

office insight

CITED:
 "UNDER CERTAIN
 CIRCUMSTANCES,
 PROFANITY PROVIDES
 A RELIEF DENIED
 EVEN TO PRAYER."
 —MARK TWAIN

Sustainability: The Big Question

Sustainability conversations are the *pain quotidian* of many who work in the interiors business, but rarely do we look at the subject's core concern: *Will life continue to exist as we know it?* **Teknion** sponsored an **Applied Brilliance** follow-up debate between bio-ethicist Dr. **Gregory Stock** and Buddhist scholar **Robert Thurman**. The upshot: Most likely the human race will avoid extinction by blundering its way forward through self-centered technological achievements. At best, it remains up in the air as to whether humans will ever be able to rise above immediate comforts for the sake of a future goal, such as saving the planet as an environment as we now know it.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 3...



2010 Year in Review

As the year progressed, office furniture manufacturers saw improvements in their financial results. Quarterly reports increasingly showed year-over-year percentage increases in sales and income instead of negative numbers. We are in the midst of a genuine recovery in demand," commented Knoll CEO **Andrew Cogan** in October. Herman Miller CEO **Brian Walker** in December reported improved order entry "across virtually every area of our business."

I see a period developing in which value will become more important than price, where purpose-driven design will overshadow a broad photograph-ready artistic canvas, where aesthetics and beautiful design will be recognized for their valued impact upon the human organism, from inspiration to neuro-chemical readjustment, and where air quality, lighting and acoustics are the first concerns of interior designers. This will take a great deal of work and a meaningful paradigm shift, but the basis for progress is there. In the meanwhile, let's see what stepping stones we have crossed this past year.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 6...



across the country. At least 40 trees will be planted in each of 40 selected cities.

>The cloud of ash from the volcanic eruption in Iceland that brought European air travel to a halt for nearly a week in mid-April had a silver lining for teleconferencing providers. Audio and video conferencing, web conferencing and telepresence technologies saw major increases in usage as well as interest during the disruption. Steelcase's Polycom subsidiary reported that the use of video conferencing and telepresence solutions hit an all-time high during the week. Cisco Systems, which acquired Norwegian telepresence systems provider Tandberg on April 19, had to use telepresence in place of face-to-face meetings during the finalization of the deal.

May

>ICFF 2010 proved once again that, while the design of interiors is serious business, it is also a colorful and provocative playground. If it's pure fun that you want, together with some novel ideas from design schools and some foreign countries, ICFF is the place to go. You'll never leave without a smile and the thought that you are glad you went. One of the few industry shows in the U.S. open to the public. (Thank you Phil Robinson.) [5.24.10]

>Interior Designers of Canada announced a restructuring from seven

provincial associations to a unified national organization. Susan Wiggins, former director of ARIDO, will be the first executive director. There are far fewer interior designers in Canada than in the U.S., but many are top notched, itching to do work in the U.S. (or doing it), and, as a profession, have their act together. Why, even the Canadian government helps finance the use of Canadian design abroad. [5.10.10]

>Haworth-furnished business incubator and co-working center The Stream in rural Newaygo, MI, opened to the public. This project is an interesting and instructive example of government-education-private business economic development, while providing another testing ground for a new type of remote officing. [5.3.10]

>Both KI and Herman Miller announced senior management changes. Brian Krenke was promoted to president at KI and was also appointed



KI: BRIAN KRENKE

to the company's board of directors. A long-term KI employee who was promoted to Executive Vice President a year earlier, Mr. Krenke previously held a series of other vice president titles, including sales and marketing, health-care market, Western region sales, and product management. (The third time is the charm!)

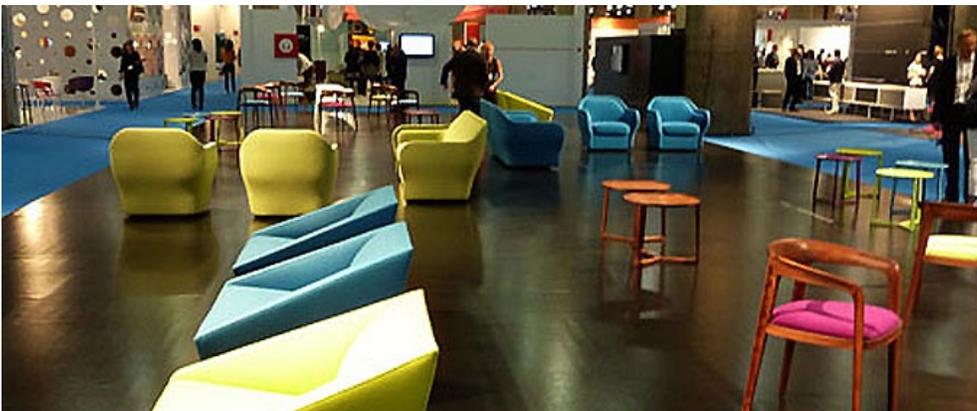
At Herman Miller, B. Ben Watson was appointed to the newly created position of Executive Creative Director. Most recently, Mr. Watson was the CEO of Moroso USA. He began his career in the contract furniture industry at Knoll as a product manager and communications director. He moved to Vitra, first as U.S. sales and marketing director and then as global marketing director. Before joining Moroso, he spent several years as global creative director for Nike. He is also a founding principle of Watson + Peters, a brand strategy and design consulting firm. [5.10.10]



