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A Day in the Life of Cheryl Durst

Editor-in-Chief Rob Kirkbride recently spent the day with IIDA Executive Vice President and CEO, Cheryl Durst, who is celebrating her 25th anniversary at one of the world's most important interior design organizations. A true visionary, she has opened up the profession to an entirely new and more diverse generation of designers.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 3...



A Law Office Designed for Collaboration and Inclusion

Design leader Unispace recently unveiled an art-filled Los Angeles office for the global law firm Orrick. Tasked with strategy, design, and construction, the architects created a space that highlights Orrick's culture of collaboration and inclusion. With artwork, casual lounge areas, and no corner offices, it is a modern legal workplace.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 10...



Formani's RIVIO Collection

Netherlands-based architectural hardware manufacturer Formani has introduced the RIVIO collection, designed in partnership with Gensler— a first-time collaboration for two companies dedicated to offering the highest-quality products. Even something as seemingly simple as a handle was transformed when the design teams came together.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 16...



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A Day in the Life of Cheryl Durst

by Rob Kirkbride

On her way to the office last week, IIDA Executive Vice President and CEO, Cheryl Durst got off the commuter train she takes into Chicago and saw an elderly woman wringing her hands. The 85-year-old woman was waiting to use the bathroom in the Ogilvie Transportation Center, which was being cleaned by the building's custodians.

A "Do Not Enter" fence was placed at the door so no one could use the women's room. By the time Durst reached the bathroom to help, a small crowd of women had gathered, all needing to use the facilities after a long commute into the city.

"I lead a small rally of women at the Ogilvie. It's Women's History Month, but we're facing tyranny of the bathroom. I get it. Bathrooms have to be cleaned, but at rush hour? Yeah. 'Come on,' I said to the woman. 'Come with me.' So I moved the fence and then I kind of knocked on the bathroom door."

She spoke to the cleaner. "She was a little bit rude and said, 'Well, they can go on the train.' I said, 'No, they all just got off the train and everybody has to get in a cab or go someplace or walk to their office and they have to go to the bathroom.' I'm like, 'You're cleaning sinks and counters and I fully respect your job, but my friend here who's 85 really has to go to the bathroom. It was such a lack of dignity moment for that woman and all these other women," said Durst.



Cheryl Durst chats with staff members and with guests from OFS who were on hand for the launch of the "Design Your World" children's book.



IIDA staff members discuss the organization's plans for the upcoming NeoCon, one of the busiest times of the year for the group.

Cheryl Durst prepares to tape her podcast, "Skill Set." Images by Rob Kirkbride

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If you want to understand Cheryl Durst, understand the story above. Durst, who is celebrating her 25th anniversary at one of the world's most important interior design organizations has literally and figuratively broken-down barriers her entire life and in the process, opened up the profession to an entirely new, much more diverse generation of designers.

When she sets her mind to something, she does it. She is curious and loves to read, obvious by the stacks of books found in her office that range from design tomes to business books and biographies. Durst can be funny and playful, but also serious and structured.

It is impossible to write about the history of IIDA without outlining Durst's contribution to the organization and design community. The two are intertwined. It is just as impossible to convey Durst's tenure at IIDA without covering her formative years leading up to it.

Her father was a University of Michigan professor; her mother a scientist and she grew up in Toledo, Ohio. She double-majored in journalism and economics at Boston University. "I always loved the idea of taking arcane subjects that people don't quite understand and making them easily understandable. So finance at the time

in the 1980s, everybody was talking about personal finance and 401Ks. And so I'd interned at the Wall Street Journal and WBUR was actually in my college of communications. And so I wrote business news," she said.

She graduated into a recession and there were few job opportunities. One of her college roommates was from Washington, D.C. and she moved to the capital where she became a substitute teacher. She taught in the D.C. schools for about four years where she taught advanced placement English and American history. On the weekends she volunteered at the Smithsonian museums.



Microphone are adjusted for the taping of Cheryl Durst's podcast "Skill Set."



Cheryl Durst is known for her glasses and she has several pieces of art in her office celebrating her specs.



Cheryl Durst introduces Maria VanDeman, Doug Shapiro and Kenzie Leon Perry at the "Design Your World" book launch last week.

people

It was a time when all public schools were struggling, especially in major metro areas like Washington. “I had 42 kids in my freshman homeroom and I had 30 desks. So one of my fellow teachers said, ‘Oh, well, we go to this place called the Design Center, and sometimes they have desks

or you can talk to people who have showrooms. And I actually ended up meeting someone who worked in the KI showroom. They loaned me chairs; they loaned me desks for my kids. It was my entree to the Washington Design Center, which was owned by the Merchandise Mart,” said Durst.



With just a few months to go before NeoCon, IIDA's leadership team hashes out its marketing plans.

The father of one of Durst's students would provide another connection to the world of design. He worked for Westinghouse and asked her if she had ever considered a career in sales. Durst left teaching to become a showroom manager and inside salesperson for Reff Furniture, the modern wood furniture maker from Toronto that would eventually be purchased by Knoll.

That led to a position at the Washington Design Center where she managed CEU courses. She also met Troy Durst who was part of the executive leadership team there. The two were married in the building.

Soon after, Troy Durst was transferred to Chicago to run the trade show division of theMART. Cheryl Durst was pregnant with the couple's first child. Troy Durst heard about a new design group, the International Interior Design Association, and that they were looking for a director of education. She applied and got the job.

The first few years at IIDA were not easy. The group, which was formed when several design organizations merged, was not doing well. Its leader resigned and the finances of IIDA were in question. A few years after she started with IIDA, she moved into the executive vice president and CEO role and the rest is history.

Durst began by proving the value of the group; that the profession would be stronger by sticking together. “We started talking about value as an organization,” she said. “After all, this is a voluntary membership organization. You are not required to be a member of IIDA. Your state doesn't require you – your employer doesn't require you to be part of it. You are not required by anything other than your own desire to be a part of this community that we call IIDA.”

The timing of the organization was perfect. It was the 1990s and people in the industry were talking about the



(left to right) Kenzie Leon Perry, Maria VanDeman and Doug Shapiro, who collaborated on the “Design Your World” children's book, make plans for the book's launch last week at IIDA's Chicago headquarters.

people

value of professional examinations. The credibility and value of the design profession was being discussed. Designers were grappling with design in the context of education as well.

"You had designers coming out of programs that were interior design programs, and you had designers coming out of programs that were interior design programs, but called themselves interior architecture," she said. "And then all of that companioned with how does the world of interior design meet the world of architecture? And is there a difference? And how do we explain that difference amongst ourselves and how do we explain that to our clients?"

The world of interior design was rapidly changing. Durst points to 1994 when Interface CEO Ray Anderson first laid out his environmental vision to the company's Environmental Task Force. It is the same year IIDA was founded.

