere handful of designers such as Aalto and Eames. In contrast, the craft of working solid wood precedes ply-bending 5000 years in terms of developing a vocabulary of shapes, forms and techniques, as well as having a sophisticated connoisseurship. Since 1946, I know of no one in the design community or academia who has focused their attention to the development of ply-bending as a technology, and its growth as an art and a craft. The work of Eames and Alto, though seminal, was rudimentary, and just a beginning. Ply-bending is an art form, requiring experience and intuition in making the molds and mindful skill in the execution. The public would be astonished if they could watch our master bender, Sudhir Walia, as he molds an entire chair in a single operation. They would come to view ply-bending as a skilled craft, requiring the same finesse we associate with Venetian glass blowing. Pushing the limits in the medium of ply-bending is a risky business, because making molds is expensive, time consuming, and the outcome, (how the wood behaves in the bend) is uncertain. To me, however, ply-bending is like a newly discovered continent, unexplored, with a wealth of possibilities. Peter Danko
David Rowland studied at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, where Charles and Ray Eames, Florence Knoll, Harry Bertoia, as well as Eero Saarinen attended school. Early in his career, Rowland trained with both Lázlo Moholy-Nagy and Norman Bel Geddes, the innovative American designer who streamlined industrial design and its production process. This unique combination of sophisticated European avant-garde modern design and American technical know-how allowed Rowland to create some of the most unique and comfortable seating produced. After opening his own office in 1954, David Rowland pursued numerous experiments in minimal seating with the goal of accommodating large numbers of people. These exercises culminated with the much lauded 40/4 Chair, designed in 1963 and was immediately awarded the grand prize at the prestigious Milan Triennial the next year. Designed as a solution for flexible, stackable seating and executed with a graphic sleekness, 40 chairs can be stacked in a four-foot high space. David Rowland went on to design numerous other chairs that satisfy the rigorous demands of mass production while retaining a high level of design sophistication, but the 40/4 chair has never been surpassed, by Rowland or others.
Eggleston Cliffs in Mist  
Horace Day
1982
Oil on canvas

Donated to the library in memory of Bolton McBryde, a friend of Day’s who introduced him to the Eggleston Cliffs.

Eggleston Cliffs in Mist  
Horace Day

Unlike most of the other artists commissioned by the Bureau of Reclamation, Horace Day was born abroad, in China in 1909 to missionary parents. He was self-taught until he came to the United States at age 18 and enrolled in the Art Students League. He studied with Boardman Robinson, Kimon Nicholaides, and Kenneth Hayes Miller. After the war, he was a professor at Mary Baldwin College and director of the Saint-Memin gallery in Alexandria, Virginia. In addition to the Bureau of Reclamation commission, he painted a mural in the Clinton, Texas U.S. Post Office. Horace Day called himself a regional painter, interested in depicting the scenery of his adopted South. The style he chose to portray the landscapes and people of the South was a brand of Romantic Realism influenced by Claude Lorraine and Jacob van Ruysdael. He primarily worked outside, as a plain air painter, using quick impressionistic brush strokes to record the scene. Eggleston Cliffs in Mist is one of the last in a series of oil paintings, wash drawings, and watercolors of the Eggleston Cliffs on the New River that Horace Day produced over a period of greater than 30 years, beginning in 1951. As a group, Day’s paintings of this subject reflect his continued artistic exploration of a remarkable landscape form different points of view. As virtually the last in the series, Eggleston Cliffs in Mist reflects all that Day had learned during his extended exploration of the subject as well as the precedents for such landscapes in the history of art. The composition reflects the treatments of similar subjects in classical Chinese painting, as well as Day’s acknowledged inspiration from Claude Lorrain and Cezanne.
In its thoughtfulness, steady development, benign lucidity, and wide range of historical sources, Matisse's work utterly refutes the notion that the great discoveries of modernism were made by violently rejecting the past. His work was grounded in tradition - and in a much less restless and ironic approach to it than Picasso's. As a young man, having been a student of Odilon Redon's, he had closely studied the work of Manet and Cézanne; a small Cézanne Bathers, which he bought in 1899, became his talisman. Then around 1904 he got interested in the colored dots of Seurat's Divisionism. Seurat was long dead by then, but Matisse became friends with his closest follower, Paul Signac. Signac's paintings of Saint-Tropez bay were an important influence on Matisse's work. So, perhaps, was the painting that Signac regarded as his masterpiece and exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in 1895, In the Time of Harmony, a big allegorical composition setting forth his anarchist beliefs. The painting shows a Utopian Arcadia of relaxation and farming by the sea, and it may have fused with the traditional "fête champêtre" in Matisse's mind to produce his own awkward but important demonstration piece, Luxe, Calme et Volupte, 1904-5. In it, Matisse's literary interest in Baudelaire merged with his Arcadian fantasies, perhaps under the promptings of Signac's table-talk about the future Golden Age. One sees a picnic by the sea at Saint-Tropez, with a lateen-rigged boat and a cluster of bulbous, spotty nudes. It is not, to put it mildly, a very stirring piece of luxe, but it was Matisse's first attempt to make an image of the Mediterranean as a state of mind.
Robert Indiana
Eternal Hexagon, 1964
Screenprint
24 x 20 inches

