



Finding Aid for

**HERMAN MILLER COLLECTION, 1923-2006
(BULK 1934-2000)**

Accession 89.177

Finding Aid Republished: June 2016



Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Blvd
Dearborn, MI 48124-5029
www.thehenryford.org
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ACCESSION NUMBER: 89.177

CREATOR: Herman Miller, Inc.

TITLE: Herman Miller Collection

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1923-2006

BULK DATES: 1934-2000

QUANTITY: 31.8 cubic ft. (50 boxes)

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English

ABSTRACT: Herman Miller, Inc. is a furniture company based in Zeeland, Michigan. The collection is primarily comprised of trade catalogs, product literature, and publications documenting the furniture, its designers, and the company's history.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS: The collection is open for research.
- TECHNICAL RESTRICTIONS: Use of original video and audio tapes, floppy disks, and compact discs contained in the collection is restricted. Access may be unavailable due to lack of appropriate software and hardware, or use copies may need to be produced unless otherwise noted. Researchers interested in this material should contact Benson Ford Research Center staff (research.center@thehenryford.org).
- COPYRIGHT: Copyright has been transferred to the Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION: Donation, 1989 and ongoing.
- RELATED MATERIAL: Related material held by The Henry Ford:
- Robert Propst Collection, Accession 2010.83
- Bill Stumpf Collection, Accession 2009.141
- Don Chadwick Oral Interview, Accession 2009.119
- Herman Miller trade catalogs. Described separately in the Research Library catalog,
<http://www.dalnet.org/henryford>
- Related material held outside The Henry Ford:
- Gilbert Rohde collection, 1930-1945. Smithsonian Institution Libraries.
<http://www.worldcat.org/title/gilbert-rohde-collection-1930-1944/oclc/39134683>
- George Nelson & Co., Inc. Records, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.
http://library.syr.edu/digital/guides/g/geo_nelson.htm

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION continued:

ALTERNATIVE FORMS: Digital images of selected collection material can be found online at:
- Herman Miller Consortium collection
<http://digital.library.wayne.edu/digitalcollections/item?id=wayne.collectionHermanMiller>
- The Henry Ford Online Collections
<https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections>

PREFERRED CITATION: Item, folder, box, accession 89.177, Herman Miller collection, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford

PROCESSING INFORMATION: Collection processed by Erin Mulloy, October 2005.

DESCRIPTION INFORMATION: Finding aid written by Erin Mulloy, October 2005, edited by Benson Ford Research Center staff, and published in September 2013.

Boxes 49-50 added to container list, collection extent revised, and links to sources for Alternative Forms updated, June 2016. Finding aid republished, June 2016.

Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

HISTORICAL NOTE

In 1905 the Star Furniture Company, which would later become Herman Miller, was started by a group of businessmen. The main customer at the time was Sears Roebuck who bought the traditional style of furniture the company produced. In 1909 the company changed its name to the Michigan Star Furniture Company. It was in that year that D.J. Depree joined on at the company as an office boy. By the year 1919, he was its president. In 1923, D.J. DePree, his father-in-law Herman Miller, and a small group of investors purchased major stock in the company, changing the name to the Herman Miller Company. In 1959, the company incorporated and took on its current name, Herman Miller, Inc. D.J. DePree retired in 1962, and his son Hugh took over as president and CEO, followed later by his brother Max in 1980.

In the 1930s, a New York designer by the name of Gilbert Rohde became associated with Herman Miller, Inc. and that association lasted into the 1940s. At the time of his arrival the company was making traditional style furniture. Rohde convinced DePree to take on a more contemporary style of furniture and made Herman Miller, Inc. the leader in the modern furniture industry. In 1942, the company began to make office furniture, manufacturing Rohde's Executive Office Group of modular desk systems. At this time the company presented Rohde's marketing concepts in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles.

Gilbert Rohde died in 1946 leading the way for George Nelson to step in. Nelson was a writer, editor, and designer at Herman Miller, Inc. He designed storage components, sofas, chairs, and desks. His designs were featured in the company product line from the late 1940s through the 1950s. Nelson was responsible for bringing other great designers on board such as Alexander Girard, Isamu Noguchi, and Charles and Ray Eames. Eames played an important role with the company, becoming internationally known. With the introduction of molded plywood, fiberglass and stacking chairs, Herman Miller became known the world over.