"I remember meeting Ray, he came to one of our annual meetings in like 1998 or 1999 and he said, 'You know, I want to come back and talk to you and your members about how design can save the world.' We were at the tip of that iceberg in the 1990s," she said.

Through all the changes since, Durst has been there to guide the ship with a singular focus: Create a thoughtful, coherent community that supports the life of an interior designer. Has she been successful? Consider the fact that the organization had 6,000 members when she started. It has 15,000 members in 58 countries today. While it is a global organization, Durst considers its grassroots chapters as the place the true value of the group resides.

The profession continues to evolve and the IIDA along with it. Durst said she loves how designers are also referring to themselves as placemakers. The idea of crafting of place will continue to grow in importance.

"My belief is design is about what happens on the receiving end. It is not focused on the person who's doing

it, it's focused on the person who's receiving it. With that uppermost in the minds of the designer, it's about the creation of place. Space is great, but place is personal," she said. "We as human beings so identify with a sense of place. And whether that is the workplace or whether that's home or whether that is a park or a restaurant, this crafting of place is so tied in with creating experience. That's been the

trajectory that I've seen over two decades, as opposed to interior designers creating these very specific vignettes. We're creating the human experience and how people feel in a given moment at a given time in a given place."

Durst said she continues to be fascinated by the design profession, even 25 years later.

"One of the things that fascinate me about the design profession is that



Cheryl Durst addresses the designers gathered at IIDA headquarters for the "Design Your World" book launch.



IIDA's Chicago headquarters is a blend of products from all of the industry's top brands.

designers are who they are 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I don't mean to denigrate any other professions, but an accountant, I think you can put down your briefcase and put away your calculator and you can be Brenda the accountant for 10 hours a day, but then you can be Brenda for the rest of your time. But designers are designers through and through, mind, body, soul. I'm fascinated by that aspect of the profession."

Durst is not only a leader; she is a champion for design. In recent years, she has focused on diversity, equity and inclusion. She has also gone back to her teaching roots a bit. IIDA launched the "Design Your World" program as an educational pipeline driven by the mission to build equity and diversity in the design industry by providing high school students with exposure to the possibilities of a career in design. The inaugural program was launched in 2021 in Chicago in partnership with the education organization, After School Matters and with sponsorship from OFS, 3form, Mannington Commercial and Configura.

The mission is to advocate for the value of design, which includes giving agency and access to under-represented people through the built environment and power of place, and by sharing what careers are available and possible in the industry.

It is important to remember that Durst was young when she took her first position at IIDA. Though this story outlines Durst's 25-year career with IIDA, it is no eulogy. She still feels she has plenty to do, including writing a book.

But ultimately, it comes down to representing a profession she loves and teaching people how design can change the world.

She remembers back to a time when she was a teacher in Washington, D.C. One of her students was a 16-year-old freshman who had been held back

a few times. He always sat near the back of the room, but Durst could tell he had trouble seeing what was on the blackboard.

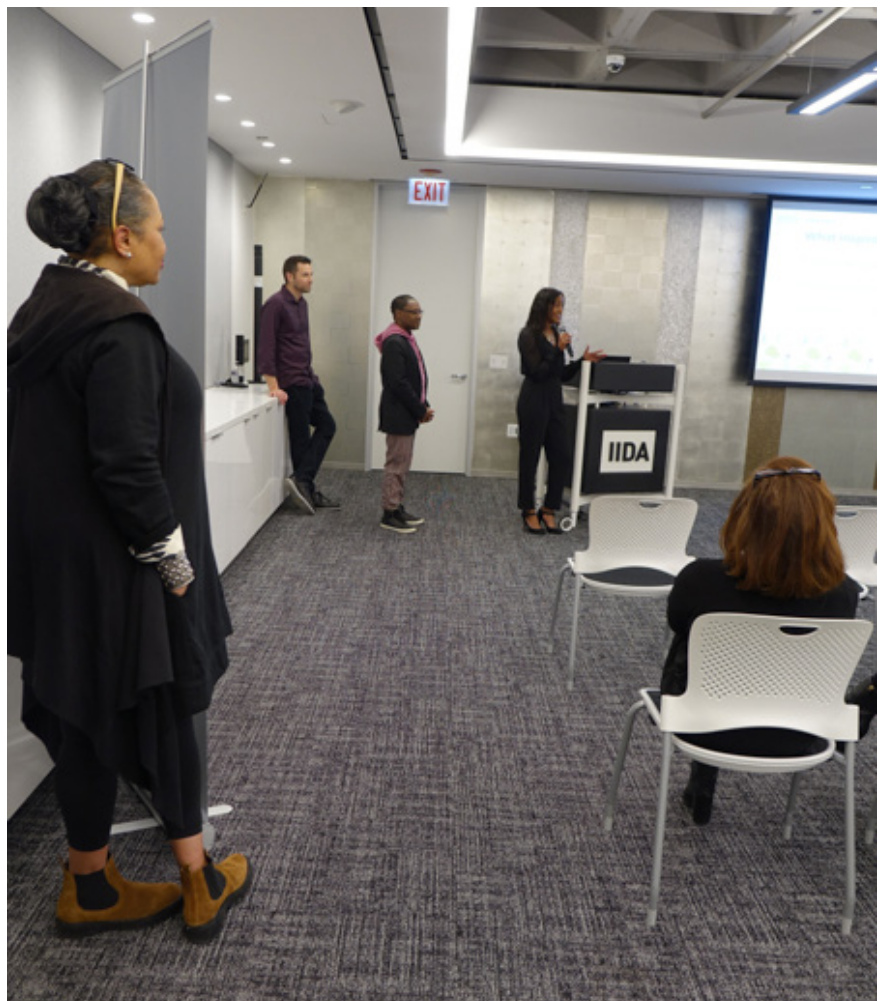
"I said to him, 'If you could put your desk anywhere in the classroom, where would you put it?' He looked at me funny and asked, 'I can move my desk?' At this point, all the other students are listening and in my head, I'm channeling my dad, who looked at everything as a teachable moment. I said to the student, Al, 'How about if we move your desk, like physically pick it up and move it?' He asked if we could put it by the window. So we picked up his desk and he moved by the window. And so when one kid does that, I have to let everybody do that.

And I said, 'Everybody, let's pick up your desk. Let's put your desks wherever you want to, today.'

"Al put himself next to the window. And he smiled. I said, 'We're going to do this again tomorrow, and you're going to sit next to the window. And you are going to do it the day after and the day after that.'"

With the advent of social media, Durst heard from her former student Al a few years ago. He's a mechanical engineer.

"He said, 'You put me in the sunlight.' For his entire life, people told Al where he should sit, but all of a sudden he had the power to change his environment. With that one simple act he said, 'You saw me.'"



