MICHIGAN MODERN: DESIGN THAT SHAPED AMERICA AT THE GRAND RAPIDS ART MUSEUM CELEBRATES MICHIGAN’S OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO MODERN DESIGN

Exhibition features 50 landmark Michigan contributions to modernism by designers, architects, and institutions, including Frank Lloyd Wright, Charles and Ray Eames, Eero Saarinen, Minoru Yamasaki, and Bill Moss.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., May 1, 2014 – The Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) presents Michigan Modern: Design That Shaped America from May 18 – August 24, 2014. This exhibition features 50 key designers and architects from 20 innovative, Michigan-based businesses and institutions from the turn of the century to the 1970s.

GRAM is excited to bring this significant exhibition to West Michigan, which debuted at the Cranbrook Art Museum. Michigan Modern will span two floors of the Museum with GRAM dedicating extra galleries to showcase this selection. This exhibition was organized by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office in association with Cranbrook Art Museum and curated by MPdL Studio of Ann Arbor, Michigan. The exhibition has been expanded by the Grand Rapids Art Museum, in collaboration with Exhibition Design Consultant Seth Alec Keller. Michigan Modern underscores the highly influential international role that our state has played in mid-century design innovation.

Michigan Modern features hundreds of landmark design objects, engaging participatory experiences, and fascinating pictorial and video documentation of the leading figures and key historical developments in architecture, industrial design, and furniture. A special feature of GRAM’s presentation is a focus on design for outdoor recreation including boat design, playgrounds, and experimental tents and camping gear.

“GRAM is thrilled to be sharing this nationally-recognized exhibition with the West Michigan audience, in part because it highlights the innovation and creativity of our region, and beyond that, mid-century modern design connects with baby-boomers who grew up in that era, and is also influential for younger generations finding their own styles,” said Dana Friis-Hansen, Director and CEO of GRAM. “The exhibition explores a range of design areas, including industry, institutions, public housing, living spaces, work spaces, mobility, and recreation.”

Michigan Modern highlights the state’s iconic role in shaping Modern design. Important highlights of the exhibition include: a full-scale Ford Model T cutaway, Frank Lloyd Wright’s designs for Steelcase, a full-scale interactive simulation of a living room in Mies van der Rohe’s Lafayette Park Apartments, vintage mid-century modern home furnishings by Charles and Ray Eames, Bill Moss tents, and a classic 1955 Wolverine Custom boat from Wagemaker.

The exhibition is accompanied by a major symposium, co-organized by SHPO and Kendall College of Art and Design, from June 19–21, 2014. The symposium will include an evening welcome reception and exhibition tour at GRAM, followed by lectures and presentations by designers, historians, experts, and exclusive tours to some of the landmarks of Michigan modernism. More information and registration regarding the symposium can be found at
michiganmodern.org.

Visit artmuseumgr.org to learn about other related programming including drop-in tours, studio workshops, and more.


LIST OF KEY DESIGNERS, ARCHITECTS, AND BUSINESSES IN MICHIGAN MODERN: DESIGN THAT SHAPED AMERICA

Designers and Architects

- Harry Bertoia
- Gunnar Birkerts
- Marcel Breuer
- Alden B. Dow
- Charles Eames
- Ray Eames
- Alexander Girard
- Albert Kahn
- Florence Knoll
- Jim Miller-Melberg
- Bill Moss
- George Nakashima
- George Nelson
- Louis G. Redstone
- Mies van der Rohe
- Eero Saarinen
- Ruth Adler Schnee
- Marianne Strengell
- Susan Vanderbilt
- Frank Lloyd Wright
- Minoru Yamasaki

Manufacturers

- Bee Line Manufacturing
- Chris Craft Outboard Motors
- Ford Motor Company
- General Motors
- Herman Miller, Inc.
- Ingersoll Steel
- Knoll, Inc.
- Moss Tents
- Parsons Corporation
- Saarinen Swanson Collection
- Steelcase, Inc.
- Wagemaker
- Wausau Tile, Inc.
- Widdicomb Furniture Company

MORE MICHIGAN MODERN RELATED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

GRAM Member Preview Party
Friday, May 16, 2014. 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Members have the first opportunity to experience Michigan Modern: Design That Shaped America during this exhibition preview party! View hundreds of landmark design objects, learn more from GRAM docents (volunteer art educators) stationed in the exhibition galleries, and enjoy complimentary refreshments and a cash bar. RSVP by May 9, 2014 at 616.831.2909 memberpreview.kintera.org

