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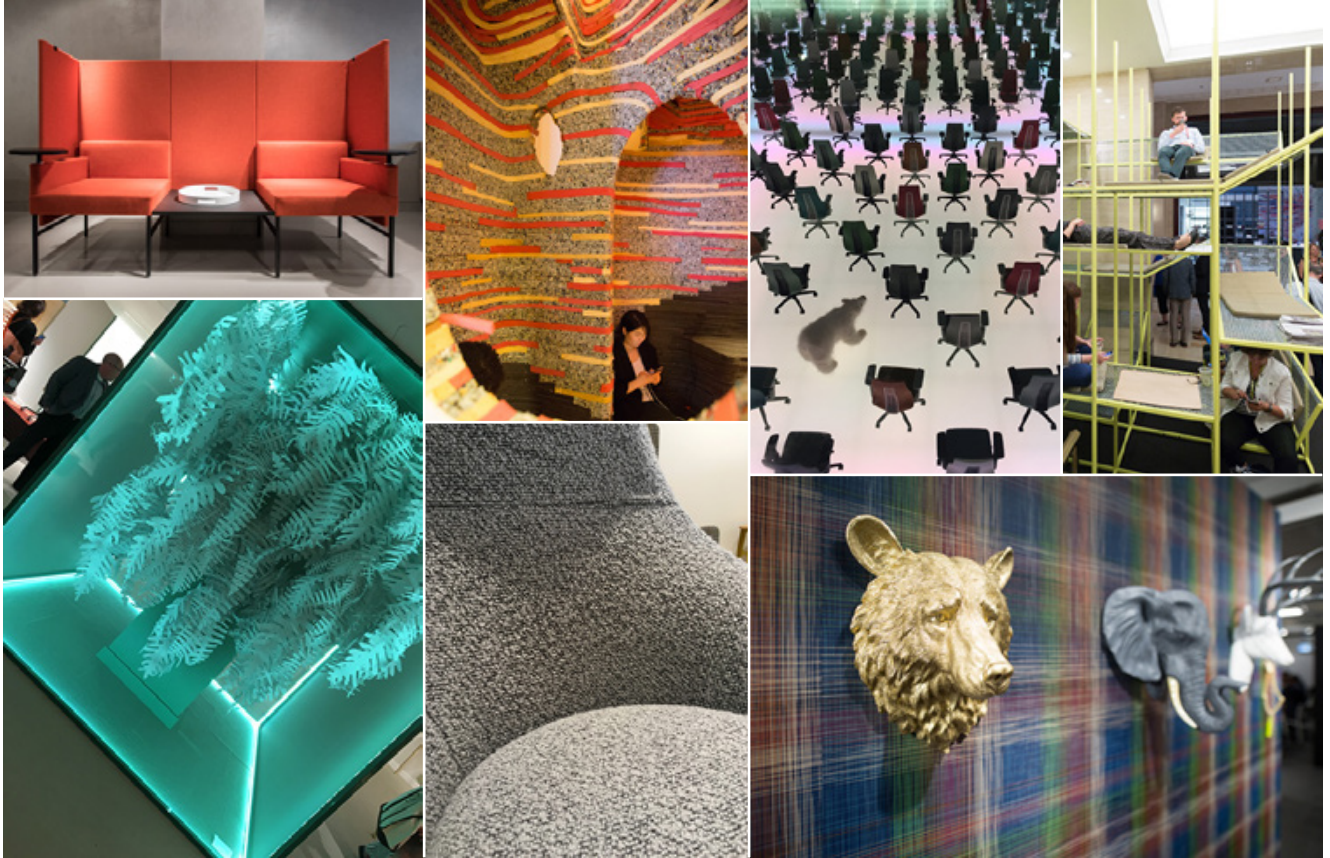
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*Delights of NeoCon! Photography: Wittefini Studio*

## Delights of NeoCon 2016

by officeinsight staff and contributors Peter Carey and Julia Peppard

For many who frequently attend NeoCon in Chicago, each year brings something fresh to the show that sticks clearly in our memories – whether it's a fantastic new product or technology, an unforgettable party, a new friend you met, or even crazy weather conditions. At officeinsight, NeoCon 2016 felt like one for the books, and we're happy to continue the tradition of offering readers our "Delights of NeoCon" – the products, showrooms, parties, seminars, people and show memories that made this NeoCon sharpen focus.

Whether you attended NeoCon this year or were stuck at the office, we hope these "Delights" will transport

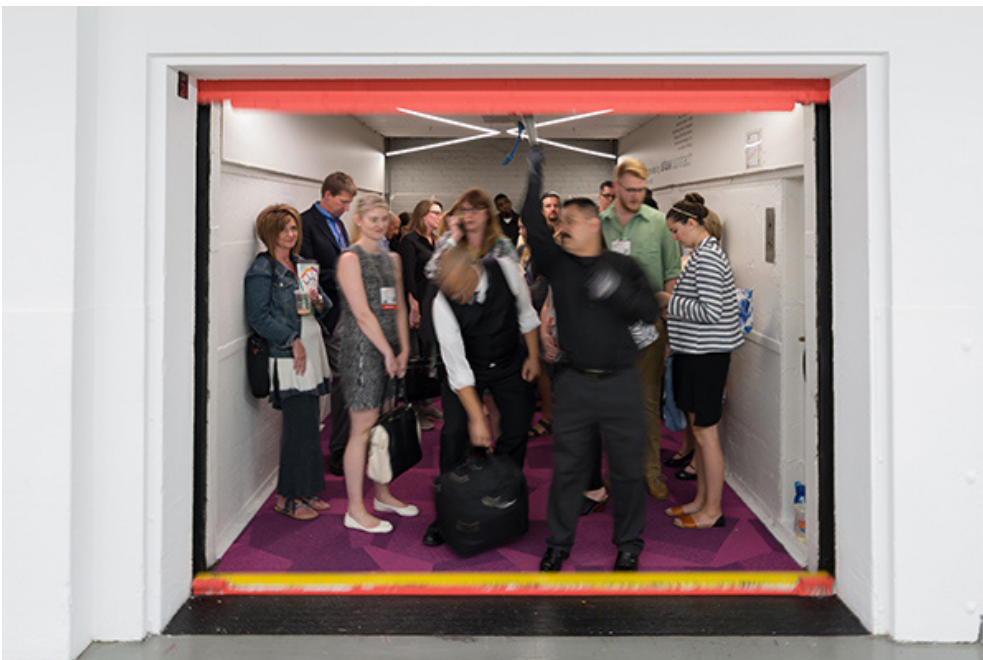
*New café/lounge areas at the Merchandise Mart. Photography: Jeff Beck*

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Grand Staircase at the Mart. Photography: Jeff Beck



Snazzy new elevators kept people moving at the Mart this year. Photography: Wittefini Studio

you back to experience the show once more before turning your attention to the busyness of “life after NeoCon.”

Monday morning was a festive blur of people dashing to and from showrooms and checking out the Mart’s new makeover. If show attendees last year were excited about the Mart’s River Drive Park, a new green space along the south drive, then the renovations unveiled this year absolutely blew us away.

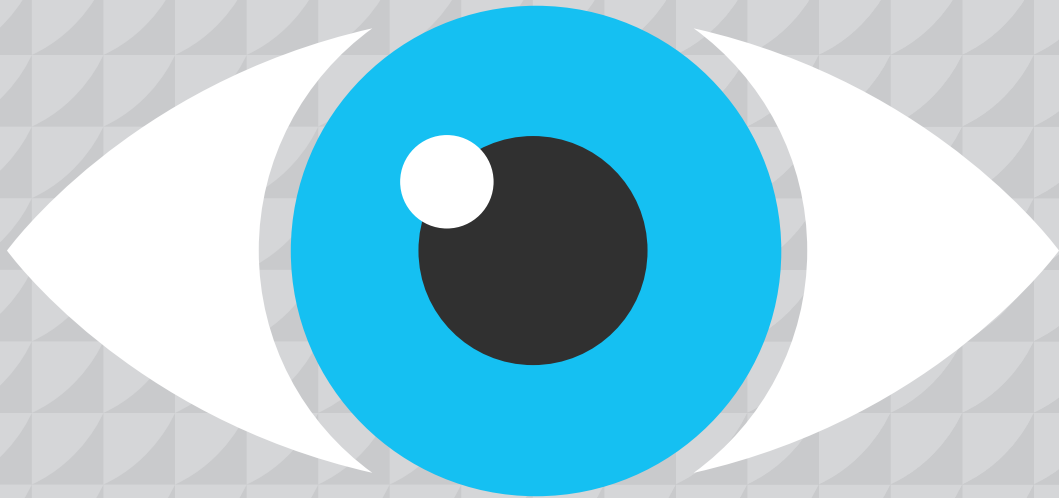
From the snazzy elevators and expanded outdoor areas to the Grand Staircase and copious amounts of stunning lounge and eating spaces, the enhancements make it so much easier for people to simply *hang out* at the Mart. Which is amazing, but we also had a lot of showrooms to visit, too!

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*Infinito Lounge Series by Toan Nguyen for Studio TK. Photography: Jeff Beck*



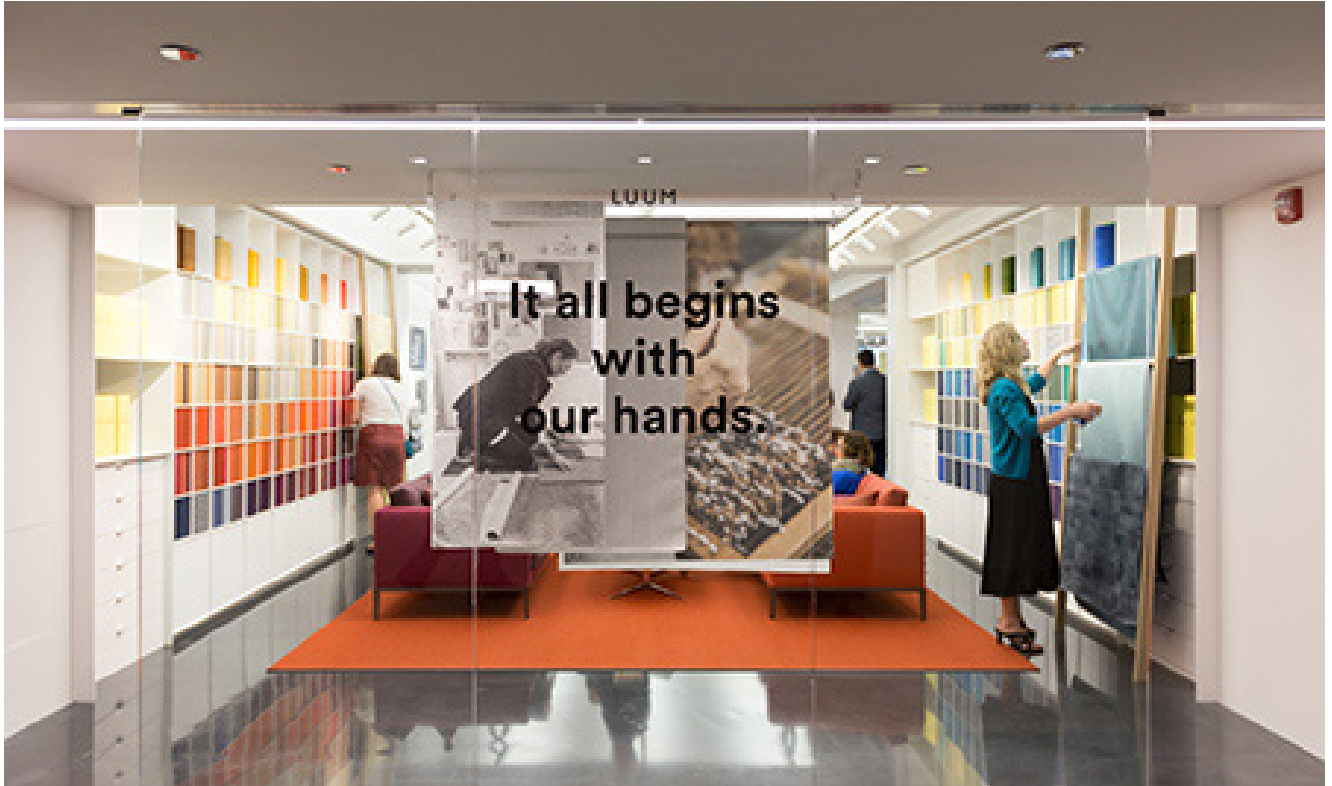
*Artist Shantell Martin at Momentum Textiles. Photography: Jeff Beck*

At **Momentum Textiles** we met **Shantell Martin**, an artist from London currently living in New York City. We caught her in the act of drawing the story of her NeoCon on one whole wall of the showroom. Of course she was invited to do so by Momentum, for whom she designed a collection of four print patterns. Appropriately named Places Faces Spaces, the patterns are open and lively and incorporate Ms. Martin's delightful artistic style that's all about telling the story of whatever is on her mind at the moment of their creation. We particularly liked the patterns with a white background but Momentum will offer the prints in a variety of colors.

In addition to nabbing top honors at the Best of NeoCon Awards for its Zones Collection, Teknion announced the renaming of Teknion Studio and

Teknion Textiles. They will henceforth be known as **Studio TK** and **Luum Textiles** (pronounced as if it were spelled loom), respectively. This is not so much a rebranding as simply a renaming to more clearly differentiate the two entities from the parent company. We liked the modular additions to Toan Nguyen's **Infinito Lounge Seating** collection from last year, greatly extending the specifiable range for this super comfortable and handsome collection.

NeoCon 2016 certainly contained the usual crowds and overstimulation, side by side with great new products and engaging seminars, but there was also an optimistic and youthful exuberance present in the materials used across the contract floors of the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. It seems that Maker Movement – the cross-



*Process: the Luum showroom in Chicago. Photography: Wittefini Studio*

cultural exchange of DIY creative individuals, handmade designers and hackers – is gaining a deeper influence in what commercial products and spaces look like today. Luum Textiles underscored this trend well.

In its new showroom, Luum was busily making the point of its guiding philosophy under the new name. “It all begins with our hands,” boasted the showroom window. Intended to highlight the

creation process, Luum actually had a loom in the showroom and a tag team of weavers demonstrating how the process works. To further underscore the new start, its first collection is aptly named **Starting Point**.



*Luum Textiles: Woven forms in plastic, PVC, and metal, by Suzanne Tick*



*A weaving demonstration at Luum Textiles. Photography: Jeff Beck*



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Early back prototype of Haworth Fern Chair. Photography: Peter Carey



Haworth showroom display for the new Haworth Fern Chair

Makers also made their mark at **Haworth**, where the company devoted an entire section of its showroom to showcasing the four-year long design process of its great new **Fern Chair**. Fern is the result of recent ergonomic research and a collaboration between the Haworth Design Studio and **ITO Design** out of Germany. It offers total back support while allowing for free movement and individual control.

Behind-the-scenes prototypes were celebrated and displayed on raw plywood surfaces alongside the finished products in a way that never would have felt appropriate several years ago. The showroom design surrounding Fern, from the visible prototypes to an enormous paper sculpture “fern,” was a fantastic success. Well done!

Across the showroom, Haworth featured a craftsman from sister company



Working models of Haworth's Fern Chair



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**Poltrona Frau** upholstering furniture in the middle of the NeoCon hustle and bustle – a nice interactive touch.

