

For Immediate Release  
January 14, 2010

***EERO SAARINEN: SHAPING THE FUTURE,***  
**RETROSPECTIVE OF INFLUENTIAL ARCHITECT'S CAREER,**  
**CONCLUDES INTERNATIONAL TOUR AT YALE**

*On view at School of Architecture and Yale University Art Gallery  
during Saarinen's centennial year, final presentation includes material  
not seen elsewhere.*

*February 19–May 2, 2010*

***Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future***, the critically acclaimed exhibition that explores the career of one of the most influential architects of the twentieth century, concludes its international tour with a presentation at **Yale University Art Gallery** and the **Yale School of Architecture Gallery**. It is the first major museum retrospective devoted to the Finnish-born architect—who both studied and worked at Yale—and was in large part enabled by the 2002 creation of the Eero Saarinen Collection at the University's Sterling Memorial Library.

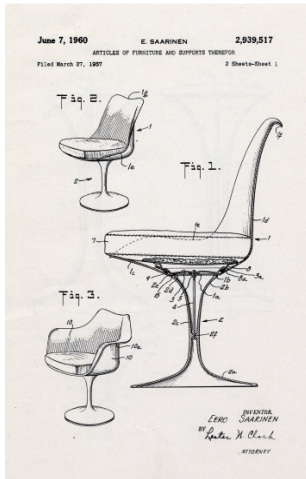
Eero Saarinen (1910–61) was one of the most prolific, unorthodox, and controversial masters of twentieth-century architecture. Using progressive construction techniques and a personal aesthetic, he defied modernist doctrine to create some of the era's iconic designs, ranging from the TWA Terminal at John F. Kennedy Airport, in New York, to the 630-foot-high Gateway Arch, in Saint Louis, to the General Motors headquarters, outside Detroit, to the “tulip chair.” Together, these and other designs helped create the international image of the United States in the decades following World War II.



TWA Terminal, New York International (now John F. Kennedy International) Airport, New York, circa 1962. Photographer Balthazar Korab. © Balthazar Korab Ltd.

**Robert A.M. Stern**, Dean, Yale School of Architecture, states, “The School of Architecture is delighted to have played a central part in the creation of *Eero Saarinen*:

*Shaping the Future*. It is fitting that the exhibition is concluding its tour at Yale, where Saarinen studied architecture and designed some of his most significant buildings, and where the major archive devoted to his work resides. Moreover, the show will be installed within two masterpieces by contemporaries of Saarinen: Louis Kahn’s building for the Yale University Art Gallery and the School of Architecture’s Paul Rudolph Hall. The resulting dialogue among three of the greatest, most distinctive architects of their time promises to be a powerful architectural experience.”



Patent drawing for pedestal chairs, June 7, 1960. Courtesy Eero Saarinen Collection, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

**Jock Reynolds**, The Henry J. Heinz II Director, Yale University Art Gallery, adds, “The Gallery looks forward to collaborating with the School of Architecture to mark Eero Saarinen’s centennial year with this exhibition. It is apt that the portion of the exhibition shown in the Gallery, which has such great strength in furniture and decorative arts, concentrates on the architect’s domestic projects and furnishings. Moreover, visitors to the exhibition can also see, on the Gallery’s third floor, two very rare pieces of domestic silver—a bowl and the prototype for a knife—designed by Eero Saarinen’s father, architect Eliel Saarinen,

who was a seminal influence and collaborator for the younger architect.”

*Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future* includes never-before-exhibited sketches, working drawings, models, photographs, furnishings, films, and other material, all drawn from various archives and collections internationally. Together, these objects open a window onto the architect’s innovations in the use of new materials and construction techniques, reveal his rejection of the dogma of orthodox modernism in favor of letting subject and site guide his design solutions, and illuminate the ways in which his work expressed American ideals of the time.

Unique to the Yale presentation will be a special display devoted to the projects that Saarinen designed for the University, including a short film, original drawings, photographs, and digital imagery. Indeed, with three buildings designed by Saarinen—David S. Ingalls Rink (1958) and Samuel Morse College and its companion Ezra Stiles College (both 1962)—and with the Eero Saarinen Collection, Yale is one of the premier

destinations for those interested in the architect's work. Visitors will therefore have the opportunity to view the exhibition and then go on to see some of Saarinen's best known buildings, located just blocks from the exhibition.

The exhibition is presently on view at the Museum of the City of New York, where it can be seen through January 31, 2010.