Cheryl Durst watches on as Maria VanDeman speaks along with book collaborators Kenzie Leon Perry and Doug Shapiro.

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Unispace designed a modern office in Los Angeles for law firm Orrick. Photos courtesy of Unispace

A Law Office Designed for Collaboration and Inclusion

by Anna Zappia

Design leader Unispace recently unveiled a new, art-filled downtown Los Angeles office for the global law firm Orrick. Tasked with strategy, design, and construction, Unispace created a space that highlights Orrick's culture of collaboration and inclusion. "Orrick puts a premium on belonging and inclusivity. It's part of their culture, which is unique for a law firm," said Chely Wright, chief diversity officer at Unispace.

The architects focused on creating a space to inspire employees, while also making a positive community impact via art. Through Unispace's Art for Impact (AFI) program, which connects businesses, artists, and nonprofits, the law firm was paired with Los Angeles-based contemporary artist Robert Vargas. A set of anchor murals by Vargas in the reception area sets the tone as staff and clients enter the 26,000-square-foot office. "L.A. is associated with Hollywood glamor, but also an urban grit. In the front-of-house

these dark walls serve as the backdrop for these beautiful murals," noted Marianne Weiss, Unispace design principal.

While the colors echo the vitality of the city, the murals reflect Orrick's partnership with the nonprofit organization A New Way of Life (ANWOL), which provides services for formerly incarcerated women as they re-enter society. Weiss explained that after further discussion, they decided to curate a gallery of work from artists as diverse as the law firm's attorneys. "In the final collection there are pieces from LGBTQ artists, transgender artists, those that are dealing with immigration issues, and those that are differently-abled. And the staff actually sees themselves represented in the office in a way that they hadn't before."

The Unispace strategy was centered on how employees would function in a truly hybrid environment, which began with sessions to learn about day-to-day job functions and varied lifestyles. "The meetings were a real voice for the

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The Orrick team values equality, so unlike in a traditional firm, there are no corner offices for partners.



The office is filled with colorful artwork that is a reflection of the staff and the community at large, including a set of murals by Robert Vargas.

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people, not just the associates or the junior attorneys, but also the administrative folks. To drill down and really understand the experiences of a group of people, it's not just one phone call. It takes several long conversations to build trust," Wright noted.

An analysis of the findings found that Orrick employees were ready to embrace hoteling for hybrid work. The architects incorporated a blend of micro-offices and community sections—reducing the footprint by approximately 60 percent. The LEED Gold-certified project is one demonstration of Orrick's prioritization of sustainability goals. "Orrick has made the commitment to go carbon neutral, and to do that they have to reduce," Weiss said.

She added that inclusivity was extended to each of the spaces within the workplace via a lack of hierarchy, which is not often found in the legal profession. "Typically in a law firm, the partners are put on the perimeter. Here, there are no corner offices, and all of the offices for the attorneys are the same size. And then there are these collaboration spaces that sit in the middle where everyone can come together. There's no longer that sense of division where you have the partner standing in the doorway talking to an associate."

These areas were designed to foster working relationships among colleagues of all ages, as well as provide places for networking. "There has to

be a reason, a purpose, for bringing people back into the office. This layout and these spaces promote a new kind of mentoring. And there is real value in younger generations being able to see behaviors modeled and learning on the job," Wright said.

Even the color palette in the workplace was curated with a range of sensitivities in mind, rather than a smattering of logo-centric branding hues front and center. "Neurodiverse populations respond to color in different ways," Weiss noted. "We chose a suite of nine colors and did blocks of offices in those shades. Some people want an all-white, incredibly calm room, while others want a little more vibrancy. So we gave the lawyers options."

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Attorneys can relax or read legal briefs in the lounge areas that have a hospitality vibe.

Weiss also explained that pieces were selected for functionality but are still relaxed, not strictly contract furnishings. “We really wanted to support different postures, so some of the collaboration spaces have an open feel that’s based on a hotel lobby, with lounge or sectional-type seating. And somebody can lie down on the sofa and read a brief if they want to. That was the kind of casualness they wanted to have in the office.”

Indeed, productivity and comfort can coexist, even in sectors that are considered too structured. Orrick’s L.A. workspace strikes an easy and enviable balance. “We are trying to set up versions of home at the office, and we are finding that we can have these different experiences. Things don’t have to be so formal, and that’s an exciting transformation,” Wright added. ■



The spaces in the office are casual, designed for collaborative work or socializing.

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Formani's RIVIO Collection

by Anna Zappia

Netherlands-based architectural hardware manufacturer Formani has introduced the RIVIO collection, designed in partnership with Gensler—a first-time collaboration for two companies dedicated to offering the highest-quality products. Even something as seemingly simple as a handle was transformed. “We’re always striving to improve user experience with our designs, and this collection, with its unique ergonomics, is no exception,” said Scott Star, director of product development and co-global practice area leader at Gensler.

Founded in 1995, Formani specializes in fittings for doors, windows, and furniture, in addition to other accessories. “Our style is unique, but with a Dutch simplicity. And obviously, we are specialized because we only make door handles, cabinet pulls, and the other hardware. We focus on the total concept, so when you choose a handle you have the same look for the entire product family. It is a 360-degree viewpoint,” noted Pim Aarts, owner and managing director, Formani.

The company has grown from a family business to a global brand that frequently works with world-class designers and architectural firms such as Piet Boon, Tord Boontje, and David Rockwell. With just under a dozen successful collaborations already completed, Aarts was interested in an expanded presence in the America – which continues to be a complex endeavor. “We have focused on the U.S. for the last few years, seeking strategic partners and concentrating on outreach. But coming from Europe and trying to move forward in this market is not easy. It has been a long road, but we are getting there,” Aarts said.

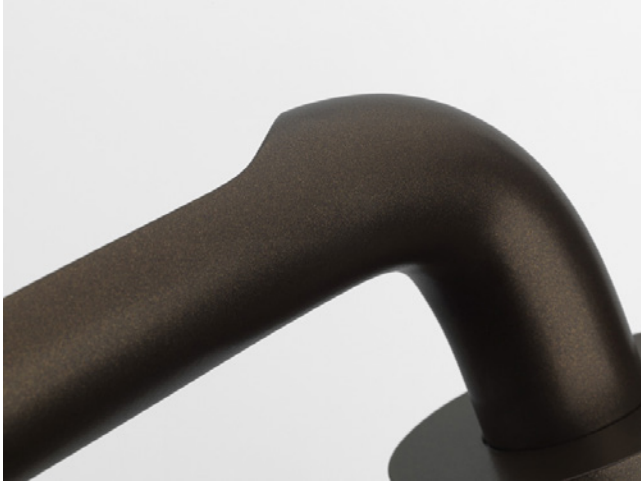
Well aware of the firm’s reputation, Aarts was undaunted and made the connection quickly. “For us it doesn’t get bigger or better than Gensler, and I finally just sent an email. It really was as simple as that, and I heard back from Scott the next morning. That’s how it started,” he said.