This year at NeoCon, we also heard “materiality” bandied about quite a bit. New materiality was often injected into older products as a way of re-introducing or refreshing them for the brand they were part of. Some of the materiality we noticed was in:

- >Color – bright, punchy chrome yellows, pinks and teal blues;

- >Fabrics we saw were lush with subtle color variations woven in, or strong, wooly, nubby pieces which reminded you of the art of textile weaving;

- >Metal finishes, such as copper, bronze and silvers; and

- >Woods of walnut, beech and subtler tech-wood blends



*Poltrona Frau making a sofa in the Haworth Showroom at NeoCon. Photography: Wittefini Studio*



*Haworth showroom display for the new Haworth Fern Chair*



*Atmospheres Collection at Carnegie Fabrics*



“Deconstructive authenticity” might have been another small theme woven throughout this year’s show. We found deconstructed upholstery and chairs in several showrooms, perhaps to educate and remind people of the craftsman and craftsmanship inherent in making furniture.

In addition to Haworth and other showrooms, this maker/deconstructive authenticity theme also set the tone at Carnegie, which was filled with textural, touchable details that made the fabrics irresistible for visitors to interact with.

On the north side of the first floor, **IdeaPaint** was demonstrating its **Studio O+A**-designed mobile dry erase boards and mobile collaboration trailer. The exhibit was great fun, but it was also an important milestone for the

young company. The **Flip Table** can be used as a normal vertical dry-erase board or flipped to provide a stand-up table for the quick meeting. The mobile vertical panel can be coated with a dry-erase clear coat that lets the Baltic Birch ply show through, creating a nice cozy and warm alternative to the usual whiteboard.

As for the trailer, co-founder **Jeff Avallon** told us it was first intended as a way to take IdeaPaint products on the road, but Studio O+A created such a fun, iconic statement that soon customers were asking if they could buy one and voilà – the company had a new, very high-end product.



Inviting, informal, touchable displays at Carnegie Fabrics



IdeaPaint co-founder Jeff Avallon demonstrating the Flip Table. Photography: Jeff Beck



IdeaPaint trailer, a surprise hit product. Photography: Wittefini Studio

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*Ginkgo seating and Valet table, by Davis. Photography: Jeff Beck*



**Davis** had tons of delights dotting its showroom this year – from the **Zen** Chair, destined to become a classic, and the expansion of the **Ginkgo** family of seating to include gorgeous mid- and low-back lounge pieces; to the **Cloud** conference chair (yes, it feels a bit like floating on a cloud), the refreshing **Techniq** training table, whose clean details only a craft-oriented company like Davis could achieve, and the fun, effortless **Valet** tray tables by **Wolfgang C.R. Mezger**.



*Techniq training table by Davis. Photography: Jeff Beck*



*Zen Chair by Davis. Photography: Jeff Beck*



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David Ritch and Mark Saffell of **5D Studio** hit a home run for **Arcadia** with the **Flirt Collection** of folding and nesting tables and chairs for educational and casual meeting environments. The chairs are lower and wider than the usual “training room” chairs and can nest efficiently, even when spec’d with the nice sized tablet arm. The tables fold, nest and handle utilities nicely, and the collection is capped with a mobile whiteboard that has a handy built-in top to hold a presenter’s stuff.

We were delighted to see **Ken Tameling**, general manager of the Global Seating division of **Steelcase**, so stoked over the seating offerings at Steelcase – and we could see why he was. **Langston** is a totally rational modular system



Flirt by Arcadia. Photography: Jeff Beck



Flirt by Arcadia. Photography: Jeff Beck

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Langston by Steelcase. Photography: Jeff Beck



Langston by Steelcase. Photography: Jeff Beck



Max Stacker in metallic finishes by Steelcase. Photography: Jeff Beck

based on a 30x30 steel wire frame. It can be combined and arranged in myriad configurations, and while it looks extremely rectilinear and maybe even a bit stiff, we found it to be very comfortable, and there's something really fetching about the look.

And as a special treat for all us old timers, Steelcase brought the **Max Stacker** back in several new frame colors in some sort of painted metal finish that for all the world has that beautiful matte look of an anodized finish. Resurrecting the Max Stacker is a brilliant strategy. The price is right at about \$200.00 List, and it should get the attention of designers for its classic shape, quality and new finishes. Delightful to see!

It's noteworthy to point out that now **Humanscale**, **Steelcase** and **Herman Miller** all have cloud-based monitoring services with occupancy sensors and software for reporting how individual workspaces are being used and then aggregating that information to the facility level. The systems can be customized at the individual level to remember preset heights for desks and programmed to alert users that it's time to stand up or sit down, as the case may be.

Last year the **Brody WorkLounge** was one of our *most* favorite products. This year, Steelcase has added



Steelcase Brody WorkLounge with Green LED occupancy sensor. Photography: Jeff Beck



some cool tech features to Brody – an embedded seat heater for those of us who are perennially cold, and an occupancy sensor that is linked to Steelcase’s system for reporting utilization to facility managers; the sensor activates a thin embedded LED strip encircling the user and visible as people approach the Brody – green for vacant and red for occupied.

The **Ology** height adjustable desk has been outfitted with embedded sensors and a sleek high-resolution LED that’s built-in to the top to remind users when it’s time to change position. Setting and resetting the intervals to suit individual preferences is simple and intuitive.

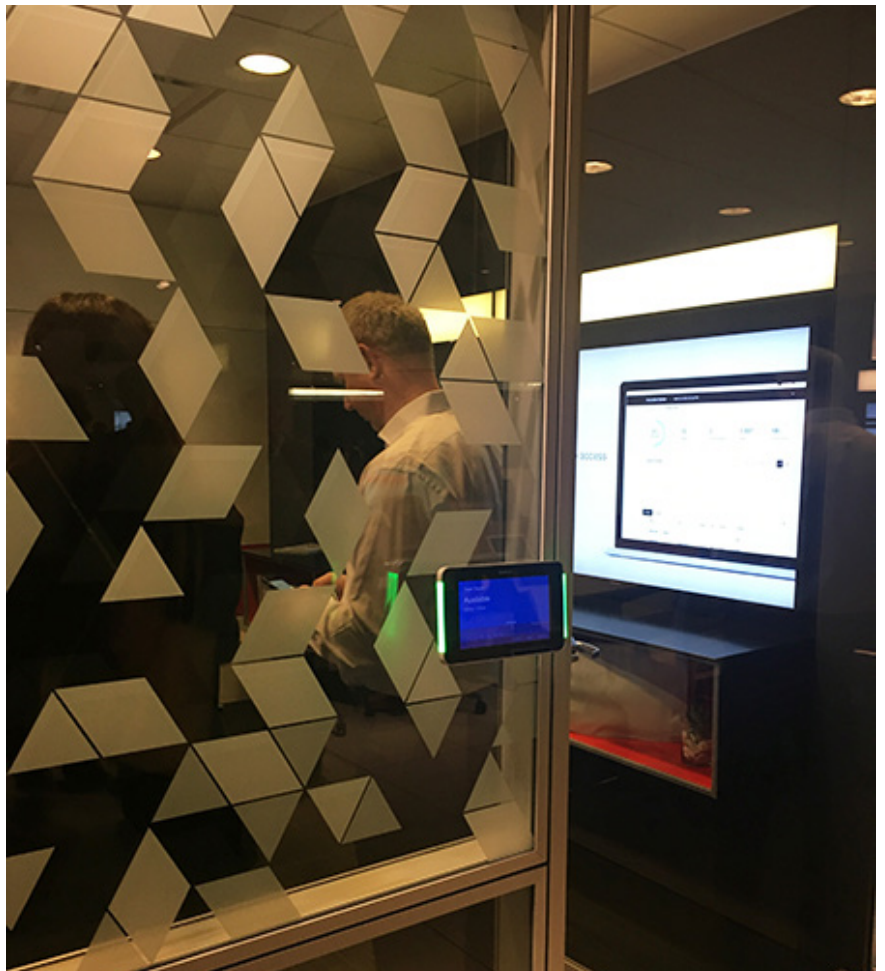
**Designtex** had a truly innovative introduction this year in the Steelcase showroom. The “product that is as yet unnamed” is the result of Steelcase research showing that even as our offices become more open and collaborative, there is still a very strong need to control access to information and allow for confidentiality. Drones and other new technologies have heightened security issues in the corporate environment. So, how do you protect your company’s proprietary information from being spied upon? Or, on a more basic level, how does one team keep what they’re working on undercover until it’s ready for primetime, while working in an open plan environment?

Designtex’s new cloaking film is basically two layers that can be installed on any architectural glass, one on the inside of the glass and the other on the exterior. A decorative pattern can be seen on the exterior as people pass by in a hallway, for example. What will not be seen from the outside is anything that is on digital screens within the “cloaked” glass walled meeting room. Kudos to this revolutionary product!

The Steelcase showroom sported noticeably more **Turnstone** products mixed in with Steelcase proper; the more affordable brand in the Steelcase



Steelcase Ology tech. Photography: Steelcase



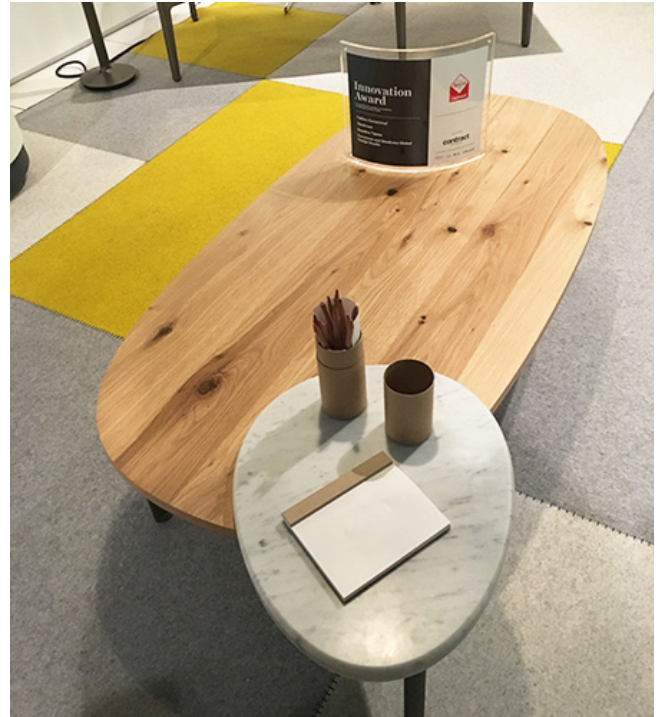
Shown at Steelcase, Designtex’s new, as yet unnamed cloaking film conceals digital screens from exterior view

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Bassline Table Series by Turnstone



Coalesse demonstrated the possibilities of the new app it developed for customizing its popular Less Than Five Chair. Photography: Julia Peppard

family added many new features to its popular **BIVI** line: new sizes to meet more design needs and exciting new colors. The brand also introduced the **Bassline Table** series, which earned a Best of NeoCon Innovation Award. The Bassline Table series creates a fun opportunity for designers to customize a simple base with whatever top they fancy. This was amusingly demonstrated by the use of a street sewer lid top with a Bassline base.

**Coalesse** featured the usual sophistication and elegance they are well known for, and its **LessThanFive**

**Chair** – meaning it weighs less than five pounds – was a hit again this year. Adding to this chair's uniqueness (it's made of carbon fiber), Coalesse introduced an app for customizing its finish. Designers can pick a color, choose a matte or glossy finish, and change the fade quality of the paint to design their own "one off" chair. There is no minimum quantity necessary.

There was a lot to see and a lot to like at **KI**. Its new product, **MyPlace**, won a gold BoN by adapting low panels to the small meeting or heads-down workspace application. KI cleverly took



MyPlace by KI. Photography: Jeff Beck



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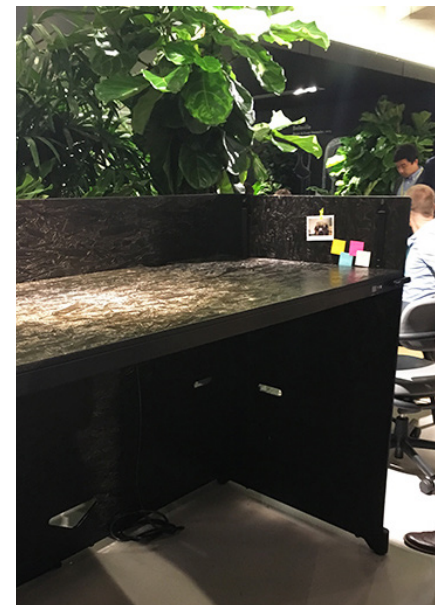


Rhythm by Geiger. Photography: Jeff Beck

advantage of the power management and accessory supporting capabilities inherent in panel systems to create useful, inviting spaces for individual or small group use.

Building on its reputation for manufacturing high quality wood caseworks, **Geiger** added another feather to its cap this year with the introduction of **Rhythm**. Designed by **EOOS**, out of Vienna, the Rhythm system features a frame-mounted construction, which can stand alone or divide space, providing privacy for two or more people while offering each one a richly personalized work experience. We loved the abundant containers and clever storage, featuring multiple drawers and shelves, along with places to showcase photos and art – in sliding wooden trays and featuring ceramic accessories. The possibilities for personalization with Rhythm seemed to be limited only by one's imagination.

At **Vitra**, **Hack** is back! Designed by Munich-based **Konstantin Grcic** after much research into the tech sector, this year Hack's versatile folding desk system was shown with a comfortable sofa option and with a hot new black finish.



Hack in black, by Vitra. Photography: Jeff Beck



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We also admired the **Belleville Bistro Chair**, designed for Vitra by brothers **Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec**, who named the chair for the neighborhood in Paris where they work. It's beautifully elegant, featuring a structural frame and curved shell back and seat. The Belleville looks slender and delicate in its design, while also allowing for a variety of material options such as colored polypropylene, molded plywood veneer, or fabric or leather upholstery. Definitely a new classic.

We were happy to discover a growing trend toward **elevated storage and locker design**. Companies from Steelcase and Knoll to OFS Brands, HON and more were showing new, imaginative ways to transform storage space into high-tech, high design pieces worth investing in. officeinsight has more to come on this topic!

Esteemed designer **Michael Vanderbyl** has designed and partnered with **HBF** in the past, winning several Best of NeoCon awards for his creations. So it was with great anticipation that we visited the HBF showroom to see his

latest introduction: the **Conexus Lounge Chair and Ottoman**. What a delight! HBF is well known for its fine craftsmanship, and together with Mr. Vanderbyl they continue that reputation.

Sculptural in an unusual and organic way, Conexus has a slim profile with plenty of exquisite little details that are rare to find these days. The

back shell comes in a flat cut walnut veneer and is also available in a fully upholstered version. We loved the flat cut walnut veneer; there is a depth and authenticity in the celebration of high quality wood veneers that HBF has harnessed beautifully. You note it particularly where the two sections of the chair shell come together.



