

officeinsight

linq | jonathan prestwich



design is a choice

DAVIS[®]

davisfurniture.com | 336.889.2009



Brian Graham: A San Francisco Design Renaissance Man

by Julia Peppard

In addition to being an inspired designer of well, almost everything, **Brian Graham** is one of the brightest, funniest people in our industry. As founder and creative director of his own firm, **Graham Design, LLC.**, Mr. Graham focuses on furniture and products that enhance the contemporary modern workplace. After beginning his career in interior design at **Gensler**, he made the seemingly uncommon – but historically natural – progression into product design. I met with Mr. Graham on July 20th in his San Francisco studio. The following interview aims to capture at least some hints of how the designer came to be who he is today and what continues to inspire and drive him to create.

OI: Tell me a little about your background. Where were you born, and where did you grow up?

BG: I'm a second generation Southern Californian native, born and raised in Long Beach (laughs), often referred to as lowa-by-the-sea. I grew up basically as a sailing bum. That was my sport, sailing and racing boats.

OI: Was there a moment growing up when you knew you wanted to get into design? An aha moment?

BG: It was a really long aha. I always thought I'd do something that had to do with sailing. Before I wanted to be an architect, I wanted to be a naval architect. My path has been a process of constantly narrowing my options – much like the design process. When I realized becoming a naval architect would require more math than I was willing to do, I narrowed it down to becoming an architect (less math) and then to interior designer. I wasn't a great student, but let's just say that I used to have great drawings on the margins of my homework. I did well in the things that interested me. My mother remembers me drawing fire engines in perspective at a really early age, because that's the way I saw things.

My maternal grandfather was a Renaissance man. He was an art director and a screenwriter and, back in the time when you could do these things, he even designed a couple of buildings. He was very interested in Southern California architects of the day and took an interest in me. He had story after story, like how he met **Cliff May** [best known for creating the California Ranch House], and stories

of other architects. I remember when I was about 14 or 15, he drove me to the brand new Art Center building in Pasadena, designed by **Craig Ellwood** [recognized for fusing the formalism of **Mies van der Rohe** with the informal style of California modernism]. It was phenomenal. As we walked around, I saw some of the work that was being done there, and I remember saying, "Grandpa, this is something I can do." And he said, "Yes, you can."

A few years later, at Long Beach City College, I answered an ad for a "draftsman." Remember that? Drafting.

A small husband and wife interior design firm hired me with zero experi-

ence, but lots of enthusiasm, to work part time with them. The best part of the job was that they had a set of Interior Design magazines. **Stanley Abercrombie** was the editor then. He had a penchant for architects, and I noticed that there were a lot of architects who were doing interior design. So I saw a potential pathway for myself. Not long after, I was introduced to another architect who was a teacher at Cal State Long Beach, which had an Interior Architectural Design BFA program. All of a sudden I became a very serious student because I knew that I was working towards something. And that's where I ended up.

OI: You made the transition from interior designer to product designer. How did that come about for you?

BG: It's unusual, and that's probably my strength. I still think like an interior designer, who just happens to design furniture. It's about the whole room and what plays in that room. I was hired by Gensler in Los Angeles. If you were lucky, as I was, you'd get teamed up with some senior designers and start by working on millwork drawings. It taught me the level of intimacy and the importance of material dimensions.

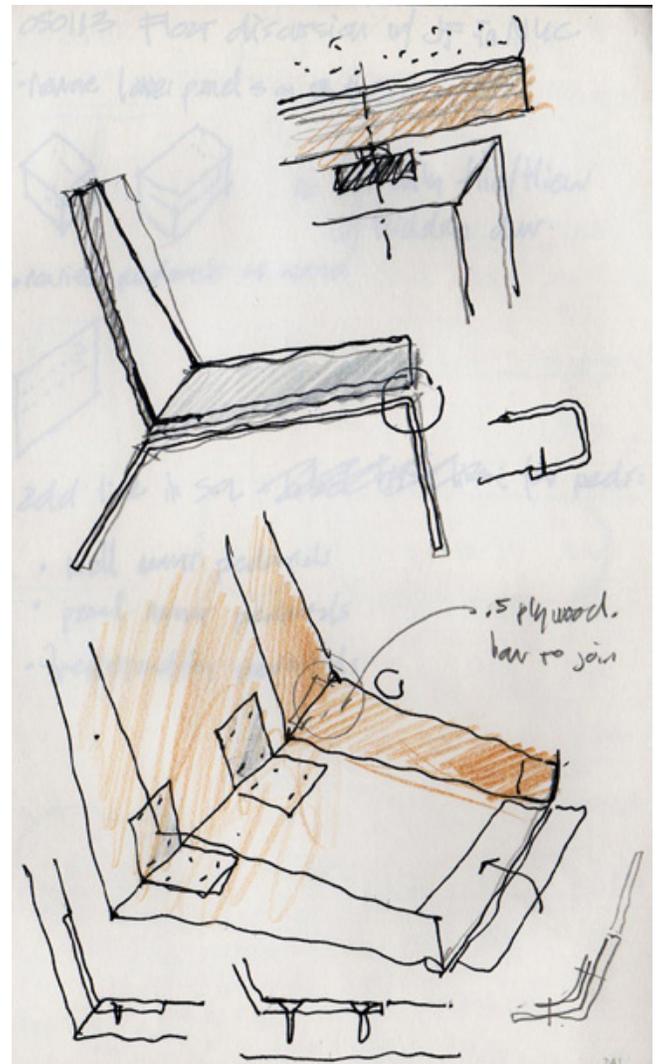
I'd seen **Don Chadwick** [designer of many products, including the Aeron



The Fold Collection for Martin Bratrud, introduced in 2014, was conceived and designed by Brian Graham, with Martin Bratrud principals Pat Baxter and Allan Stratford and Product Development leader Eric Perez.



The Reveal Collection, introduced in 2013, was conceived and designed by Brian Graham, with Martin Bratrud principals Pat Baxter and Allan Stratford and Product Development leader Eric Perez.



Design study sketch for Fold for Martin Bratrud, 2012

people



Agenda, introduced in 1991, was conceived and designed by Brian Graham with the Gensler Product Design Group and Halcon Design Director Fred Poisson.

chair for **Herman Miller**] give a lecture on his work in furniture design at Cal State Long Beach, but it wasn't until I got into the finite work of millwork that I really understood. It was there that I met **Pat Baxter** from **Martin Bratrud**. He was doing a lot of banquettes and lounge furniture for Gensler projects. I asked Pat how they developed new products, and how something new would get created at Martin Bratrud. I had no idea what that would entail. It was the seed of my beginning. I moved to San Francisco, still at Gensler, in 1989. Around that time, Halcon approached Gensler about the idea of designing a product with them, and I became the lead designer on the project.

We developed the Agenda Collection. This became a defining product for Halcon and helped to make them a significant player in the market. Then I



Agenda, introduced in 1991, was conceived and designed by Brian Graham with the Gensler Product Design Group and Halcon Design Director Fred Poisson.

helped with developing and introducing the Smart Caseload TM line- along with the (new at the time) concept of “people work in piles.”

A few years later, after leaving Gensler, I spent several years in what I considered “graduate school” when I worked with **Bob Arko** and the **Metropolitan Furniture Group** [now part of **Steelcase’s Coalesse**] on developing Teamwork. They taught me how a product is conceived, developed and introduced. I’ve been heavily influenced by my time at Metro. It was a seminal time. Metro functioned as a west coast think tank for Steelcase, capturing the latest trends we were seeing here. It was exciting to be part of that group. So many people who were there still continue to be influential today.

OI: What are some of the benefits of having come from an architectural/ interior design background rather than an industrial design background?

BG: It’s about having an awareness of objects and a deep understanding of how what you design must “play well with others.”

OI: I love the short film on your website, where you draw similarities to the film industry and being an “independent director,” which is akin to working with different studios, but in our world they are the manufacturers. Can you describe your design process?

BG: It all starts with a hand sketch in my notebook. It’s then a synthesizing of disparate ideas and stimuli. I go back and forth to try to find that simple essence of something. A little distance can help too. Chasing a little white ball around for a day or two can help [Brian is an avid golfer!]. When I come back, I often find some clarity.

OI: We hear a lot about CNC, real time technology and tools like 3D printers these days. How has that

affected your design process and how do you see that affecting product development in general?

BG: One of the things about transferring from being an interior designer to a product designer is that there’s no poché, the filled-in parts of the plan. In product design, you have to know exactly what everything is made of. Oftentimes I don’t have the luxury of

tooling every part from scratch, so I have to use standard materials, shapes and thicknesses.

I think there is another challenge out there as well for us. Normally when I start a project, I’d come to the factory, tour it, and design something that could go through that factory well. Now, the product may not go through that factory. It may go through some-



Teamwork, introduced in 1993, was conceived and designed by Brian Graham, with the Gensler Product Design Group & Metropolitan Designers Bob Arko, Mark Kapka, Chris Domina, Paul Espinoza, Joe Nobles and Jess Sorel.

people



The Graham Collection, introduced in 2007, was conceived and designed by Brian Graham, with Knoll SVP Design Benjamin Pardo and the Knoll Toronto Product Development team.

one else's factory, or even through four or five vendor factories, before it eventually comes together. We're now relying more on a variety of vendors, with some overseas, which can make the process much more challenging.

It's a lot more work to make sure that what you're doing is manufacturable.

OI: When you start a product design project, how long do you expect it will

take before you see the results – to reach that first full-scale prototype?

BG: All are different, but roughly 18-24 months is typical. 12 months is a fast cycle. There's vendor sourcing, order entry, sales training. Not everybody has dedicated model making prototype shops, and if the factory is really busy, then you have to get in line.

What you're trying to do with a prototype is to get that first snapshot. That, then, is what everyone rallies around, and no engineering is wasted. That's a lesson I learned from **Brian Kane**; he always prototypes his own products. There's a level of control there, but you can still refine the design.

And, while it's great to have enthusiasm and ideas, it's all about the execution of the product. I never want to be the smartest guy sitting around a table of engineers. They know much better how to get a product through their factory than I do.

OI: You've worked with a lot of major manufacturers in our industry (Knoll, Martin Bratrud, Geiger, Halcon). What are some of the quali-



The Graham Collection, introduced in 2007, was conceived and designed by Brian Graham, with Knoll SVP Design Benjamin Pardo and the Knoll Toronto Product Development team.

ties that make for a great working relationship and great results?

BG: It's much like marriage: forgiveness and understanding. (He laughs) All the companies you've mentioned understand that good design is a positive thing that helps them earn business, win jobs and grow their business. Good design. It's a strategic advantage. Companies like these value what you do, and they're supportive.

OI: If you work with 'X' manufacturer, does it affect you in working with 'Y' manufacturer later?

BG: Sometimes. This business is made up of four-to-five really big manufacturers and dozens of terrific small businesses. The small businesses never seem to have a problem if you've worked in the past with the big ones. But at the big level, if you're working with 'X', you cannot work with 'Y' at the same time. Once you're finished with 'X', if 'Y' comes calling, it's alright. It's understood.

This also goes back to the Hollywood

analogy though. As an independent designer I'm expected to do something unique and authentic for each particular client.

OI: When you set out to design a product, can you describe some of the things that spark your original idea?

BG: Architecture. It's a continual source of inspiration for me. I think about this and draw a lot on long plane rides. Sometimes it's really abstracted, like looking at the relationship of planes and solids and masses. Or, I'll look at some detail I see on another unrelated product, and I might wonder if it's something that could become a pull or a leg detail.