There is a surprising alignment between the disparate companies—both touch every corner of the globe. “We are relatively small compared to Gensler, this massive compa-



Formani's new RIVIO hardware collection was designed in collaboration with Gensler. Photos courtesy of Formani

products



Specifiers can choose curved handles that have an elegant look.



The 90-degree angle variation has a more contemporary style.

ny,” Aarts noted. “They are everywhere in the world, and we have distributors in more than 50 countries. So wherever you can find a Gensler office, there is somebody selling our products. That’s what we have in common.”

Designing with so many teams, however, was a new experience for those at Formani. They often work with one designer who proposes a few styles which are then selected for a line. For the RIVIO Collection, a variety of options were presented

for each segment. “Gensler brought a lot of people on board from different backgrounds. There was one designer for office and another for restaurants, and so on. That design process was a real luxury for us,” Aarts added.

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Transition was the watchword for the Gensler designers. Carved through the center of its circular section and transitioning from slender to solid, the flowing cutaway of the handle allows the thumb and fingers to engage in a more natural way. The elegant piece is offered in two variations, curved or a 90-degree angle leading to the neck and rose.

Crafted of stainless steel with state-of-the-art CNC and VMC machinery specifically designed for milling and turning parts, all of the products in the collection are available in four finishes: satin stainless steel, Physical vapor

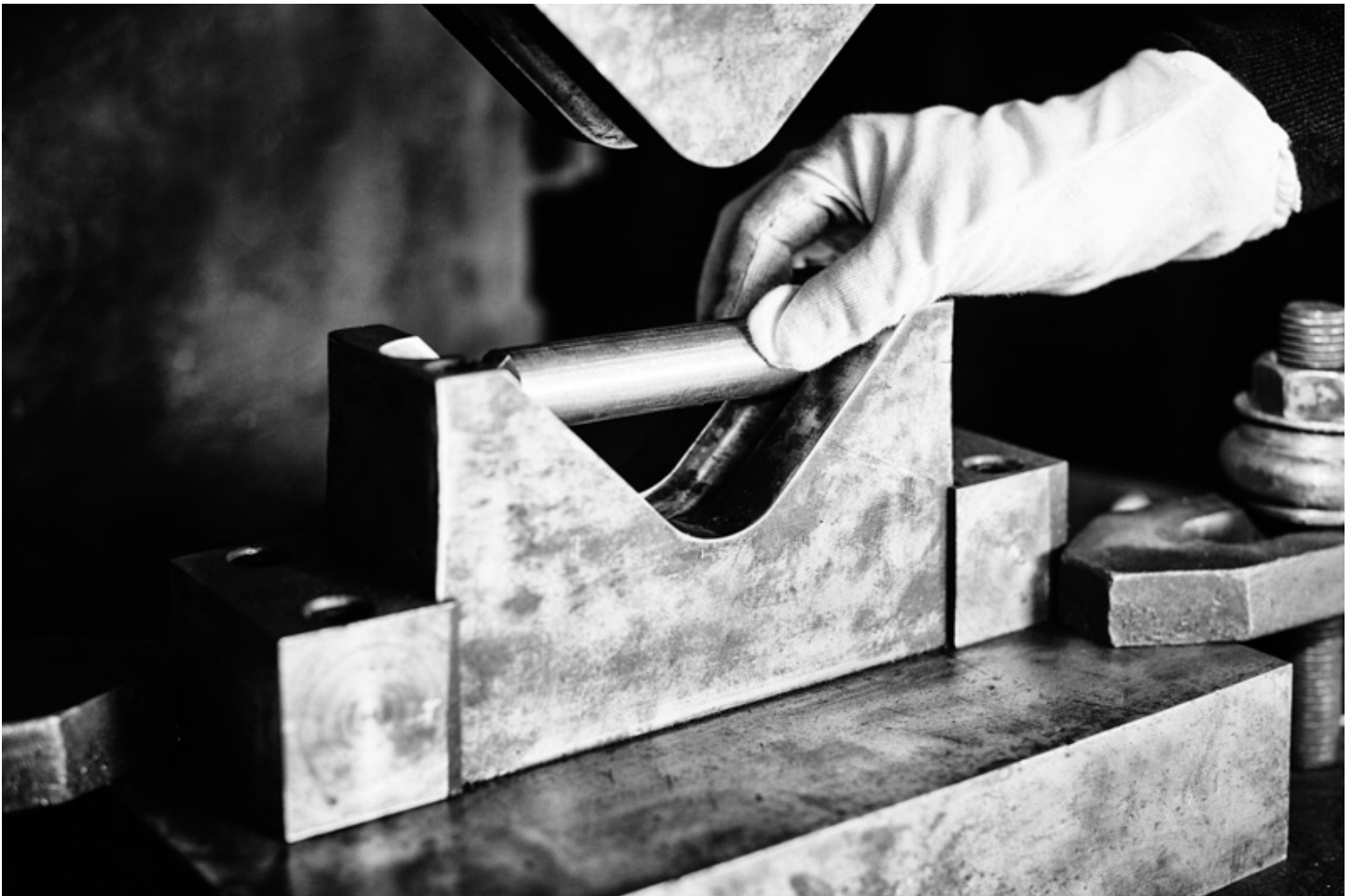
deposition (PVD) satin gold, PVD satin black, and bronze powder coat.

Physical vapor deposition is a process in which a solid material is vaporized in a vacuum and deposited onto the surface of a part. These coatings are not simply layers of metal, but they actually change the properties of the metal surface itself. PVD hardware is highly resistant to corrosion and acidity from hands. "It is best in hospitality settings where many people are touching the handles every day," Aarts noted.

The style and form make the RIVIO pieces ideal in any interior. "Whether

used in a hospitality setting, residential environment, office, or retail space, the shapes are haptically engaging and make even the shortest of interactions easier and more enjoyable," Star said.

Aarts noted that while each company has distinct operations, they were united in their vision. "We always search for partners that have a similar design philosophy, and Gensler has much of the same in their DNA. We had that, combined with their knowledge and professionalism, and it worked really well for us," Aarts added. ■



The pieces are crafted of stainless steel with state-of-the-art machinery.

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RESEARCH-DESIGN CONNECTION

Virtual Office Research

by Sally Augustin, Ph.D.