*Belleville Bistro Chair, by Vitra. Photography: Julia Peppard*



*Conexus Lounge Chair and Ottoman, designed by Michael Vanderbyl for HBF. Photography: Jeff Beck*



*All in the details: Conexus Lounge Chair and Ottoman by HBF. Photography: Jeff Beck*

Another not-to-be-missed detail: no welting (shout-out to **Jay Rubino** at HBF for his engineering chops and devotion to making great design into three-dimensional reality). They have managed to seamlessly match the wood edge of the chair with the fabric. They literally melt into each other. And sitting in it, you experience exactly what it was designed to do. You can lounge in it, as well as work at a comfortable angle, due to the perfect pitch of the seat. Conexus means “connected,” for greater fluidity between casual conversations and task oriented work. You can do both in comfort and with a timeless elegance.

At HBF Textiles, we had a chance to meet Christiane Müller, who designed a stunning, rich, yet approachable textile collection for HBF Textiles’ newest introduction. These fabrics have all

the good feels, and the durability cred to match.

Big things are happening at HBF; we were lucky to spend some time getting to know **Dan Chong**, newly announced as president of HBF. In addition, the brand unveiled a sleek new website experience, which we’re in love with – be sure to check it out!

**West Elm Workspace exclusively with Inscape**, one of the contract companies credited for initially fueling the rise of a more residential and industrial look to commercial furniture, referred to handmade designer palettes throughout their showroom this year. While the brand prides itself on speed-to-market philosophy and made a point to show more of its residential identity, the things we found most attention-worthy were two workplace-specific items at the back of



*West Elm Workspace applied a natural wood aesthetic to height adjustable desking.*



*HBF Textiles VP of Design Mary Jo Miller and Christiane Müller, who designed HBF’s newest textile collection. The Christiane Müller Collection earned Best of NeoCon Gold.*



*The Christiane Müller Collection by HBF Textiles. Photography: Jeff Beck*



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the showroom: a wood-finished height-adjustable desking solution, and a movable cart with markerboard and tackable surfaces.

Other companies nodded to incorporating a distinctive retro-residential feel to their furniture and/or finishes. **Leland Furniture** launched **Guild**, a collection of modern furniture artifacts, and introduced many of us to the designs of the late **Ralph Rapson**, a contemporary of Charles Eames and Harry Bertoia at Cranbrook Academy of Art. Leland's **Thirty-Nine** series was never produced in Rapson's lifetime, but it looks just as fresh as the day it was first sketched on a napkin all those years ago. Complementing the old with the new for Leland was the **Palomino Collection**, designed by **Jess Sorel**. This contemporary take on modern design balanced the warmth of wood with clean wireframe outlines; it is pure Leland, and sure to be a hit with designers.

There was tons to see at Indiana based **OFS Brands**, which has been quietly evolving over the past few years, responding creatively to the evolving needs of the workplace. Each year we've seen new products added and existing ones enhanced in their brand – always within the framework of being a family-owned business with a history rooted in environmental conservation. This year, OFS hired product designer and brand strategist **Brian Graham** to consult with them on their classic wood casegoods products.

The result? **Aptos**, a casegood line designed by Mr. Graham to provide a lighter, leaner look while maintaining the product integrity for which OFS is so well known. Blending together a range of material offerings, with a foundation of fine wood veneers, Aptos work surfaces allow for height adjustability and incorporate soft radius edges, which contrast nicely with the strong duo and tri-foil metal legs that elegantly accommodate wire manage-



*The Thirty-Nine Lounge collection, by Leland. Photography by Wittefini Studio*



*The Palomino collection, by Leland. Photography by Wittefini Studio*

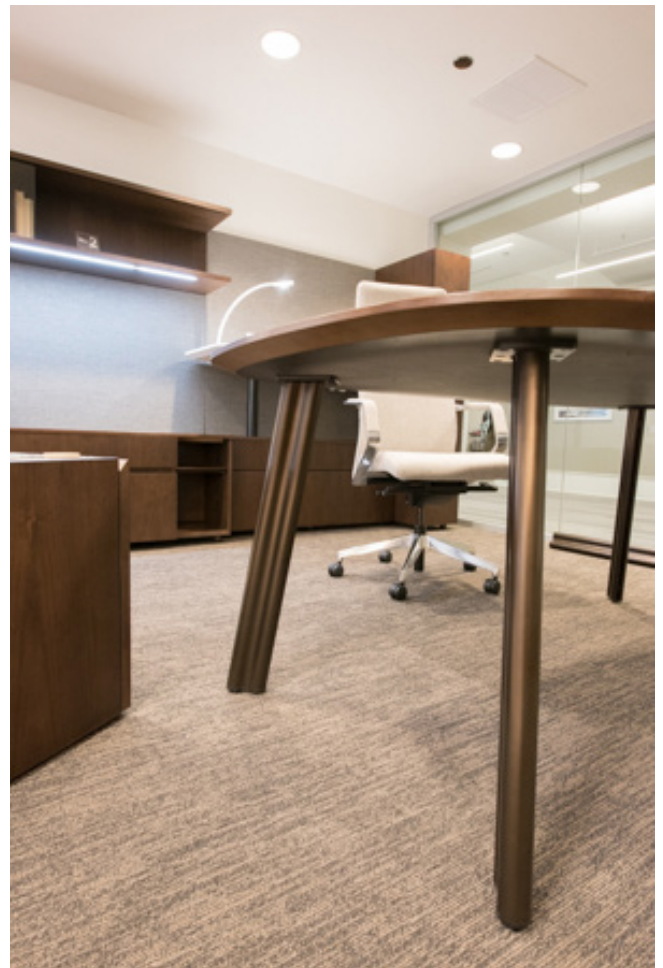
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ment. The devil is in the details – and the details imbue Aptos with personality and possibilities, ranging from an open tray top pedestal, molded out of the same material you find in the trunk of your car – PET – for softness, to the clean design of the drawer pulls offered and the subtle under overhead-mounted lighting. We were impressed!

OFS Brands was also demonstrating a disruptive product you apply to any wall like paint. However this material is magnetic and forms a strong bond to that brown plastic sheet magnetic material. For the demo, OFS showed how to hang shelves strong enough to carry wood samples. Once you've painted the wall with the material and applied the plastic magnetic sheet to the back



Aptos, designed by Brian Graham for OFS Brands. Photography: Jeff Beck



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of the shelf, the shelf sticks to the wall (obviously). But when you rotate the shelf 90° the magnets lock and the shelf is very strongly fixed! So you can attach the shelves with no mechanical fasteners or adhesives, and by rotating them backward 90°, they unlock and can be easily moved or removed. The long “Branding Wall” at OFS with the huge graphic cross section of trees was printed onto a roll of this magnetic plastic and can be peeled off and replaced with great ease...like wallpaper you can quickly, easily and cleanly remove.

The OFS Brands showroom foreshadowed much of today's design trends last year, and this year had a much cleaner and streamlined take on things; nothing on display was a prototype. Everything was available to order that day. How many other manufacturers at NeoCon could say the same? Incorporating reclaimed wood

as a running line finish in their **Eleven Wood** conference table line is a bold move, considering how unpredictable working with reclaimed wood can be. But, that's the history of OFS Brands, and it's great to see this company apply its heritage in wood to new design techniques.

The reclaimed and distressed look in materials dominated NeoCon this year.

From fabrics to carpeting, even durable finishes like laminate and porcelain tile were sporting faux peeling paint and rusted metal, or looked threadbare and worn. Many carpet and floorcovering companies displayed new products with a mottled or dappled look. **Lapidus**, the Best of NeoCon Gold winner from **Milliken** this year, touches all the right points and is sure to be a hit.



A disruptive new wall material product by OFS Brands. Photography: Jeff Beck



Lapidus, the Best of NeoCon Gold winner from Milliken. Photography: Wittefini Studio



Reclaimed: The Eleven Wood Conference Table by OFS. Photography: Peter Carey



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**Chilewich** did a contemporary take on **Plaid** this year, and its booth on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor was fantastic. Offering a new range of both bold and quiet options for floors and walls, these products could be the perfect feature finish or just recede into the background, depending on the needs of the project.

**Tarkett** managed to nudge **Tandus Centiva** out of most of their third floor showroom, but I don't think too many people were upset because the flooring Tarkett had on display was wonderful. Taking a gold award in the hard surfacing category for Best of NeoCon, **Collection Infinies** uses groundbreaking technology to deliver the first digitally printed LVT in the industry. Digital printing allows for extended pattern repeats, creating a portfolio of designs with expansive, randomized flooring motifs and enhanced realism.



Plaid wallcovering by Chilewich. Photography: Wittefini Studio



Bold and Quiet: The Chilewich booth at NeoCon. Photography: Wittefini Studio



Collection Infinies by Tarkett. Photography: Wittefini Studio



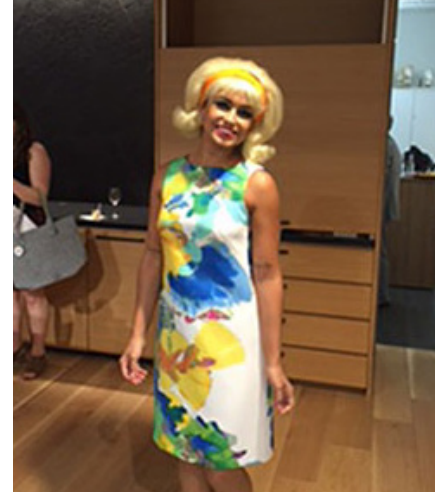
As our corporate and personal cultures become less formal overall, much of the new furniture at NeoCon reflected that change. Mounted prominently in the ground floor space of the Merchandise Mart was **BuzziJungle** by **BuzziSpace**. As brave and brilliant as the design may be, after stepping inside and trying different levels, OSHA and BIFMA regulations and standards for commercial interiors came to mind, which is rarely a good first impression. BuzziJungle is a fantastic idea starter for a new tech startup, but even veterans in this field would be hard pressed to give this the green light for their project unless it gets tweaked.

Looking past the garish/funky BuzziJungle, the thing that really caught our eye at BuzziSpace this year was the **BuzziBalance**. BuzziSpace does an excellent job of creating design elements whose purpose is...murky... and not necessarily acutely related to traditional work functions; BuzziBalance is a perfect example of this. Available as a small or large rocking pouf, or as a "rocking board," BuzziBalance

is a design that taps into the benefits of purposeful stretching and brings "stretching" into the workplace in a cool, non-weird way. Users can simply step onto the BuzziBalance to take a brake from work at their desk.

**Global** was a happening place to be at the Mart, especially on Monday night. The brand celebrated 50 years of business with a fun party featuring cocktail passing waitresses dressed in 1960s outfits with big bouffant hairstyles.

Product-wise at Global, **Corby** is a new mid-century modern reflection of wood veneer desks, tables and storage designed by **Christopher Wright**. **Bakhita** is a true winner – an ultra modern chair designed to be light-



*Global celebrated 50 years of business with a fun party featuring cocktail passing waitresses dressed in 1960s outfits with big bouffant hairstyles.*



*Corby by Global*



*The BuzziJungle on the ground floor of the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. Photography: Wittefini Studio*



*BuzziBalance rocking board by BuzziSpace. Photography: Wittefini Studio*



weight and durable, with the added bonus of being stackable. It can be spec'd with or without arms, is 100% recyclable, rated for 300 lbs, and meets all ANSI-BIFMA standards. Oh – and it's reasonably priced too.

It was great to see New York makers **Uhuru** displaying their new contract benching furniture at NeoCon. Known for years as a premiere residential and hospitality brand, Uhuru is trading in their distressed finishes for a cleaner, more industrial look for the commercial market.

Even **Decca** got into the informal act with an adjustable height conference table. Invoking responses that ranged from, "That's cool" to "Why?", I could only think it was a classic NeoCon move, designed to draw attention and stimulate ideas, not really specifications.

If anything, NeoCon is about making ideas come to life, but the pathway to mass production is another story.



Bakhita by Global



twenty-something, the Art Center Studio collection by Bernhardt Design. Photography: Peter Carey

"Several years ago I came to the realization that many recent design school graduates were very enthusiastic and had wonderful ideas," said **Jerry Helling**, president of **Bernhardt Design**, "but they didn't know how the

process of product development actually worked or what was required to design for mass production. We started the **Art Center Studio** to give students a real life, real time experience from the initial client brief through the



Uhuru's contract benching system on display at NeoCon. Photography: Peter Carey



Height adjustable conference table by Decca. Photography: Peter Carey

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*Always Lounge chair by naughtone*



*naughtone's Always Lounge, located at the front of naughtone's showroom, was upholstered in Cozy by Luna Textiles.*



*Polly Chair, by naughtone. Photography: Julia Peppard*

launch of a product in the market. This was an experiment to see if we could make a positive difference in design education, and seven years later we are as excited about it as we were on day one."

The resulting designs, a collection of pieces called **twenty-something**, are well thought out and resolved without being too stuffy. twenty-something picked up a Best of NeoCon Editor's Choice award.

We saw more European products being shown in the Mart this year. Companies like **naughtone**, from Great Britain (newly aligned with Herman Miller), showed products for the first time in the Mart. Monday alone, it had more than 1200 visitors to their compact one thousand square foot

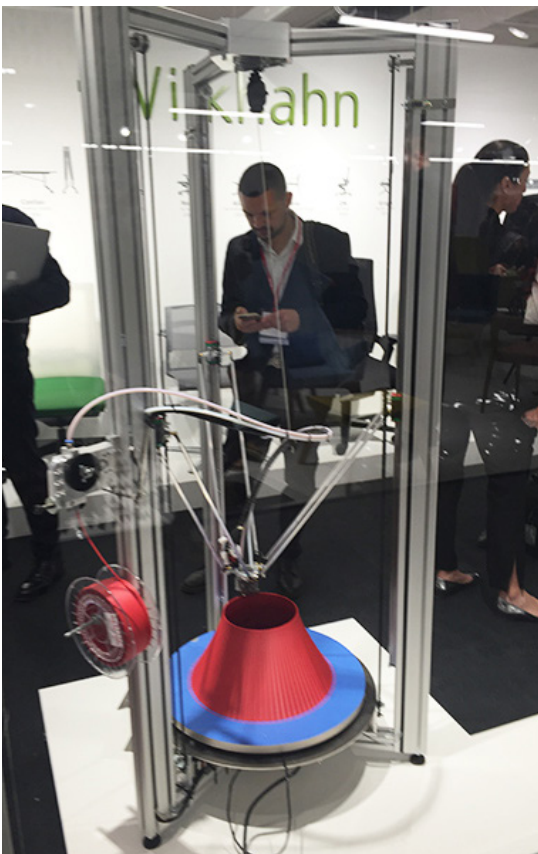
showroom on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor. naughtone Director **Matt Welsh** told us they've been selling in the U.S. market for two and a half years now and have seen phenomenal growth – much of it in the tech sector. They looked for a partnership, and feel quite lucky to have signed up with Herman Miller. They plan on continuing as an open line for all dealers, lucky for us. Being aligned with Herman Miller, however, has helped them in that they can now produce products stateside, in a factory that makes some of the Eames classics.

naughtone's showroom was clean, simple and pitch-perfect in terms of décor and display of their beautiful everyday furniture. No gimmicks were present, just pleasing shapes and won-



derful textures. The **Always Chair** line showcases the fine attention to detail in upholstery seaming they are capable of; the Always Lounge version at the front was upholstered in the **Cozy** fabric by **Luna Textiles**. And the **Polly Chair** will brighten any room with its cast of fun colors, along with its ability to stack in a sled or four legged base. It's comfortable, subtle and elegant.