I also try to rediscover what the masters were doing 50 or 60 years ago. Not for styling, but to understand how, despite the lack of technology they were working with then, they created such innovative, fresh products. During the war, for instance, when there were limitations on materials. We don't

really have limitations like that now, but maybe you could impose something like that?

OI: What drives innovation from your point of view?

BG: Innovation means something different for every manufacturer. Working together, I try to solve problems unique to their specific needs.

OI: How do you design products that are fresh and not iterative?

BG: It's the subtle little differences – nuances, materials, finishes and proportions – the really basic design principles, that are the ultimate differentiators.

OI: How do you stay inspired?

BG: I don't have a choice. It's the difference between waiting for your muse to strike and being a professional. I'm a professional; I hit my marks and perform. **Michael Vanderbilt** taught me that if you have a variety of things that you're working on, you can make a move from one problem or product to another, which allows your mind to open up. There are a lot of things that I'm always working on. So I'm hopefully feeding my design machine. If I practiced golf like this, I'd be much better than I am!

OI: I'd describe your product designs as being elegant and classic with a modern sensibility. What was your inspiration for the Ratio Table, which you designed for Decca Contract this year?

BG: Well, for the past 10 years, I've been advising Decca Contract on their showroom look and products. This year, we decided to develop stories for the showroom vignettes which I hoped would resonate with people. And I felt something was missing. I knew from designers and dealers in the industry that there was a need for a simple communal table that people could gather around. Decca has amazing veneers and wood capabilities, so I knew they could make it. I started drawing a



Detail of the Graham Collection for Knoll, 2007. Photo by Michael Cullen

big rectangle like a classic farm table. And it ultimately became this simple thing that as you approach it from one angle, it looks one way and then changes as you walk around it.

It's funny, because [Decca Contract President] **John Fischbach** asked me, "How long did it take you to come up with that?" And I remember that Charles Eames had a great quote when asked something similar. He said it was "a 30 year flash", because they'd had the idea 30 years before they finally had the technology to make the product.

OI: Your company, Graham Design, does a lot more than "just" product design. Can you describe some of the other services you provide to clients?

BG: I always have some level of a consulting relationship with my clients. But it's so much more than just developing products; it's more strategic than that. Where before I was filling product voids, now I'm helping manufacturers find those voids, and advising them on where they may need to go.

My model is Michael Vanderbyl. He's

a graphic designer, yet he influences so many other things with his clients, like showrooms, branding and advertising. I get involved in those decisions as well, because they're interconnected, but I'm more furniture-focused.

OI: What is it like working for a company like Decca Contract, where you've had a truly broad scope of work?

BG: My key relationship at Decca is with John Fischbach. Because of the challenges of working across time zones [Decca is located in China], we've become more sophisticated in how we work together. We use a collaborative platform called Base Camp. It posts everything in project buckets, tracking everything we do online and in the cloud.

Three years ago, my wife **Nancy Graham** joined me after a career in sales and sales management at Stendig, Sunar Hauserman, Geiger and Knoll. She developed the Élan by Decca brand from scratch. It was great. She dove in and, working with others, developed the brand and iden-

tity, wrote briefs and identified market opportunities. She created all of that and continues to refine things. So, consulting is presenting us with many more opportunities for expansion.

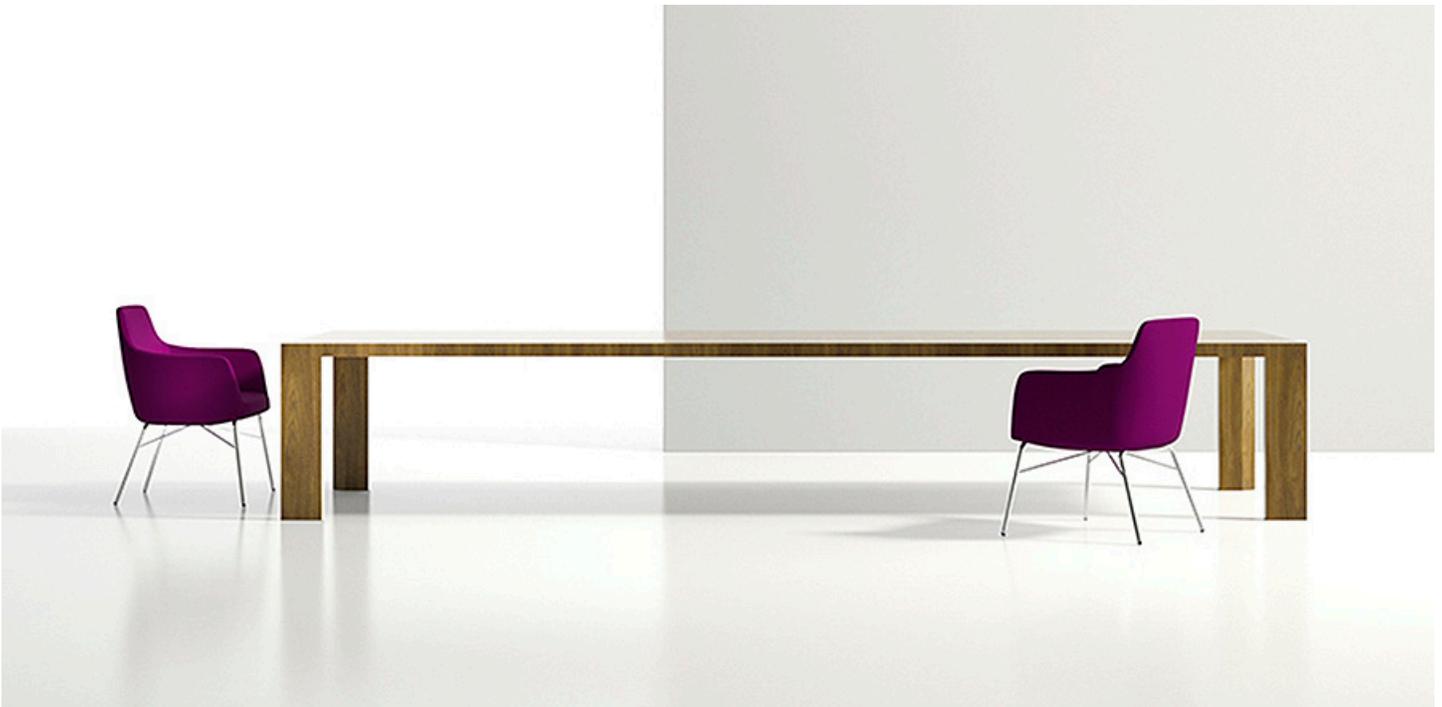
OI: What would you say most distinguishes west coast or San Francisco designers?

BG: Despite the clichés, we're not laid back. There is an openness to new ideas. Architecturally I think of Neutra and Schindler, who emigrated to the west coast from Europe, the Eames Studio and the Southern California case study houses. These continue to be inspirational and enduring. What they did at that time was really sophisticated and daring.

OI: What advice do you have for designers who want to get into product design today?

BG: Young designers are not waiting to be asked to design things. They're just doing it. The idea of lining up to be anointed to go work for a furniture manufacturer is radically receding.

My advice? Don't sell one idea or one thing. Sell your ability to do

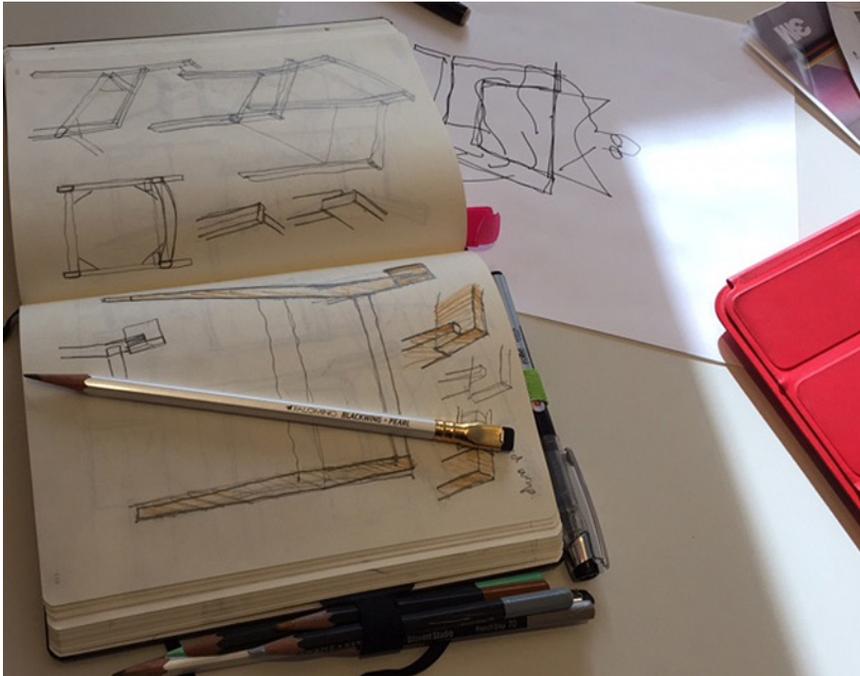


The Ratio Table Collection, introduced in 2015, was conceived and designed by Brian Graham, with Decca Contract president John Fischbach and the Decca Product Development team.

anything, and a lot of different things. Identify problems in the marketplace. Sell your point of view. And build relationships.

OI: What are your top five products, rituals, or things you can't live without?

BG: My wife, Nancy. She has impeccable taste, and she really cares. Working together has deepened our



A designer's tools: Mr. Graham uses a German Leuchtturm1917 sketchbook and a Blackwing Pearl Palamino Pencil, now made in Japan.



The Museum Collection Rectangular Coffee Table for Elan by Decca, introduced in 2013, was conceived and designed by Brian Graham, with Decca Contract president John Fischbach and the Decca Product Development team.

people

relationship in a way I didn't expect.

My morning cup of Peets coffee, or Sightglass coffee on 7th Street, if we have out of town guests. The space there is phenomenal; it's really well designed.

A morning walk – for gathering ideas. Inevitably, it clears my mind.

Golf. I'm an avid golfer, and I completely get out of my design head for a few hours when I play.

My sketchbook and pencil. I use a German Leuchtturm1917 sketchbook and a Blackwing Pearl Palamino Pencil, which is now being made in Japan. This is how I talk to myself and get ideas down.

OI: Who has had the most impact on your career?

BG: Brian Kane and Michael Vanderbyl. They're dear friends, they're mentors, and they are my brackets. They're in this market. They understand it. They come at things completely differently, and they produce excellent results.

OI: Who is the hot young designer to watch?

BG: Justin Champaign, with Most Modest. He's pushing new boundaries and is a bright young talent.

OI: Where would you travel tomorrow for inspiration?

BG: New York, for the energy. It's always interesting. And my new favorite would be London. The design talent there is pretty amazing.

OI: If you went back to school, where would you go?

BG: Anywhere with a football team! (laughs) No, really it would be Pratt. It would be to go to the school the masters went to. There's such a connection to history.

OI: What are you reading now?

BG: "You're My Favorite Client," the second book by Mike Monteiro, who runs Mule Design. It's really funny and spot on.

people

officeinsight

OI: Who has been your favorite client over the years?

BG: The next one. No, really, that's like choosing your favorite child! So, I'll say the next one.