Latini, Di Giuseppe, and D'Orazio have determined that research outcomes obtained in virtual reality settings are useful in real world applications. They conducted research in real and immersive office spaces finding "No significant results variation between real and virtual offices. . . . participants performed one test session in a real or a virtual room, three cognitive tasks and surveys (on immersivity, cybersickness, comfort, and intention of interaction). The validation process was addressed by evaluating the adequacy of VR in representing real-life scenarios and the benchmark



of results. Findings confirmed the ecological validity of the model by an excellent sense of presence, graphical satisfaction, involvement, realism and low cybersickness levels. The absence of significant differences between the results on comfort, productivity, and behaviour, collected in the real and virtual settings, supported the criterion validity. Results highlighted the potentialities of applying VR to support a user-centred design and investigations on multi-domain comfort." ■

Arianna Latini, Elisa Di Giuseppe, and Marco D'Orazio. 2023. "Immersive Virtual vs Real Office Environments: A Validation Study for Productivity, Comfort and Behavioural Research." *Building and Environment*, vol. 230, 109996, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.buildenv.2023.109996>

Sally Augustin, PhD, is the editor of *Research Design Connections* (www.researchdesignconnections.com). *Research Design Connections* reports on research conducted by social and physical scientists that designers can

apply in practice. Insights derived from recent studies are integrated with classic, still relevant findings in concise, powerful articles. Topics covered range from the cognitive, emotional, and physiological implications of sensory and other physical experiences to the alignment of culture, personality, and design, among others. Information, in everyday language, is shared in a monthly subscription newsletter, an archive of thousands of published articles, and a free daily blog. 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) and can be reached at sallyaugustin@designwithscience.com.

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Fill in the empty cells so that every row, column and cube contains a digit from 1-9, without duplication. (Level: Easy)

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PRODUCT INTROS

>Designtex introduced three new easy-to-clean vinyls and two premium silicones.

Combining performance and creativity, bold geometric patterns and expressive hand-drawn designs are digitally printed onto these hardworking textiles.

The new vinyls include **Tan-gram**, a large-scale angular design inspired by puzzles and available in six lively colorways; **Line Up**, a smooth coated vinyl with a small-scale linear pattern, Greenguard Gold-certified and available in seven colorways; and **Curve**, featuring a dynamic pattern

and printed top stitch that adds interest and dimension to the free-hand brush strokes, available in seven creative colorways. The new silicones are **Silicone Lane**, which combines precise linework and bright hues to create a calming ambience indoors or outside, available in seven colorways; and **Silicone Skyline**, inspired by abstract landscapes with tonal and textured rectangles creating a visually-pleasing backdrop both from far away and close up, available in six eye-catching colorways. [Read More](#)

>HON launched two new products: Universal Screens and Flexion.

From standalone offices to training rooms to workstations, HON Universal Screens are a solution inspired by the dual need for optimizing shared open spaces and establishing a sense of privacy in bustling office zones. HON created Universal Screens to keep productivity at its peak and help define boundaries without discouraging connection. With visual barriers available in a wide variety of material options and personal tool accessories to encourage personalized comfort and control, the product naturally blends into any workspace, integrating seamlessly with



Designtex: Silicone Lane and Silicone Skyline



HON: Flexion



Designtex: Vinyls (L-R) Tangram, Line Up, Curve



HON: Universal Screens

an existing desk or benching platform by means of simple bracket attachments. Recognizing that productivity also depends highly on comfort is the inspiration behind The Flexion Chair; the innovative office chair concept with a flexible seat and back that move in relation to natural body movement. HON wanted to develop a sleek, light-scale seating solution that supports an on-the-go workstyle, with minimum adjustment and ample comfort. HON's Flexion Chair allows for dynamic postures, relieves pressure points, and moves and adapts to the user, their body, and their day. [Read More](#)

>Luxxbox unveiled Cono, a new acoustic light fixture for commercial, hospitality, and high-end residential applications. It offers powerful noise absorption capabilities with a contemporary PET cone structure. The playful contrast of its cone-shape, distinctive black finial, and upholstered textural wool finish adds

character. Cono is offered in multiple output options, including a glass-diffused ambient light source. The conical shape also optimizes acoustic performance, lowering the volume in open spaces. It is available in two sizes and 51 colorways. The pendant is crafted from premium New Zealand wool and PET material manufactured from recycled plastics. "When designing Cono, we wanted to create a unique and playful cone acoustic pendant," said

Jason Bird, Founder and Creative Director of Luxxbox. "We played with form and new materials, contrasting the textural outer wool finish with the sculpted black finial." [Read More](#)

>Poltrona Frau launched Bay System, a modular seating designed in close collaboration with Foster + Partners.

The system is particularly suited to cater to transportation infrastructure and design such as throughout airports and train stations, but it is

equally suited to commercial, education and healthcare spaces. It offers two main ranges – **Bay Gate** and **Bay Lounge** – that have been designed to offer different levels of ergonomic support and privacy. The primary structure is common between the two systems, with twin central beams creating a simple support for a single row or two rows of seats. The area between the two beams conceals space for cabling and provides space to integrate future technologies. Power sockets, induction charging for phones, personal screens and lighting fixtures can all be integrated in a plug-and-play manner, allowing for infinite flexibility. The seats vary across the two ranges. Bay Gate provides efficient, high-density seating for areas with short wait times, such as boarding gates. It is made entirely of hard-wearing, recyclable materials such as nylon, with an ergonomically molded plastic seat and slim armrest. Bay Lounge's curved



Luxxbox: Cono



Poltrona Frau: Bay System

seating is based on in-depth studies to understand how people like to sit when they are unaccompanied or in small and large groups. Taking a tailored approach, it offers a range of layouts with varying levels of comfort, enclosure, and privacy. It features a wider cushioned seat and premium finishes for longer periods of rest and relaxation. [Read More](#)

>Studio TK expanded its recent product launch Pico—an inviting, warm, and welcoming lounge chair—with a new four-legged wood base option. Pico was designed in collaboration with famed Danish designers Flemming Busk and Stephan Hertzog of busk+hertzog. Often inspired

by the shapes and lines found in nature, the duo folded paper to create Pico's organic shape that promotes comfort and encourages free movement. The low and high-back versions open users to various sitting postures. The modularity of Pico also permits a wide range of fabric combinations (from Luum, Kvadrat, and Maharam) that allows for an expressive use of color, texture, and material. Pico's wood bases are offered in five distinct light-to-dark shades: Basque White Oak, Sierra, Cocoa Brown, Truffle, and Natural Oak. The warm wood toned-bases answer the call for biophilic elements to include in transitional outdoor-in designs. [Read More](#)

