

# DAVID ORTH

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## Selected Exhibitions

- 2009 *REGIONAL MASTERS: EXTRAORDINARY FURNITURE*, Lubeznik Gallery, Michigan City, IN.
- 2006 *MENTALMETAL*, Function+Art Gallery, Chicago.
- 2005 *SUSTAINABLE FURNITURE*, The Chicago Cultural Center, curated by John Kriegshauser & Lee Weitzman.
- 2005 *UNBUILDABLE*, The Furniture Society (an exhibition of impossible-to-realize, digital models displayed digitally at the annual FS conference.) Curated by Tom Loeser and Wendy Maruyama.
- 2001 *BEYOND FUNCTION: THE ART OF FURNITURE*, The Chicago Cultural Center.
- 1999 *DAVID ORTH & VORTEX DESIGN: 4 GENERATIONS, 1 SINGLE THREAD*, Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design.
- 1998 *LITURGICAL AND SACRED ART*, Springfield Art Association, Springfield, IL.
- 1997 *ARTFUL FURNITURE*, Evanston Art Center, Evanston, IL. Curated by Michelle Rowe-Shields.
- 1992 *NEW CHICAGO FURNITURE*, Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture & Design, annual exhibition and awards.
- 1996
- 1994 *FUNCTION/DYSFUNCTION*, Gwenda Jay Gallery, Chicago.
- 1993 *TABLESERVICE SONATA*, National dining-table & accessory competition sponsored by the Springfield Art Association.
- 1992 *TRADITIONS & TRANSITIONS: AMISH & MENNONITE EXPRESSION IN VISUAL ART*, Canton Art Institute, Canton, Ohio. Curated by Stanley Kaufman.
- 1991 *DAVID ORTH: FURNITURE & SCULPTURE*, Loyola University Fine Arts Gallery, Chicago.
- 1991 *FURNITURE OF THE 90'S*, Franklin Parrasch Gallery, New York, and American Society of Furniture Artists, Houston, TX. Juried by Franklin Parrasch, Rick Snyderman, and Adam St. John.

## **Selected Commissions & Collections**

*“Tempest Table”, acquired for use as a chapel altar, St. Norbert College, DePere, WI, 2009.*

*“Water from the Rock”, a tallit and kippot sculpture, Congregation Beth Am, Buffalo Grove, IL, 2006.*

*Portico, The Gurdjieff Society of IL (Covered outdoor meeting and entryway space - Alden, IL.)*

*Processional Cross, St. Eulalia Church, Maywood, IL. 1998.*

*Torah Holder, Oak Park Temple - B'nai Abraham Zion. 1993.*

*Coffee table, dining table, & serving unit, Carl Rogers House, Oak Park, IL, collectors George & Nita Kubricht. 1988 - 1992.*

*Processional Cross and Hiroshima Memorial, Church of St. Giles, Oak Park, IL. 1991.*

*Communion Table/Altar, Oak Park Mennonite Church, Oak Park, IL, 1990.*

*Foyer table, H.P. Young House, Oak Park, IL, interior remodeling architect Frank Lloyd Wright, collectors Louis & Joan Mercuri. 1988.*

*Dining table and lighting, George Furbeck House, Oak Park, architect Frank Lloyd Wright, collectors Mr. & Mrs. Kouvel. 1987.*

*Tabernacle, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, Glen Ellyn, IL, architects Buderus, Sunshine, and Jager. 1986.*

*Dining table, Charles E. Roberts House, Oak Park, interior remodeling architect Frank Lloyd Wright, collectors Mr. & Mrs. Lofgren. 1986.*

*Podium, Unity Church of Oak Park, 1984.*

*.... and around 500 other corporate and residential commissions.*

## **Free Lance Design for Furniture Industry**

*Orth began designing for the furniture industry in 1995. He has designed work realized and sold by Ello Manufacturing Company, Elite Manufacturing, Stratus, The Lam Lee Group, and Costantini – companies in Rockford, Los Angeles, Madison, China/Phillipines/Dallas, and Italy. This has required visits to the High Point Furniture Market, some work at manufacturing sites, digital modeling, digital file transfer, and web-based communication.*

## **Published Writing & Public Speaking**

*"Aboriginal Art & the Furniture Designer: Ethical Questions and Fresh Perspectives"*, talk given to the Chicago Furniture Designer's Association, 2010.

*"The Shamanic Aspect of Design: Design for Transitioning and Dwelling"*, talk given to the Chicago Furniture Designers Association, 2009.

*"Clearing a Space on the Workbench: How Focusing Helps Me Build"*, essay for *The Folio: Volume 21, #1, 2008*, a journal of psychology published by the Focusing Institute, Spring Valley, New York, Fall 2008.

*"Embracing the Problematic, the Disturbing, and the Haunted: a Process Model for Designing, Building, and Marketing"*, talk given to the Chicago Furniture Designers Association, 2008.

*"Garrett Rietveld and Architectural Mysticism"*, talk given to the Chicago Furniture Designers Association, 2007.

*"The Riddle of Craft"*, essay for *Material for Thought* (on line issue), 2004, [www.farwesteditions.com](http://www.farwesteditions.com).

*"Imagining a Career"*, talk given during "Symposium on Vocation in the Visual Arts", North Park University, 2003.