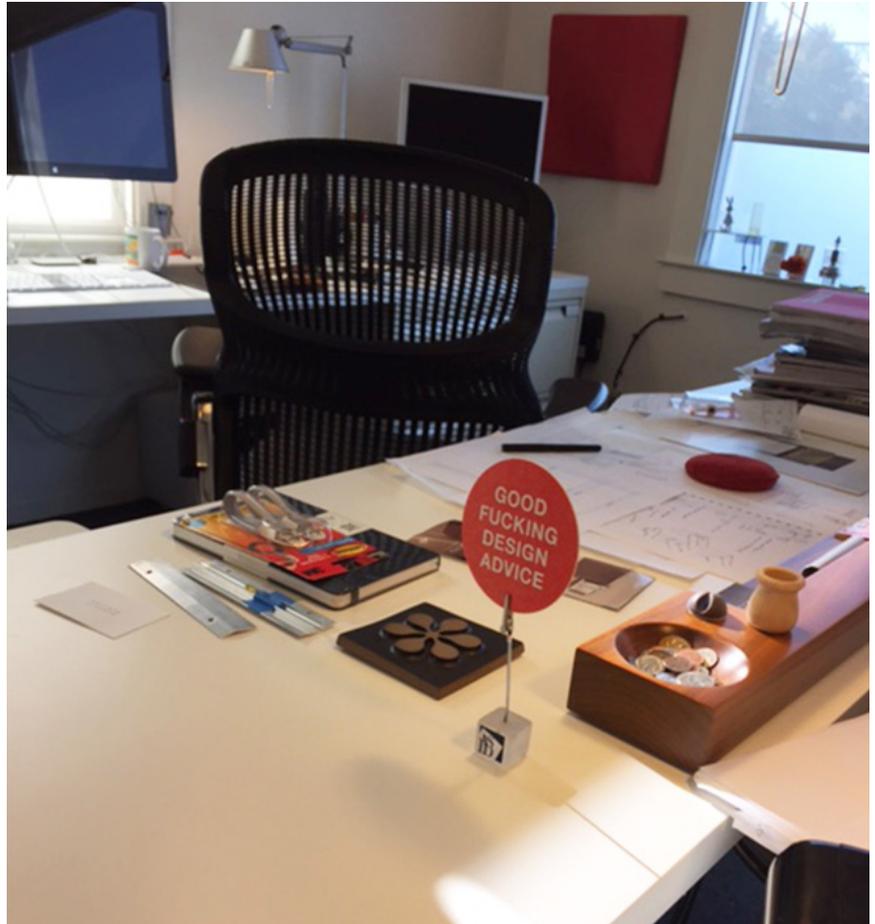
OI: What's next?

BG: NeoCon in 346 days [Brian shows his countdown clock app (T-0) on his iPhone]. The busiest part of NeoCon is now, post-NeoCon. From a product standpoint, we're all looking at what needs to be done before they open the doors next year.

I'm working on a variety of things, from a singular seating object to entire new product systems, for a variety of clients.

I'll see you in Chicago next June! ■

For more information about Brian Graham and Graham Design, please visit www.grahamdesignsf.com



The Graham Design Studio

ERG international

VESPER



See our entire Vesper collection on the web!



www.ERGinternational.com

materials

officeinsight



HBF Textiles showroom at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago

HBF Textiles Brings Texture to Life

by Mallory Jindra

Brands of every kind take on many forms throughout their lifetime, but often the strongest brands adopt a singular identity that people will consistently notice over time and associate with those companies' products. In the textiles industry, companies build their brands around everything from color and pattern to weaving processes, materials, and special manufacturing techniques.

At the helm of **HBF Textiles** for more than 25 years, **Mary Jo Miller**, VP of design and development, has guided the brand under the inspiration, "Bringing texture to life."

Since the brand's inception, it has partnered with a cast of design industry greats including Orlando Diaz-Azcuy, Robert A.M. Stern, and Barbara Barry. The past three years has seen HBF Textiles take a laser-sharp focus in solidifying its identity as an industry leader in high quality yarn textures. With guidance from New York-based boutique design consultancy firm **2x4**, the textile company is now hitting its



Mary Jo Miller, VP of design at HBF Textiles

materials

officeinsight

stride with a clear brand message of full yarns and depth of materials.

“We’ve built a lot of our reputation on texture, and our work with 2x4 has given legs to that message of who we are,” said Ms. Miller. “We want to bring visual integrity to the surface of textiles. We want to capture a residential, hospitality quality that crosses into corporate, and to translate something that is mechanically woven into something that looks and feels handwoven.”

One of the most impactful moves any interior products brand can make in defining itself is in its selection of outside designers. A brand’s in-house design team must instinctually dictate the brand message, but outside design collaborations often provide a slew of new directions by which the brand message can manifest itself.

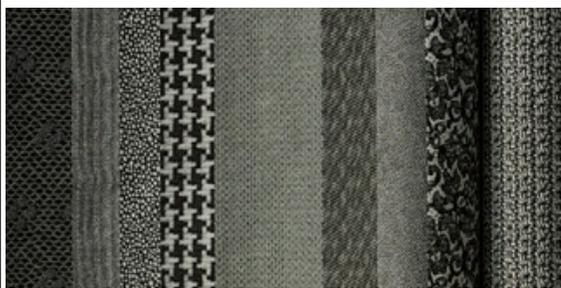
In this respect, Ms. Miller and the

HBF Textiles team has not shied away from bold choices. For its seminal 2014 collection, which won a Best of NeoCon Gold Award in the Textiles: Upholstery category that year, the company partnered with fiber artist **Elodie Blanchard**, who specializes textile design and fabrication, in particular large-scale textile installations. This year, its collaboration with **Erin Ruby**, a leading designer of interiors and products, resulted in a collection that earned a Best of NeoCon Silver Award in the Wall Treatments category.

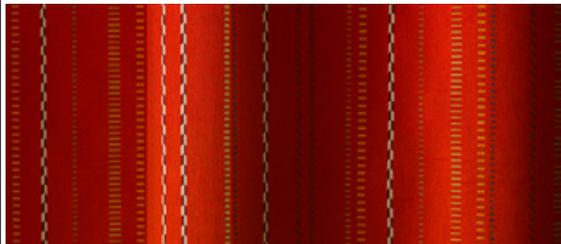
“We look for individuals who speak our language, and who bring more depth to our brand,” said Ms. Miller. “There needs to be a kinship, as if they were an extension of our brand. And there is a lot of talent in this industry right now, which can make it difficult to make these decisions.”

For her 2014 collection of eight upholstery fabrics, Ms. Blanchard divided the focus into three parts: *Texture* – seen in Forge, Foundation and Twist; *Geometric Patterns* – seen in Braids and Bars, Dot Structure and Moving Blanket; and *Conceptual Ideas* – seen in Remember and Remember Houndstooth.

The imaginative **Moving Blanket** fabric delights with a dazzlingly simple inspiration, a moving blanket. Designed with a chevron pattern using a matelassé structure to enhance its padded construction, Moving Blanket is an elegant reinterpretation of a classic material, focusing on contrast and featuring both large- and thin-stitched lines inspired by artist Sol Lewitt’s drawings. Hues within the Moving Blanket lines range from vibrant brights to globally inspired tones, each carrying the name of an equally inspiring city around the world.



Attach and Remember



Braids and Bars



Forge



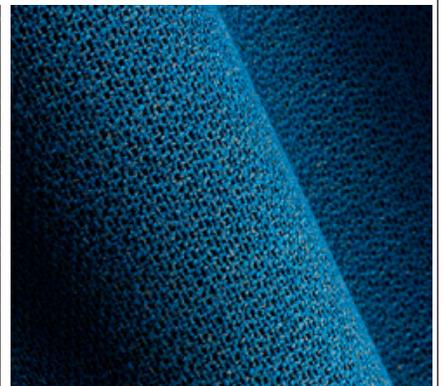
Houndstooth



Moving Blanket



Foundation



Twist

materials

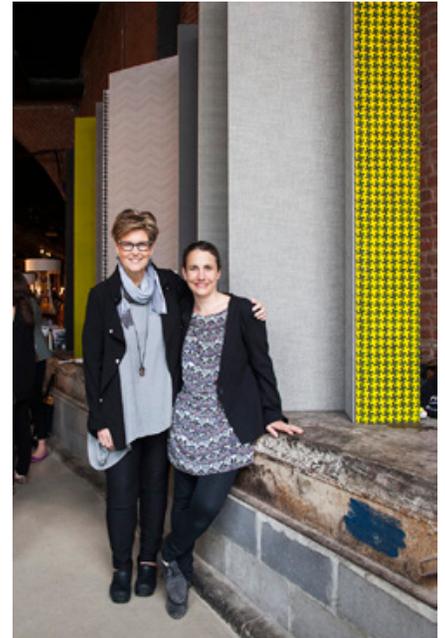
officeinsight

“Designing a textile collection is really a full collaboration,” said Ms. Blanchard. “It takes a whole organization to make something that people will hopefully want to buy, and Mary Jo has so much experience. “It’s a trial

and error process that involves a lot of back and forth between many teams and the mills – what does it need, what does it need more of, what are the performance requirements. It’s like any other job in that you need to be flexible.”

The collaboration also brings light to the vast differences in working styles associated with varying textile projects.

“In my textile installations, there’s a lot of samples, a lot of work with a



The Wanted Design 2015 event in New York City, with an installation created by Elodie Blanchard and HBF Textiles. Ms. Blanchard also designed the event entry bracelets in collaboration with HBF.



Elodie Blanchard in the studio



materials

officeinsight

contractor, and you're working on-site with a big group of people," said Ms. Blanchard. "With the textile collection, it was completely different; a lot of work on the computer and on paper."

For her collection this year at Neo-Con, Ms. Ruby, chose to approach texture through a lens of weathered, imperfect, everyday materials.

"Each fabric in the line ties back to the overriding concept of exploring the nature of time and wear, and how those elements impact fabric. Time, use, character – we wanted to explore the idea that these things enhance the quality of the textile."



Erin Ruby



HBF Perfect Fit chair with HBF Textiles Brushed Canvas fabric



Erin Ruby Collection in Black and White

materials

officeinsight



Brushed Canvas



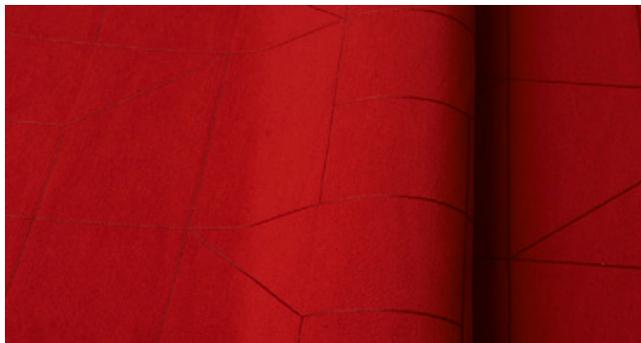
Needlepoint Grid



Cork Cloth



Tickled Herring



Fourfold



Wabi Sabi



Gradient Block

Erin Ruby Collection for HBF Textiles

materials

officeinsight

Indeed, the Erin Ruby Collection brings an uncommon, broken-in residential quality to a contract textiles market that is so often focused on the perfectly precise, brand new aesthetic.

"I haven't seen that residential-hospitality type of quality in textiles yet," said Ms. Ruby. "But, as contract interiors focus more and more on gathering spaces and amenity spaces, the product design must follow."

Cork Cloth, which won Best of Neo-Con Silver this year, is an innovative

fabric made from cork, a 100% natural material. The pattern explores its use in cloth form as an alternative to leather in four colorways: Birch, Brick, Earth and Slate. Another standout fabric in the line is **Brushed Canvas**, which Ms. Ruby calls the "quiet pioneer of the collection."

"It has a little bit of everything in it, but it's a seemingly very simple textile. It's infinitely specable, for both modern and traditional settings, and is soil and stain resistant."