officenewswire



Studio TK: Pico Lounge now includes four-legged wood base option

NOTEWORTHY

>Marnique Heath, Board Chair of STUDIOS Architecture, earned elevation to the AIA College of Fellows. The recognition was bestowed for her advancing the profession through civic stewardship, social awareness, and advocacy for underrepresented communities. While co-leading an international architecture firm with over 250 colleagues in Washington, DC, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Paris, and Lyon, she uses the power of her voice to lead change within the practice of architecture. With a focus on the greater common good, at the appointment of Mayor Muriel Bowser, she chairs the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board, and she previously chaired the District of Columbia Board

of Zoning Adjustment. In addition to elevating the work of architects from around the world in design reviews and critiques as she protects the cultural heritage of our nation's capital, she amplifies the history of marginalized communities by creating new historic districts and landmarks, including Kingman Park Historic District and Barry Farm Historic District—both historically Black neighborhoods. Recent STUDIOS projects include the transformation of the 200-year-old Franklin Park in downtown Washington, DC into an active, sustainable, and inclusive neighborhood-serving park fit for the 21st century, while seamlessly celebrating the park's rich history. Presently, she is leading the revitalization of the historic Bond Bread Factory

and Washington Railway & Electric Company site for Howard University into a 600,000sf mixed-use destination in the bustling Shaw neighborhood of Washington, DC. [Read More](#)



Marnique Heath

>Justin Ramirez was promoted to director of mergers and acquisitions for Zweig Group.

“Justin’s promotion to director of M&A advisory recognizes the growth of this area of Zweig Group and the need for strong, focused, ambitious leadership,” said Jamie Claire Kiser, managing principal and director of advisory services. “His expertise, attention to detail, outstanding ability to build relationships and navigate negotiations with graciousness and expediency are unmatched. We are certain that under Justin’s direction, our M&A practice will continue to flourish.” Prior to joining Zweig Group, Ramirez was a third-party provider risk analyst at Arvest Bank, where he oversaw annual inherent risk assessments on more than 3,500 independent third parties. He also has more than nine years of experience in the construction industry and holds a B.S.B.A. in

finance and accounting from the University of Arkansas and a Juris Doctor from the University of Arkansas, School of Law in Fayetteville. [Read More](#)



Justin Ramirez

>Emerald announced new promotions in its Hospitality Group:

-Keisha Byrd was named Brand Leader of BDNy and BD’s portfolio of non-trade-show events, including the BD Forum series, BD Match, and Gold Key Awards. For the past nine years, Byrd has led BD-branded conferences and events as part of BDNy’s inaugural team. Her leadership as BD’s Conference and Events Manager, and most recently, as Director of Strategic Events for HD and BD, gives her a unique perspective on both brands. She has played an essential role in overseeing



Keisha Byrd

and planning the Hospitality Design and Boutique Design portfolios of media and networking events, connecting the hospitality industry through shared experiences.

-Rachel Long was named Brand Leader of HD Expo + Conference and HD’s networking and awards events, including HD Summit, HD NextGen Forum, HD Awards, HD Platinum Circle. The brands will collaborate to produce Hospitality Group CitySCENE franchise events. Long has been an integral part of HD’s history, spending 25 years with the brand as an editor and on the HD Expo + Conference launch team before joining Interior Design and Material Bank in VP Experience roles for a decade. She rejoined Emerald as VP Content of the Design Group in 2019 and has been the driving force behind the content of HD Expo + Conference and the brand’s think tank-focused events, sourcing speakers and key attendees. In their new roles, Byrd and Long will oversee the day-to-day operations for their respective brands, reporting to Kevin Gaffney, who was recently promoted to Group Vice President, Design Group, Emerald. [Read More](#)



Rachel Long

>Resource Furniture announced seven promotions and role changes across multiple departments:

-Challie Stillman, with over 13 years at Resource Furniture, shifted from Vice President of Sales & Design to Vice President of Marketing & Brand Strategy. Stillman will also continue overseeing the marketing department, public relations efforts, and showroom design.

-Christine Salzer, after growing from sales consultant to executive leadership over the course of 12 years, has now stepped from Vice President of Operations into the role of Vice President of Sales, where she’ll oversee all showroom managers and sales teams to increase revenue and identify growth opportunities, starting from the showroom floor.

-Pat Pujols, an expert in finance management and internal affairs, will utilize her seven years of experience with Resource Furniture and new role of Vice President of Finance & Operations to oversee both the finance and operations departments, with increased transparency and interdependency between the two functions of the company. Additional promotions include **Pieter Depreeuw** to Director of Project Management & Technical Services, overseeing all project managers and installation teams; **Samantha Cunningham** to Director of Operations, managing purchasing, inventory, and vendor communications; and **Massimo Zambon** to Controller, responsible for key financial reporting. Resource

Furniture also announce the hire of **Brian Ricci** as Director of People & Culture. In this newly-created role, Ricci will be responsible for hiring, onboarding, internal communication structures, conducting employee surveys, planning team-building events, and more. [Read More](#)

>The IIDA Foundation and John J. Nelson Sr. named the recipients of the 2022 John J. Nelson Sr. Legacy Scholarship. This fund was established to support diversity and further the study of interior design and architecture by students of African American descent. Scholarship recipients include **Brianna Toussaint** of the School of Visual Arts, New York, and **Kambria Lauderdale** of California State University, Sacramento. "One of IIDA Foundation's greatest honors is supporting and recognizing emerging designers," said IIDA Executive Vice President and CEO Cheryl S. Durst. "As an association and community, funds like this help drive the common goal across the design industry of amplifying the talents of Black students and providing assistance as they begin their careers. We're thankful to John J. Nelson Sr. for his role in this crucial support year after year." [Read More](#)

>IIDA NY's winners of the second annual Hazel Siegel Scholarship participated at IIDA Texas Oklahoma Chapter's SHIFT Student Conference in downtown Dallas. In early February, the scholarship recipients attended

various programs, networking with professionals, and engaging in friendly competition. In its first year of determining recipients, IIDA NY's Student Development Group chose three candidates who not only demonstrated outstanding academic achievement but were also committed volunteers to the chapter through the Knowledge Forum Committee. The three recipients of this year's award—**Ashima Yadav** of The New School, Parsons School of Design, **Joseph Olivieri** of New York Institute of Technology, and **Teresa Uhl** of Rochester Institute of Technology—were awarded an all-expense paid trip to the conference. The three-day event began with an

invitation-only Student Design Charette, conducted virtually due to the ongoing snow and ice storm in Dallas. Separated into teams, students were challenged to hone both their design capabilities and collaboration skills. The following day consisted of mock interviews, portfolio reviews, workshops, roundtable discussions, and CEU product presentations, all leading up to an industry expo. Networking opportunities allowed students to connect with professional design firms and opened them up to furthering their professional experiences with interview opportunities. On the final day of the conference, designers and vendors hosted a panel discussion on

healthcare design, discussing today's needs, challenges, and future opportunities. Following that, students gathered into smaller groups for bus tours to various architectural firms and showrooms. This IIDA NY scholarship program serves to honor the legacy of Hazel Siegel, an acclaimed textile designer and chapter member who held numerous leadership positions and received numerous honors over 40 years of dedicated service to the chapter. After Siegel's passing in 2020, IIDA NY developed an initiative to honor her memory and all that she gave to the industry. Following the SHIFT Conference, the Hazel Siegel Scholarship recipients will be supported by IIDA NY in their academic endeavors. In addition to being called back for next year's applicant review, these students will also serve on the Hazel Siegel Scholarship Alumni Program, mentoring new winners through their school life and their transition into a career path in the design industry. [Read More](#)



