



NEWS RELEASE

2200 Dodge Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102 Phone: 402-342-3300 Fax: 402-342-2376 www.joslyn.org

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Contact: Amy Rummel, Director of Marketing and Public Relations
(402) 661-3822 or arummel@joslyn.org



the ART of SEATING

200 Years of American Design

(Omaha, NE) – Few works tell the history of modern design as eloquently as the chair. *The Art of Seating: 200 Years of American Design* pulls this most familiar of everyday objects out from under the desk and dining room table to surprise visitors with the exceptional style and creativity to be found in this seemingly humble piece of furniture. Drawn from the Jacobsen Collection of American Art and organized by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, Florida, the exhibition presents an exploration of American design from the early nineteenth century to the present day. *The Art of Seating* is on view at Joslyn Art Museum from **June 1 through September 8**.

Considering the chair not only as an everyday item but also as functional sculpture, each of the forty chairs in the exhibition reflect important artistic, social, economic, political and cultural influences. The exhibition also offers a glimpse into the dedication and passion of a collector, who collaborated with curators, scholars, and specialists to assemble a collection that not only exemplifies the majority of important movements in American design over two centuries, but also traces the vibrant and progressive history of this country's ingenuity and creativity.

Examples include a modest *Rocking Arm Chair* from the 1840s, common to a middleclass home or front porch, simply designed for comfort and function; later nineteenth century furniture that drew its inspiration from European Gothic, Rococo, and Renaissance Revivals and exotic Asian-influenced designs; clever "Patent Furniture" using new materials to allow foldability and flexibility from the office to the railway car; and the Craftsman Movement, admired to this day for its simple, forthright designs. The twentieth century saw the emergence of elegant and futuristic designs using industrial

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The Art of Seating at Joslyn Art Museum

materials, such as aluminum tubing and plastics. In the vital period after the Second World War, American designers wowed the world with modernist designs that were light, compact, and inexpensive yet also projected an energetic and bright outlook. Contemporary chairs reflect a groundbreaking use of materials and design, often mirroring challenging trends in architecture.

Although designed first for function, each chair tells a story about ingenuity, creativity, and the unique history of American decorative design. From chairs made by anonymous craftsmen to a who's who of modern designers and architects from Frank Lloyd Wright to Charles and Ray Eames, Eero Saarinen, Isamu Noguchi, and Frank Gehry, *The Art of Seating: 200 Years of American Design* highlights creativity and inspiration from the kitchen counter to the corner office.



The Art of Seating: 200 Years of American Design is organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, in collaboration with the Thomas H. and Diane DeMell Jacobsen, Ph.D. Foundation



and is toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C.

IMAGES: (PAGE 1) Designed by Harry Bertoia (1915–1978), Manufactured by Knoll Associates, New York City, NY, *Large Diamond Lounge Chair*, c. 1952; Photo by Michael Koryta and Andrew VanStyn, Director of Acquisitions, Conservation and Photography

Exhibition Tickets and Tours

The Art of Seating is a ticketed exhibition: \$10 for general public adults; \$5 college students with ID (tickets for those with a UNMC student ID are free); free for members and youth ages 17 and younger. Special Thursday pricing (4–8 pm): \$5 for general public adults. All visitors, including members, must obtain a ticket at the admissions desk for entrance to the exhibition. Programs with visits to the exhibition will be priced accordingly for general public adults. Docent-guided tours of the exhibition are offered weekly (ticket pricing applies; view the calendar of events at www.joslyn.org for tour offerings).

Exhibition Mobile Tour

Free Wi-Fi is available in all Joslyn galleries. Guests may use their own web-enabled mobile device or borrow one of Joslyn's to access the dual language *The Art of Seating* mobile tour. Dial (402) 881-3601 for English or (402) 972-4031 for Spanish; *or* visit www.joslyn.org > Education > Multimedia; *or* scan the QR code at the entrance to the exhibition; *or* read the audio script, available for hearing impaired visitors (access it through the web app). Presented by Joslyn and OnCell with special thanks to 91.5 KIOS FM.

Exhibition Programs & Events

Friday, May 31; 5:30–8 pm

Members Preview Event

On Friday evening, May 31, members are invited to a private discussion and reception celebrating *The Art of Seating*. At 6 pm in the Witherspoon Concert Hall, members will hear a presentation by **Diane DeMell Jacobsen, Ph.D.** The chairs featured in *The Art of Seating: 200 Years of American Design* are from the collection of the Thomas H. and Diane DeMell Jacobsen Ph.D. Foundation. After the talk, stay for exhibition viewing, light hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar in the Storz Fountain Court, and browsing in the Hitchcock Museum Shop. Joslyn members receive invitations. To join Joslyn, visit www.joslyn.org.