Just as Ms. Blanchard's textile installations informed her collection, Ms. Ruby's background in the design of interiors fed the design of her textile collection.

"As an interior designer, I want to bring an understanding of the workplace environmental to the design process," said Ms. Ruby. "I only design products that I would specify. Is this something that is scalable? Can I spec it? Where can I see this being used?"



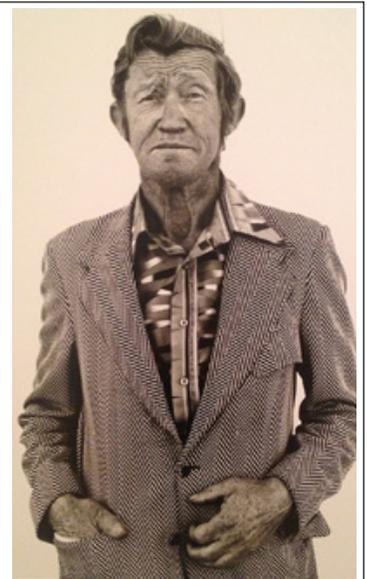
Canvas Bag



Mandela Duo



Scarpa



Tickled Herring



Cork Lady



Needlepoint Grid Building



Wabi Sabi Boat

Inspiration for the Erin Ruby Collection for HBF Textiles

materials

officeinsight

Three of the line's fabrics are suitable for vertical use, and two of those three are also suitable for upholstery. And although the collection takes on a weathered, tumbled, broken-in feel, Ms. Ruby and the HBF Textiles team kept the performance capabilities at high standards.

"All of the fabrics have 50,000-100,000 double rubs," noted Ms. Ruby, "because if they can't hold up in the intended use, then what's the point?"

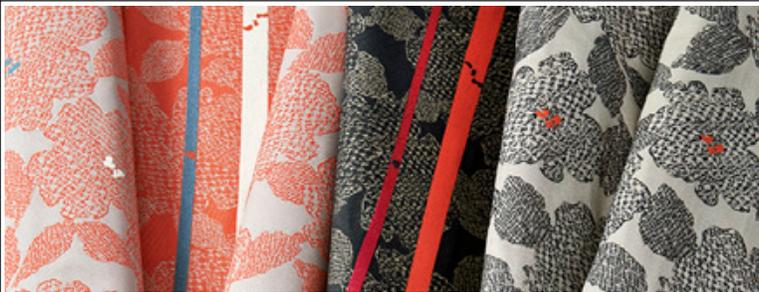
This foray into collaborations in all corners of the design world makes sense, as Ms. Miller herself comes

from a fine arts background; she holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and a Master of Fine Arts from Washington University in St. Louis. As a master's student, she cultivated her passion for printmaking while working as a contract printer's assistant on lithography prints for Roy Lichtenstein and Sam Gilliam.

Ms. Miller's knowledge of mill technologies across the globe is almost unmatched, and that fact gives HBF Textiles an edge over stiff industry competition. She was recently named President of the Association for

Contract Textiles (ACT), a mecca of contract textiles resources, advocacy and leadership in sustainability.

Under the creative direction of Ms. Miller, the Spring 2015 Collection combines inviting textures, luxury coated materials and mid-century motif from two perspectives – the television show Mad Men and the world of Andy Warhol. Comprised of eight designs in 48 colorations, Spring 2015 portrays a range of hues that evoke classic leather good colors to mid-century vivid accents to complex neutrals, while touting performance properties.



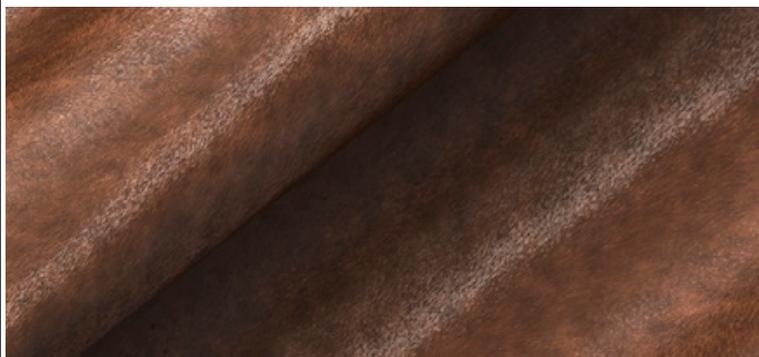
Big Floral and Big Floral Stripe



Modern Tweed



Deco Epingle



Sable Island

materials



HBF Trestle Chair with HBF Textiles Sweater fabric

Big Floral and **Big Floral Stripe**, for example, were inspired by the Pop art movement and Andy Warhol's 1964 Flower series, becoming a modern interpretation of that infamous series, with an emphasis on the textural cross-stitched surface. The fabric is reversible (yes!), and both designs exceed ACT heavy duty upholstery guidelines while available with a superior moisture resistant finish.

Also notable is **Sweater**, which emulates the feel of a favorite sweater. The "cozy warm cocoon of fiber" is simple and elegant. A lofty knotted mohair yarn is the primary lead in this highly textured cloth available in one sophisticated color. Sweater contains rapidly renewable fibers and employs a knit polyester backing.

HBF Textiles' future looks bright, as it will continue to seek out new, intriguing partnerships, as well as continue its relationships with previous collaborations. Ms. Blanchard will design the brand's Fall 2015 collection, which will adopt her quirky patterning for multi-use, wrapped mid-panel and upholstery options.

"Every time we do a collection with someone, I feel like we come out of it with a new best friend," said Ms. Miller. "We learn something new from every designer we work with." ■



Being Smart about Textiles – Part III

by Mallory Jindra

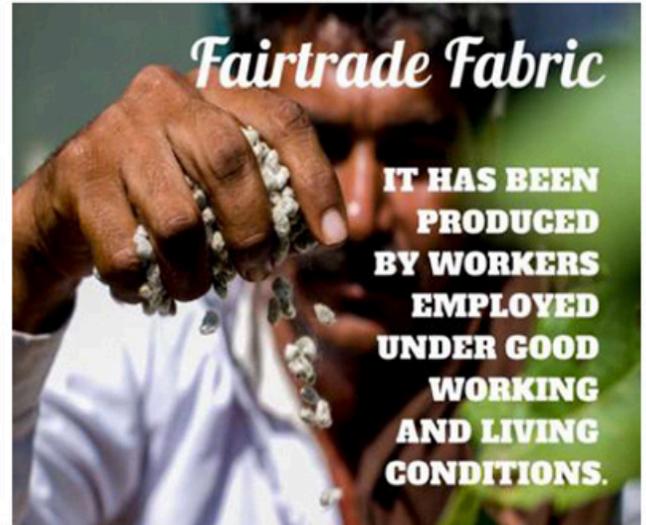
In this conclusion to a three-part series, we present the final installment of our coverage of the **NeoCon 2015** “Smart Textiles for Modern Environments” seminar led by **Deb Barrett**, a leading window fashion design expert, trend strategist, and principal of Window Dressings. Part I focused on the basics of fabric and fabric selection, while Part II provided a comprehensive guide to the newest cutting edge technologies being applied to create “smart” textiles, as well as examples of these new “smart” textiles. This week, we’ll address sustainability issues specific to the textiles industry.

Ever since the idea of sustainability entered into the public discourse, accurate and consistent terminology has been a problem. This is understandable, as all new issues of focus must come into clearer focus over time. Still, “green” textiles, “sustainable” textiles, and “organic” textiles, or



materials

officeinsight



green/sustainable/organic distinctions of any kind, are often tossed around so interchangeably that it can be difficult to understand the differences.

To put it simply:

>*Green* textiles are perceived to be beneficial to the environment. [Source: Association of Contract Textiles (ACT)]

>*Sustainable* textiles incorporate or relate to a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged.

A sustainable product is a product that has no negative impact on natural ecosystems or resources. [Source: Association of Contract Textiles (ACT)]

>*Organic* fabrics involve fertilizers or pesticides of animal or vegetable origin, as distinguished from manufactured chemicals.

Ms. Barrett outlined three major criteria that true “green” textiles incorporate to gain that “green” distinction: materials, process, and facilities.

>*Materials*: The raw material criterion can be met in one of two ways – by using energy saving recycled materials, or by manufacturing biodegradable fibers. If the raw material is a naturally grown fiber, it must be a quickly renewable resource and also be grown without or with minimal harmful pesticides, chemicals and fertilizers.

>*Process*: This refers to the series of actions needed to achieve a final textile as well as the environmental aspects of manufacturing. From yarn dyeing and spinning to weaving and finishing the fabric, no harmful chemicals are involved. The manufacturing facility must comply with environmental protection laws governing energy conservation, water treatment and chemical regulation.

>*Facilities*: Working conditions, public health, and implementation of green programs are examples of facility and social responsibility concerns. Manufacturers must comply with fundamental human rights laws for improved working conditions.

The facilities criteria also brings up an additional distinction, between organic fabric and fair trade fabric. While *organic* fabric is created from fibers which are produced and processed using purely natural methods, *fair trade* fabric has been produced by workers employed under good (fair) working and living conditions.

How do we know which products are truly organic and which ones are truly fair trade? Certification programs, of course! Designers looking for organic fabrics should look for products with the **Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)**, **EU Ecolabel**, and/or **Oeko-Tex Standard 100** certifications. Fair trade certification standards are issued from the **World Fair Trade Organization** and **Fairtrade International**. These certifications programs come in addition to many other programs and organizations that measure sustainability, including: **LEED**, **Green Globes**, **NAHB**, **FACTS**, **GREENGUARD**, and **MBDC Cradle to Cradle (C2C)**.



materials

officeinsight

Aside from terminology confusion, an issue called greenwashing also plagues the sustainability movement. When sustainable issues first became concerning to the public, some corporations, not anxious to alter their operations, instead implemented the use of “green” marketing

and advertising as a means to mask and soften their images.

Greenwashing, a term coined in 1986 by New York environmentalist Jay Westerfield, is the practice of pretending that a product or material is environmentally friendly when in fact it is not, and the link is very

facts™



The sustainability certification program for commercial textiles



Tested for harmful substances
according to Oeko-Tex® Standard 100
ZHBO 032471 TESTEX



materials

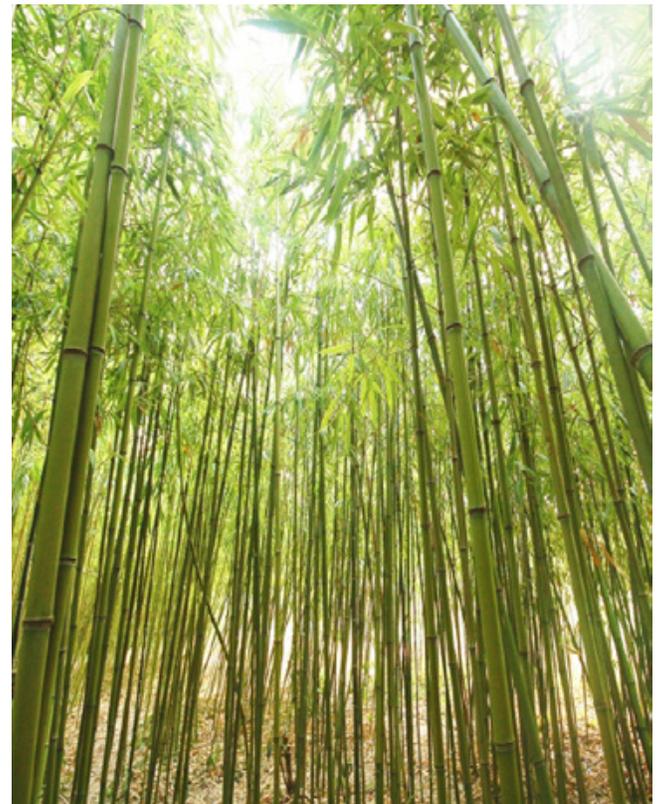
officeinsight

tenuous. Greenwashing often manifests in changing the name or label of a product to evoke the feeling of nature. An example would be the hotel industry’s practice of placing “green” placards in each room pro-

moting reuse of towels to “save the environment.”