German manufacturer **Wilkahn** was on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the Mart for their third year. The brand showcased sophisticated seating and finely engineered tables for which their craftsmanship is well known and respected. They had something no one else had: The first mass-produced 3D printed stool called **Presto**, designed by **Thorsten Franck**. You could watch one being made out of its plant-based polymer, Lignan. The 3D-made bases



A 3D printed stool called Presto, designed by Thorsten Franck for Wilkhahn, being made out of a plant-based polymer in the Wilkhahn showroom. Photography: Julia Peppard

come in a variety of colors and, when combined with the various shapes and seat tops to choose from, offer more than 150 possible combinations to design. The leathers are all vegetable dyed, and you have two heights to choose from: 20" H and 22" H. Fun idea!

At **Tuohy**, we found smooth precision in the **Leit System**, a modular collection of seating, work surfaces and privacy panels designed by **Matthew Plumstead**. The product name Leit is derived from leitmotif, a recurring theme throughout a composition. Leit's recurring theme is one freestanding modular seat and work surface, and designers can add additional seats,

work surfaces, and panels in three heights to form varying degrees of privacy and collaboration. Leit can be integrative and collaborative in nature just as easily as it can be freestanding and private. Its table surfaces are available in wood or Fenix NTM, a luxurious feeling nanotech material for superior wear and easy maintenance. Aesthetic: mixed materials in a minimalist presentation.

**Sedia Systems**, manufacturer of JumpSeat, which is the perfect chair for hallways and places with minimal space that need additional aesthetically pleasing seating, introduced **JumpSeat Emerge**. JumpSeat Emerge is designed to fold up and out



JumpSeat Emerge by Sedia Systems. Photography: courtesy of Sedia Systems



Leit System by Tuohy. Photography: Jeff Beck

neocon



## neocon

## officeinsight

of the floor to transform an open event space into a JumpSeat auditorium in minutes. It won't be inexpensive, but with real estate costing what it does in many parts of the country, this type of creative engineering for optimal space utilization can be critical – and many will find it well worth the investment.

Last year, **Framery**, out of Finland, earned a Best of NeoCon award for

its single booth. This year, it claimed a much larger footprint on the Mart's seventh floor, showcasing Framery O (single booth) and its new **Framery Q**, a double-sized booth for private one-on-one meetings. It was a popular place to be, with show attendees eagerly settling into these booths for a quiet moment to re-coup from the noise and chaos that is NeoCon, or

to meet for a quiet chat with a friend. Both booths are available in a wide variety of colors and finishes and provide nice refuge from the hubbub of a busy office environment.

**Keilhauer** has firmly staked out its turf in the "Heads Up" part of the workplace furniture market. The company is well known for its expertise in producing outstanding seating, and this year it bolstered its reputation with **Hangout**, a modular lounge series with a huge planning range, including stools and tables. The natural wood legs and table edges provide a nice counterpoint to all the upholstery. Hangout is perfect for use in areas where the work is heads up. Keilhauer is also well known for its bold showroom murals, and this year's version was both playful and instructive, demonstrating some of the many possible configurations of Hangout.

We think everyone involved in the Merchandise Mart's 7<sup>th</sup> floor renovations deserves a special thank you; with new flooring, lighting, wayfinding and more, the 7<sup>th</sup> floor is now a clean, welcoming place where exhibitors can proudly show their new offerings, and where showgoers can actually enjoy looking at them!



*Framery Q double-sized privacy booth, by Framery*



*Hangout by Keilhauer. Photography: Jeff Beck*



*With new flooring, lighting, wayfinding and more, the 7th floor is now a clean, welcoming place where exhibitors can show their new offerings. Photography: Wittefini Studio*



neocon

## officeinsight

Stay tuned for future officeinsight articles on some of the seminars our team attended (hint: another excellent presentation from the Gensler duo of Dean Strombom and Sven Govaars is on the docket).

And of course, one of our favorite parts of covering NeoCon is our chance to collect the surprise/smile/chuckle-worthy things happening during the show that can only be captured with a photo. Cheers to another great year at NeoCon! ■



No comment necessary! Photography: Wittefini Studio



A power-up charging station near the escalators leading up to the third floor showrooms. Photography: Wittefini Studio



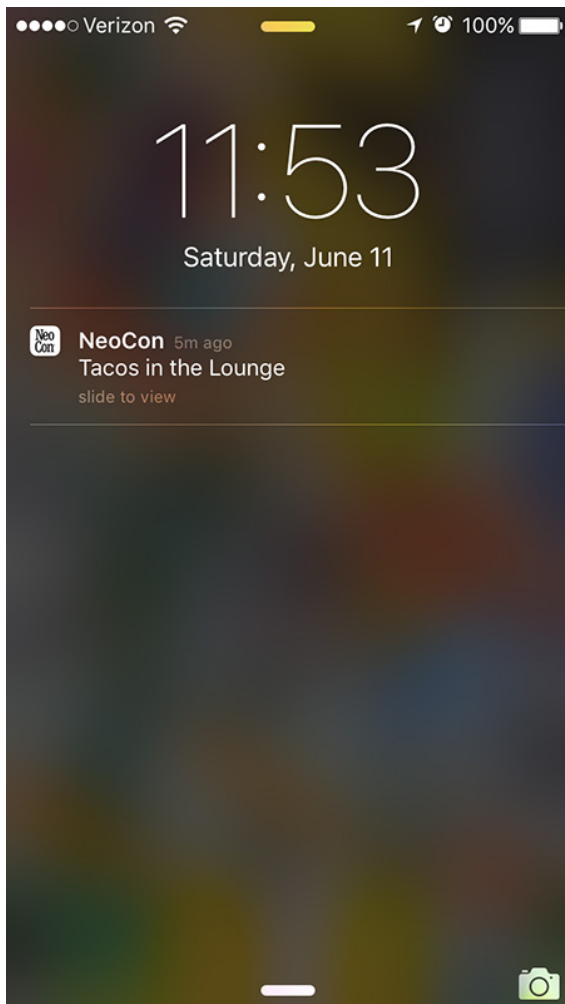
Design goodies from Herman Miller!







*Cotton candy champagne at KI*



*Food alerts from the NeoCon app? Yes please!*



*KI girls in red. Photography: Julia Peppard*



*3form's imaginative, color-saturated new showroom design*





Food Trucks! Photography: Wittefini Studio

neocon



National's namaste army guy press kits



Showgoers making their mark on furniture at izzzy+





## r-d connection

## officeinsight

**RESEARCH-DESIGN CONNECTION**  
**Design and Snacking**

by Sally Augustin, Ph.D.

In a study at Google's New York office, Baskin, Gorlin, Chance, Novemsky, Dhar, Huskey and Hatzis studied how the location of at-work snacks influences their consumption. Their findings have been published in *Appetite*. The team reports in a press release that they "looked at the extent to which the proximity of snacks to free beverages increased snack consumption... 'It was a bit surprising that an extra few feet of distance between snacks and beverages yielded such a significant change in snacking frequency,' says Baskin, who found that the probability of snacking increased by more than half when an employee visited a beverage station that

was near the snack supply."

The article in *Appetite* provided this information: "The micro-kitchen in which we ran this study had two entrances, and two identical beverage stations with refrigerators and coffee machines, one near (6'5") and the other far from (17'6") a snack bar displaying snacks such as M&Ms, chocolates, nuts, cookies, granola bars, packaged chips and pretzels, and fresh fruit... The probability of snacking increased by more than half when an employee visited the near beverage machine rather than the far one... Of the employees who used the beverage station near the snacks, 20.5% took a snack, whereas only 12.2% of those who used the far beverage station did. Thus, increased relative proximity of beverages resulted in a 69% increase in the probability of snacking." ■

Ernest Baskin, Margarita Gorlin, Zoe Chance, Nathan Novemsky, Ravi Dhar, Kim Huskey and Michelle Hatzis. 2016. "Proximity of Snacks to Beverages Increases Food Consumption in the Workplace: A Field Study." *Appetite*, vol. 103, pp. 244-248.

"Distance Makes the Habits Healthier: Advice on Snacking." 2016. Press release, Saint Joseph's University, <http://www.sju.edu/news-events/news/distance-makes-habits-healthier-advice-snacking>

Sally Augustin, PhD, a cognitive scientist, is the editor of Research Design Connections ([www.researchdesignconnections.com](http://www.researchdesignconnections.com)), a monthly subscription newsletter and free daily blog, where recent and classic research in the social, design, and physical sciences that can inform designers' work are presented in straightforward language. Readers learn about the latest research findings immediately, before they're available elsewhere. Sally, who is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, is also the author of *Place Advantage: Applied Psychology for Interior Architecture* (Wiley, 2009) and, with Cindy Coleman, *The Designer's Guide to Doing Research: Applying Knowledge to Inform Design* (Wiley, 2012). She is a principal at Design With Science ([www.designwithscience.com](http://www.designwithscience.com)) and can be reached at [sallyaugustin@designwithscience.com](mailto:sallyaugustin@designwithscience.com).





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## PRODUCT INTROS

**>Aceray's new Vero modular seating is highly customizable by combining single, double, and triple bases with a variety of seating units.**

High-density injection molded foam seats are constructed with a steel inner frame to withstand heavy use in commercial spaces. The base and legs are solid beech wood for strength and stability. Designers can create a custom look with Aceray graded-in upholstery or COM/COL, and can choose from a wide selection of wood stains or request a custom match. [Read More](#)



Aceray Vero

**>Crossville, Inc. launched Satori, a Laminam by Crossville porcelain tile panel collection for floor and wall applications.** It is offered in three color options – Black, Brown, and Beige, each in unpolished finish. Panels come in 1x3M with 5.6mm in thickness. Though the 5.6mm is a very lean profile, it is thick enough to be installed on interior floors as well as interior walls and other horizontal interior surfaces. It may also



Crossville Satori by Laminam, health clinic

be specified for exterior walls. "Satori is a Japanese word meaning enlightenment – a bestowing of greater knowledge and understanding," said Crossville Vice President of Marketing Lindsey Wal-drep, adding that the Satori collection is an example of "wabi-sabi," the Japanese view on design that focuses on a mixture of perfection and imperfection. The collection was named IIDA/HD Best of Show – Hard Surface Flooring at the recent Hospitality Design Expo. [Read More](#)

**>ILEX issued a new edition of its Chroma light by Christopher Poehlmann.**

The updated version is now available in wall sconce and tripod versions, as well as its original pendant, to highlight the piece's signature shape. Chroma's conceptualization and various applications are centered in mid-century modern design. Mr. Poehlmann's original focus was to develop a simple pendant, which through the use of a single variable – color – could offer a product family with many options. With the

addition of the three new versions, designers can achieve uniformity by using different Chroma fixtures in different settings. For maximum light, the new Chroma versions are able to tilt from the fixture's body, while visible cords allow for a modern, industrial look. [Read More](#)



ILEX Chroma, Tilt

**>Magnuson Group introduced KASKAD Planters – a new family of free-standing, modular planters by QDe-sign.**

Constructed from powder-coated painted steel that is completely recyclable post-use, they are available in five shapes and three heights (eight rectangular, two square and two parallelogram models). They can be used individually or grouped together, suitable for a broad range of high- or moderate pedestrian traffic in public and private interior spaces. Each planter comes with adjustable glides and removable internal planter liners. Poly bags are provided for all 20- and 36-inch high KASKAD models in case the customer would like to add sand or pea gravel ballast for added stability. Three finish colors are available: Anodized Silver, Mineral Bronze and Textured White RAL 9010. [Read More](#)

**>Maharam introduced Assembled Check by British fashion designer Paul Smith in collaboration with the Maharam Design Studio.** Since 2002, Paul Smith has worked with Maharam to transform traditional apparel refer-



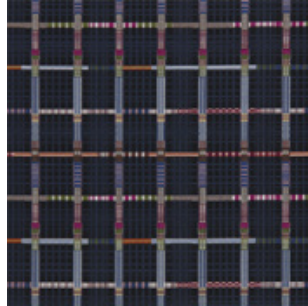
Magnuson KASKAD Family, Bronze





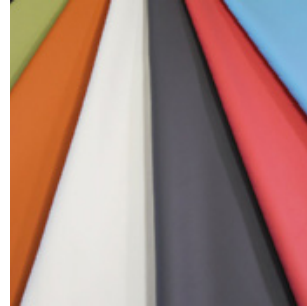
*Maharam Assembled Check by Paul Smith*

ences into new classics. In keeping with that approach, Assembled Check is based on a printed silk blouse from his SS15 Black Label women's collection, which drew upon the sun-soaked shades and art-deco architecture of Miami. Successfully translating its complex and vibrant pattern into a jacquard-woven, upholstery textile required a technical feat. A layered patchwork of colorful horizontal and vertical bars made dimensional through highlight and shadow, it is woven in Germany by the same resource that manufactures such intricate and highly specialized designs as Bavaria by Studio Job and the Maharam Design Studio's Massive Paisley. In the end, Assembled Check surpasses its predecessors as the most densely woven textile the resource has ever produced, with over 350 picks per inch as five-to-six weft colors alternate throughout its 20.75" h x 28" w repeat. While fine cotton yarn offers a soft hand and subdued luster enhanced by a calendered finish, a tapestry construction of tight rib and twill weaves provides graphic precision and clear color. [Read More](#)



*Maharam Inlay by Hella Jongerius*

**>Maharam also introduced Inlay by Hella Jongerius.** With its densely layered and highly detailed grids, Inlay reflects a level of intricacy and potential for visual discovery first seen in Repeat, designed by Ms. Jongerius in 2002. Influenced by traditional Dutch woven ribbons, the design was initiated by layering vertical and horizontal pieces of tinted tape to capture the effect of overlapping patterns. In time, it evolved into intricate checkers and stripes rendered in a finely woven quality with a hand-crafted feel. Bold and graphic in appearance, Inlay is constructed using an end-on-end nylon warp, creating a variety of micro-woven patterns and structures. Close inspection reveals a subtle plaid in the ground, upon which bands of unusual color appear overlaid. These gridded arrangements, highlighted by colored embellishments, seamlessly transition from one to the next. It is within these banded structures that detail and color reside, encouraging deep exploration within the design. Unexpected color pairings include ribbons of bright pink and olive green atop a ground of navy blue, and checks of sky blue and burnt orange layered over a taupe base. [Read More](#)

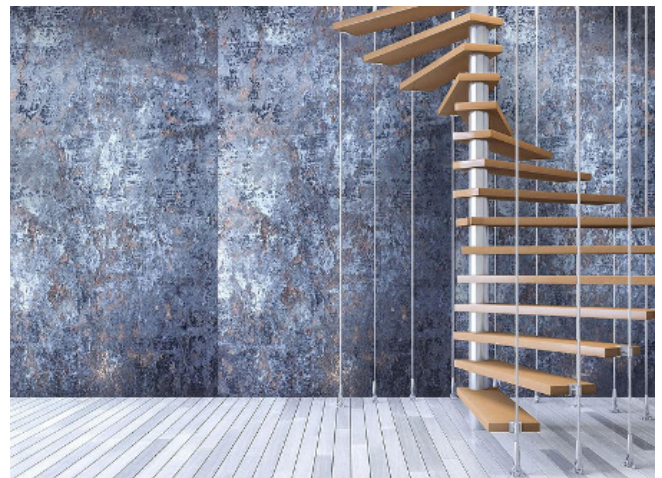


*Morbern Allante Touch*

**>Morbern launched Allante Touch, a denim-dye resistant vinyl with a luxury hand.** It offers the aesthetic of soft leather without the worry. The buttery-soft, cleanable vinyl stands up to traffic, stains, mildew, sun, and denim. Its dull finish is designed to be low burnishing, non-polishing, and resistant to ultraviolet exposure. It also has superb tailoring qualities, which make pre-heating and steaming unnecessary and not recommended in the fabrication process. "In today's American wardrobe, denim is the clothing of choice, but typical seating surfaces like leather can't stand up to its dye," said Morbern Vice President of Marketing Doug McClendon. "Allante Touch provides the

look and feel of leather in 21 colorways, but with the added advantage of a cleanable top coat." [Read More](#)