During the coming decades the company continued to grow. In 1958, a large new manufacturing facility was built. In the 1960s, Robert Propst created Action Office, and in 1970 the company offered stock publicly for the first time. Diversification brought about a new manufacturing plant in England, a chair line called Ergon created by designer Bill Stumpf, an expanded participatory employee plan was put into action, and the creation of the Facility Management Institute in Ann Arbor, Michigan was developed. Herman Miller focused on the education of employees and company needs which fueled the purchase of Marigold Lodge. Built in the style of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, the lodge has been designated a state and national historic site. It provides a quiet atmosphere for work and planning sessions. It parallels the way in which the company dedicates itself to peace, nature, and the environment.

During the 1980s, Herman Miller introduced new office furniture designs, opened new manufacturing plants in Michigan, Georgia and California, added subsidiaries in the United States, and constructed new facilities in England and France. In addition, branches were established in the Far East, Australia and the Middle East. The year 1984 alone produced the Equa chair and Ethospace system. The Equa chair set new standards in comfort, and Ethospace became the first architecture office system. A decade later in 1994, Herman Miller began to manufacture and sell classic Eames and Nelson pieces

for the home. Also in 1994 came a breakthrough in comfort design with the Aeron chair. This chair is now a part of museum collections world wide.

Today Herman Miller still holds its place as one of the top furniture design companies, being listed in *Fortune* magazine as among the Most Admired Companies in the United States and by *Industry Week* as one of the world's 100 Best Managed Companies. It is known not just for its office systems but for its home furniture not just in the United States, but in the world over.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection is made up of eight series and a 2006 Addendum. The bulk of the material is comprised of trade catalogs and product literature covering several years. The material covers the company history, designers, publications, presentations used, advertising and price books, as well as other various pieces of literature.

The Company History series, 1975-1994, contains biographical sketches, company profiles, timelines, master plans and designs, and information on Marigold Lodge which plays a significant role in the company's history.

The Product Literature series, 1946-2004, includes price books and trade catalogs. The price books run from 1946 to August of 2004. Price books list the prices of the manufactured products from Herman Miller throughout those years. Microfiche of price books, which run from 1946 to 1991, are also located here. Trade catalogs center on the many different types of furniture and office systems that Herman Miller provide, such as: Passage, Action Office, Resolve, and Ethospace. It also looks at seating, tables, textiles, and other forms of Herman Miller furniture such as: Storage Systems, Integrated Systems, and Choices, which are many different pieces of Herman Miller furniture placed into one catalog or book.

The Publications series, 1936-2005, contains magazine articles that run from 1936 to 2005. It also contains newspaper clippings from 1934-1954 and Herman Miller publications such as: reports, research summaries, and shareholder information, as well as information and research on Ergonomics.

The Designers series, 1955-2004, deals with information on past and present designers of Herman Miller and has them listed alphabetically along with two binders that have collective information on a variety of designers and the products they created for Herman Miller. It also contains Oral History tapes as well as typed transcripts of those tapes from several of the designers.

The Presentations series, 1984-2001, primarily comprised of video tapes and compact discs. Compact disks make up power-point presentations and video tapes are largely corporate profiles. Slides also are included which picture different pieces of Herman Miller furniture.

The Advertising series, 1936-2004, is made up of cards, booklets, pamphlets, and binders. This material was used to promote and sell Herman Miller merchandise. The material is arranged by date within separate subject and alphabetized.

The Miscellaneous series, 1961-2004, is arranged by subject. Material is organized by date within each subject and then alphabetized.

The 2006 Addendum, 1978-2006, is comprised of a variety of product literature, publications, reports, sales guides, price books etc. arranged by date.

The Unprocessed series (1 cubic ft.) consists primarily of product literature, but also includes annual reports, President's reports and reports to shareholders.