What many companies fail to realize, Ms. Barrett pointed out, is that they’re spending significantly more money and/or time on advertising being green

rather than spending resources on environmentally sound practices. Still, its prevalence in advertising and public spaces of all kinds continues to dupe consumers. This is not to say that many companies aren’t now making



Examples of greenwashing, the practice of pretending that a product or material is environmentally friendly when in fact it is not, and the link is very tenuous.

materials

officeinsight

great strides to truly environmentally positive practices; but, incidences of greenwashing are still on the rise.

One innovative way to spotlight particularly egregious examples, and to train your own eye to spot greenwashing techniques is by visiting the Greenwashing Index, a website that allows consumers to post ads that might be examples of greenwashing and rate them on a scale of 1 to 5. A 1 rating is a little green lie; 5 is an outright falsehood.

Ms. Barrett highlighted research indicating that consumers are content to simply “feel” more green as a result of greenwashing in advertising, and don’t actually feel compelled to pay more for more environmentally sounds products. In this way, many companies are winning with greenwashing-based strategies.

On the flipside, one positive manufacturing process many companies are using today is *upcycling*. Coined by William McDonough and Michael Braungart, upcycling refers to the reuse of waste materials by turning them into different and useful new products of higher value. Ms. Barrett referenced Modern Fabrics, an online shop for reclaimed high-end interior textiles created by James Powell, as a champion of this practice. Giving new meaning to dumpster diving, Modern Fabrics collects up to a hundred bolts of fabrics

per week from furniture manufacturers. The online shop then lets interior designers and textile artists browse the site for surplus scores by such designers as Kravet, Pollack and KnollTextiles at highly discounted prices.

Interior designers do have some power over the types of products they’re specing, but the list of factors that can affect a fabric’s sustainability level can be overwhelming. When specing sustainable products, a few things to keep in mind include:

- >What impact will the cloth have on the environment?
- >Are the fibers replenishable?
- >Was it processed with fewest chemical possible?
- >How is it processed?
- >How is it finished?
- >What is its useful life span?
- >Can it be recycled and reused?
- >Is it biodegradable?
- >How will the fabric be fabricated, or applied to another product?

The sustainability movement will continue to grow both in prevalence and complexity. One of the best ways interior designers and architects can stay current in best practices and new product innovations is to get involved in the conversation; attend seminars, continue learning about new processes and new products, and strive to spec those products in their work. ■

10 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR SUPPLIERS WHEN SPEC’ING GREEN:

- > Does your company have an internal environmental policy?
- > Is the finished product tested or certified by any third party certifiers or agencies? Which ones?
- > What’s the product’s life expectancy?
- > Does the product contain recycled content? If so how much is post consumer and post industrial?
- > Can you provide performance statistics if the product consumes energy while functioning?
- > Is scrap material from the process recycled or reused? Do you have programs to reduce other manufacturing waste and pollutants?
- > Does the product negatively impact indoor air quality when installed?
- > How is the product packaged? Is any of the packaging reused?
- > How are the raw materials transported to the factory? How fast do they travel? Does your distributor use efficient shipping methods?
- > Does your product foresee innovations in the product that will lower its environmental impact?



Green Globes certification process

economics

officeinsight



The Brits are Coming (Back): UK Office Market on Track for Record Numbers

by John Sacks

There's a new sense of confidence in the British office furniture industry.

The dramatic aftereffects of the 2008 financial crisis when the market fell from \$1.26bn in 2007 to \$924m in 2011 seem like ancient history, as recent reports indicate that demand is right back on track and 2015 industry sales should reach \$1.49bn. Clearly, inflation distorts these historical figures, but over this period, commercial pressures kept the lid on price rises, and the overall performance is impressive.

And the industry is nicely profitable. All UK companies must file their financial statements, so we know that the combined profit of the 10 largest companies is \$50m. One company, Elite Office Furniture, made a return on turnover last year of over 30%!

Although there are always macro-economic threats around to worry a nervous CFO, it's probably a fair bet that the industry will continue to pros-

per for a good while yet. The general election in May returned a relatively business-friendly conservative government; unemployment and inflation are both low, and most economists are

predicting steady growth in GNP. Yes, issues such as skills shortages are threatening to constrain capacity; but the industry is never more profitable than when it's straining to force a quart



Coza Chair by Boss Design

economics

of sales out of a pint-pot of a factory.

So how is this optimism expressing itself? Well, there are some exciting new products around from British manufacturers – the results of some bold thinking and serious investment. **Boss Design**'s new *Coza* chair designed by Martin Ballendat was launched in May to considerable acclaim, and the *Lano* range of tables with its stylish die cast aluminium legs from **Orangebox** are just two examples.

Expansionism is also taking hold in the geographical growth of some of the larger companies. A new age of colonization perhaps? The UK industry's export record is patchy at best, perhaps because of its relatively high

historical manufacturing costs and a record of some rather introverted product designs. In recent years however, British tastes in office furniture have taken on a broad international styling, led by world-class designers from home and overseas.

The main export targets are the traditional ones of the Middle East and, naturally, the United States, the world's largest market. The dynamic language and cultural links between the UK and the US have long been an irresistible magnet for UK manufacturers, and the latest market entrants are feeling their way through a notoriously tough environment. **Senator**, the UK industry's largest company with 8.6%

of the market, has production facilities in Maumee, OH, and showrooms in Chicago and NYC. Boss Design, another UK major, acquired the old-established **Jack Cartwright** upholstery business out of High Point, NC, last year, and for NeoCon this year, opened a permanent 3rd floor showroom at the Merchandise Mart.

Where the brave lead, others inevitably follow. It will be interesting to see whether the currently benign economic conditions last long enough to allow UK manufacturers to exploit the US market successfully with some interesting creative ideas about office-based work and strong product designs. ■



Lano Table System by Orangebox

RESEARCH-DESIGN CONNECTION

More On Sit-Stand Work

by Sally Augustin, Ph.D.

Callaghan and his colleagues investigated the repercussions of sitting and standing while working. They report that people who have access to sit-stand desks need to be trained in their use to benefit from them: "Changing exposures from sitting to standing does not eliminate these issues [negative



health and musculoskeletal issues for workers], as evidence indicates prolonged standing also induces problems. Reducing seated exposure and rotating frequently between sitting and standing has been shown to result in positive health outcomes, reduced discomfort and increased work performance. Implementing sit-stand workstations has promise to mitigate work-related health issues, if the users are provided with training that includes accommodations for individual work patterns and preferences." ■

Jack Callaghan, Diana De Carvalho, Kaitlin Gallagher, Thomas Karakolis, and Erika Nelson-Wong. 2015. "Is Standing the Solution to Sedentary Office Work?" *Ergonomics in Design: The Quarterly [sic] of Human Factors Applications*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 20-24. Sally Augustin, PhD, a cognitive sci-

entist, is the editor of *Research Design Connections* (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) and can be reached at sallyaugustin@designwithscience.com.

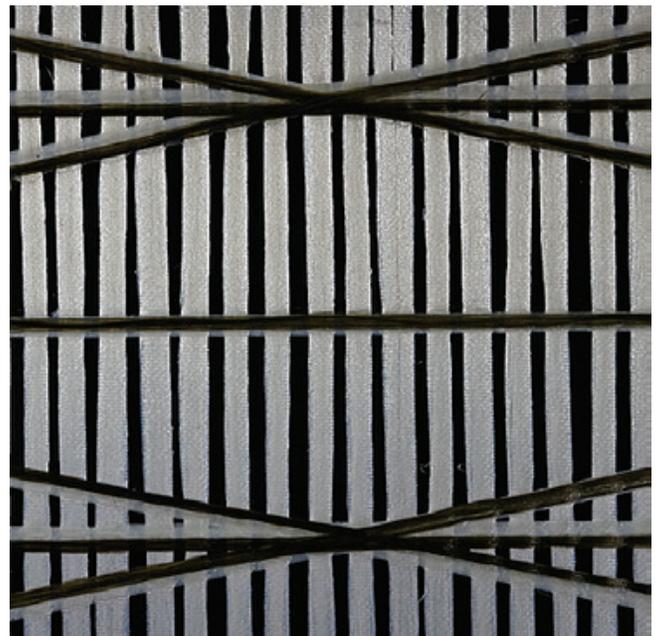
MATERIAL OF THE WEEK

MC# 7187-01

Multi-axial textiles: This range of textiles is composed of either polyester (PET), fiberglass, carbon, basalt, aramid, Vectran® or Zylon™, or a combination of the above. Given the performance properties of the fibers, the material is non-flammable, sound absorbing and has a high tenacity. It can be used as a substitute for metal mesh as it is lighter and easier to transport.

Applications include ventilated architectural facades, sun shading, interior wall partitions, furniture, lighting, fashion and accessories.

This column is published in collaboration with Material ConneXion. For more information regarding the material previewed, please contact Michael LaGreca at mlagreca@materialconnexion.com. T: 212.842.2050.





For complete releases, visit www.officenewswire.com.
Keep current with the RSS feed.

officenewswire.com

officeinsight

Note to Readers: Links to all of this week's officenewswire press releases will be available in the officenewswire section of the newly redesigned officeinsight website, launching soon. Our email address for submitting press releases has changed. It is now pressrelease@officeinsight.com.

PRODUCT INTROS

>Foscarini's Magneto lamp by Giulio Lacchetti has a magnetic ball that connects the lamp's support rod and its compact LED light source. Attached to the rod with the magnet, the LED source has 360-degree movement capacity. The new Magneto features an improved lens and the latest LED technology to more than double the luminous strength.



>Landscape Forms introduced TOTOTO and Zed: playful, colorful, user-friendly outdoor chairs from marketing partner Maxdesign. TOTOTO is a one-piece molded armchair. Designed by Studio Hannes Wettstein, its generous cross-section

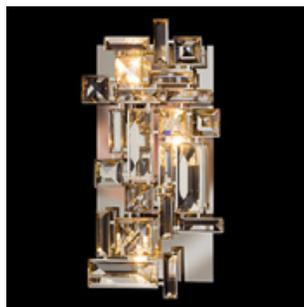


Landscape Forms TOTOTO and Zed

provides hefty material thickness for strength and stability. Zed, designed by Hannes Wettstein, is a Z-shape molded chair that takes its name from the shape of the armrest as it joins the seat and back. Its four legs are made of solid steel rod for durable performance in active settings. Both chairs stack, have drain holes in the seats, and are recyclable.

www.landscapeforms.com

>The Met Opera Shop has put up for sale the Met Opera house's original 1966 wall sconces. Hand-cut clusters of Swarovski crystals make up these gorgeous antiques that had been a gift to the Met from the Austrian government. Also for sale are



one-of-a-kind chandeliers (hand-cut Swarovski crystals) inspired by the Met Opera's original "Sputnik" chandelier, which was designed by Hans Harald Rath of J. & L. Lobmeyr of Vienna.
www.metoperashop.org

>Modern Forms unveiled three new LED wall luminaires for indoor or outdoor lighting applications: Berkley, Origami and Pandora.