In 1955 Robert Indiana met Ellsworth Kelly whose hard-edge abstraction helped shape Indiana's style in the late 1950s. When he moved to a new studio at Coenties Slip in 1956 his neighbors included not only Kelly and other abstract painters such as Jack Youngerman and Agnes Martin but also another future Pop Artist, James Rosenquist. From 1960 to 1962 Indiana produced constructions made predominantly of wood and other objets trouves. In 1961 Indiana started producing austere painting using large stenciled letters and hard-edged designs, further confirming the impact of Kelly's work. Indiana's adoption in these works of the minimal appearance of signs and commercial imagery demonstrated his desire to capture the experience of modern America, a goal also reflected in his decision to change his name to that of his native state. Several of the sign works of 1961 and 1962 related to his love for American writers such as Herman Melville, while a number of works from 1963 using the figure five were homages to I Saw the Figure Five in Gold (1928) by Charles Demuth, an artist he greatly admired. In 1966 he initiated a series of paintings consisting of the word 'Love', an embodiment of the idealism of that decade. He also extended these into three dimensions in large aluminum sculptures. Indiana has continued to develop the sign works of the 1960s in paintings, aluminum sculptures, occasional constructions and public Love sculptures in steel.
Roy Lichtenstein graduated from the School of Fine Arts at Ohio State University with a MA in 1949 but stayed on to teach until 1951. Towards the end of the 1950s, while teaching in New York, he made drawings of characters from Walt Disney and also inserted hidden references to Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Bugs Bunny into paintings executed in a loose Abstract Expressionist Style. In 1960 he was appointed Assistant Professor at Douglass College, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. Through a fellow instructor, Allan Kaprow, he was introduced to Happenings and to the artists Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg and George Segal. He began his first Pop paintings in 1961, transferring cartoon characters from comic books or bubble-gum wrappers (Look Mickey and Popeye) directly onto primed canvas with minor but telling changes. His brazen use of bold outline, primary colors and speech bubbles, and his imitation in the paintings that followed of the printing technique of the Benday dots, caused a mixture of excitement and shock when the paintings were first shown at the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, in 1962. Later that year, he was also included in the 'NewRealists' exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery. Apart from the violent and 'glandular' emotions exaggerated in cartoon strips, Lichtenstein's subjects have also included the works of modern artists, and in the 1970s he made a series of pictures that parodied other styles in paintings, including Fauvism, Surrealism and Expressionism. Since the first Pop paintings Lichtenstein has retained his bold style and mechanical method of reinterpreting images, adapting his technique for sculpture and later murals.
Frank Lloyd Wright
3 Prints from a set of 100 lithographs
"City by the Sea"
"A Home in a Prairie Town"
"Twin Suspension Bridges for Pittsburgh"