ARRANGEMENT

The Herman Miller Collection consists of 8 series and an addendum:

- Company History series
- Product Literature series
 - Price Books subseries
 - Trade Catalogs subseries
 - Oversize Product Literature subseries
- Publications series
 - Non Herman Miller Publications subseries
 - Herman Miller Publications subseries
 - Oversize Publications subseries
- Designers series
- Presentations series
- Advertising series
- Miscellaneous series
- 2006 Addendum
 - 1978-2000 Published Material subseries
 - 2001-2005 Product Literature and Price Books subseries
 - 2005-2006 Product Literature and Price Books subseries
- Unprocessed series

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate

Chadwick, Don, 1936-
Eames, Charles, 1907-1978
Eames, Ray, 1912-1988
Girard, Alexander, 1907-1993
Nelson, George, 1908-1986
Propst, Robert, 1921-
Rohde, Gilbert, 1894-1944
Stumpf, William, 1936-
Herman Miller, Inc.
Herman Miller, Inc.--History

Subjects

Furniture
Furniture--Marketing
Furniture design
Furniture designers
Office furniture
Sales promotion

Genre and Form

Oral histories
Trade catalogs
Microfiche
Color transparencies
Floppy disks
Videocassettes
Audiocassettes
Audio tape
Photographic negatives
Optical disks
Compact discs

BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

Box no. **Description**

COMPANY HISTORY

Box 1

Book, "A Modern Consciousness," 1975
Biographical Sketches, 1986-1987
Biography on D. J. DePree, 1978-1990
Brief History by Innovative Strategy and Design, 1992-1994
Company Profile, undated
Company Timelines, 1981-1986
D.J. DePree Oral History Transcript with Tape, July 26, 1985
Herman Miller Built on Research and Design Paper, 1985
Herman Miller Master Plan, 1974
Herman Miller Publication and Promise Statement, 1949 and 1991
Histomap Project and Memo, 1987
Information on Marigold Lodge, 1989
List of furniture sold to other institutions, 1956 and 1963
Pamphlets, 1978
Press Release, 1998
Regional Sale Meetings with Huge DePree, 1979
Speeches, 1979-1993
Book "Who is Herman Miller?", 1984

Box 41 (oversize)

Timeline of Corporate History with Negatives, 1923-1950

PRODUCT LITERATURE

Price Books

Box 2

January 1962- February 1976

Box 3

February 2, 1976- April 18, 1983

Box 4

April 18, 1983- May 6, 1985

Box 5

May 6, 1985- July 1987

Box 6

July 20, 1987- May 1, 1989

- Box 7**
May 1, 1989- June 4, 1990
- Box 8**
June 4, 1990- September 3, 1991
- Box 9**
September 3, 1991- October 1991
- Box 10**
January 6, 1992- March 1, 1993
- Box 11**
March 1, 1993- June 5, 1995
- Box 12**
June 5, 1995- September 1, 1996
- Box 13**
October 1, 1996- March 1, 1999
- Box 14**
May 28, 1999- October 1999
- Box 15**
January 2000- September 4, 2001
- Box 16**
September 4, 2001- August 2, 2004

Trade Catalogs

Action Office

Action Lab Information, 1981-1983

Action Office 2 Installation Manual, undated

Booklets, 1964-1982, 1985-1986, 1990-1997, 2001-2004 (4 folders)

Encore Installation Manual, January 1990

Encore Planning Guide, 1988

Encore, Planning Options, Documentation Tools, 1988

Guides, 1976-1995

Installation Manual, July 1990

- Box 17**
Microfiche, 1946-1991

Box 18

Pamphlets, 1982
Photocopied Papers, 1987
Pictures, 1985, 1993-1994 and 2000
Product Guide, October 1, 1987
Research Handbooks, 1976-1981
Research Handbook, 1979
Series 1 and 2 Installation Manual, November 2000
Series 2 Planning Guide
 1991 July
 1998 April
Series 2 Planning Guide Addendum, February 2000
Series 2 and 3 Planning Guides, January-May 1993
Series 3 Panels Installation Manual, November 1992
Series 3 Planning Guides, May 1991
Service Parts Manual, April 1996
Slides, Encore, 1989 (35mm color transparencies)
Beirise Collection Information
 General information, 1996
 Slides, 1997 (35mm color transparencies)
Burdick Group (see also Box 37, Three Ring Binder, 1985)
 Booklets, 1980-1987
 Planning Information and Photocopies, 1991
Choices (see also oversized Box 40)
 10 Day or Less Catalog, 2002
 Booklets, 1973-2003
 Floppy A, User Adjustment, 1996 (1 3.5 inch diskette)
 Folders, 1973-1991, 1998-2002
 Information Sheets, 1991-2004
 Presentation Notebooks, 1972, 1979-1980, 1989
 Service Parts Books, 1981-1984
 Slides, Different Furniture, 1997 (35mm color transparencies)
 Slides, Photocopies, 1997
 Specification Book, July 1, 1980