Berkley (pictured) offers arts and crafts styling with a refreshing twist, featuring an enduring look of forged iron over mouth blown etched opal glass. It is available in three versions: the 11-inch 15.5-watt model, the 16-inch 19.5-watts style, and the 21-inch 26-watt model. The new Origami sconce features a curvaceous form that accents and grazes the wall while enhancing the space. Pandora is a multi-dimensional sculpted wall sconce with a tiered design, hand finished in a stunning Oil Rubbed Bronze finish.
www.modernforms.com

>Transit by Takeform is a complete sign system for parking garages. It changes the experience of the parking garage from a dark, dreary and unsafe feeling to colorful, bright and upbeat. Graphics are printed directly on an aluminum composite panel. The



panel has a protective overlay providing scratch and chemical resistance. The system includes 24 graphic families; predesigned options make it easy to select graphics appropriate for a specific project. www.takeform.net/transit

>Unika Vae's Fusion Collection of Muse, Cocoon and Tailor pays homage to the classic tradition of finely crafted wool products with a nod to haute couture. Tailor is a contemporary and classic textile inspired by fine tailoring and traditional craftsmanship. Woven from a melange yarn, the sophisticated textile features a subtle and beautiful heathered texture. Cocoon is a soft and luxurious bouclé that provides a tactile experience with its exaggerated surface. Muse is a distinctive new design from the sustainable LIFE™ Textile collection that epitomizes simplicity and the provenance of traditional manufacturing.



NOTEWORTHY

>Graham Cartledge CBE DL, Chairman of Benoy, last week joined British Prime Minister, the Rt Hon David Cameron MP, in a high-profile trade mission to Southeast Asia. During the tour, which included

visits to Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia, Mr. Cartledge added his support to the launch of a new initiative from the UK-ASEAN Business Council, of which he is a Board Advisory Member. 'ASEAN Insight' will focus on companies of all sizes, right across the UK, and the importance of Southeast Asia's fast growing markets. www.benoy.com

>Matthew A. Duggan, AIA, LEED AP, was promoted to vice president within Wight & Company's Design group. Mr. Duggan, who joined the firm in 2006, previously served as corporate market manager for the group and will continue in that role. His recent clients include the ADP, Morgan Stanley, CDK Global, Allstate Insurance, Adler Planetarium, Philips, Citigroup and Chicago Public Building Commission. www.wightco.com



>Mark Kinsler was promoted to president of Trendway Corp. He replaces **Bill Bundy**, who continues to lead the organization as CEO and will assist in the transition until his planned retirement in 2016. Mr. Kinsler joined the team as

chief operating officer in early 2014, where he led Sales, distribution development and customer relations. Prior to Trendway, Kinsler served as vice president of business attraction/international business development for the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Before his tenure at MEDC he held sales leadership positions at Herman Miller over a period of 26 years. www.trendway.com



>Chuckals Office Products, responding to a heat wave that hit the city of Tacoma, WA in early July, donated more than 300 cases of water to help the homeless.

Partnering with the Tacoma Rescue Mission, which was running low on water, the dealership issued a call to its own customers to purchase a case of bottled water for the mission and matched all purchases with a case of its own. "It's a remarkable example of how small and medium sized businesses can really make a difference in the community when we work together," said Chuckals President Al Lynden. Pictured: Jon Rossman – vice president of Chuckals Office Products; Crystal Wertz – director of marketing of Chuckals Office Products; Frank Jackson – program services division director of Tacoma Rescue Mission.

>HPFi (High Point Furniture Industries) was awarded a new North Carolina state contract. This contract, number 201400059 for Furniture All Types – STC #420A, is effective immediately and extends to Dec. 31, 2016. The awarded categories of furnishings include case-



goods, classroom furniture, bookcases, ergonomic chairs, office swivel and side chairs, computer furniture, mobile and folding furniture, upholstered seating and commercial dining.

>Loewenstein, an OFS Brands company, launched the company's first-ever open-source design challenge. Partnering with Unbranded Designs, Loewenstein issued an open design brief titled "Designing the Future: Third Space Lounge." It challenges designers to create a design a piece or collection of pieces that support a more flexible, relaxed work style that functionally and physically blends the ideas of "work" and "home." Designers are asked to create a research-based design that visually and technically addresses the proposed problem, and also aligns with Loewenstein's brand and product offering. Deadline for submission of initial product designs is Sep. 2. For more information please visit www.unbrandeddesigns.com/challenges/Third-Space.



>World Interiors News launched two new awards: Interior Practice of the Year and Emerging Interior Practice of the Year. Both accolades champion the most creative minds behind the most imaginative interior designs – whether leading lights or rising stars. The Interior Practice of the Year will be awarded to a designer or design practice that demonstrates devotion to elevating the art of interior design. For the Emerging Interior Practice of the Year, up-and-coming interior design teams are invited to submit conceptual, in-progress, or completed work across all disciplines. Entry deadline is Sep. 30; entries before Aug. 28 will receive a 15% early bird discount. More information here: <http://backstage.worldarchitecturenews.com/worldinteriorsnews/calendar>

RE-SITED

>Stacey Milici joined Gunlocke as architect and design manager in Washington, DC. Supporting the A+D community in the District of Columbia and surrounding areas, she reports to Phil Gerlach, Gunlocke's vice president, regional sales, northeast. Most recently, Ms. Milici was the founder and owner of StudioLines, LLC, where she secured government and commercial contracts for top furniture manufacturers. She has extensive experience in the contract furniture industry, including previous roles at CHL Business Interiors, Office Pavilion, American Office and Hogue. www.gunlocke.com



>Susan Quinton joined Gunlocke as a business development manager in the San Francisco Bay area. In this position, she will focus primarily on the A+D community, serving as a strategic consultant responsible for keeping designers and architects up-to-date about the latest Gunlocke resources and innovative product solutions. She reports to Jamie Mikkelson, division manager of sales, west. Ms. Quinton has more than 25 years of experience in the business of design, marketing, and sales. She previously served as A+D Market Manager at One Workplace, the Steelcase dealer in San Francisco. www.gunlocke.com



>Frederick Robertus joined VOA's Chicago office as senior vice president, design director in VOA's hospitality group. Mr. Robertus is currently engaged in design work for VOA on Virgin Hotels New York, The Wrigley Hotel in Chicago and projects in hospitality, aviation and retail. With 23 years of extensive experience in architectural interior design, his portfolio includes numerous luxury hospitality projects in Asia for

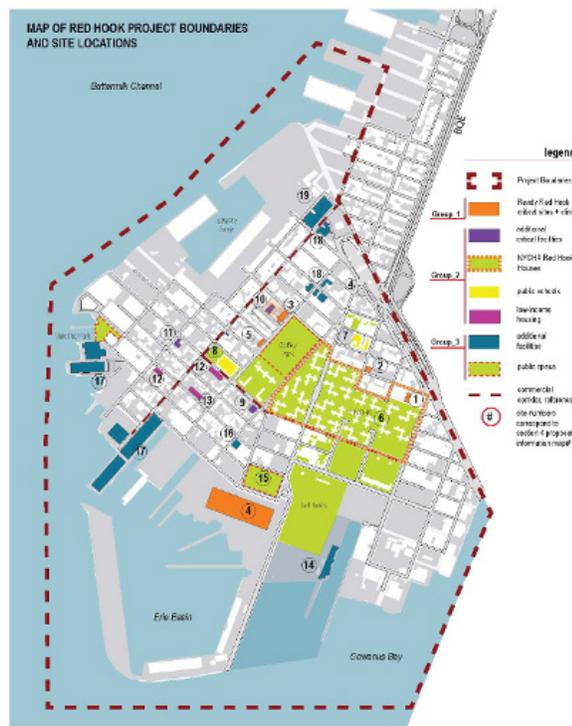


international brands, retail banking and sportswear design as well as residential projects. www.voa.com

ENVIRONMENT

>FXFOWLE was awarded a research grant to determine the viability of implementing the Passivhaus standard for tall residential buildings in New York. Working with an associated consultant team, and using an FXFOWLE residential project currently in design, the study investigates the detailed implications of adapting a typical sustainable tall residential building to meet the Passivhaus standard. The project is an approximately 500,000 square foot multifamily residential building with a mix of market rate and subsidized housing in Queens, targeting LEED Silver Certification, slated to begin construction in late 2015. The grant was awarded by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), which will use the results to enhance its ongoing efforts supporting energy efficiency. www.fxflowle.com

>thread collective, LLC, Principal Gita Nandan, RA, LEED AP, is leading the design of an innovative local emergency electrical system in Brooklyn's Red Hook neighborhood. The project, funded through a grant from NYSERDA, aims to implement a resilient community microgrid – a local energy network that can operate separately from the larger electrical grid during extreme



NY Prize submission: RFP 3046, Friends of Community Board 6 Inc. - Red Hook Community Microgrid

weather events or emergencies. The design team includes two local Brooklyn community groups: the Red Hook New York Rising Community Reconstruction Planning Committee (which Ms. Nandan chairs) and Friends of Brooklyn Community Board 6, Inc. According to Nandan, the project team will assess improved power

resiliency for critical facilities and operations to sustain the waterfront community on a day-to-day basis as well as in future emergency events. The microgrid employs clean distributed energy and innovative controls to be financed through “pioneering infrastructural investments.” <http://threadcollective.com>

PROJECTS

>Perkins Eastman and the town of North Haven, CT, celebrated the groundbreaking of the North Haven's renewed middle school campus. Designed by Perkins Eastman, the \$69.8 million project – the largest school expenditure in the town's history – includes an 88,000 sq.ft. addition to the school and renovations to the existing building, for a total building of approximately 136,000 sq.ft. The new classroom and lab spaces are scheduled for completion in the summer of 2016 while the renovations will be complete by the summer of 2017. The school serves approximately 773 students in grades 6-8. Designed to transform a sprawling 1960s-era middle school into a vibrant, energy-efficient 21st Century teaching and learning environment, the project includes a two-story academic addition that connects with the existing commons space, creating a dynamic, light-filled multi-functional commons area. It will provide a centralized “crossroads” for students, faculty, and families to gather, connect, and learn, as well as much needed breakout space for large crowds attending performances, athletic events, and town meetings. Generous expanses of glazing will supply the students and faculty with an abundance of natural light and views of the surrounding campus. The exterior façade was designed for compatibility and continuity with the exist-

officeneWSwire.com

officeinsight



ing high school located on the campus, and traditional sloped roofing tops the new academic wings and has large overhangs to provide shading and protect the building's facade. All existing mechanical and electrical systems will be replaced with new energy-efficient digital controlled systems that will provide finely tuned climate control for all spaces.

EVENTS

>ASID and Interior Designers of Canada will convene thought leaders from business, government, and non-profit sectors for the inaugural Impact Summit 2015, Aug. 6-7. To be held at the Lake Nona Medical City in Orlando, FL, the summit's insightful two-day agenda is designed to help members and participants connect, collaborate, and create strategies for healthier people and buildings. www.asid.org/event/impact-summit/2015-agenda#.Vb5FO_IVikp

>The Design Center at The Mart and LuxeHome will host Design Chicago Oct. 6-7. The event will feature presentations from renowned keynote speakers, innovative CEU accredited seminars, more than 100 new product

debut from TOP showrooms, a Ones to Watch reception honoring three rising stars in the design world, and the Chicago VIP Luxury Gala celebrating the best in Chicago design. Participating Design Center Showrooms on floors 6, 14 showcase the best in luxury home furnishings, outdoor furnishings, rugs, lighting, fabric, accessories, art, and more. Admission to all daytime programming is free for trade professionals, but pre-registration is required; for more information please visit designchicagoevent.com.

