

***The Art of Seating:
200 Years of American Design***

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PRIVATE CHAIR COLLECTION IS A REFLECTION ON AMERICAN DESIGN HISTORY

Fort Wayne Museum of Art in Fort Wayne, IN is pleased to announce *The Art of Seating: 200 Years of American Design*, on view at FWMoA from December 12 through January 24.

Most chairs encountered throughout the day define themselves fairly simply—a place at the family table, a comfortable spot with a great view of the river, a seat of corporate power. When looking at the 43 chairs selected for *The Art of Seating: 200 Years of American Design*, however, there is much more to see than simple pieces of furniture. Developed by the Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville and organized for tour by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C, these works of art have compelling stories to tell about our national history, the evolution of American design and incredible artistry and craftsmanship.

The Art of Seating provides audiences with a unique opportunity to see chair types that usually reside in private homes, withheld from public display. The American Chair Collection, the center of this exhibition, is an amazing and comprehensive private collection of iconic and historic chairs reaching back from the mid-1800s to pieces from today's studio movement. The exhibition provides an opportunity to see readily recognizable pieces alongside those rarely seen by the public.

Curated by Ben Thompson, curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville, *The Art of Seating* takes the viewer into the design studio through patent drawings, documented upholstery, artist renderings and multimedia presentations. Selections from the Thomas H. and Diane DeMell Jacobsen Ph.D. Foundation offer a stylistic journey in furniture with showstoppers by John Henry Belter, George Hunzinger, the Herter Brothers, the Stickley Brothers, Frank Lloyd Wright, Charles and Ray Eames, Eero Saarinen, Isamu Noguchi, Frank Gehry and others waiting to be discovered. The exhibition also features contemporary and historic designs by some of the biggest manufacturers such as Knoll, Herman Miller and Steelcase.

Perhaps the most illustrious piece of history in this collection is that of the House of Representatives Chamber Arm Chair from 1857. Designed by Thomas U. Walter, Architect of the Capitol from 1851 to 1865, the House of Representatives chairs were created to be used in

the halls of Congress and were showcased in portraits of political leaders such as Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson. A later design by David Wolcott Kendall, deemed by his peers as “The Dean of American Furniture Design,” was presented to William McKinley during his term in the White House and has become known as the “McKinley” arm chair.

On January 7 at 12:15pm, a guided tour will be given by FWMoA CEO and Chief Curator Charles Shepard. The tour is free with gallery admission, which is \$5 for students and \$7 for adults.

The exhibition originated at the Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville, FL, where it was displayed from January 21 through April 3, 2011. Current tour dates include: Figge Art Museum, Davenport, IA (June 11, 2011 – September 4, 2011); Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, AL (September 22, 2011 – January 15, 2012); Westmoreland Museum of American Art, Greensburg, PA (February 5, 2012 – April 8, 2012); Columbia Museum of Art, SC (April 27, 2012 – August 26, 2012); Academy Art Museum, Easton, MD (November 29, 2012 – January 2013); Telfair Museums, Savannah, GA (February 26, 2013 – May 19, 2013); Royal Alberta Museum, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (June 15, 2013 – October 6, 2013); Fullerton Museum Center, Fullerton, CA (October 25, 2013 – December 22, 2013); Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, LA (January 17, 2014 – April 11, 2014); Reading Public Museum, Reading, PA (May 31, 2014 - July 27, 2014); Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Winston Salem, NC (August 23, 2014 – December 31, 2014); The Elliot Museum, Stuart, FL (February 6, 2015 – May 31, 2015); Western Gallery of Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA (September 2015 – November 2015); Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA (February 2016 – April 2016); The Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI (June 2016 – August 2016). For an updated tour schedule, please visit <http://artsandartists.org/exhibitions/chairs.html>

The Art of Seating is developed by the Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville, in collaboration with the Thomas H. and Diane DeMell Jacobsen Ph.D. Foundation, and is organized for tour by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C.

The Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville, a private non-profit visual arts educational institution and cultural resource of the University of North Florida, serves the community and its visitors through exhibitions, collections, educational programs and publications designed to enhance an understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art with particular emphasis on works created from 1960 to the present.

The American Chair Collection started as a way to provide further context to the **Jacobsen Collection of American Art**—paintings, sculpture, silver and furniture which were acquired during the early 1990s. With the help of Andrew Van Styn, Director of Acquisitions, Conservation and Photography, the creation of the chair collection began with the purchase of an Egyptian Revival Side Chair and has since blossomed to the more than 40 works on display in this exhibition.

International Arts & Artists in Washington, DC, is a non-profit arts service organization dedicated to increasing cross-cultural understanding and exposure to the arts internationally, through exhibitions, programs and services to artists, arts institutions and the public. Visit www.artsandartists.org

About the Fort Wayne Museum of Art: Beginning with art classes in 1888 given by J. Ottis Adams and later William Forsyth, the Fort Wayne Museum of Art has evolved into a center for the visual arts in the Northeast Indiana region. Regularly exhibiting nationally acclaimed artists, the FWMoA also boasts an extensive permanent collection of American and related art. FWMoA is committed to the collection, preservation, and presentation of American and related art to engage broad and diverse audiences throughout the region to add value to their lives. The Fort Wayne Museum of Art is a funded partner of Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne. This activity made possible, in part, with support from the Indiana Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

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