**>Móz Metals & Architectural Products expanded its Blendz Patina Collection with four new color offerings inspired by nature.** The Patina Collection is the newest addition to the Móz portfolio of dynamic metal surfacing materials. Featuring varied tones of copper, wood, water and other earth tones, it adds dimensionality and natural beauty to walls, columns, and facades in a lightweight easy-to-install metal material. Fabricated from solid core recycled aluminum, it is available in thicknesses ranging from .040" to .125" with two standard sheet sizes of 48" x 96" and 48" x 120". Custom sizes are also available. Móz metal products are easy to clean and durable offering a long lasting lifespan that make their materials suitable for airports, healthcare facilities, hospitality environments, corporate offices, and retail spaces. [Read More](#)



*Móz Designs Blendz Patina*



Neutral Posture Icon

**>Neutral Posture's new Icon™ chair is an elegantly designed series that features clean lines and intuitive ergonomics.** It has a natural feel with a weight-sensing mechanism, allowing it to form to the body rather than making the body conform to it. Features include a mesh back, adjustable lumbar, adjustable armrests, seat height and depth adjustment, a removable headrest, optional coat hanger, and easily replaceable seat cover. A removable and changeable seat allows any user to easily detach the seat and remove, change or wash the cover. It has a single support for the back, making the chair strong while supporting the user. The seat is constructed with a steel frame and will carry a limited lifetime warranty. [Read More](#)

**>OFS Brands, Inc. and Visual Magnetix entered a strategic collaboration to leverage respective capabilities and the potential impact of co-product development.** Both family-owned, the companies share many

foundational elements such as a commitment to social responsibility, craftsmanship, and pursuing innovative products and alliances. Already a strong player in materials innovation and offering a range of unique products such as magnetic dry erase wall coverings for the workspace, Visual Magnetix created quite a buzz over the last two years of WantedDesign, with its Dynamic Spaces



Slyde Charging Solutions Slyde™ Ped

collection. Dynamic Spaces now features the Polarity Collection, a line of accessories for the workplace that work in tandem with Visual Magnetix' writable wallcoverings, and designed by New

York-based industrial design studio, Visibility; and the Workspace Collection™, a series of writable background and layer options. Ryan Menke, Sr. VP of Sales and Marketing of OFS Brands, and Joe Deetz, President/CEO of Visual Magnetix, met by chance during a philanthropic endeavor called Fresh Artists. The two leaders immediately envisioned a better future by bringing their worlds together. [Read More](#)

**>Slyde Charging Solutions' introduced Slyde™ Ped, a personal storage drawer that also serves as a charging station.** It is an expansion on the original Slyde Charging Drawer. Scott Lesizza, founder of Slyde Charging Solutions and principal of Workwell Partners, recognized that "old-fashioned" pedestals are becoming obsolete in today's new offices of height-adjust-



OFS Brands Visual Magnetix display at Neo Con



able tables and smaller work surfaces, as they take up too much room in a desk footprint and remain on the floor as desks rise. With space for filing, electronics and personal items, the Slyde™ Ped provides users with personal lockable storage and charging capabilities at their individual workstations. Easily installed underneath the work surface, it is constructed from powder coat finished steel that can be specified to match the color of workstations for a seamless aesthetic or in a contrasting hue to add a bold pop of color. Features include internal power outlets and

USB ports that allow users to charge up to five devices simultaneously. [Read More](#)

**>via seating announced that all of its chairs will ship with the 4U base, effective July 1.**

The company said that this base design offers better quality and better aesthetic as well as a better range of adjustability from starting height to full height. It will be available in nylon (black), white (powder coated over aluminum), polished, and brushed options. Product comparison images (pictured) show each model with the current base on the left and the new base style on the right. [Read More](#)

## officeneWSwire

### NOTEWORTHY

**>Jay Brotman, AIA, was promoted to the official leadership role of managing partner at Svigals+Partners.**

In addition, three architectural professionals have been promoted to the level of associate principal: **Doug Lovegren, Bruce Wujcik, AIA,** and **Ron Cooper, AIA.** The transition – part of a series of moves the firm is calling an “evolution of leadership” – follows in the wake of the firm’s new commitment to building prosperous, compassionate communities, rolled out earlier this year. It also comes as founding principal **Barry Svigals, FAIA,** steps back from his roles in day-to-day operations and decision-making. Going forward, those responsibilities fall to Mr. Brotman in his new executive position and his colleagues in the new project leadership and management team.

Adept at orchestrating highly collaborative design processes, Mr. Brotman’s considerable portfolio of high-performance buildings and projects also includes innovative research facilities, campus transformations, and corporate headquarters and interiors. Mr. Svigals

will continue to participate in the firm’s creative and collaborative endeavors, assuming the title of Partner Emeritus. [Read More](#)

**>Lauren Deranek was promoted to A&D manager for the Chicago market at Gunlocke.** In her new role, she will work with dealers, architects and designers to increase Gunlocke brand awareness and sales in the greater Chicago area. She reports to Beth Gall, regional sales manager. Ms. Deranek joined Gunlocke in 2012. She most recently served as showroom manager/project specialist in Chicago. [Read More](#)



Lauren Deranek

**>Jonathan Matta was named regional education leader at KI.**

In this role, he will assist KI’s sales team with research and insight into the education marketplace, and work with and educate customers, architecture and design firms, and thought leaders on KI’s expertise in both the K-12 and higher education markets. Mr. Matta has been with KI for 10 years, starting as an inside sales specialist and most recently as a sales specialist in Chicago.



Jay Brotman



via seating new 4U base

He is a strong believer in the power of design and the art of storytelling, and aims to affect learning by inspiring curiosity and change through the planning of education spaces. [Read More](#)



Jonathan Matta

**>BIFMA elected a new board president, a vice president/president-elect, and four new directors:**

**Sylvain Garneau** was elected as BIFMA board president for the 2017 fiscal year. He is the president and CEO of Groupe Lacasse based in Saint-Pie, QC. His professional experience includes more than 25 years in the manufacturing sector where he has occupied various executive positions from EVP to CEO within large North American organizations with multi-location operations.



Sylvain Garneau

**Don Van Winkle** was elected vice president/president-elect. He is president and COO of Kimball International, Inc. based in Jasper, IN. He joined Kimball in 1991 and has held various roles in accounting, finance, administration, marketing, manufacturing operations, and branded sales and distribution strategies.



Don Van Winkle

**Rebecca Boenigk, Julio Enrique Hirschfeld Mereles, Chas Hepler and John May** joined the BIFMA board of



Rebecca Boenigk, Julio Enrique Hirschfeld Mereles, Chas Hepler, and John May

directors. Ms. Boenigk is the CEO and chairman of the Board of Neutral Posture, Inc. in Bryan, TX. She has more than 27 years of experience in research, development, design, and the manufacturing of ergonomic seating with expertise in the areas of finance, strategic planning, HR, operations, growth and diversity. Mr. Hirschfeld Mereles is the executive director of PM Steele in Mexico City. He joined the company in 1994 and has held several positions in the company. In 2005, he became the executive director and has helped the company with significant achievements including ISO 9001 Certification. Mr. Hepler has served as president and CEO of Via Seating since 2013. Located in Reno, NV, Via Seating has specialized in office seating for almost 30



years across North America. Mr. May was appointed CEO of Dekko and a member of its Board of directors in June 2013. Headquartered in Garrett, IN, Dekko was established in 1952 and has been a major supplier of electrical components to the office furniture industry for the last several decades. Prior to accepting this new position, May was President and CEO of several market-leading businesses with revenues ranging up to \$500 million annually. [Read More](#)

**>NCARB announced the inauguration of a new President and First Vice-President for the organization:**

Architect **Kristine A. Harding**, who practices in Huntsville, AL, was inaugurated as NCARB's 97th president. She will lead the organization and its 54 U.S. licensing boards, which serve more than 40,000 NCARB-certified architects, and 41,000 licensure candidates. "NCARB has become a leader in the regulatory world and an essential voice in the profession," said Ms. Harding, adding that in her new position she would ensure NCARB continues to



Kristine Harding



“strive for excellence, embrace innovative ideas, and build our community.”

Elected to the position of First Vice-President and President-Elect – the position held by Ms. Harding until now – is **Gregory L. Erny**, an architect who practices in Reno, NV. “I look forward to strengthening the perception of our profession and helping NCARB reach architects in new and inspiring ways,” said Mr. Erny. By virtue of his election, he will become NCARB’s next president in June 2017.



Gregory Erny

The inaugurations coincided with NCARB’s Annual Business Meeting, held in Seattle, during which outgoing president Dennis S. Ward, FAIA, bestowed the organization’s highest honor, the President’s Medal for Distinguished Service, on six individuals. The recipients are:

**-Jon Alan Baker**, FAIA, San Diego, CA

**-Dawn Broadfield**, Cranston, RI

**-John E. Cardone, Jr.**, Lake Charles, LA

**-Ricky L. Engebretson**, AIA, Fargo, ND

**-Maribel Fisher**, FCARM, AIA, Ensenada, Mexico

**-Jared Zurn**, AIA, Manassas Park, VA

The recipients were selected for their commitment to the architecture profession and to NCARB’s mission of ensuring the health safety and welfare of the public. [Read More](#)

**>CetraRuddy, in its eighth year of supporting PENCIL Partnership, hosted 50 third-graders from the Bronx to its Soho studio for a day of activity-based lessons.** PENCIL Partnership is a national leader in innovative collaborations between businesses and schools. Along with architect Theresa Genovese, AIA, a principal at CetraRuddy, the firm developed a new PENCIL course about bridges. “The project-based learning class was designed to be fun and world-expanding, to show the children that there are many exciting opportunities in life,” says Ms. Genovese,



Cetra Ruddy PENCIL Partnership

who is currently designing three K-12 schools in India. “Building a model bridge, and seeing examples from around the world, offers them new experiences as it develops teamwork, math, and science skills.” [Read More](#)

**>Environetics Design Inc., an integrated practice of architects, engineers and interior designers with offices in Philadelphia and Malvern, PA, joined NORR, a full-service global firm.** EDI’s motivations to join NORR were to successfully compete with top tier firms throughout North America, expand the capacity to serve its growing list of national and global clients, and to increase professional growth and development opportunities for its talented staff. Leadership at EDI will remain in place. Bill Westhafer has been appointed as Vice President of the two EDI offices and John Kohlhas as Director of Operations. The firm will transition to the NORR name in the coming months. “I look forward to EDI’s contribution as the NORR brand continues to grow in prominence throughout the U.S.,” said Brian Gerstmar, President of NORR

US and COO NORR. “The addition of EDI’s east coast operations diversifies the U.S. portfolio of our Chicago, Detroit and Sacramento offices focused largely on retail, restaurant, hospitality and residential markets. They are a key addition to the NORR family.” [Read More](#)

**>Indiana Furniture is participating in the Arts for Learning Indiana reading program with a “travelling chair” hand-painted by artist Emily Kennerk.** This chair will move to different locations throughout Indiana, and at each location a figure of the community will read a story to a group of children. “Windows” on the chair will allow for an array of



NCARB Medalists



Indiana Furniture Travelling Chair

characters to visit and pop in while their story is being read. The oversized chair symbolizes the possibilities of how reading can expand the mind. [Read More](#)

**>The INDEAL 2016 and 2017 Idea Book for Healthcare is now available to INDEAL members.** Showcasing a wide range of product targeted at the developing healthcare market segment, the Idea Book is an effective marketing tool for INDEAL dealers servicing the vertical market. For use as a prospecting piece or an idea starter, it is grouped into four categories: Caregivers, Patients, Visitors and Facility. The book shipped to dealers the first week of June. The electronic version of the book is available for dealers to embed onto their own websites, providing another means for end users to instantly familiarize themselves with the scope of products available to source for their healthcare projects. [Read More](#)

**>IFI congratulated the participants of World Interiors Day, officially celebrated May 28 with the theme "Interiors Intelligence."** Events and activities were organized by IFI members during the entire month, demonstrating the power, potential and the merits of the Interiors discipline and its impact on the quality of our lives. Some highlights:

-In Shanghai and Wuhan (China), China National Interior Decoration Association (CIDA) organized several programs, including a comprehensive forum dedicated to WID.

-Chamber of Interior Architects of Turkey (CIAT) celebrated WID through several different events that took place in Izmir and Mersin (Turkey).

-Vereinigung Schweizer Innernarchitekten/Architekten, Association Suisse des Architectes d'Interieur (VSI. ASAI) organized at the Stil-

haus Rothrist (Switzerland) an exhibit dedicated to the late Leo Zimmermann and several podium talks about "Interiors Intelligence".

-In Toronto, Interior Designers of Canada (IDC) set up an outdoor living room, giving out copies of D magazine and engaging with passers-by about the world of Interiors. [Read More](#)

**>IIDA's 5<sup>th</sup> annual Healthcare Interior Design Competition is now open for entries.**

This competition honors and celebrates outstanding originality and excellence in the design and furnishings of healthcare interior spaces. Submissions are being accepted in the following categories:

-Ambulatory Care Centers, including Outpatient Clinics, Medical Practice Suites, and Medical Office Building Public Spaces

-Hospice Care, including Palliative Care Facilities/Units

-Hospitals, including Community/Academic/Teaching Hospitals, Pediatric Hospitals, Women's Hospitals, and Geriatric Hospitals

-Senior Living and Residential Health, Care and Support Facilities, including Assisted Living Facilities, Nursing Homes, Community-based Service Facilities, and Continuing Care Retirement Communities

The competition is open to participants worldwide. Any design professional practicing legally within his or her jurisdiction may submit

project(s) for consideration via the competition website. Projects submitted must have been completed in or after June 2014. The deadline for entries is Thursday, Aug. 11. [Read More](#)

**>NCARB, following its Annual Business Meeting in Seattle, made a number of major announcements impacting the architectural industry in North America, as well as globally.**

First, NCARB announced updates to the path to certification for architects who do not hold a degree from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB). These architects were previously required to complete NCARB's Broadly Experienced Architect (BEA) Program. The new streamlined path, which will be available beginning in 2017, requires three years of continuous licensure in one jurisdiction, plus documentation of professional experience and/or education. This revised path will be offered at no additional charge to active Record holders and will incorporate the reduced Certificate application fee of \$1,100.

"This change recognizes the value of the initial license and practical experience while maintaining a rigorous, yet inclusive, option for architects seeking NCARB certification," said NCARB CEO Michael Armstrong.