>IIDA NY's 2015 Color Invasion event will take place Thursday, Oct. 29, 7:00-11:00 p.m. at the Waterfront Tunnel, 269 11th Ave. in NYC. This annual theme party



benefits the chapter's student activities and Design Awards Programs. Costumes are strongly encouraged. Once again, the event is also supporting The Pajama Program (www.pajamaprogram.org) with a dropbox for new, unwrapped pajamas and books for children from infants to age 18. Get tickets at <http://iidany.ticketleap.com/ci15/>.

>IIDEXCanada organizers report that registration for #IIDEX15 is open and exhibition space is already 70% sold. The show takes

place Wednesday, Dec. 2 and Thursday, Dec. 3 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Attendees registering now can gain free access to the exhibit halls in both the North and South buildings, and visit more than 1,600 exhibitors, world renowned keynote speakers, 350 seminars, feature exhibitions, special events, the opening night party, tours and more. Free registration ends on Nov. 17. Various travel subsidies are available; please see website for more information. www.iidexcanada.com/2015/



BUSINESS AFFAIRS

>**DIRTT Environmental Solutions Ltd. plans release its fiscal 2015 second quarter financial results on Tuesday, Aug. 4, after markets close.** President **Scott Jenkins** and CFO **Derek Payne** will host a conference call and webcast for the investment community on **Wednesday, Aug. 5, 9:00 a.m.** Eastern Time (7:00 a.m. Mountain Time) to discuss the second quarter results in greater detail. To access the conference call by telephone, please dial +1 647.427.7450 (Toronto and international callers) or 1.888.231.8191 (toll-free in North America). Please call 10 minutes prior to the start of the call. In addition, a live webcast (listen only mode) of the conference call will be available at <http://event.on24.com/r.htm?e=1028808&s=1&k=4C727B67B16520CE56EAC8CD91F20FED>. Investors are invited to submit questions by email before and during the conference call. Please send them to ir@dirtt.net.

A replay of the conference call will be available at +1 416.849.0833 or 1.855.859.2056 by entering the passcode 94622937, from noon (ET) Wednesday, Aug. 5, to midnight (ET) Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2015, through the webcast archives at <http://www.newswire.ca> or on DIRTT's website at <http://ir.dirtt.net>

>**Interface, Inc.'s Board of Directors declared a regular quarterly cash dividend of \$0.05 per share, representing an increase in the regular quarterly dividend.** It is payable Aug. 28 to shareholders of record as of Aug. 14. www.interfaceglobal.com/Investor-Relations.aspx

>**Interface, Inc. on Jul. 29 announced its second quarter 2015 results** (dollars in thousands except EPS):

3 Mos. Ended	7.5.15	6.29.14	%Ch.
Net Sales	\$263,637	\$260,624	1.2%
Gross Profit	\$101,252	\$90,385	12.0%
SG&A	\$68,033	\$66,042	3.0%
Op. Inc.	\$33,219	\$24,343	36.5%
Net Inc.	\$21,722	\$13,071	66.2%
EPS (dil)	\$0.33	\$0.20	65.9%
Orders	\$277,700	\$280,700	-1.1%

6 Mos. Ended	7.5.15	6.29.14	%Ch.
Net Sales	\$500,541	\$479,616	4.4%
Gross Profit	\$186,684	\$165,071	13.1%
SG&A	\$132,065	\$128,701	2.6%
Op. Inc.	\$54,619	\$36,370	50.2%
Net Inc.	\$34,044	\$17,096	99.1%
EPS (dil)	\$0.51	\$0.26	96.2%
Orders	\$537,200	\$520,800	3.1%

Industry Stock Prices

	7.31.15	6.26.15	3.27.15	12.26.14	9.26.14	6.27.14	%frYrHi	%fr50-DayMA
HMiller	28.0	30.5	27.4	29.6	30.4	30.7	-13.3%	-3.1%
HNI	49.6	53.2	53.8	51.5	37.0	39.0	-14.1%	-2.7%
Inscape	3.2	3.3	3.2	2.6	2.5	2.3	-15.8%	-3.5%
Interface	26.0	25.2	20.6	16.6	16.3	18.9	-4.4%	6.1%
Kimball*	11.3	11.9	10.2	9.9	15.4	16.7	-22.5%	-7.2%
Knoll	24.2	25.9	22.7	21.4	17.9	17.4	-7.1%	-2.5%
Leggett	47.8	49.7	45.4	42.6	35.5	34.1	-6.8%	-3.5%
Mohawk	201.6	193.2	181.2	155.3	136.6	136.9	-0.4%	4.0%
Steelcase	17.9	19.7	18.9	18.5	16.7	15.5	-12.7%	-3.3%
USG	31.0	28.5	25.9	27.9	28.3	29.9	-1.3%	11.6%
Virco	2.6	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.7	2.3	-32.7%	-6.5%
SUM	443.1	443.8	412.0	378.4	339.2	343.5		
DJIndust	17,690	17,947	17,713	18,054	17,113	16,852	-3.6%	

*Kimball historical stock prices for 9.26.14 and earlier include both Kimball Furniture and Kimball Electronics earnings prior to the spin-off of the company's Electronics segment on 10.31.14. On 11.3.14, Kimball International, Inc. began trading on NASDAQ under the ticker symbol: "KBAL" and the previous ticker symbol "KBALB" was retired.

With foreign currency held neutral, sales in the 2015 second quarter increased 10.4% to \$287.7 million, versus \$260.6 million in the prior year period. On a currency neutral basis, sales in the first half of 2015 were \$543.8, up 13.4% compared with the first half of 2014.

“Consistent with our strategy, we are driving improvement in profitability by expanding gross margins and taking share in a rebounding corporate office market,” said Interface Chairman and CEO **Daniel T. Hendrix**. “In local currencies, our sales were up a healthy percentage across all divisions, primarily due to robust corporate office segments in the U.S. and Europe as well as our continued resurgence in Australia. We increased gross margins dramatically in each of our business units, as a result of our lean manufacturing initiatives, higher manufacturing volume, improved selling prices, and lower raw material costs and usage. As anticipated, currency headwinds took a heavy toll on our top line and operating income, but we still finished with earnings per share that tied our all-time record in the fourth quarter of 2007.”

Second quarter sales in the company’s **Americas** business increased 9.5% on a currency neutral basis compared with the prior year period, led by the continued rebound of the corporate office market (up 12%), along with more modest gains in non-office segments (up 3% in the aggregate). Within the non-office segments, sales improvements in the education (up 9%), hospitality (up 55%) and government (up 4%) markets were partially offset by declines in the retail (down 12%) and healthcare (down 9%) segments. **FLOR** recorded its highest ever second quarter sales, up 3.9% compared with the second quarter last year, primarily due to improvements in web sales. Currency fluctuations negatively impacted 2015 second quarter sales in the Americas by approximately \$3.9 million, resulting in a year over year gain of 7.0% in U.S. dollars.

In local currency, Interface’s **Europe** business had the highest growth rate, with sales up 15.7%, mainly due to strength in the U.K., Ireland and Germany. The increase in local currency was driven by the corporate office market (up 21%), partially offset by a modest decline in non-office segments (down 3% in the aggregate), mostly due to austerity measures within the government sector. Currency had a \$15.7 million negative impact on 2015 second quarter sales in Europe, resulting in a year over year decline of 6.6% in U.S. dollars.

Sales in the **Asia-Pacific** region in the second quarter of 2015 were up 4.1% in local currency compared with the prior year period, led mainly by 14% growth in Australia and 6% growth in China, offsetting a 35% decline in Southeast Asia. In U.S. dollars, Asia-Pacific sales in the second quarter of 2015 were down 6.2%, mostly due to a \$4.2 million negative currency impact in Australia.

Second quarter 2015 operating income improved 330 basis points to 12.6% of sales, compared with 9.3% of sales, in the second quarter last year. Currency fluctuation negatively impacted 2Q15 operating income by \$3.4 million. Operating income for the 2015 six-month period was 10.9% of sales, versus 7.6% of sales, in the first six months of 2014. In the first six months of 2015, currency fluctuations had a negative impact of \$5.6 million on operating income.

Gross profit margin was 38.4% in 2Q15, up 370 basis points compared with 34.7% in the prior year period. SG&A expenses were 25.8% of sales, in 2Q15, versus 25.3% of sales in 2Q14. The SG&A percentage increase was attributed to higher incentives as a result of the improved performance levels in the current period.

“We’re seeing strong demand in almost all areas of our operating footprint, and market data shows that we’re gaining significant market share in the U.S. and Europe,” said Senior Vice President and CFO **Patrick C. Lynch**. “We’re also regaining market share in Australia, with our plant now fully operational versus the prior year and more than offsetting the negative currency impacts on its gross margin. Our business generated a substantial amount of cash during the quarter, versus a similar sized use of cash in the second quarter last year. In the back half of the year, SG&A expenses will remain an area of focus for us, as we continue to strike an appropriate balance between cost control and funding a few select growth initiatives in burgeoning markets.”

Mr. Hendrix concluded, “While we’re pleased with our reported improvements across almost all financial metrics, the negative currency impacts are masking much of the underlying health and growth of our business. For example, as reported in U.S. dollars, second quarter orders were down 1% year over year, but were actually up 7% to \$300 million on a currency neutral basis versus a record prior year comparison, which points to continuing strong demand. Based on the rebound we’re seeing in the corporate office markets in the U.S. and Europe, which seem to be in the early stages of recovery, along with potential market share gains, we believe we have headroom for additional sales growth in the second half of the year. We remain focused on innovations throughout the organization, particularly in manufacturing and new product development. We also believe our gross margin is sustainable, and perhaps could see further improvement as our strategic initiatives continue to take hold. Notwithstanding the currency headwinds, we’re proud of the progress we’ve made on profit enhancement and we’re excited about our prospects for the remainder of the year.”

The full text of Interface’s 2Q15 earnings release, including all tables, and an archived replay of the company’s Jul. 30 conference call, are available at www.interfaceglobal.com/Investor-Relations.aspx.

>**Kimball International, Inc. on Jul. 30 released its fourth quarter fiscal year 2015 results** (dollars in thousands except EPS):

	6.30.15	6.30.14	%Ch.
3 Mos. Ended			
Net Sales	\$159,061	\$137,858	15.4%
Gross Profit	\$51,079	\$42,056	21.5%
SG&A	\$40,818	\$42,175	-3.2%
Op. Inc.	\$8,694	-\$119	-
Inc. from			
Cont. Oper.	\$4,745	\$359	1,221.7%
Net Inc.	\$4,745	\$7,848	-39.5%
EPS (dil.)	\$0.12	\$0.01	1,100.0%
12 Mos. Ended			
Net Sales	\$600,868	\$543,817	10.5%
Gross Profit	\$188,865	\$166,725	13.3%
SG&A	\$166,253	\$164,781	0.9%
Op. Inc.	\$17,322	\$1,944	791.0%
Inc. from			
Cont. Oper.	\$11,143	\$3,419	225.9%
Net Inc.	\$20,300	\$33,461	-39.3%
EPS (dil.)	\$0.29	\$0.09	222.2%

EPS figures shown are diluted from continuing operations. Adjusted income from continuing operations for the fourth quarter of FY15 was \$5.8 million, or \$0.15 per share, excluding charges related to a previously announced restructuring plan and the spin-off of the company's Electronic Manufacturing Services segment. For the full year, adjusted income from continuing operations was \$17.6 million in FY15, or \$0.45 per share. This compares with adjusted income from continuing operations in FY14 of \$3.7 million, or \$0.10 per share, which excludes the gain on the sale of an idle manufacturing facility and charges related to the spin-off of the company's EMS segment.