HERMAN MILLER: B BEN WATSON

June

>Delights of NeoCon 2010. [6.21.10] It was an upbeat year at NeoCon. Even as the year went on, from the dreary results of 2009 attitudes and optimism were apparent by the time of NeoCon. Our favorite products were **Knoll's Antenna Workspaces** and **Halcon's Proximus** by Gary Lee, old fashion high-end



BERNHARDT'S BOOTH AT ICFF

events

officeinsight

wood casegoods in a tough year for wood companies. **Haworth** had a most interesting year, proving that the great success it has had over the last decade has not spoiled it. No one has done more to improve its image and position in the contract furniture industry since we have been publishing than Haworth. Remember in the late '90s when Haworth introduced concept products such as *Crossings*. If you were worried, as we were, that the company's success has turned it stodgy, NeoCon 2010 proved that this is not the case. Haworth hired his *estimability* **Clive Wilkinson** to add some decoration to the striking creation conceived by **Eva Maddox** and **Eileen Jones** six years ago. Mr. Wilkinson, one of the most recognized and ca-

pable Big D designers around turned the stunning Maddox/Jones presentation on its head, more closely mimicking a Parisian night club than anything else. What fun, and what guts. The design, they said, was aimed at the younger set. I wished they had been there to see it.

Beside the flamboyance of the showroom, Haworth had a quiet year, focusing on the *Very* fine chair line of that name. Let us also note that, with its affiliation with Tuohy, Haworth has the strongest high-end wood producer of the large companies. **Tuohy** has sharply focused on high-design wood products over the past several years, and its offerings this year were out-

standing. Does everyone need a cubist table by Norman Diekman. No! But is there a place for this type of emotion-arousing creation? Absolutely. We need much more of it.

—Best of Competition Winner: **ON Chair** by **Wilkahn**. Clearly a fine chair, but with a lot of competition and effective distribution for Wilkahn in the U.S. remains to be seen.



HALCON: PROXIMUS BY GARY LEE



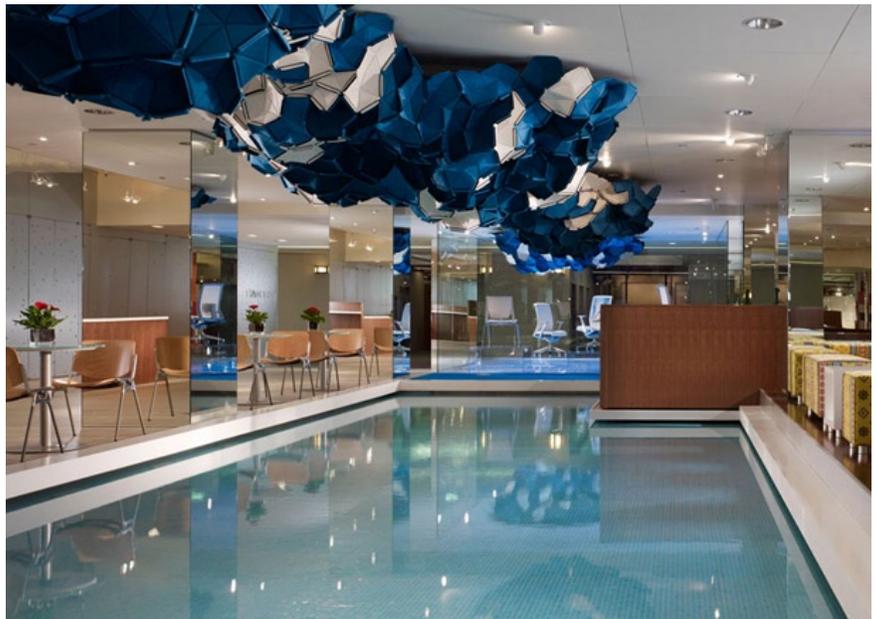
HAWORTH: VERY CHAIR



WILKAHN: ON CHAIR



KNOLL: ANTENNA WORKSPACES



HAWORTH'S NEOCON SHOWROOM 2010