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The Art of Seating at Joslyn Art Museum

Saturday, June 1 @ 6 pm

Joslyn Art Museum Association Gala

The Joslyn Art Museum Association (JAMA) presents this special gala preview of *The Art of Seating*. Guests will enjoy a cocktail reception and private exhibition viewing followed by a plated, gourmet culinary experience in a beautifully decorated tent outside on the Museum grounds (tent is air-conditioned). The evening also includes an oral auction of a Barcelona chair and ottoman and a lively after party. Formal Attire. Honorary Chairs: Laura and Michael Alley. Event Chair: Emily Lauritzen. JAMA President: Jackie Conway. Presented by Knoll/CL Select.

Chair Prototypes: A Partnership

Visit Joslyn's community gallery (Memorial Building, lower level) to see design documents and production-grade prototypes of chairs created by University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) Architecture and Interior Design students. The students were all enrolled in a product design course inspired by the exhibition *The Art of Seating*.

Led by Nolan Golgert, UNL Lecturer–Interior Design, students engaged in a design process including research, data collection, design prototyping, and fabrication. The research phase enabled students to shape their design process around that of other designers to influence how users would “connect” with their chairs, formally and figuratively. Using critical dimensions discovered during data collection, the design prototyping phase allowed students the mobility to pursue various design concepts. Students assessed their work together to evaluate the formal qualities and feasibility of their proposed chairs. In the final five weeks of the course, students merged their findings to fabricate the production-grade prototypes of their chair designs, on view at Joslyn this summer.

Tiny Treasures

See a dozen handcrafted fine-scale miniature chairs—from ones fashioned after Windsor and Shaker styles to others representing designs by Frank Lloyd Wright and Charles and Ray Eames—all selected from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln's (UNL) Kruger Collection of Miniature Furnishings and Decorative Arts. A blend of design history and craft, this little display, on view in Joslyn's Memorial Building, lower level, is a glimpse into the unique collection of more than 20,000 miniatures permanently housed at UNL's College of Architecture.

Chair Prototypes and *Tiny Treasures* are collaborations between Joslyn and University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Both are on display at the Museum June 1–September 8 (Memorial Building, lower level).

Thursday, June 13; 6–8 pm

Pull Up a Chair!

Stop by to meet UNL student designers and try out their chairs! Enjoy light refreshments, give selected chairs a sit, and engage in conversation with the designers to learn about their inspiration and some of the trials and triumphs that accompanied the design process. Those wishing to view *The Art of Seating* exhibition that evening must obtain a ticket (exhibition tickets are discounted to \$5 for general public adults on Thursdays, 4–8 pm).

Thursday, June 27 @ 6:30 pm (cash bar @ 5 pm)

Chairs that Rock...and Some that Don't

Join us for a look at *The Art of Seating* through expert eyes. Interior designer Nancy Novak and architect Ryan Fisher, both with Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture, will discuss the nature of outstanding design during a gallery walkthrough. Free with *The Art of Seating* exhibition admission (special \$5 tickets for general public adults). Space is limited; tickets will be issued on a first come, first served basis. Guests are asked to check in upon arrival on June 27; no advance registration required.

Nancy Novak's interior design experience includes programming, budget development, furnishings, space planning, finish selection and specification, and project management. She specializes in library design and has helped create award-winning spaces in municipalities and universities across the country. Novak strives to create design that fosters an innovative, low-stress, and healthy atmosphere. She is LEED Accredited and holds National Coalition for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) Certification.

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The Art of Seating at Joslyn Art Museum

A graduate of Iowa State University, **Ryan Fisher's** education opened his eyes to modern Midwestern beauty, pragmatism, and constructability. Since then, he has continued an interest in the connections between modern architecture, industrial fabrication, and both emerging and traditional construction techniques. In 2014 and 2015, Fisher's work was recognized with multiple AIA Nebraska Design Awards for Emerging Architects.

Thursday, July 25; 5–6 pm

Omaha Under the Radar Festival

The contemporary performance festival Omaha Under the Radar returns to Joslyn for the sixth year, enlivening the galleries and open spaces of the Museum with original music and dance. Festival artists will spread throughout the galleries and sculpture garden presenting works for solo percussion and dance, as well as a new work created in response to the exhibition *The Art of Seating*. Featuring **Nicholas Swoboda, Nathan Brumbaugh, and artists from the SOUNDRY Institute**, this fun, family-friendly event will explore surprising directions in performance. The event is free and open to the public. Those wishing to view *The Art of Seating* exhibition that evening must obtain a ticket (exhibition tickets are discounted to \$5 for general public adults on Thursdays, 4–8 pm).