Second, NCARB announced a new Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) between the architectural licensing au-



IFI President Sebastiano Raneri, IFI President Elect Steve Leung, and representatives of CIDA and other organizations saluted WID in Shanghai.



thorities of the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, which will enable architects to earn reciprocal licenses abroad. The arrangement was spearheaded by NCARB, signed by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) and the New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB), and was approved by U.S. licensing boards at the Annual Business Meeting. For the MRA to be implemented, a minimum of 28 U.S. licensing boards will need to sign the arrangement by Dec. 31.

Third, NCARB announced of a partnership between NCARB and the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) for the 2016-2017 school year. NCARB will be supporting AIAS and its Freedom by Design program through a series of grants and mentorship opportunities. The goal of the partnership is to increase the availability of key tools and resources that architecture students need to improve the safety and accessibility of homes, community spaces, and playgrounds. [Read More](#)

**>OFM revealed the winners of its Office Throwback Contest on Instagram. In this contest, office workers around the country shared the oldest item in their workplace.** OFM selected one winner in each of the three categories: 1) Oldest; 2) Most Unusual, and; 3) Best All-Around Photo. The winner of the Oldest category goes to wittenathan, who entered a photo of a 1950s-era Remington Travel-Riter



#### OFM Office Throwback contest

typewriter. The winner of the Most Unusual category goes to standardbusinessfurniture, who submitted a vintage Bates List Finder phone directory. And the winner of the Best All-Around photo goes to javajohnz, who entered a photo of his 1980s-era Pet Rock. Each winner will each receive two modular stools from OFM's Jupiter, Hex or Quin series collection in the color of their choice.

In previous OFM contests, participants showed the clever ways they prevent their staplers from being borrowed by their coworkers, discussed what their work desk says about them and shared the doodles they drew during long meetings in the office. "At OFM, we know that the office isn't just a workplace," said OFM chief operating officer Blake Zalcborg. "It's where we spend most of our day, thinking, working, and even daydreaming. These contests help us continue to design furniture for the way that people actually work." [Read More](#)

**>WallGoldfinger expanded its sales representative team to Pennsylvania, Delaware and Southern New Jersey with the addition of Philadelphia-based Facility & Design Resource.** Launched by President Matt Boyle in 2006, FDR is comprised of Boyle, representing Pennsylvania and Delaware; Associate Laurel Logan, also representing Pennsylvania; Associate Tim Kalberer, representing Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey; and Office Manager Susan Welborn. Mr. Boyle has more than 20 years of experience in

contract office, education and hospitality furniture. He held multiple sales and management roles with Kimball Office and Falcon Products prior to managing KMA & Associates in Eastern Pennsylvania. Mr. Kalberer joined FDR in 2009. He has an impressive 30-plus years of contract office sales experience, including at Kimball Office and Lear Associates. Ms. Logan is a licensed interior designer with more than 20 years of interior design and project management experience, including serving as director of interior design at Cather & Associates (now D2CA). An active member of the Interior Design Legislative Coalition of Pennsylvania, she joined FDR in 2013. Ms. Welborn has an extensive background in the industry, including an interior design degree, facilities project management experience, and working in account management and design roles at the dealer level. She joined FDR in 2010 and provides assistance with specifications and quotes, as well as with product information and sample requests. [Read More](#)



Wall Goldfinger The Facility & Design Resource team, from left, Tim Kalberer, Susan Welborn, Laurel Logan and Matt Boyle

**RE-SITED**

**>Andrew Kost has joined Gunlocke to assume Lauren Deranek's former role as Chicago showroom manager**

(see Noteworthy, above).

He will oversee operations in the Gunlocke showroom, #1126 at theMART (formerly the Merchandise Mart) and reports to Beth Gall. Mr. Kost, most recently with Knoll, has more than 20 years of showroom management experience. [Read More](#)



Andrew Kost

**>Sabrina Sobhan joined Lane Office as a DIRT designer.**

Ms. Sobhan received an Architectural Technology B.S.A.T. from New York Institute of Technology and interned with Advanced Building Consultants. In her new role, she draws construction documents, makes



Sabrina Sobhan

shop drawings, and uses ICE Software for various projects. Significant projects include ConEdison, Verizon Marketing, Fross Zelnick Lehrman & Zissu [Read More](#)

**ENVIRONMENT**

**>J+J Flooring Group released its fourth annual corporate sustainability report.** Titled "It All Adds Up," the latest report covers the commercial flooring manufacturer's social and environmental performance for 2015, including the company's continued progress towards its 20/20 Vision, a set of conservation, resource reduction and environmental efficiency goals for the year 2020. The report also showcases the company's deeply embedded sustainability commitment – one rooted in the belief that the greatest changes are often the result of consistent effort and investment over time. Highlights include:

- Official Zero Waste to Landfill Certification – an industry first.

- Safely cycling as much as 65% of water used back into the manufacturing process.

- A greater than 15% energy consumption reduction since 2010.

- Off-setting more than 50% of total direct energy used in 2015 with the purchase of more than 14.7 MM kWh of

Green E RECs, qualifying J+J as an EPA Energy Leadership Partner.

- A nearly 15% reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions since 2009.

- The reintroduction of Working for Life, a comprehensive employee health and wellness program.

- Employee volunteerism and support for more than 20 local, regional and national charitable organizations.

[Read More](#)

**>Perkins Eastman has pledged to apply EDGE, the green building certification system for emerging markets, to at least five of its clients' projects in the next year.** EDGE, which stands for Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies, is an innovation of the International Finance Corporation, a member of the World Bank Group. The partnership agreement was signed between Perkins Eastman and IFC in Washington, DC.

Perkins Eastman and IFC decided to collaborate in recognition of their shared aspirations that architectural firms can play a pivotal role in influencing the construction industry to follow a more low-carbon, less resource-intensive path. Through the partnership, the entities will work together to promote sustainable design practices

in emerging markets, with an emphasis on India and China. Perkins Eastman's pioneering of EDGE is intended to encourage other major design firms to follow its lead.

EDGE was created to respond to the need for a measurable solution to prove the financial case for building green and help jumpstart the proliferation of green buildings. EDGE includes complimentary software to empower building professionals to quickly and easily determine the most cost-effective ways to build green based on occupant behavior, building type, and the local climate.

Perkins Eastman has a strong commitment to sustainability that can be seen in many of its projects around the world, such as Huishan North Bund in Shanghai, a dynamic mixed-use development and marina on the Huangpu River, comprising several new buildings that have achieved LEED Gold, China 3-Star Rating, and BREEAM Excellent Certifications; and the Kartal Towers in Istanbul, a residential and mixed-use development that is projected to achieve energy savings of 30 percent. The firm is a signatory to the 2030 Commitment, an industry initiative to reach carbon neutrality within the next two decades. [Read More](#)



INVISION kinetex





## PROJECTS

**>Celia Imrey of Imrey Studio LLC has designed the new \$11 million, Silver LEED Edgartown Public Library on Martha's Vineyard, which held its grand opening on June 25.** The library features signature "lighthouse" clerestories and soaring interior spaces that bring daylight deep into the reading areas. "I wanted the architecture to uplift while providing an anchor of learning and research at the same time," said Ms. Imrey, who was originally hired by the Town of Edgartown in 2011 to design the project on a different site. "Learning is for everyone, and the community here is inclusive. The building's design is conceived to provide transparency, both literally and figuratively."

In Edgartown, where widow's walks and lighthouses abound, Ms. Imrey took cues from the local architecture to inform the overall massing and design. To achieve simultaneous "uplift" and "anchor," the building combines a solid brick perimeter with tall windows and wrap-around clerestories. The 15,000 sq.ft. library is divided into three main programmatic volumes: Adult Wing, Children's Wing and Gallery/Community Room and exterior reading areas that fit together into a kind of campus. The three clerestories are gently up-lit at night like giant lanterns. Inside, the volumes express their distinct program with lighting, materials and furnishings. The design also features an "eave-less" gutter that eliminated the heavy overhangs that are so common in typical building methods, a stain-

less steel and walnut stair, and oversized custom light fixtures on the adult reading level. The fixtures, designed by Imrey and fabricated in Boston, are intended to evoke a mix of glass-and-rope buoys and nautical gas lanterns. The building also has a WIFI terrace, an interior café and an exterior children's story hour garden.

After several alternate site evaluations, the Town voted to construct a ground-up building next to the new elementary school. Ms. Imrey, who co-designed the 300,000 sq.ft. satellite of the Louvre Museum that opened in late 2012 in Lens France, is familiar with complicated public projects. "The library design itself is a manifestation of the complex terms we needed to negotiate on behalf of our complicated client: The

design gives tribute to the history of the Edgartown, it reaches toward the future, it responds to the varied patron groups, and it accommodates seasonal uses," she explained. [Read More](#)

## EVENTS

**>Configura will host the 9<sup>th</sup> annual CET Designer User Conference Oct. 18-19 at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids, MI.** Color expert **Laura Guido Clark** will keynote the conference that's expected to draw hundreds of design professionals and office furniture manufacturers. IIDA Executive Vice President and CEO **Cheryl Durst** will also speak at the conference. A pre-conference welcome event for attendees will be the evening of Oct. 17.



Imrey Studio Front of Edgartown Public Library Photo Credit Bob Gothard



Configura CET Designer Conference keynote speaker Laura Guido Clark



Configura CET Designer Conference speaker Cheryl Durst

In conjunction with the CET Designer User Conference, Configura will also host a developer conference. "The goal is to bring designers and developers together, so they can talk with each other about what's possible with the software. Their conversations will be the start of new ideas and features for CET Designer," said Chief Product Officer Nicklas Dagersten.

Both conferences will also include breakout sessions and tracks specific to space planning and design, and IT and software development. [Read More](#)



*IIDA NY Attendees last year at the 2015 Annual Meeting*

**>IIDA NY will hold its 2016 Annual Meeting + Volunteer Thank You Event on Jun. 28 at 200 Lex.** Katie Michael-Battaglia, IIDA, Nemo Tile will give a recap of her year as chapter

president and will share what has inspired her about the IIDA NY Chapter. New and returning members of the Board of Directors will be inducted along with new chapter president, Ginger

Gilden, IIDA, IA Interior Architects. Recipients of the IIDA NY Spirit Award and the Ellen Kushman Distinguished Service Award will also be honored. [Read More](#)

## SUDOKU

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## business

**RAYMOND JAMES BRIEF 6.22.16****Herman Miller: F4Q16 Beats; NA and ELA Impressive; Specialty & Consumer Not So Much**

Analysts: Budd Bugatch, Bobby Griffin, David Vargas

**>After Wednesday's market close, Herman Miller reported F4Q16 GAAP EPS of \$0.67.** Excluding a \$6.1 million (pre-tax) gain from the sale of assets and a better-than-modeled tax rate (favorable transfer pricing adjustment), normalized adjusted EPS of \$0.56 beat our \$0.52 estimate (also the consensus) and management's \$0.51-\$0.55 guidance. Total sales of ~\$583 million beat our \$567 million estimate, the \$569 million consensus and the \$560-580 million guidance. Organic sales grew 6.4 % y/y. Total company orders increased 8.9% y/y to \$606.2 million, and ending backlog increased 0.4% y/y to \$323.5 million.

**>Adjusted operating income beat our model by ~400k, as higher-than modeled sales (~\$0.02 benefit) were offset partially by higher-than-forecast operating expenses.** Normalized operating margin was flat y/y at 8.7% versus our 8.8% estimate. Normalized gross margin improved ~59bp from 38.1% in F4Q15 to 38.7% in F4Q16, in-line with our 38.7% estimate. The y/y gross margin expansion reflects lower commodity costs, operational improvements, and fixed cost leverage. Below the line, lower-than-expected interest expense and the lower-than-forecast tax rate (of the \$2.0 million full-year FY16 transfer price benefit booked in the quarter, \$0.5 million to F4Q16) benefited results by \$0.04.

**>North America (N.A.) sales increased 7.6% y/y** (on top of 0.8% growth last year) to \$332.9 million, nicely better than our \$325.1 million estimate. Organically, ex-currency, sales increased 7.9% y/y. F4Q16 North America orders increased ~11.5% y/y to \$358.6 million. Given the sluggish industry environment, we think the solid mid-single digit N.A. sales growth and double digit incoming order growth Herman Miller delivered is impressive. Normalized operating income improved ~30.7% y/y to \$39.2 million (vs. our \$34.4 million estimate); normalized operating margin increased ~208bp y/y to 11.8% (vs. 10.6% estimate).

**>Europe and Latin America (ELA) sales increased ~7.4% y/y to \$110.5 million** (vs. our \$101.4 million estimate). Adjusted operating income was \$8.5 million, versus our \$6.1 million estimate. Reported ELA orders increased 8.9% y/y. Organically, ELA sales increased 9.1% and orders increased 10.0% y/y. Specialty segment sales increased 3.7% y/y to \$61.6 million, roughly in-line with our \$61.7 million estimate. Normalized operating income was \$4.5 million, compared to our \$6.3 million estimate. Orders improved 6.6% y/y.

**>Consumer segment revenues, which includes DWR, were \$77.6 million**, versus our \$78.7 million estimate. Normalized operating income was -\$1.2 million, compared to our +\$3.4 million estimate. DWR comparable brand sales increased 0.6% y/y, on top of 16.4% last year. Admittedly, the home furnishings environment has been sluggish throughout the first half of 2016, and management is working through some short-term

## Industry Stock Prices

	6.24.16	4.1.16	12.31.15	10.2.15	6.26.15	3.27.15	%frYrHi	%fr50-DayMA
HMiller	29.4	30.4	28.7	29.2	30.5	27.4	-13.9%	-6.0%
HNI	44.6	39.6	36.1	43.7	53.2	53.8	-16.5%	-1.5%
Inscape	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.3	3.2	-4.0%	3.5%
Interface	15.7	18.2	19.1	22.5	25.2	20.6	-42.3%	-6.7%
Kimball	11.1	11.4	9.8	9.9	11.9	10.2	-14.7%	-2.1%
Knoll	23.4	21.9	18.8	21.9	25.9	22.7	-9.3%	-2.7%
Leggett	48.7	48.5	42.0	42.1	49.7	45.4	-5.0%	-2.1%
Mohawk	185.5	192.4	189.4	189.0	193.2	181.2	-12.6%	-5.1%
Steelcase	14.1	14.9	14.9	18.6	19.7	18.9	-31.0%	-8.5%
USG	26.0	25.1	24.3	27.4	28.5	25.9	-20.8%	-6.4%
Virco	4.2	3.1	3.3	3.1	2.9	2.7	-1.2%	8.8%
SUM	405.7	408.6	389.4	410.3	443.8	412.0		
DJIndust	17,401	17,793	17,425	16,472	17,947	17,713	-4.2%	

operational issues within its DWR franchise. We hope to get further commentary regarding the cadence of DWR's business on tomorrow's conference call.

**>Management guided F1Q17 revenue to \$600-620 million** (\$610 million midpoint), including the impact of an extra operating week. Our model did not account properly for the extra week. Excluding that impact (~\$35 million) and a dealer divestiture (~\$9 million in F1Q16 sales), management expects organic sales to increase ~3% y/y. Management pegs F1Q17 EPS at \$0.60-0.64 (including the extra week). Assuming a ~10% contribution margin, the EPS impact from the extra operating week is ~\$0.04, implying core EPS guidance of \$0.56-\$0.60, compared to our prior \$0.61 estimate and the \$0.60 consensus.