Gift of Mr. & Mrs.
Harry S. Williams

lithographs frank lloyd wright

Frank Lloyd Wright spent more than 70 years creating designs that revolutionized the art and architecture of this century. Many innovations in today's buildings are products of his imagination. In all he designed 1,141 works - including houses, offices, churches, schools, libraries, bridges, museums and many other building types. Of that total, 532 resulted in completed works, 409 of which still stand. However, Wright's creative mind was not confined to architecture. He also designed furniture, fabrics, art glass, lamps, dinnerware, silver, linens and graphic arts. In addition, he was a prolific writer, an educator and a philosopher. He authored twenty books and countless articles, lectured throughout the United States and in Europe, and developed a remarkable plan for decentralizing urban America (Broadacre City) that continues to be debated by scholars and writers to this day -- some 60 years after its conception. "As a boy," he wrote in his autobiography, "I learned to know the ground plan of the region in every line and feature. For me now its elevation is the modeling of the hills, the weaving and fabric that clings to them, the look of it all in tender green or covered with snow or in full glow of summer that bursts into the glorious blaze of autumn. I still feel myself as much a part of it as the trees and birds and bees are, and the red barns."
William Ward Moseley, a Lawrenceville, VA native, received his bachelor of science degree in building design and construction in 1951, has been an active alumnus promoting Virginia Tech at the local, state and national levels. For his lifelong dedication and support of the university, Moseley was awarded the Virginia Tech's 1997 Alumni Distinguished Service Award. In 1969 he founded his own architectural/engineering firm, the Mosely Group. Under his leadership, the firm grew to employ more than 60 professional staff members, with billings of nearly $1 billion. President Ronald Regan honored Moseley in 1983 with Virginia's Small Business Person of the Year Award. He served as president of the Richmond-based firm until 1989, when he assumed the duties of chairman of the board and consultant. Today, the firm is known as the Moseley, Harris McClintock Group, and Moseley is chairman of the board, emeritus. For the past several years, he has served as president of the Moseley Development Company—a real-estate development firm. Moseley became involved with the Alumni Association in the mid 1970s when he was elected to the Board of Directors of the Richmond Alumni Association. He later served two terms as chapter president, increasing chapter membership from 300 to 800 alumni. In recent years, he has provided thoughtful guidance and insight as a member of the Advisory Board of the College of Architecture and Urban Studies. His architecture firm has hired many Virginia Tech graduates and provided internships for students to gain experience in a professional working environment. He has been an active painter since his retirement from the practice of architecture in 1990. Moseley's work is of realistic impressionist style which is inspired by landscape scenery of Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida. Moseley has developed a unique style in watercolor, pastel and oil, allowing great expressiveness and flexibility with the vibrant use of color. Moseley's work has been greatly influenced by the artist, Wolf Kahn.
For the past 12 years, a relationship between Virginia Tech and Uruguay has been incubating, and has recently had renewed life with the announcement of a new student-exchange program through a memorandum of understanding signed recently by President Charles Steger and Universidad ORT President Jorge Grunberg. This agreement now opens the door university-wide for those interested in participating in an Uruguayan exchange. The relationship with Uruguay started in the early 80s when noted Uruguayan architect Armando Barbieri-Castagna became interested and involved with Tech's architecture and urban studies programs while his daughter was a student here. In 1988, a formal ceremony marked the official relationship as Barbieri presented a cultural token to the College of Architecture and Urban Studies—a wood carved bust by well-known Uruguayan sculptor Juan Pedro Morra. This bust is currently housed in the Art and Architecture Library in Cowgill Hall. In return, Barbieri accepted a pastel painting by CAUS Professor Dennis Kilper, which still hangs in the Court of Justice in Salto, Uruguay. In 1998, Barbieri revisited Tech to celebrate a decade of cultural exchange between the university and Uruguay by presenting a talk and slide presentation to members of the Henry H. Wiss Center for Theory and History of Art. While here, he met with university officials (with Architecture Professor Humberto Rodriguez-Camilioni as translator) to discuss future educational and cultural exchange possibilities. In recent years, Rodriguez-Camilioni has been invited to lecture at ORT, and while there, met with administrators to continue discussions about the exchange possibility. "This university is very young, but is considerably similar to Tech. They are particularly interested in what we can offer their students, and visa versa," says Rodriguez-Camilioni. "They have a dynamic staff and are anxious to do innovative things. Our university is the kind of entity they want to become identified with."
For more than half a century, my life and career have been associated with the tombs and monuments of the classical past—in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Iran, Greece, Turkey, Italy, Japan, China, Indo-China, Siam, and Java—and of the Maya of Honduras, Guatemala, and Yucatan. As an artist with perhaps some small gifts for literal detail, my privilege was to be present when some of the great tombs of antiquity were re-opened by modern archaeologists and to assist them in their work. What I saw I recorded with brushes and paint on canvases. Mine has been a happy life not only of opportunity in art, but also of adventure. Joseph Lindon Smith
red poppy  georgia o’keefee