Omaha Under the Radar Festival takes place from July 24–27, 2019 at locations throughout Omaha. Learn more at www.undertheradaromaha.com

Saturday & Sunday, August 24 & 25

Free College Weekend

During regular public hours (10 am to 4 pm) on Saturday and Sunday, August 24 and 25, anyone with a valid college ID will receive free tickets to *The Art of Seating*. Regular ticket price for college students is \$5 (tickets for those with a UNMC student ID are always free).

Thursday, August 29 @ 6:30 pm (cash bar @ 5 pm)

Free Public Lecture: Joslyn welcomes Interior Design Scholar, Mark Hinchman, Ph.D.

In his presentation, "Battle of the Chairs: Victorians and Moderns in American Interior Design," Dr. Hinchman examines some of the most renowned masters of American interior design. This talk is free, however, those wishing to see *The Art of Seating* exhibition must obtain an exhibition ticket (special Thursday evening pricing of \$5 per ticket for general public adults).

Mark Hinchman is a Professor in the Interior Design Program in UNL's College of Architecture. A design and architecture historian, he writes widely on the history of interior design, and has been published in *Interiors*, *The Journal of Interior Design*, and the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. He has written three interior design textbooks, including his most recent, *Interior Design Masters*, written with a former student, Elyssa Yoneda. His monograph on French colonial architecture in West Africa was published by the University of Nebraska Press. A USIA Fulbright Grant funded his research in Africa. Before coming to UNL, he worked as a commercial interior designer in Chicago and Frankfurt.

Other Programs at Joslyn

Many of Joslyn's regularly scheduled programs will feature *The Art of Seating*-inspired themes. Visit www.joslyn.org for complete details.

- **Art Encounters** (Thursday, June 20; 10:30 am): Art lovers, from the well-seasoned to the amateur, will enjoy a docent-guided tour of *The Art of Seating* exhibition. \$10 general public adults; \$5 college students with valid ID on June 20.
- **Stroller Tours** (Wednesday, July 17): Joslyn offers docent-guided tours designed for moms, dads, and caregivers to look at and talk about art with other adults, while being mindful of young ones in arms and strollers. Guests gather on the Strauss Bridge at 9:30 am for complimentary refreshments, then head to the galleries at 10 am for tours of

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The Art of Seating at Joslyn Art Museum

Joslyn's collections and exhibitions. Crying babies welcome! On July 17, the tour will feature *The Art of Seating* exhibition. Free for Joslyn members and infants/toddlers; \$10 for general public adults (includes exhibition ticket). Space is limited; reservations are requested. Sign-up at least one week in advance at www.joslyn.org > Visit > Kids Programs.

- **Story Adventures** (Tuesday, August 20; 10:30 am): This free gallery reading program for preschoolers and young readers accompanied by an adult features *The Art of Seating!* Guests must stop at the entrance desk for a ticket, which is complimentary for general public adults for this program.
- **Art Camps and Classes**
Joslyn offers classes and camps for all ages this summer, many inspired by *The Art of Seating*. Online class registration is available; Joslyn members receive discounted registration. Visit www.joslyn.org > Education > Classes.

Bench + Joslyn Partnership

Enroll in *Intro to Woodworking* or *Chair Construction* at Bench, a public woodworking shop and artisan hub located in Omaha's makerhood, north of downtown. Course descriptions, fee information, and registration at www.joslyn.org.



JOSLYN
Art Museum

Our Mission — Joslyn Art Museum collects, preserves, and interprets the visual arts of the highest quality, fostering appreciation and enjoyment of art for the benefit of a diverse audience.

Our Vision — To be cherished and respected as a premier art museum.

Joslyn Art Museum showcases art from ancient times to the present. The Museum was a gift to the people of Omaha from Sarah Joslyn in memory of her husband, George, who made his fortune as president of the Western Newspaper Union. The Museum's original 1931 building is one of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture in the nation, with 38 types of marble from seven countries. The Walter and Suzanne Scott Pavilion, a 58,000-square-foot addition built in 1994, was designed by renowned British architect Norman Foster as his first U.S. commission. The Museum features galleries, a 1,000-seat concert hall, fountain court, education technology gallery, lecture hall, classrooms, sculpture garden, café, shop, and Art Works, an interactive space for art exploration.

General Museum Admission: Free (additional charge for general public adult tickets to *The Art of Seating*; see page 2).

Regular Museum Hours: Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am–4 pm; late 'til 8 pm on Thursday; closed Monday and major holidays.

www.joslyn.org | (402) 342-3300 | 2200 Dodge Street | Omaha, NE 68102