"Our turnaround is getting nice traction," said Kimball International Chairman and CEO **Bob Schneider**. "Our business is growing across most verticals, with sales increasing a strong 15% compared to the prior year fourth quarter. Our profitability is up significantly, with the current quarter adjusted operating profit as a percent of net sales hitting the highest level in the last decade. It is very encouraging to see the progress and feel the excitement of our employees as we deliver on creative new product introductions and find ways to operate more efficiently. It is a tremendous team effort."

On Oct. 31, 2014, Kimball International spun off its Electronic Manufacturing Services segment. The following discussion excludes the results of the EMS segment for all periods presented, except where indicated.

The increase in net sales in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2015 was primarily driven by increases in the hospitality and other commercial vertical markets. Net sales for the hospitality vertical increased 36% over the prior year, driven by strong

sales of both custom and non-custom hospitality furniture.

The other commercial vertical, focused on a broad variety of customers, increased 24% over the prior year fourth quarter, boosted by new product sales and the positive impact of marketing initiatives.

Orders received during the fiscal year 2015 fourth quarter increased 15% over the prior year fourth quarter. Orders in all market verticals increased with the exception of the education vertical. The hospitality and other commercial vertical markets in particular are experiencing significant growth, with hospitality orders growing in both custom and non-custom furniture, and other commercial orders benefiting from many new products which have been well received.

Fourth quarter gross profit as a percent of net sales increased 1.6 percentage points from the prior year fourth quarter. The margin improvement was attributed to price increases, lower sales price discounting, cost reduction efforts, and the leverage gained on increased sales volumes.

Selling and administrative expenses in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2015 declined as a percent of sales by 5.0 percentage points on leverage from higher sales volumes, and decreased 3% in absolute dollars compared to the prior year. The lower selling and administrative expense was driven by declines in spin-off expenses, bad debt expenses, and the elimination of compensation and incentive pay related to executives who retired in conjunction with the spin-off. The year-over-year comparison was also impacted by a large gain on the sale of an idled manufacturing facility that occurred in the prior year fourth quarter.

Pre-tax restructuring costs in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2015 totaled \$1.6 million and were related to the company's previously announced restructuring plan to consolidate its metal fabrication production from an operation located in Post Falls, ID, into existing production facilities in Indiana. The restructuring plan remains on track for completion by Sep. 30, 2016.

Operating cash flow for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2015 was a positive cash flow of \$1.8 million compared to a positive cash flow of \$5.0 million in the fourth quarter of the prior year. The prior year figures include Kimball Electronics' operating cash flows, as cash management was centralized prior to the spin-off.

The company's cash and cash equivalents declined to \$34.7 million at June 30, 2015, compared to June 30, 2014 cash and cash equivalents of \$136.6 million (inclusive of Kimball Electronics). The decline was primarily due to the transfer of \$63.0 million of cash to the Kimball Electronics subsidiary as of the Oct. 31, 2014 spin-off date, at which time Kimball Electron-

ics began operation as an independent company. Additionally, the company expended \$33.1 million for capital investments during fiscal year 2015, with the largest items being building renovation costs related to the spin-off and manufacturing equipment purchases related to the transition of metal fabrication production from the Post Falls facility to production facilities in Indiana.

During FY15, the company acquired 1.0 million shares of its common stock at an aggregate purchase price of \$11.3 million. Additionally the company has paid \$7.7 million of dividends to shareholders during the year, for a total year-to-date capital return to shareholders of \$19.0 million. The company repurchased its common stock pursuant to a previously announced stock repurchase program which allows for the repurchase of up to 2.0 million shares.

Results by End Market Vertical (dollars in millions):

NET SALES

3 Mos. Ended	6.30.15	6.30.14	%Ch.
Education	\$10.0	\$9.9	1%
Finance	\$14.3	\$14.0	2%
Government	\$22.9	\$25.4	-10%
Healthcare	\$16.5	\$14.4	15%
Hospitality	\$40.5	\$29.8	36%
Other Commercial	\$54.9	\$44.4	24%

12 Mos. Ended	6.30.15	6.30.14	%Ch.
Education	\$38.5	\$39.9	-4%
Finance	\$56.3	\$62.2	-9%
Government	\$96.0	\$90.5	6%
Healthcare	\$60.4	\$59.3	2%
Hospitality	\$143.2	\$118.1	21%
Other Commercial	\$206.5	\$173.8	19%

ORDERS

3 Mos. Ended	6.30.15	6.30.14	%Ch.
Education	\$13.4	\$14.8	-9%
Finance	\$17.1	\$15.5	10%
Government	\$29.6	\$28.5	4%
Healthcare	\$17.5	\$16.0	9%
Hospitality	\$38.7	\$25.0	55%
Other Commercial	\$56.0	\$50.1	12%

12 Mos. Ended	6.30.15	6.30.14	%Ch.
Education	\$39.9	\$37.9	5%
Finance	\$59.3	\$64.2	-8%
Government	\$100.7	\$95.1	6%
Healthcare	\$63.4	\$58.7	8%
Hospitality	\$144.2	\$114.6	26%
Other Commercial	\$216.7	\$183.3	18%

Guidance

There is no change to the company's previously announced guidance for periods following the expected completion of consolidation of the Idaho manufacturing facility into other operations in southern Indiana. The consolidation continues to progress according to plan with completion of the plan anticipated by September 2016. Estimated savings resulting from the consolidation activities are expected to be approximately \$5 million annually thereafter. When the restructuring is complete and the savings are fully realized beginning in the quarter ending Dec. 31, 2016, the company expects operating income as a percent of net sales to be in the range of 7% to 8% for that quarter. Net sales in that quarter are expected to be in the range of \$170 million to \$180 million; operating income is expected in the range of \$12 million to \$14 million; the effective tax rate is expected to range from 35% to 38%; and earnings per diluted share are expected to range from \$0.20 to \$0.24. At 8% operating income, return on capital would approach 20%, which is among the best in the office furniture industry.

The full text of Kimball's 4Q15 earnings release, including all tables, and a webcast replay of the company's Jul. 31 conference call, including a PDF file with supplementary data, may be accessed at www.ir.kimball.com.

TECHNOLOGY

>Configura, maker of CET Designer software, announced free August and September webinars with CET Designer instructors:

Getting Started with CET Designer

Aug. 3 at 10 p.m. ET
 Aug. 4 at 4 p.m. ET
 Aug. 18 at 1 p.m. ET
 Sept. 7 at 10 p.m. ET
 Sept. 21 at 10 p.m. ET

Tools for Working in CET Designer: Favorites, Blocks & Alternatives

Aug. 12 at 11 a.m. ET
 Aug. 26 at 4 p.m. ET

Edit Graphics in CET Designer

Aug. 12 at 4 p.m. ET
 Aug. 19 at 4 p.m. ET

The free webinars are for anyone, whether a Beginner or Advanced CET Designer user, anywhere in the world. Please call 877-568-4106 and click on "Join Webinar Now" at www.configura.com/cet/training. To contact Configura with any questions or suggestions, call 877-238-0808.

Learn more about additional courses and opportunities at www.configura.com.

business

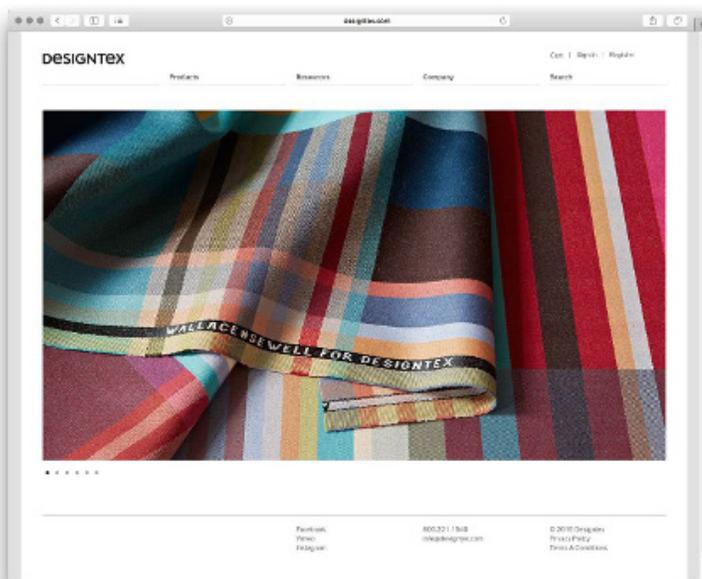
officeinsight

>Current Builders, a premier construction company headquartered in Pompano Beach, FL, is deploying SmartWater, a forensically traceable liquid theft deterrent, at several construction sites. Supplied by **SmartWater CSI**, SmartWater products are forensically encoded liquids that can be applied to any property, thereby leaving an invisible 'serial number' on the item. It is said to be non-hazardous, extremely robust, virtually impossible to remove, and guaranteed to last a minimum of five years. The technology does not contain organic DNA-based materials, which are degradable under sunlight and can be affected by temperature, oxygenation and other environmental factors. According to SmartWater CSI, it has a proven track record of reducing property crime over the past 17 years and has played a vital role in more than 1,200 convictions worldwide. www.SmartWaterCSI.com

>Designtex launched its redesigned website with a variety of advanced features. Reflecting the company's ongoing mission to educate designers about materials and to demystify technical terminology, the website brings to the foreground detailed product information that is usually relegated to the background. On each product page, clickable pop-up tool tips provide definitions of complex terminology and unpack brand names, offering customers clear and concise information to assist in product selection. Replacing jargon with straightforward everyday language, these pop-ups reflect Designtex's commitment to sharing knowledge about its products and manufacturing processes in a transparent manner.

A second key feature of the new website is the inclusion of extensive filter options, allowing visitors to refine their search according to multiple criteria, such as material content, aesthetics (color family, pattern type, etc.), or technical and performance characteristics (cleaning, abrasion testing, etc). Significantly enhanced filtering options facilitate assembling a short list of products that meet particular sustainability credentials. Products may be selected according to their relevant Standards and Certifications (Cradle to Cradle, Facts, SCS Indoor Advantage, etc.), whether they fulfill LEED criteria (containing rapidly renewable materials or recycled content) or meet the definition of Optimized Chemistry, for example by avoiding certain chemicals in their content (being free of phthalates or using only non-halogenated flame retardants) or in their post-installation maintenance (where a carefully established cleaning protocol replaces perfluorinated stain-resistant finishes).

Other new features include the option of creating a personal account, allowing customers to order free samples, view and track orders, and also to set up project pages where favorite products can be collected and saved in order to be easily referenced and shared with co-workers, team members and clients. Ongoing favorite features—such as the "Resources" page, listing a line-up of continuing education classes along with installation and maintenance handbooks, warranty information and more—have been retained with an updated aesthetic. www.designtex.com



JOB SITE

To place ads or for billing
information, email
Bob@officeinsight.com
Or, call
T 972 293 9186

Find the rest of our ads on
our online job site.

Sales Representative - Illinois

Carnegie, a leading textile/
wallcovering company is
seeking a sales representative
for the Illinois market.
Preference for candidates
with sales experience and
strong standing in the A&D
community. Tremendous
opportunity to represent
a design oriented,
environmentally focused
company in an important
market.

Please contact Erika Gaies -
egaies@carnegiefabrics.com

SUDOKU

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

				3				5
1	9		6			8		
		2			5	7		
2		7	5	8				1
5	6			7				
	8	1		9	6			
9			7					
		3	1	4		9		
								4