

DAVID ORTH

Furniture Designer
Sculptor/Craftsman
Speaker/Writer

20817 Bunker Hill Road
Marengo, IL 60152
815.943.4099 home & studio
708.288.5199 cell
360.937.6485 fax
davidorth@OrthFurniture.com
www.OrthFurniture.com

Selected Exhibitions

- 2012 *Forthcoming: ALTARS & ASHES: THE CEREMONIAL WORK OF DAVID ORTH, Burning Bush Gallery, Wheaton, Illinois.*
- 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
to
Museum of Architecture & Design, annual exhibition
and awards.*
- 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

“St. Paul’s Cross”, winner of national competition sponsored by St. Paul’s Episcopal Church of Louisville, KY. Installed 2011.

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

“Water from the Rock”, a tallitot 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

David Orth has designed a variety of items manufactured, marketed, and sold by Ello Manufacturing Company, Elite Manufacturing, Stratus, The Lam Lee Group, and Costantini – companies in Rockford, Los Angeles, Madison, China/Philippines/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.

"Imagining a Career", talk delivered at "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 Wdworking, 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, well-regarded, and copied 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

Featured Artist, December 2009, Episcopal Church Visual Arts, ECVA.org

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.

Jim Tolpin, "Accented Joinery", *American Woodworker*, July/Aug 1994, p. 52.

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).



Canoeing on the Chicago River

David Orth – bio, career, & philosophy:

David Orth, b. 1953, American studio furniture designer and sculptor working in wood & direct steel & bronze.

Orth was born in Texas, but lived with his expatriate family in Costa Rica & Guatemala during the 1960s & 1970s, moving to North Carolina as a teen, and then Chicago as an adult. Growing up in foreign countries among diverse communities exposed the young David to Spanish, Mayan, & European cultures and architecture, astonishing craftsmen that worked without electricity or store bought tools, and the International Modernism of larger Latin American cities.

Today Orth is one of Chicago's top furniture artists, an innovative educator, and a furniture industry designer. He has taught sculpture, interior architecture, and designed objects at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is a member of the Chicago Furniture Designers' Association and served on its board of directors for five years.

Orth's furniture & sculpture has been featured in museums and galleries since the early 1980's. DAVID ORTH & VORTEX DESIGN: 4 GENERATIONS, ONE THREAD, a special focus of the Chicago Athenaeum's NEW CHICAGO FURNITURE VIII, featured Orth's work, apprenticeship program, the work of his graduates at Vortex Design, their own students and one of Orth's mentors, Mark Levin. FURNITURE OF THE 90'S featured 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 long detour and received two degrees in philosophy. Surprisingly, this took him right into the heart of design and craft issues where he discovered the underlying connections between thinking, living, and building. Orth believes that art is an opportunity to dig down deep and understand something about life. For him, furniture - the sculpture we all live closest to - is a thread of connection between our ordinary, daily life and the insane immensity of the universe. Orth says he feels like a bloodhound - always on to the faint scent of something delicious and haunting. He gets a little unhinged by the whole thing and likes to paraphrase T.S.Eliot :

*[Every design] is a step to the block, to the fire, down the sea's throat
Or to an illegible stone: and that is where we start.*

We die with the dying:

See, they depart, and we go with them.

We are born with the dead:

See, they return, and bring us with them.

David drags his clients along on this mostly enjoyable discovery process. The furniture and sculpture that result are broadly satisfying and unexpected. James A. Mangum, author of the Dos Cruces Trilogy has called Orth's work "Amazing, overwhelming, musical. Rock and roll, the blues, arias."