IIDA NY: Hazel Siegel Scholarship winners (L-R) Ashima Yadav, Teresa Uhl, Joseph Olivieri

RE-SITED

>Gray Dougherty joined KOVA as Director of Architecture. In this role, he will lead KOVA's "Connect" team to collaboratively identify, develop, and deliver innovative products in this expanding category for the company. Gray is a connector of ideas, people, and solutions. Having grown up in a family of architects who inspired him to seek out the intersection of

analytical and design thinking, he seeks inspiration in as many different forms as possible, whether it's walking through cities, reading and watching films, or immersing himself in nature on his snowboard or boat. His extensive professional background most recently includes co-leading a studio at Gensler focused on higher education architecture and growing the government practice across Northern California, Oregon, and Washington. With a passion for research, he collaborates with his teams to develop innovative product solutions that are more cost effective and efficient, while simultaneously addressing the climate crisis through responsible building and construction processes. In his new role, he sees great opportunity in KOVA's delivery model to better facilitate that input and impact. Dedicated to developing a deeper understanding of componentized architecture and the product design process, he will take a hands-on approach assisting with bringing KOVA's groundbreaking, soon-to-launch system, Modwall, to market. [Read More](#)



Gray Dougherty

>Lauren Gauthier joined SGA as Director of Architecture for the firm's Academic team. Gauthier is an experienced designer, planner, and registered architect with a focus on strategic planning and design in the academic realm, especially independent schools, and higher education. She comes to SGA after working for several major architectural firms where she worked on many prominent academic projects, including Coburn Hall at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell; Snell Experiential Library at Northeastern University; Sterling Chemistry Lab at Yale University; Middlesex School's Theater and Performing Arts Center; The Pike School's master plan; and the Fessenden School Science Center in Newton, MA, among others. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture from the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning at Cornell University. Her professional affiliations include the AIA, Boston Society of Architects, and Society of College and University Planning. [Read More](#)



Lauren Gauthier

>Bhavini Hardev was named Studio Manager, Interior Architecture & Design in Ware Malcomb's San Francisco office. In this role, she is responsible for leading the growth and management of the Interior Architecture & Design Studio and managing select projects. A licensed architect in California, Hardev has more than 15 years of experience, working at multiple AE firms before joining Ware Malcomb. She demonstrates a deep understanding of the human impacts of the built environment, prioritizing the design of quality spaces to promote and cultivate the lives of people and communities. In her most recent role, she focused on the architecture and interior design of hospitality projects, working on new construction projects as well as renovations. She continues to serve her community as a volunteer mentor to high school students interested in exploring careers in design and construction. In addition, she is a volunteer baker for Cake4Kids, a non-profit organization that delivers birthday cakes to underserved youth in the community. [Read More](#)



Bhavini Hardev

>Jewel Kayfes joined LRS Architects as Director of Business Development & Marketing. Kayfes has 14 years of experience leading large-scale teams in winning and maintaining client and partnership relationships that meet a company's strategic vision. Her straightforward and influential personal work style helps establish cohesive and collaborative work environments that bring out the best in each team member. As a creative and strategic thinker, she prioritizes implementing policies and procedures that increase engagement and brand visibility. Kayfes was honored with the 2020 Women of Vision Award by the Daily Journal of Commerce for her accomplishments in the built environment and her mentoring role for women in the workplace. She is a National Delegate and former President of CREW Portland and a member of the SMPS Oregon chapter, where her team won several awards for their work. [Read More](#)



Jewel Kayfes

>Jake Loftis joined AHF Products as its new Chief Operating Officer. In this role, he has overarching responsibility for the critical areas of Manufacturing Operations, EH&S, Supply Chain, Procurement, Quality, Logistics, Product Innovation, and Continuous Improvement. Loftis brings a wealth of experience in both product innovation and productivity. His career spans 33 years of military and corporate leadership experience. He has been a top contributor to the success of major brands like Milwaukee, Hover, WeatherGuard®, DeWalt®, Sharpie®, Irwin, Werner®, Rubbermaid®, Porter Cable®, Black & Decker®, Graco® and Lenox®. He also is a U.S. Army Veteran, Six Sigma Blackbelt, certified Project Manager and Leadership Coach. "Jake is a decisive, growth-focused executive with remarkable operations leadership experience with a focus on manufacturing, supply chain, distribution, transportation, and customer service," said AHF Products CEO Brian Carson. "He is adept at bringing strategic vision and innovative approach to achieve customer-focused goals, business transformation and revenue expansion." [Read More](#)



Jake Loftis

>Angela Saladino joined Landscape Forms as its new Lighting Regional Sales Representative for the Southeast Region. She will provide lighting sales support in Maryland, Washington DC, Virginia, West Virginia, Eastern Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida. In this role, she will collaborate with clients, Landscape Forms business development representatives, and lighting agencies to provide them with lighting and support services. Saladino brings a wealth of experience to Landscape Forms. She has worked for lighting manufacturers, in distribution, and assisting with the implementation of utility rebate programs for small businesses. Prior to joining Landscape Forms, she worked for lighting distributor Illuminating Technologies, where she was involved with all aspects of her projects, from product selection and photometrics to assisting electricians and owners onsite. She received her LC (Lighting Certification) in 2012 and continues to educate herself on the latest technologies. [Read More](#)



Angela Saladino

>Ben Stich joined Room & Board Business Interiors as National Business Sales Manager. Stich has led regional, national, and North American sales efforts within the commercial furniture industry for more than 17 years. He has implemented numerous rebranding efforts, product launches and factory expansions to better serve customer needs. His passion for leading and supporting effective sales teams, providing creative solutions with a client-focused approach and expertly formulating strategies for growth that maximize the customer experience will continue to enhance Room & Board's commercial capabilities. [Read More](#)