Box 19

Ethospace
 Booklets, 1984-2002
 Design and Planning Information, 1988
 Installation Manual, 1992
 Pictures and Cards, 1987-2000
 Planning Guide
 1985 June
 1987
 1992 May
 Planning Options/Tools, 1987-1991

- Self Study Program/Application Guide, 1989, 2002
- Integrated Systems
 - Booklets, 1979-1981, 1979-1984, 1980-1982 (3 folders)
 - Photocopies, undated
 - Product Catalog
 - 1979
 - 1980 October
- Liaison System
 - General Information, 1993-1994
 - Installation Manual, July 1993
 - Planning Guides, May 1993 and February 1994
- Milcare
 - Booklets, 1972-1997 and 1999-2005 (2 folders)
 - L Cart Manual, 1981
 - Pamphlets/Information, 1983, 1996
 - PEAK Program, 1990
 - Sheets of Information, 1993-1999
 - Storage and Transport Solutions, 1999

Box 20

- Passage
 - Desking System, 2001
 - Freestanding Furniture System Books, 1998, 1999
 - Furniture Cards and Model Packets, undated
 - Planning Guide, April 1999
- Phoenix Designs System Information, 1990-1996
- Q System
 - Booklets, 1996-2001
 - Handbook, 2001
 - Installation Manual, February 1998
 - Planning Guide, 2003
 - Service Parts Manual, November 1997
- Relay
 - Guides, 1990-1992
 - Tear Sheets, Pictures, Poster, 1990-1994
 - Understanding Relay Book, 1991
- Resolve (see also oversize box 44)
 - Booklets, 2000
 - Booklets, 2001-2003
 - Cards, 1999
 - Guides, 2000-2002
 - Installation Manual, September 2000
 - Packets, 2002
- Storage Systems
 - Booklets, 1949-1994 and 1994- 2000 (2 folders)
 - Information Sheets, 1986-2005

Tear-Away Sheets, 2002-2003

Box 21

System Bridge

- Wall Information, 1997-1999
- Wall Installation Manual, June 1999

Textiles (see also oversize box 44)

- CMF Information Packet with Photocopies, 1998
- Color/Material Booklets, 1977 and 1998-2004
- Color/Material/Finish Booklets, 1997
- Color/Material Pamphlets/Information, 1989-2003
- Textile Alliance Program, November 2001-March 2003

V-Wall

- Booklets, 1983-1996
- Installation Manual, March 1991

Other Office Systems

- Accents Collection Information, 1999, 2002
- Arrio Freestanding Furniture
 - Planning Options, October 1996 and 1997
 - Installation Manual, January 1997
- Avive Collection, 2003
- Computer/Work Organizer Information, 2002
- Contracts Products Catalog, June 1979
- Geneva Furniture Information, January 1993
- JB Collection Information, 1995
- Kiva Collection Information, 1999, 2002
- Levity Collection Information, 2000
- M Collection Typicals, 2004
- Meridian Planning Guide, 1993
- Newhouse Group
 - Planning Information, June 1994 and September 1996
 - Privacy Panel Information, undated
 - Product Catalog, 1982
 - Prospects Planning Guide Addendum, May 2000
 - Prospects System Information, 2001
 - Prospects System Installation Manual, July 2000
- Puzzle Mobile Office Pictures, 1998
- Sanford Collection Planning Information, October 1991
- Sign System Booklet, 1972
- Sprezzatura Collection Information, 1988
- SQA Catalog, 2001
- Steel Frame Furniture Information, 1954-1959
- TD Collection Information, 1994
- TJ Collection Home/Office Planning Kit, 1999
- Word Processing Stations, 1976-1999

Seating

Booklets, 1961 and 1976, 1980-1989, 1992-1999, 2000-2004, and undated (5 folders)

Folders 1974-1995

Information Sheets, 1979, 1980-1988, 1991-1999, 2000-2005, and undated

Box 22

Pamphlets/Information 1980-2003

Tear Sheets, 1992-2004

Tables (see also oversized Box 40)

Booklets, 1961-1987, 1988-2003 (2 folders)