In an attempt to discover a personal language through which she could express her own feelings and ideas, Georgia O’Keeffe began a series of abstract charcoal drawings that are now recognized as being among the most innovative in all of American art of the period. She mailed some of these drawings to a former Columbia classmate, who showed them to Alfred Stieglitz. Stieglitz began corresponding with O’Keeffe, and he exhibited 10 of her charcoal abstractions in May at his famous avant-garde gallery, 291. From 1923 until his death in 1946, Stieglitz worked assiduously and effectively to promote O’Keeffe and her work. As early as the mid-1920s, when O’Keeffe first began painting large-scale depictions of flowers as if seen close up, which are among her best-known pictures, she had become recognized as one of America’s most important and successful artists. Three years after Stieglitz’s death, O’Keeffe moved from New York to her beloved New Mexico, whose stunning vistas and stark landscape configurations had inspired her work since 1929. O’Keeffe continued to work until the late 1970s, when failing eyesight forced her to abandon painting. She then became a three-dimensional artist, producing objects in clay until her health failed in 1984. She died two years later, at the age of 98.
Max Bill, architect, sculptor, painter, graphic artist and one of the principal representatives of Concrete Art, studied at the Arts and Crafts Academy in Zurich, followed by an apprenticeship as silversmith and studies at the Bauhaus. Bill moved to Zurich in 1929. He was active as architect, painter, graphic artist and sculptor from 1932 onwards, in public relations from 1936 on, and as product designer as of 1944. He also taught and gave presentations. Co-founder and director of the Ulm school of arts and crafts, he worked on architecture and product form. From 1961-1964, he was the head architect of the Building and Design Sectors for the Swiss National Exhibit in Lausanne. He became professor at the State School for Fine Arts in Hamburg in 1967 and received awards, honors and an honorary degree. In 1968, he received the Zurich Art Award and has been exhibiting in galleries and exhibition halls since 1928. His Constructivist sculptures for public squares as well as his paintings have become popular in America, Europe and Asia. He began writing monographs, catalogues and his own writings in the 50’s. His print work played an important role as well.
Josef Albers, at age 32, enrolled at the newly-formed, progressive Bauhaus school in Weimar. After finishing his studies there, Albers joined the faculty to teach the preliminary course on material and design. It was during his time with the Bauhaus that Albers came into his own as a creative talent. Eventually becoming Assistant Director and Director of the Furniture Workshop, he retained his position with the Bauhaus until it was forced to close, under Nazi pressure, in 1933. In America, the organizers of Black Mountain College, a utopian experiment in education in the mountains of North Carolina, asked Philip Johnson, then director of the department of architecture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, to recommend an art teacher. He suggested Albers, who, though he did not speak a word of English and did not know where North Carolina was, accepted. Albers remained at Black Mountain until 1950 when he became head of the Department of Design at Yale University School of Art. He remained there until 1958, when he assumed the position of Visiting Professor until 1960. In 1971 he was the first living artist ever to be the subject of a solo exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Albers died in 1976 at the age of 88. Albers's earliest works were figurative drawings and paintings. His style became increasingly abstract at the Bauhaus where he began to explore abstraction and color, his primary lifelong preoccupations. He was fascinated by the ambiguities of visual and spatial perception. This preoccupation is central to his famous Homage to the Square series begun in the 1950s and continuing until his death. In this series, color assumes the main role of producing deceptive and unpredictable effects, causing multiple readings of the same hue depending on what colors surround it. Albers did not mix colors, putting the colors on the painting right out of the tube. He forced his viewers into a changing and dynamic relationship with his work, rather than accepting one visual truth.
cane shell chair  bill stephens

William Stephens joined the Knoll Design Development Group in 1960 where he worked with Bob Savage on a method of bending wood to make frames. The chair was originally an attempt to make a cane chair on a minimal frame with the cane surface continuous from the front edge to the top of the seat. It didn’t work; the cane at the front edge, where it wrapped over the knee of the chair, broke up too easily in use. Keeping the frame, Stephens changed the seat to a shell: “It turned out better than I had hoped...that frame by itself is not a stable piece. You can break it up if you were to sit on it. The shell is a flexible, flimsy shell, but if you staple the shell into the frame, it forms that total structure. It worked out well.” The chair which took a year and a half to develop became the first piece in the Stephens Open Office Furniture System.
The perfectly symmetrical, bell-shaped, wooden sculpture of Saint Anne stands about a foot tall. Her head is spherical, her face an abstraction. Her hands are clasped neatly at her waist. Sculptor Dean Carter has just finished creating her for a friend. He had no preconceived images of his subject and he used no models. "I'm an intuitive artist," he says. To see examples of Carter's work on the Tech campus, you don't have to walk far. His Madonna and Child sculpture is in Wallace Hall. Stuart Cassell's portrait head resides in Cassell Coliseum; one of Edward Lane is in Lane Stadium. The veterinary building features Carter's outdoor marble animal sculpture of a dog, a swan, and a bullock. Vet students rub the nose of the dog for good luck. Two portrait heads, one of Tech's architecture department founder Clinton Cowgill and one of Bauhaus art and architecture movement originator Walter Gropius, are in Cowgill Hall. Gropius never sat for anyone, but Carter. Recently Carter donated a portrait head of Gropius to the Huntington, WV Museum of Art, which was partially designed by the Bauhaus legend. Carter joined Tech's architecture department in 1950 to teach sculpting. At that time, Tech had no art department. Carter would later help establish the art department and become its head for 10 years. Although he retired in 1995, Carter is still active sculpting, exhibiting, and guest lecturing. Last year, he sculpted a portrait head of the late Tech architecture professor Leonard Currie; the work awaits dedication in Cowgill Hall. In 1995, Carter completed bronze door pulls in the shape of fish and the four evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John for the Ikenoue Chapel in Japan. Akira Inadomi '60, Carter's former student and the chapel's architect, commissioned the project. Work keeps him looking ahead: "I like to think about the future," he says.
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