## **Teaching**

### **ACADEMIC AND STUDIO INSTRUCTION:**

*FURNITURE DESIGN: Interior Design Department, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL, 2006 & 2008.*

*METALSMITHING FOR THE WOODWORKER, Marc Adams School of Woodworking, 2007*

*BUILDING A STEREOSCOPE & STEREO PHOTOGRAPHY, Marc Adams School of Woodworking, 2007*

*BRONZE FABRICATION: Marc Adams School of Woodworking (MASW), Indianapolis 2005 & 2006.*

*BUILDING A CURVY TABLE, Marc Adams School of Woodworking, 2006*

*HAMMER VENEERING: Marc Adams School of Woodworking, Indianapolis 2006.*

*FURNITURE DESIGN I: Designed Objects Department, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2004.*

*FURNITURE DESIGN I: Interior Architecture Department, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1998.*

*WOODWORKING: Sculpture Department, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1996?*

*PHILOSOPHY of TECHNOLOGY, Philosophy Department, Northwestern University, 1979.*

**DESIGN PRESENTATIONS:** Chicago Furniture Designer's Association, Illinois Institute of Technology, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, University of Illinois at Chicago, Ray College of Design, College of DuPage, Loyola University, Judson University, Triton College, International Academy of Merchandising and Design.

**ORTH FURNITURE APPRENTICESHIP:** David Orth is the founder and director of a one year, full-time internship in the furniture arts that operated 14 years from 1989 – 2003. This was an innovative, highly organized, and well-regarded apprenticeship. Over 20 men and women of all ages were certified by the Orth Furniture Apprenticeship. All graduates seeking employment were hired by furniture studios or by the furniture industry.

## **Selected Media**

*500 Tables*, Lark Books, 2009, p. 318.

*Almanac*, Connecticut Home & Garden Magazine, Fall 2006, p. 13.

Patrick F. Cannon, Hometown Architect, 2006, p. 57 (dining table & light fixture in FLWright house).

Polly Ullrich, "Heavy Metal", Metalsmith Magazine, Fall 2005, p. 58.

Pat Gerlach, "Artfully Made", West Suburban Living Magazine, May/June 2004, p.86-88.

Muskan Taurani, "Art as Furniture", Latest Magazine (published in the United Arab Emirates), November 2003, pp. 70-73.

Chicago Home & Garden Magazine, Spring 2003, p.114.

Featured on Ron Hazelton's House Calls (TV), January 2003.

Woodwork Magazine, December 2002, pp. 52 & 53.

Log Home Design Ideas Magazine, January 2002, pp. 170-173

Hyun Jin Lee, "David Orth", Crart (Korean Craft & Art magazine), July 2002, pp. 94-97.

Spencer Hart, Wright Rooms, Chartwell Books, 1998, p. 106. Dining table and light for George Furbeck House.

Robin Langley Sommer, The Genius of Frank Lloyd Wright, Barnes & Noble, NY, 1997. Foyer table on page 41.

Design Book Six, The Taunton Press, 1992, p. 67.

Design Book Five, The Taunton Press, 1990, p.37.

Design Book Four, The Taunton Press, 1987, p.48.

Carla Lind, The Wright Style, Simon & Schuster, 1992, pp.199,200 & 217.

Elizabeth Horner, "Prairie Pieces", Inland Architect, May-June 1991, pp.7-9.

Nancy Stetson, "A Design Philosophy", Chicago Tribune, April 14, 1991, Sec. 15, pp. 1 & 3.

Diane Douglass, "Chicago 1984: Contemporary Furniture," New Art Examiner, June 1984, p.20.

## **Education**

MA, Philosophy, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. 1979. (Emphasis on Phenomenology, Aesthetics, the Philosophy of Technology, and Eastern Philosophy).

Photo by Gregory Halvorsen Schreck



Canoeing the Chicago River

*David Orth has resided at length in Texas, Costa Rica, Guatemala, North Carolina, and Chicago. Growing up in foreign countries gave the young David daily access to ancient Mayan ruins, and friendships with astonishing craftsmen that worked without electricity or store bought tools. Since 1972, Orth has lived and worked in the Chicago area.*

*Orth is one of Chicago's top furniture artists, an innovative educator, a furniture industry designer, and a sculptor. He is a member of The Furniture Society and the Chicago Furniture Designers Association (serving on its board of directors from 1999-2004). Orth's furniture & sculpture have been featured in museums and galleries since the early 1980's. DAVID ORTH & VORTEX DESIGN: 4 GENERATIONS, 1 SINGLE THREAD, a special focus of the Chicago Athenaeum's NEW CHICAGO FURNITURE VIII, featured Orth's work, apprenticeship program, and the work of his graduates at Vortex Design. FURNITURE OF THE 90'S selected Orth as one of 25 American furniture artists and was exhibited in New York at the Franklin Parrasch Gallery and in Houston at the American Society of Furniture Artists.*

*In college and graduate school, David took a road less traveled by artists and received two degrees in philosophy. Surprisingly, this detour took him right to the heart of design and craft issues where he had the time to discover the essential connections between thinking, living, and building. Orth believes that art is an opportunity to understand something important about life. For him, furniture - the sculpture we all live closest to - is a thin thread of connection between our ordinary, daily life and the insane immensity of the universe.*

*David strives for a direct architecture that celebrates the human process playing out between the raw materials underfoot (on the one hand) and the overwhelming terror and generosity of space (on the other). This outrageous continuum on which humans perch so precariously seems a little more easily managed (and understood) with some chairs, a table or two, and a cabinet for your stuff. Each design is a fresh effort to reach down below the surface of busyness, superficial amusement, and group behavior that vex our daily routines. He is searching for something more delicious and haunting - a flavor, or a scent you almost didn't catch. David draws his clients into an enjoyable process - exercising the mind, the emotions, and an animal connection to the natural environment.*