Information Sheets, 1972-2004

Pamphlets, 1990-1999

Tear Sheets, 1987-1998

Box 37

Oversize Product Literature

Action Office

Master Literature File, 1978-1984

Planning Guide Three Ring Binder, 1978

Three Ring Binder, 1985 (includes Burdick Group)

Presentation Notebooks, 1972, 1979-1980, 1989-1998

Textile Three Ring Binder, 2001

Box 38

Other Office Systems

Presentation Binder, 1987

Presentation Two Files of Various Office Systems Price Books, October 1, 1996 - January 8, 1998/ June 5, 1995 (Pocketed)

Presentation Notebook, 1976

Box 39

“For The Home” – Product Line Catalogs, 1994 and 1997-2000 (2 catalogs.
See also Advertising, Box 40)

PUBLICATIONS

Non Herman Miller Publications

Articles (see also oversized Box 41)

1936-2006 (59 folders)

Box 23

Clippings, 1934-1950

Box 24

Clippings, 1950-1954

Herman Miller Publications (see also Boxes 41 and 42)
General, 1934-1952

Box 25

General, 1968-2005

Box 26

Reports

Annual Reports

1957-1999

Employees, 1979-1983

Shareholder Information, 1978-1986 (2 folders)

Research Reports

1973-1977

Box 27

1977-2005

Research Summaries, 1989-1997 (29 folders)

Box 41 (oversized)

Oversize Publications

Blueprint, June 1989 (magazine)

Designing Liaison Environments, 1993

Ergo-Planner: A Reference Tool For Making Good Ergonomic Furniture

Decisions, 1998

Resolve

Road Signs, 1999

Box 42 (oversized)

Catalog, 1941

Catalog Supplement, 1940

EOG Catalog, 1942

DESIGNERS

Box 28

Designer Biographies

Beirise - Hollington

Box 29

Ivicevic - Stumpf

Information on Collective/Various Designers, 1955-1995

Box 30

Oral Interview Tapes

Chadwick - Harper (Original interviews on recorded on audiocassettes; digital use copies are available and housed with originals.)

Box 31

Nelson - Rohde (Original interviews on recorded on audiocassettes; digital use copies are available and housed with originals.)

Box 32

Oral Interview Transcripts

Chadwick - Rohde

Boxes 43 and 49 (oversized)

Alexander Girard Wall Covering Design Drawings, 1957, 1970-1971 (62 drawings, some with multiple sheets; rolled)

Box 44 (oversized)

Resolve Fabric Color Samples, undated

Kira Textile Design Samples, 2004

PRESENTATIONS

Boxes 33-34

VHS tapes, 1984-1990 (Note: Use of original video tapes in the collection is restricted and use copies may need to be produced unless otherwise noted. See Technical Restrictions, page 3, for more detail.)

Box 45 (oversized)

Product Presentations, Catalogs and Computer Design Data, 1996-2001 (material on compact discs and optical disks. Use may be restricted. See Technical Restrictions, page 3, for more detail.)

ADVERTISING

Box 35

Booklets, 1984-1995

Caper Notebook, undated

Cards, 1995-2003

Flyers, Maps, Pamphlets, 1979-1998

Sales Bulletins 1936 and 1967

Try A Chair Campaign, 1995-2000

Box 40 (oversized)

Dealer Ads, 1995-1998 (4 binders)

User Orientation Packet, 1978

MISCELLANEOUS

Box 35

Bibliographies, 1982-1986
Booklets, 1966-2000

Box 36

Cost/Warranty Booklets, 1979-2004
Drawn Out Plan and Perspective, June 1, 1983
Exercise Poster, 1979
Film/Video Catalogs, 1987
Information Sheets, 1983, 2002, 2003
Innova Company Information, 1987
Installations, 1961-1966
Service Net Program, 1988-1990
System Templates, 1981-1993
Telecommunication/Worksite Program, 1996-1999
Various pamphlets/flyers, 1976-2000
Word Processing Stations, 1976-1999

2006 ADDENDUM

Box 46

1978-2000 Published Material (18 folders; Includes Product Literature, Reports, Historical Background, Sales Guides)

Box 47

2001-2005 Product Literature and Price Books (6 folders; Includes HM for Health Care)

Box 48

2005-2006 Product Literature and Price Books (18 folders)

UNPROCESSED

Box 50

Unprocessed Material (1 cubic ft.; primarily product literature, annual reports and President's reports)