### **Exhibition**

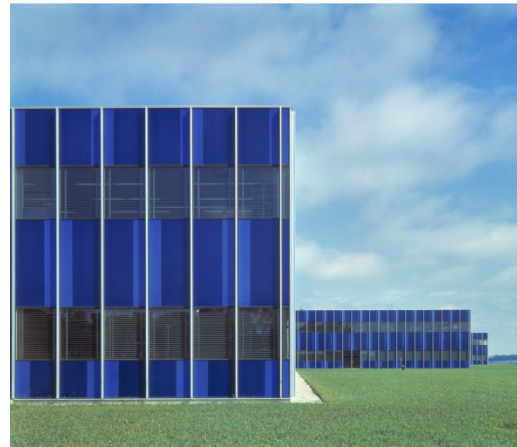
*Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future* encompasses the architect's career from the 1930s, when he was a student, through the early 1960s, when the last of his buildings were completed posthumously by colleagues Kevin Roche and John Dinkeloo. About two-thirds of the items in the exhibition, devoted primarily to his major building projects, will be installed in the Yale School of Architecture Gallery, while the Yale University Art Gallery will present diverse material related to Saarinen's early life and domestic projects, along with some fifteen examples of his furniture.

The installation in the **School of Architecture Gallery** opens with a display of drawings, letters, photographs, and other materials dating from Saarinen's years as an architecture student at Yale—when his designs ranged from a residence for a college dean, to a \$1,000-dollar bill, to a synagogue. A highlight here is a watercolor made by Saarinen while on student travels. Titled *Acropolis*, it was recently donated to the Yale School of Architecture by Richard Nash Gould '68 B.A., '72 M.Arch.

A section devoted to Saarinen's large-scale work, titled "Building for Post-War America," examines the major public and semi-public buildings that helped to create potent expressions of American aspirations and values at mid-century. Through large-scale models (created by Saarinen's firm in order to review projects with clients), drawings, photographs, and other materials, the exhibition examines the expressive and technical aspects of an array of iconic buildings. These include Dulles International Airport, near Washington, D.C., and the TWA Terminal, where the architect's pioneering designs and dynamic forms expressed the glamour of international travel; the soaring St. Louis Gateway Arch, which celebrates America's westward growth; and the American chancelleries in London and Oslo, which simultaneously make use of modern

technologies and adapt to local conditions, conveying an image of the United States as a powerful and good neighbor.

Saarinén's projects for leading corporations were pioneering designs for the then-new typology of the corporate campus, deploying the power and authority of the traditional country-estate in the service of corporate programs and image. "Creating Corporate Style," the portion of the exhibition that focuses on this aspect of his work, reveals how, with their advanced building-technologies and materials and their strong forms, these projects created potent images of innovative and forward-thinking companies. For example, General Motors' promotional brochure for Saarinén's GM Technical Center, which is on view in the exhibition, was titled *Where Today Meets Tomorrow*, while *Life* magazine called the Center "A Versailles of Industry." The exhibition explores this and other designs, including the corporate headquarters for companies ranging from IBM, to CBS, for which Saarinén created the first reinforced-concrete skyscraper in New York City, and John Deere, where he used Cor-ten steel for the first time in architectural practice.



IBM Manufacturing and Training Facility, Rochester, Minnesota, circa 1958. Photographer Balthazar Korab © Balthazar Korab Ltd.

Saarinén's work for colleges and universities is explored in a section titled "Forging Community." Here, buildings for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Brandeis University, Vassar College, and Yale, for example, demonstrate his efforts to balance social interaction with privacy, while campus master-plans provided the architect with the opportunity to design a total environment.

"Saarinén and Yale" encompasses drawings and photographs of David S. Ingalls Rink, a structurally innovative, sculptural masterpiece; Samuel Morse and Ezra Stiles Colleges, inspired in part by medieval Italian hill towns; and planning studies for the Yale campus. A highlight of this section is the first public showing of a video by KDN Films comprising interviews about Morse and Stiles Colleges with architectural historian Vincent Scully and architects Kevin Roche and Cesar Pelli, both of whom worked with

Saarinen. In addition, digital displays feature the renovations of Ingalls Rink, recently completed by Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates, and of Morse and Stiles Colleges, being undertaken by the architecture firm KieranTimberlake.