## RAYMOND JAMES BRIEF 6.24.16

### Herman Miller Part 2

Analysts: Budd Bugatch, Bobby Griffin, David Vargas

**>Recommendation: We reaffirm our Market Perform rating on MLHR, following Herman Miller's F4Q16 sales/earnings release and management conference call.** On a consolidated basis, revenue and adjusted EPS beat our and consensus' estimates as well as management guidance. Operating margin in the North America and ELA segments were above our estimate while the specialty and consumer segments missed.

Though we judge that MLHR is not expensive, trading at ~14x our NTM EPS estimates (versus a 15.0x median), we remain on the sidelines because we see some potential near-term challenges from higher raw material costs, as well as continuing hurdles in its consumer business. Management expects to communicate a price increase to its dealers, but not likely until calendar year-end, which suggests an impact in mid-2017, at the earliest.

**>F4Q16 report:** As detailed in an earlier brief, Herman Miller reported F4Q16 adjusted EPS of \$0.56, thereby beating our \$0.52 estimate (also consensus). Adjusted EPS excludes both a \$6.1 million pre-tax gain from the sale of assets and a \$1.5 million piece of the \$2.0 million after-tax gain from transfer pricing adjustment (positively affects the tax rate). Total sales of ~\$583 million beat our \$567 million estimate, the \$569 million consensus, and management's \$560-580 million guidance. Organic sales grew 6.4% y/y and total orders increased 0.4% y/y. Ending backlog increased 0.4% y/y to \$325.5 million.

**>North America office not rolling over:** On its call, CEO Walker spoke qualitatively about the business environment and noted that industry metrics for the North America contract segment are improved and improving. Miller's new orders for projects

greater than \$1 million were robust during F4Q16. Healthcare, business services, and government verticals led order growth while energy remains weak. Those comments maintain that the North America office is not rolling over as was conventional wisdom earlier.

**>In fact, Miller's improvement was led by a welcome and meaningful turnaround in its North America Office Furniture Solutions segment (NA).** NA sales increased 7.6% (+7.9% organic) year-over-year. New orders increased ~12% y/y to \$359 million. Healthcare also continues to perform well while the energy vertical remains challenged. Recall, industry association BIFMA does not include healthcare in its industry estimates.

**>Consumer segment still challenged:** Consumer segment sales, which includes DWR, were down 1.6% (-1.5% on an organic basis). DWR comparable brand sales increased 0.6% y/y, on top of +16.4%. Consumer (and DWR) remains challenging and "unacceptable." Management fell short of its goal of opening six new DWR studios and operating margins will likely remain under pressure through the first part of FY17.

**>Estimates:** Our FY17 EPS estimate goes to \$2.30 from \$2.29; FY18 is introduced at \$2.44.

**>Valuation:** Our intrinsic value calculation (page 9) pegs fair value for MLHR at \$30 to \$32.

## RAYMOND JAMES BRIEF 6.22.16

### Steelcase: F1Q17 Beats; Orders Weak; F2Q17 Guidance below Estimates

Analysts: Budd Bugatch, Bobby Griffin, David Vargas

**>Wednesday evening, Steelcase reported F1Q17 GAAP EPS of \$0.16.** Excluding ~\$4.6 million (pre-tax) in restructuring charges, adjusted EPS were \$0.18, above our \$0.15 estimate, the \$0.16 consensus and at the top end of management's \$0.14-0.18 guidance. Total sales increased 1.9% y/y to \$719 million, above our \$699 million estimate, the \$702 million consensus, and management's prior \$690 million to \$715 million guidance. Excluding FX movement (~400k headwind) and a small dealer acquisition (\$6.8 million in sales), organic sales increased ~1% y/y.

**>Excluding restructuring cost, normalized operating income beat our model by ~\$0.03,** driven predominantly by higher-than-forecasted gross margin (\$0.03 benefit), as consolidated results benefited from lower disruption costs and inefficiencies associated with Steelcase's manufacturing footprint changes in EMEA. Adjusted gross margin increased ~130 bp y/y to 32.6%, above our 31.8% estimate. F1Q17 normalized operating margin was 5.3%, versus our 4.6% estimate and 5.0% in F1Q16.



## business

**>Americas segment revenues were flat y/y at ~\$520 million**, above our \$508 million estimate. Organically, excluding currency (\$1.7 million negative impact) and a dealer acquisition (\$6.8 million), organic sales decreased ~1% y/y. Normalized operating income declined ~5.6% y/y to \$49.2 million (vs. our \$44.4 million estimate), while normalized operating margin decreased 57bps y/y to 9.5% (versus our 8.7% estimate).

**>Americas orders declined 5% y/y** (on top of 8% growth last year), reflecting lower activity in the insurance services, federal government and energy verticals. Recall, last year's orders included strong year-over-year growth in both the insurance services and federal government sectors. Importantly, excluding those sectors (less than 15% of total product orders), North American organic orders posted modest growth, thereby suggesting that the entire broad office furniture industry has not "rolled over."

**>EMEA segment revenues increased 4.5% to \$125.3 million**, above our \$122.9 million estimate. Positively, Steelcase continues to make progress with its EMEA restructuring, as normalized EMEA operating income improved from a \$9.6 million loss in F1Q16 to a \$4.2 million loss in F1Q17 (better than our -\$4.8 million estimate). Reflecting, lower disruption and inefficiencies and favorable business mix (more "day to day" business), EMEA gross margins improved ~485bp y/y to 25.5%. Organically, sales increased ~3% y/y. Facing tough prior year comparisons, as well as continued weakness in the Middle East and Africa and a significant decline in the U.K., EMEA orders declined 12% y/y.

**>Revenue in Steelcase's "Other" segment increased 10.9% y/y to \$73.1 million**, nicely above our \$67.6 million estimate. Operating income improved to \$2.2 million versus our \$0.6 million estimate.

**>Management guided F2Q17 revenue of \$770-795 million**, compared to the ~\$827 million consensus and our ~\$831 million estimate. It expects diluted and normalized EPS of \$0.29 to \$0.33, compared to our \$0.38 estimate and \$0.37 consensus. Given the weaker than expected guidance and y/y decline in North America orders, SCS indicated lower in afterhours trading. We will have additional commentary following Steelcase's 11:00 a.m. ET conference call Thursday morning.

## RAYMOND JAMES BRIEF 6.24.16

### Steelcase: Project Pipeline Strong; Office Furniture Sentiment Improving

Analysts: Budd Bugatch, Bobby Griffin, David Vargas

**>Recommendation: We reaffirm our Market Perform rating on SCS, following Steelcase Inc.'s F1Q17 earnings report and**

**conference call.** Sales of \$719 million beat our \$699 million estimate, the \$702 million consensus, and management's \$690-\$715 million guidance. Adjusted EPS of \$0.18 were above our \$0.15 estimate, \$0.16 consensus, and at the top end of management's \$0.14-\$0.18 guidance. Despite F2Q17 guidance below ours and the pre-existing consensus estimates, the pipeline of large projects has strengthened sequentially and Steelcase will begin to lap energy-related demand declines towards the end of FY17. SCS now trades at 12.7x our updated NTM EPS estimate, below its five-year median of ~15.1x.

**>Results and Sentiment:** Excluding the \$4.6 million (pre-tax) restructuring cost, normalized EPS beat our estimate by ~\$0.03 at the operating line, driven mostly by higher-than-modeled gross margin (\$0.03 benefit). Consolidated gross margin results benefitted from less disruption costs in EMEA, product mix in the Americas segment, and commodity price deflation. On its call, management remarked that its near-term outlook is improving. In the Americas, the number of large projects that management believes it has a good chance of winning has grown considerably sequentially and year-over-year. CEO sentiment appears to have bottomed out and the ABI is up 5% in May.

**>Americas:** Total revenues were flat y/y at ~\$520 million and organic revenue declined ~1%. Revenue from the federal government, insurance, and energy verticals were down more than 25%, with all other vertical markets in the Americas up ~6%. Organic orders declined 6%, driven primarily by the insurance, federal government, and energy verticals. Collectively, these verticals make up ~15% of total product orders. Excluding those sectors, North American organic orders posted "modest" growth. The y/y gross margin improvement was driven by lower material costs, favorable business mix, and improved customer pricing, partially offset by \$6 million of higher warranty costs. Higher operating expenses in the segment were primarily the result of higher sales and marketing investments. Management expects these investments to continue going forward.

**>EMEA:** EMEA total revenue increased 4.5% to \$125.3 million and normalized operating income improved \$5.4 million y/y to \$(4.2) million. Disruption costs declined and management indicated it only has about \$1 million of disruption costs left. Within SG&A, higher expenses associated with the Munich Learning and Innovation center caused SG&A to deleverage. The exit of Britain from the European Union could cause push outs of projects across the EU and pressure economic growth.

**>Guidance/Estimates:** Management provided the following guidance for F2Q17: revenue of \$770-\$795 million; 2) normalized EPS between \$0.29 and \$0.33; 3) organic revenue decline between -3% and -6%.

## BUSINESS AFFAIRS

>**C.F. Stinson, LLC announced that it has received a significant investment from BV Investment Partners.** BV, a middle-market private equity firm focused on the information and business services sectors, is investing in partnership with **Keith and Glenn Stinson**, the third generation of family ownership. Keith and Glenn will continue to run the business and maintain a substantial ownership interest in the company.

Central to Stinson's business model and success is the company's patented, tech-enabled sample system developed by its wholly owned subsidiary, **Sample Technologies**. This system allows customers at all levels of the supply chain to easily access Stinson's fabrics and order samples which is integral to the design and specification process across multiple market segments.

**Andrew C. Davis**, managing director of BV, said, "Stinson is the fund's third investment with a tech-enabled distribution theme and has a number of attractive characteristics that align well with BV's investment strategy and philosophy. The company is mission critical to its suppliers and customers, uniquely positioning it within the textile supply chain. Furthermore, Stinson serves diverse commercial markets including the attractive hospitality and healthcare industries, with a substantial percentage of its business derived from the growing demands of the U.S. healthcare delivery industry." [Read More](#)



>**HNI Corp. plans release its second quarter fiscal 2016 results on Thursday, July 21 after market close; with a conference call for investors scheduled for Friday, Jul. 22, 11:00 a.m. Eastern Time (10:00 a.m. Central).** To participate in the call, please dial 1-877-512-9166 (Toll-free); Conference ID 30192037. A live webcast of the call will be available on the Investors page of HNI's website, where a replay will be available after the call. A replay will also be available through Friday, Jul. 29, 10:59 p.m. Central Time at 1-855-859-2056 or 1-404-537-3406; Conference ID: 30192037. <http://investors.hnicorp.com/>

## business

>**Herman Miller, Inc. on Jun. 22 released its FY16 fourth-quarter and full-year results** (dollars in millions except EPS):

3 Mos. Ended	5.28.16	5.30.15	%Ch.
Net Sales	\$582.6	\$550.7	5.8%
Gross Mar.	\$225.2	\$209.6	7.4%
Gross Mar. %	38.7%	38.1%	1.8%
Oper. Exp.	\$168.6	\$161.7	4.3%
Oper. Earn.	\$56.6	\$37.1	52.6%
Net Earn.	\$40.7	\$23.4	73.9%
EPS (dil.)	\$0.67	\$0.39	71.8%
Orders	\$606.2	\$556.9	8.9%
Backlog	\$323.5	\$322.2	0.4%

12 Mos. Ended	5.28.16	5.30.15	%Ch.
Net Sales	\$2,264.9	\$2,142.2	5.7%
Gross Mar.	\$874.2	\$791.4	10.5%
Gross Mar. %	38.6%	36.9%	1.3%
Oper. Exp.	\$662.7	\$615.3	7.7%
Oper. Earn.	\$211.5	\$163.4	29.4%
Net Earn.	\$136.7	\$97.5	40.2%
EPS (dil.)	\$2.26	\$1.62	39.5%
Orders	\$2,279.7	\$2,146.5	6.2%

Excluding the impact of certain non-recurring gains associated with the sale of property, a dealership divestiture and tax planning, adjusted diluted earnings per share in the fourth quarter totaled \$0.56. In the fourth quarter of last fiscal year, the company reported adjusted diluted EPS of \$0.47. For the full year, adjusted diluted EPS totaled \$2.17 in fiscal 2016, representing an increase of 19.2% over adjusted EPS of \$1.82 in FY15. The company estimates that foreign currency translation unfavorably impacted its full-year earnings per share by approximately \$0.13 in fiscal 2016.

The company also announced an **increase in its quarterly cash dividend to \$0.17 per share** payable in October 2016. This change represents an increase of over 15% from the current dividend payout of \$0.1475 per share.

"Strong net sales and order growth were a clear highlight of our results this quarter, capping a full fiscal year that set an all-time record level of sales for our company," said CEO **Brian Walker**. "We also delivered a year-over-year increase in adjusted earnings per share of 19% in the fourth quarter. Our fifth dividend increase in the past four years reflects the confidence of the Board and our leadership team in the power of our long-term strategy to create shareholder value. These results are a tribute to the talent and effort of our people and they demonstrate the meaningful progress we have made on our strategic priorities."

Herman Miller attributed the increase in operating expenses during the quarter primarily to spending on new product launch and marketing initiatives, higher incentive accruals,



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product warranty expenses, and variability from higher net sales. The expenses in the current period also reflect the benefit of pre-tax gains totaling \$6.1 million related to the sale of a former manufacturing facility in the United Kingdom and the divestiture of the company's dealership in Australia.

The company ended the fiscal year with total cash and cash equivalents of \$84.9 million, an increase of \$29.6 million from the balance at the end of the third quarter. Cash flow generated from operations in the fourth quarter and full fiscal year was \$84.5 million and \$210.4 million, respectively. This compares to \$57.9 million and \$167.7 million in the respective periods last fiscal year.

"We finished fiscal 2016 on a strong note, posting our highest quarterly sales and order levels in the past fifteen years," said CFO **Jeff Stutz**. "Gross margin remained a key contributor to operating performance for the quarter, reflecting favorable commodity costs, production leverage and operational improvements from our ongoing lean enterprise focus. We also benefited from tax planning that helped to meaningfully reduce our consolidated effective tax rate. These factors drove strong cash generation and return on invested capital, which totaled approximately 22% for the full fiscal year."

#### Results by Operating Segment (dollars in millions):

<b>3 Mos. Ended</b>	<b>5.28.16</b>	<b>5.30.15</b>	<b>%Ch.</b>
<b>North America</b>			
Net Sales	\$332.9	\$309.5	7.6%
Oper. Earn.	\$39.2	\$30.0	30.7%
<b>ELA</b>			
Net Sales	\$110.5	\$102.9	7.4%
Oper. Earn.	\$14.6	\$6.2	135.5%
<b>Specialty</b>			
Net Sales	\$61.6	\$59.4	3.7%
Oper. Earn.	\$4.5	\$5.9	-23.7%
<b>Consumer</b>			
Net Sales	\$77.6	\$78.9	-1.6%
Oper. Earn.	-\$1.2	\$6.3	-
<b>12 Mos. Ended</b>	<b>5.28.16</b>	<b>5.30.15</b>	<b>%Ch.</b>
<b>North America</b>			
Net Sales	\$1,331.8	\$1,241.9	7.2%
Oper. Earn.	\$152.0	\$125.2	21.4%
<b>ELA</b>			
Net Sales	\$412.6	\$409.9	0.7%
Oper. Earn.	\$35.3	\$25.9	36.3%
<b>Specialty</b>			
Net Sales	\$231.8	\$219.9	5.4%
Oper. Earn.	\$16.4	\$13.5	21.5%
<b>Consumer</b>			
Net Sales	\$288.7	\$270.5	6.7%
Oper. Earn.	\$8.1	\$14.7	-44.9%

(The North American Furniture Solutions segment includes the operations associated with the design, manufacture, and sale of furniture products for work-related settings, including office, education, and healthcare environments, throughout the U.S. and Canada. The business associated with the company's owned contract furniture dealers is also included in the North American Furniture Solutions segment. The ELA Furniture Solutions segment includes the operations associated with the design, manufacture, and sale of furniture products, primarily for work-related settings, in EMEA, Latin America, and Asia-Pacific. The Specialty segment includes the operations associated with the design, manufacture, and sale of high-craft furniture products and textiles including Geiger wood products, Maharam textiles, and Herman Miller Collection products. The Consumer segment includes operations associated with the sale of modern design furnishings and accessories to third party retail distributors, as well as direct-to-consumer sales through eCommerce and Design Within Reach retail studios).