Member Day
Saturday, May 17, 2014. 10:00 am – 5:00 p.m.
Can't make it to the preview party? Take a full day to preview Michigan Modern: Design That Shaped America, exclusively for GRAM Members! Enjoy snacks and beverages from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, activities throughout the museum all day long, conversations with Museum docents in the galleries, and a lecture led by J. Marc Greuther, Chief Curator and Curator of Industry and
Design, The Henry Ford Museum and Dana Friis-Hansen, Director and CEO, Grand Rapids Art Museum

**Member Lecture:**

**The Impact of Michigan Design: A Conversation**
Saturday, May 17, 2014. 3:00 pm
Cook Auditorium, Grand Rapids Art Museum
A conversation with J. Marc Greuther, Chief Curator and Curator of Industry and Design, The Henry Ford Museum and Dana Friis-Hansen, Director and CEO, Grand Rapids Art Museum

**Lecture:**

**Boating into Mid-Century with Bob Shapton**
Thursday, June 12, 2014. 7:00 pm
Cook Auditorium, Grand Rapids Art Museum
Enjoy a lecture exploring boating in Michigan by Bob Shapton, an Industrial Designer, Collector, Restorer, and Founder of Engine Industrial Design, LLC with a BFA from Center for Creative Studies, Detroit.

**Design Briefs**
June 26 & August 21, 2014
Cook Auditorium, Grand Rapids Art Museum
AIGA and GRAM Members: $5, General Public: $10
GRAM and AIGA West Michigan have partnered for a two-part series focused on design, entrepreneurship, and social impact, coinciding with this summer’s exhibition.

**GRAM Instagram**
Keep your eyes on GRAM’s social media channels! Celebrate with GRAM as we highlight Michigan design: yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Share your photos on Instagram inspired by Michigan’s design with the tag #MImodern.

**WORKSHOP:**

**Creativity Uncorked**
June 20, July 18, August 15
7:00 pm - 9:30 pm
Doors open at 6:15 pm with cash bar
$25 for Members, $30 for non-members
Activate your mind and express yourself while exploring the diverse body of work seen in Michigan Modern: Design That Shaped America. No experience necessary. Join GRAMStudio each month for a new and unique project.

**COURSE:**

**What Floats Your Boat?**
Friday, Saturday, & Sunday June 6, 7, & 8, 2014
Fri 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm, Sat 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm, & Sun 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Free with admission, free for GRAM Members
During Festival of the Arts 2014, experiment with recycled materials to create your own boat! Join GRAM Friday, Saturday, and Sunday at Pocket Park, located near the Peter Wege Plaza, and test the waters with your unique creation.

**TOURS:**

Docent Guided Tours of the exhibition are available throughout the course of the exhibition. Visit artmuseumgr.org for details.

**Mid-Century Modern Architecture Tour**
June 21, 2014
10:30 am - 12:30 pm
Members: $10; General Public: $15

Join Gina Bivins, President of the Grand Rapids Historical Society, and Pamela VanderPloeg, Founder of West Michigan Modern, for a trolley tour of Mid-Century Modern architecture near downtown Grand Rapids.

EXTERNAL RELATED PROGRAMMING

Michigan Modern Symposium Organized by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
June 19 - 21, 2014
Kendall College of Art and Design
Registration required. Fee is $250. Limited student registration available for $175
Register at michiganmodern.org.

Concurrent Exhibitions

The Below the Surface exhibition displays the evolution of Powers’ working practice with different materials and his understanding of their hidden potential, culminating in a large-scale installation of hundreds of his pillow forms. The opening reception will be held on May 29, 2014 at 7:00 pm where Powers will discuss his work.

GRAM Selects ArtPrize 2013: Encore, on view through October 12, 2014.
This exhibition showcases some of the strongest ArtPrize works selected from nine different ArtPrize 2013 venues.

About the Grand Rapids Art Museum

Focusing on art, design, and creativity, GRAM provides diverse platforms for experiences, ideas, and dialogue that enrich the human spirit and build practical learning skills. Through dynamic exhibitions, collections, learning initiatives, and community collaborations, GRAM increasingly serves as a cultural beacon and civic anchor. Established in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, the Art Museum is internationally known for its distinguished design and LEED® Gold certified status. Established in 1910 as the Grand Rapids Art Association, GRAM has grown to include more than 5,000 works of art, including American and European 19th and 20th century painting and sculpture and more than 3,000 works on paper. Embracing the city’s legacy as a leading center of design and manufacturing, GRAM has a growing collection in the area of design and modern craft.

For GRAM's hours and admission fees, visit artemuseumgr.org or call 616-831-1000.

Museum Hours:
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Thursday: 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.
Sunday: 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Closed Mondays

Museum Admission:
General Admission:
GRAM Members – Free
Adults - $8.00
Senior Adults & College Students (W ID) - $7.00
Youth (ages 6-17) - $5.00
Children under 6 – Free

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