The installation in the **Yale University Art Gallery** begins with a section devoted to Saarinen's life, training, and work during the crucial period spent collaborating with his father at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, in suburban Detroit. Included here are letters, photographs, early sketches and drawings, a wrought-iron gate designed for a school, and a biographical film. Saarinen's first architectural project, a 1939 competition for a new building for the Smithsonian Gallery of Art, is represented by a model, sketches, and photography.

Following this is a display of early furniture, including examples from among the hundreds of tables, chairs, sofas, beds, and other pieces that Saarinen designed in 1929–31 for the Kingswood School for Girls, among other items. These show Saarinen's early engagement with the European modernist aesthetic that he would later redefine.

The house and cottage that Saarinen designed for the Miller family of Indiana are explored through photographs, drawings, a video, and a re-creation of a table setting, complete with dishes, from the Columbus, Indiana, house, which is considered one of the masterworks of twentieth-century modernism. Saarinen worked with Kevin Roche on the design of the Miller House, which reveals the architects' close attention to Mies van der Rohe's designs for his Barcelona pavilion and Farnsworth House. Alexander Girard was in charge of the interior design for the Miller House, and the tableware he created for it is a central part of the display.



Miller House, Columbus, Indiana, circa 1957.  
Photographer Ezra Stoller. © Ezra Stoller / ESTO.

Photographs and sketches of other houses, including the Wermuth house, the Bell residence, and the John Entenza house, demonstrate Saarinen's desire to create designs that reflect post-war American life.

Saarinen's exploration of new materials, techniques, and forms was not limited to his work with buildings, but also informed his designs for furniture, which was a career-long pursuit. In designing his "Womb Chair," for example, he turned to reinforced polyester resin, a then-new material that had been developed in order to build the hulls of Navy boats, while his pedestal chairs represent the solution to a problem he expressed as "the slum of legs" beneath "typical chairs and tables," resulting in an "ugly, confusing, unrestful world." These and some eight other examples of Saarinen's furniture, including the Grasshopper Chair and pedestal table, as well as the chair he designed with Charles Eames for the Museum of Modern Art's "Organic Design" competition, are spaciouly displayed on an L-shaped platform, highlighting the sculptural quality of each piece. They are complemented by related drawings—including one of the lounge for the TWA Terminal, populated with womb chairs and pedestal tables—as well as by sketches and advertisements.

*Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future*, which is open to the public free of charge, will be accompanied by an agenda of public programs. For additional information: [www.eerosaarinen.net](http://www.eerosaarinen.net); [www.architecture.yale.edu](http://www.architecture.yale.edu); [www.artgallery.yale.edu](http://www.artgallery.yale.edu).

### **Organization, Support**

*Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future* has been curated by Donald Albrecht, curator of architecture and design at the Museum of the City of New York. The presentation at the Yale University Art Gallery is organized by John Stuart Gordon, the Benjamin Attmore Hewitt Assistant Curator of American Decorative Arts, with Emily Orr, the Marcia Brady Tucker Fellow, Department of American Decorative Arts; the presentation at the Yale School of Architecture is organized by Dean Sakamoto, critic and director of exhibitions at the School of Architecture.

*Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future* has been organized by the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York; the Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki; and the National Building Museum, Washington, D.C., with the support of the Yale School of Architecture. ASSA ABLOY is the global sponsor for the exhibition. Additional support is provided by Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates, Florence Knoll Bassett, Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, Elise Jaffe + Jeffrey Brown, Jeffrey Klein, Earle I. Mack, Marvin Suomi,

anonymous donors, and the Ministry of Education, Finland. Support for the Yale venues is provided by ASSA ABLOY, Stanley Tigerman '61 M.Arch., and the Joann and Gifford Phillips, Class of 1942, Fund.

The accompanying publication, which has been co-edited by Mr. Albrecht with Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, assistant professor of architecture, Yale School of Architecture, is made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts and Furthermore: A Program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund.

### **Yale Arts—Architecture at Yale**

In addition to a history of training some of the world's leading architects at its School of Architecture, Yale University is internationally celebrated as the home of some of the most important works of modern architecture in the United States. These have been designed by architects including Louis Kahn, Paul Rudolph, Philip Johnson, and Gordon Bunshaft, among others in the post-World War II era, and more recently Lord Norman Foster, Robert Venturi, Charles Gwathmey, and Cesar Pelli.

The University considers all of the architectural masterpieces on campus to be works of art in its collection, and places the highest priority on their conservation and preservation. In keeping with Yale's tradition of enlightened architectural patronage, this work, like the design of new buildings on campus, is being undertaken by some of the most prominent architects working today.

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