Within Herman Miller's North American reportable segment, new orders in the fourth quarter totaled \$358.6 million, representing an increase of 11.5% from last year. New orders in the ELA segment totaled \$101.7 million in the fourth quarter, representing a year-over-year increase of 8.9%. In the Specialty segment, new orders in the fourth quarter of \$61.7 million increased 6.6% compared to last year. And in the Consumer segment, orders in the quarter of \$84.2 million were slightly higher than the same quarter in the prior year.

#### Outlook

Looking forward, Herman Miller expects net sales in the first quarter of fiscal 2017 to be in the range of \$600 million to \$620 million. This would represent an increase of between 6% and 10% from the first quarter of fiscal 2016. The first quarter revenue estimate includes the impact of an additional week of sales based on the company's accounting calendar - a change required periodically to re-align the company's fiscal periods with the calendar months. On an organic basis, adjusted for the impact of the extra week and dealer divestiture, this forecast implies sales growth of approximately 3% at the mid-point of the range. Diluted earnings per share in the quarter are expected to range between \$0.60 and \$0.64.

The full text of Herman Miller's 4Q16 earnings release, including all tables, along with a webcast replay of its Jun. 23 conference call, including a PDF document with supplemental financial information, may be accessed in the Investors section of the company's website: [www.hermanmiller.com/about-us/investors.html](http://www.hermanmiller.com/about-us/investors.html)

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**>Inscape Corp. on Jun. 23 released its fourth-quarter and full-year financial results for FY16** (Canadian dollars in thousands except EPS):

3 Mos. Ended	4.30.16	4.30.15	%Ch.
Sales	\$20,480	\$12,641	62.0%
Gross Profit	\$5,208	\$1,195	335.8%
SG&A	\$6,856	\$6,353	7.9%
Net Inc./Loss	\$5,373	-\$3,396	-
EPS (Basic)	\$0.37	-\$0.24	-

12 Mos. Ended	4.30.16	4.30.15	%Ch.
Sales	\$79,846	\$69,424	15.0%
Gross Profit	\$19,803	\$14,808	33.7%
SG&A	\$26,162	\$22,344	17.1%
Net Inc./Loss	-\$1,254	-\$13,076	-
EPS (Basic)	-\$0.09	-\$0.91	-

"We are seeing the results of our focus on our key strategic objectives," said **Jim Stelter**, CEO. "Inscape made significant strides in the improvement of our dealer network this year, including participation in the most robust training program in our company's history. We have seen increased utilization of our F.I.R.E. software, a key differentiator linking visualization, specification, order acknowledgement and shipment of our products to market. In addition, we are committed to delivering not only superior service, but also innovative products that meet the needs of today's workspaces. We will build on the success seen at NeoCon this year, with our two Best of NeoCon awards."

The company reported that all business segments achieved an increase in sales volume, and the addition of West Elm Workspace with Inscape and seating solutions also contributed to the growth in the current quarter's sales. With the exclusion of U.S. currency impacts, sales in the fourth quarter were 33.7% higher than the same quarter of last year, and the year-over-year sales increase was 2.1%.

During the fourth quarter of the year, Inscape reorganized its administrative and overhead support functions to expenses in future years. A restructuring cost of \$0.4 million was accrued in the quarter. \$0.3 million of the costs was included in the overhead component of the costs of goods sold. The current quarter income also included an unrealized gain of \$7.5 million relating to the change in the fair market value of the outstanding U.S. currency hedge contracts, whereas the same quarter of last year had an unrealized gain of \$5.9 million. Excluding these unrealized derivative gains, the current quarter had an adjusted loss of \$1.3 million compared with the same quarter of last year's adjusted loss of \$4.9 million. The improvement of \$3.6 million was attributed to higher sales volume and lower production costs that benefited from economy of scale.

The current year's loss included a derivative gain of \$4.7 million and unrealized exchange gain of \$0.3 million due to the revaluation of FX hedges and exchange respectively. With the

exclusion of the currency adjustments, the restructuring cost and certain one-time items, fiscal year 2016 would have an adjusted loss of \$5.0 million compared to last year's adjusted loss of \$6.4 million before taxes.

The fourth quarter gross profit as a percentage of sales was 15.9 percentage points higher than the same quarter of last year. This improvement was attributed to higher volume, favorable USD exchange rates, and lower production costs benefited from economy of scale; partially offset by the restructuring cost of \$0.3 million, or 1.6% of the quarter's sales.

On an annual basis, gross profit as a percentage of sales increased 3.5 percentage point from last year's 21.3% to current year's 24.8%. This increase was attributed to favorable overhead absorption with higher sales volume, lower variable and fixed cost of sales, which was offset by unfavorable realized selling prices.

Selling, General & Administrative Expenses for the quarter were 33.5% of sales, compared with last year's 50.3%.

At the end of the fiscal year 2016, the company was debt-free with cash and cash equivalents of \$6.0 million and short-term investments of \$4.5 million.

#### Results by Segment (Canadian dollars in thousands):

3 Mos. Ended	4.30.16	4.30.15	%Ch.
<b>Furniture</b>			
Sales	\$14,255	\$9,080	57.0%
Op. Inc./Loss	-\$1,091	-\$3,688	-
<b>Moveable walls and rollform</b>			
Sales	\$6,225	\$3,561	74.8%
Op. Inc./Loss	-\$557	-\$1,261	-

12 Mos. Ended	4.30.16	4.30.15	%Ch.
<b>Furniture</b>			
Sales	\$57,595	\$50,066	15.0%
Op. Inc./Loss	-\$2,422	-\$4,068	-
<b>Moveable walls and rollform</b>			
Sales	\$22,251	\$19,358	14.9%
Op. Inc./Loss	-\$3,937	-\$4,954	-

#### Sales by Location (Canadian dollars in thousands):

3 Mos. Ended	4.30.16	4.30.15	%Ch.
<b>U.S.</b>	\$18,720	\$11,413	64.0%
<b>Canada</b>	\$1,750	\$1,228	42.5%
<b>Other</b>	\$10	-	-

12 Mos. Ended	4.30.16	4.30.15	%Ch.
<b>U.S.</b>	\$72,628	\$62,460	16.3%
<b>Canada</b>	\$7,196	\$6,921	4.0%
<b>Other</b>	\$22	\$43	-48.8%

A replay of Inscape's Jun. 24 conference call will be available until 10:30 a.m. on July 1 at 1-800-558-5253 (Reservation Number 21813150). The full text of Inscape's 4Q16 earnings



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release, including all tables, is available on the company's website at <http://inscapesolutions.com/company/press-releases/>.

**>Steelcase Inc. on Jun. 22 announced its FY17 first-quarter results** (dollars in millions except EPS):

3 Mos. Ended	5.27.16	5.29.15	%Ch.
Revenue	\$718.8	\$705.5	1.9%
Gross Profit	\$229.8	\$216.6	6.1%
Oper. Exp.	\$196.1	\$185.1	59.4%
Oper. Inc.	\$33.3	\$33.5	-0.6%
Adj.Op.Inc.	\$37.9	\$35.4	7.1%
Net Inc.	\$19.4	\$20.0	-3.0%
EPS (dil.)	\$0.16	\$0.16	0.0%

Excluding restructuring costs, adjusted earnings were \$0.18 per share, compared with adjusted earnings of \$0.17 per share last year. Organic revenue growth over the prior year was 1% after adjusting for unfavorable currency translation effects and the impact of a small acquisition. The Other category posted organic revenue growth of 12% over the prior year, driven by Asia Pacific and Designtex. EMEA achieved organic revenue growth of 3%, while the Americas experienced an organic revenue decline of 1%.

"Our financial results for the quarter were at the top end of our expectations, with strong revenue growth in Asia Pacific and a significant improvement in EMEA's gross margins," said **Jim Keane**, President and CEO. "We were also pleased with the improvement in gross margins in the Americas, where we have been making increased investments in sales and marketing initiatives, including many of the award-winning products and enhancements which were introduced at NeoCon last week."

Excluding restructuring costs, first quarter adjusted operating income of \$37.9 million represented an improvement of \$2.5 million (or 30 basis points as a percent of revenue) compared to the prior year.

Cost of sales was 67.4% of revenue in the current quarter, an improvement of 130 basis points compared to the prior year. EMEA cost of sales improved by 480 basis points as a result of lower disruption costs and inefficiencies associated with manufacturing footprint changes in EMEA and favorable business mix. The Americas cost of sales improved 70 basis points over the prior year, driven by lower material costs, favorable business mix, on-going cost reduction efforts, and improvements in negotiated customer pricing, partially offset by higher warranty costs.

"In EMEA, we were pleased to see our business mix include improved day-to-day business and our operations continue to stabilize in its new footprint," said **Dave Sylvester**, senior vice president and CFO. "We have been shifting our focus toward improving our efficiency, realizing the targeted savings, and driving lean manufacturing principles and continuous cost reduction programs."

The year-over-year increase in operating expenses was attributed to investments in sales and marketing, the impact of an acquisition in the Americas, costs associated with the Learning + Innovation Center in Munich, and higher corporate costs.

Total liquidity, comprised of cash, short-term investments and the cash surrender value of company-owned life insurance, aggregated \$315 million, and total debt was \$299 million, at the end of the first quarter.

During the quarter, the company repurchased a total of 1.0 million shares of Class A Common Stock under its share repurchase authorizations for a total cost of \$14.8 million. A total of \$153.2 million remained under the company's share repurchase authorizations at the end of the first quarter.

The **Steelcase Board of Directors declared a cash dividend of \$0.12 per share**, to be paid on or before Jul. 15 to shareholders of record as of Jul. 5.

**Business Segment Results** (dollars in millions):

3 Mos. Ended	5.27.16	5.29.15	%Ch.
<b>Revenue</b>			
Americas	\$520.4	\$519.7	0.1%
EMEA	\$125.3	\$119.9	4.5%
Other	\$73.1	\$65.9	10.9%
<b>Operating income/loss</b>			
Americas	\$46.6	\$54.1	-13.9%
EMEA	-\$6.2	-\$13.5	-
Other	\$2.2	\$0.9	144.4%
<b>Revenue mix</b>			
Americas	72.4%	73.7%	3.9%
EMEA	17.4%	17.0%	0.0%
Other	10.2%	9.3%	

(The Americas segment serves customers in the U.S., Canada, the Caribbean Islands and Latin America with a portfolio of integrated architecture, furniture, and technology products marketed to corporate, government, healthcare, education, and retail customers through the Steelcase, Coalesse, and Turnstone brands. The EMEA segment serves customers in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa primarily under the Steelcase and Coalesse brands, with an emphasis on freestanding furniture systems, storage, and seating solutions. The Other category includes Asia Pacific, Designtex and PolyVision.)

### Outlook

Order patterns were mixed during the first quarter, growing by approximately 5% in the Other category and declining by 5% in the Americas and 12% in EMEA compared to the prior year. The decline in orders for the Americas compares to an 8% increase in the prior year, which benefited from very strong growth in the Insurance Services and Federal Government vertical markets. The Americas was also negatively impacted by a significant decline in orders across the Energy vertical market,

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which grew modestly in the prior year. In EMEA, the decline in orders was driven by continued weakness in the Middle East and Africa and a significant decline in the U.K. As a result, the company expects second quarter fiscal 2017 revenue to be in the range of \$770 to \$795 million, which reflects an expected decline of between 3% and 6% compared to the prior year. In the second quarter of fiscal 2016, the company reported revenue of \$819.0 million, which represented 4% growth over the prior year and 7% organic revenue growth.

"While we are forecasting an organic revenue decline in the second quarter, we remain positive about our longer-term prospects," said Dave Sylvester. "In the Americas and EMEA, the vertical markets and geographies which posted the most significant order declines in the first quarter represented less than 15% of total product orders, and the rest of the businesses posted flat to modest order growth overall. In addition, our internal estimates of project orders expected to ship in the next four quarters (including for projects that have not yet been awarded) reflect growth compared to a year ago."

Steelcase expects to report diluted earnings per share and adjusted earnings per share of between \$0.29 to \$0.33 for the second quarter of fiscal 2017. This estimate includes an anticipated significant year-over-year improvement in EMEA cost of sales as a percentage of revenue, primarily due to the expected elimination of disruption costs and inefficiencies associated with manufacturing footprint changes in EMEA. Steelcase reported diluted earnings per share of \$0.30 and adjusted earnings per share of \$0.35 in the second quarter of fiscal 2016.

"The five product awards won by Steelcase brands at NeoCon validate multiple aspects of our strategy," said Jim Keane. "We were recognized for being ahead in the development of technology solutions that provide meaningful information about how space is being used, and we were recognized for insight-based products and surface materials that promote engagement through a more inspiring and effective workplace. We look forward to bringing these and other products in our development pipeline to market in the coming quarters."

A replay of Steelcase's Jun. 23 conference call webcast, including presentation slides, and the complete text of the company's 1Q17 earnings release, including all tables, are available at <http://ir.steelcase.com>.

## TECHNOLOGY

**>Meet Configura's CET Designer User of the Month Maria Iovan:** With a bachelor of fine and decorative arts degree from Romania and a brief career in residential design, Maria Iovan now works as a designer at **Solutions Business Interiors** in Edmonton, Canada.

"I love creating moments of beauty in our daily routine," said Ms. Iovan. "Playing with materials, textures, colors and light is fun, and I enjoy seeing my clients' reactions when they look at my work and can visualize their space."

Ms. Iovan has been using CET Designer since 2014 when she started at Solutions Business Interiors. She says it has simplified the way she works. "Instead of using at least four different software products to complete a project, I can do almost everything I need in CET Designer," she said. "Clients love that they can get involved in the design process."

She especially likes creating fly-thru videos. Her interest in CET Designer's **Movie Studio Extension** earned her third place in the **2015 Best of CET Designer Awards** competition.

"When I decided to enter the Best of CET Designer Awards, I wanted to do something different," she said. "Since I entered the video category, my idea was to showcase the movie tool itself – not just the space or the furniture."

Her Best CET Designer tips: "Attend the webinars that Configura offers about CET Designer every month! And use **Edit Graphics** and the **Material Library** for better-looking renderings," she said. [Read More](#)



*Configura CET Designer User of the Month Maria Iovancaption*



*Configura Rendering created in CET Designer by Maria Iovan*



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