Ben Stich

>Global Furniture Group, USA welcomed new Regional Sales Managers in the West: **-Blake Brotherson** is the new Regional Sales Manager of Northern California, Northern Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska. With more than 17 years of experience in the contract furniture industry, Brotherson has an extensive background across multiple verticals, including the healthcare

and government markets. In his previous role as owner/principal of CFS Commercial Interiors, he oversaw strategic growth planning and new business development for the Bay Area. Throughout his career, he has developed a diverse network of industry connections, including A+D, Commercial Brokerage, Public Sector and Commercial End Users as well as many Dealer Principals. Blake believes in strong working values that deliver a successful project from start to finish



Blake Brotherson

-Christy Bouquet is the new Regional Sales Manager of Southern California, Southern Nevada, and Arizona. Bouquet has more than 25 years in the contract furniture industry, with an emphasis on the California region. Her most recent roles include Director of Strategic Growth, Senior Workplace Success Strategist and Market Development Director. She has an extensive background in dealer sales and is a practiced negotiator and decisive leader with an adaptable approach. She prides herself in nurturing strong relationships and passionately mentors

young individuals to develop into strong leaders. With a competitive strategy paralleled with her high energy, she strongly believes in a team approach to achieve goals and surpass customer expectations. [Read More](#)



Christy Bouquet

ENVIRONMENT

>Norwegian urban furniture producer Vestre plans to be the first furniture company in the world to use fossil-free steel from Swedish steel company SSAB in their production. The technology for fossil-free steelmaking that SSAB has developed is

based on the HYBRIT initiative (Hydrogen Breakthrough Ironmaking Technology), which SSAB started in 2016 together with the mining company LKAB and the energy company Vattenfall. With the help of this technology, where coal and coke are replaced with fossil-free hydrogen, SSAB has the potential to reduce Sweden's CO₂ emissions by around 10%. In 2021 SSAB successfully produced the first steel reduced with 100% fossil-free hydrogen. The goal is to offer fossil-free steel on the market in 2026.

Vestre has always strived to be at the forefront of the green shift and is quick to test new technologies and solutions to reduce their climate impact: from having tied all business strategies directly to 9 of the UN's 17 global sustainability goals in the Agenda 2030, to exclusively use high-quality materials, such as Swedish steel and Nordic woods from sustainable forestry, in their

production. In 2022, Vestre also opened the doors to The Plus – the world's most environmentally friendly furniture factory, located in Magnor in Norway, near the Swedish border. Along the way, Vestre has worked with several groundbreaking sustainability projects, for example, creating furniture from plastic waste collected on beaches and in the ocean, creating fair stands where all materials have been reused, and developing Vestre Habitats – a project and a series of furniture for the smallest inhabitants of the planet – which aims to preserve and strengthen biological diversity in our cities.

"When we learned about the HYBRIT process and SSAB's fossil-free steel, we immediately saw this as a big part of our solution towards a net-zero future and contacted SSAB to place an order," said Vestre Sustainability Officer Øyvind Bjørnstad. "Early estimates show that converting all our steel to fossil-free could

reduce our overall footprint by around 60%. We intend to be a driving force for demand for the fossil-free alternative, and as the prices of the EU's mandatory carbon dioxide quotas increase, there will be increased pressure on the steel industry to also reduce carbon dioxide emissions." Later this spring, Vestre, together with one of Scandinavia's most celebrated designers, will present an exciting project based on SSAB's fossil-free steel. "Fossil-free steel has great potential, and even if it will only be available in small quantities at first, it will have a big impact for us," said Bjørnstad. "SSAB is a pioneer in this area, and since we have had a long collaboration with them on our current steel – which has more than 20% lower emissions than the world average – it was only natural that we became a partner on the journey towards fossil-free steel." [Read More](#) ■



Vestre and SSAB collaborating on a project using fossil-free steel

business

BUSINESS AFFAIRS

>Upcoming quarterly reports this week:

-MillerKnoll, Inc. third quarter fiscal 2023 results to be released this Wednesday, Mar. 22, after the market closes; conference call at 5:30 p.m. Eastern time. Participants may access the call live via webcast on the company's investor relations website or participate via telephone by dialing (800) 715-9871 and entering the conference identification number 7825517. <https://www.millerknoll.com/investor-relations>.

-Steelcase Inc. fourth quarter and fiscal year 2023 results to be released this Wednesday, Mar. 22, after the market closes; webcast on Thursday, Mar. 23, 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time. A link to the webcast will be available at <http://ir.steelcase.com>,

With more than 200 manufacturers already in the Configura library, users can accurately and confidently bring drawings and rendering visions to life. "Partnering with the right manufacturers is important to us," said **Stefan Persson**, CEO of Configura. "As we strive to provide the most comprehensive library with seamless design capabilities, our top priority is to continue adding resources that align with our users' visions."

Framery offers soundproof office phone booths, pods and private spaces to solve noise and privacy issues in open office environments. Dozens of the world's leading companies, including **Microsoft**, **Puma** and **Tesla** are using Framery. The CI Library now includes 400 Framery SKUs.

FireKing's file cabinets, storage cabinets and safes are trusted in homes, offices, retail and commercial spaces around the world. Its range of industry-leading products include professional-grade protection shielding documents, data, priceless family belongings and more in the event of a fire or theft. The CI Library now includes 29 FireKing SKUs.

A CET Commercial Interiors license is required to gain access to the complete CI Library available in the Marketplace on MyConfigura. [Read More](#)

TECHNOLOGY

>Configura expanded its robust Commercial Interiors Library in Q1 2023 by adding two manufacturers under its CET umbrella: **Framery** and **FireKing**. Configura's CI Library was developed to empower designers and salespeople through a competitive advantage by allowing them to access a massive library of supplemental data. It allows CET Commercial Interiors users to produce high-quality drawings and detailed product listings to use for quotes, design layouts, renderings and sales documents.

Industry Stock Prices

	3.17.23	12.30.22	9.30.22	7.1.22	4.1.22	12.31.21	%frYrHi	%fr50-DayMA
MillerKnoll	20.8	21.0	15.6	26.4	34.4	38.9	-43.7%	-9.5%
HNI	27.1	28.4	26.5	34.6	37.0	42.1	-31.4%	-10.4%
Interface	7.7	9.9	9.0	12.7	13.9	16.0	-49.2%	-25.2%
Kimball	12.3	6.5	6.3	7.8	8.5	10.2	-2.9%	54.2%
Leggett	30.2	32.2	33.2	35.2	35.5	41.2	-27.9%	-11.7%
Mohawk	94.4	102.2	91.2	129.0	124.2	182.2	-40.7%	-15.3%
Steelcase	7.1	7.1	6.5	10.7	11.8	11.7	-43.2%	-6.2%
Virco	3.9	4.5	4.3	3.9	2.9	3.0	-22.7%	-15.4%
SUM	203.5	211.9	192.6	260.2	268.3	345.2		
DJIndust	31,862	33,147	29,590	31,097	34,818	36,338	-10.2%	-4.5%