

**Dezso D. Sekely Collection on
Herman Miller and Knoll Furniture
MS.20**

Finding aid prepared by Anna J. Clarkson and Joy Davis

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10 Art Museum Drive

Baltimore, MD, 21032

(443) 573-1778

BMAlibrary@artbma.org

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Summary Information

Repository	Archives and Manuscripts Collections
Creator	Sekely, Dezso (Dezso D.)
Title	Dezso D. Sekely Collection on Herman Miller and Knoll Furniture
Date	1933-1998
Extent	3.8 Linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Dezso D. Sekely Collection on Herman Miller and Knoll Furniture contains 3.8 linear feet of research materials related to the modern home and office furniture manufacturers, Herman Miller and Knoll Furniture. Design professor and Herman Miller collector, Dezso D. Sekely, gathered material about Miller and Knoll from the 1960s through 1980s for potential books about the firms. The collection includes catalogues, brochures, note cards, posters, price lists, blueprints, photographs, clippings, and publications related to the modern home and office furniture manufacturers Knoll and Herman Miller. The material spans from 1933-1998 with the bulk of material dedicated to Herman Miller. Well represented designers in the Collection include Charles and Ray Eames, George Nelson, and Gilbert Rohde. The collection also contains transcripts of Sekely's interviews with D.J. DePree, James Eppinger, George Nelson, and Robert Propst of Herman Miller dated 1967-1972.</p>

Preferred Citation

**Dezso D. Sekely Collection on Herman Miller and Knoll Furniture, Archives and Manuscripts
Collections, The Baltimore Museum of Art**

Biographical Information

Dezso D. Sekely (1921-1995) was a mechanical engineer, industrial designer, professor, author, and historian.

Sekely taught mechanical engineering and industrial design beginning in 1955 at several universities including Memphis State University, Southern Illinois University of Carbondale, Trenton State College, North Dakota State University, and The University of Minnesota. While at Minnesota in the late 1950s, Sekely created and starred in a thirteen-part television series based on the Ford Motor Company booklet, *Creative Design*, which was sponsored by the University and the Department of Industrial Education.

Sekely authored several publications including *Creative Design for the Industrial Arts Teacher*, *Contemporary Industrial Arts Projects*, and *Creative Design as Integral Part of Engineering Drawing*.

In the 1970s, Sekely was instrumental in organizing the Herman Miller exhibit at the Smithsonian.

Over his lifetime Sekely amassed a large collection of printed materials, photographs, and research notes related to the Knoll and Herman Miller Furniture Companies. The collection, The Dezso D. Sekely Collection on Herman Miller and Knoll Furniture, is currently located within The Baltimore Museum of Art's Archives and is available to researchers by appointment.

Scope and Contents

The Dezso D. Sekely Collection on Herman Miller and Knoll Furniture contains 3.8 linear feet of research materials related to the modern home and office furniture manufacturers, Herman Miller and Knoll Furniture. Design professor and Herman Miller collector, Dezso D. Sekely, gathered material about Miller and Knoll from the 1960s through 1980s for potential books about the firms.

The collection includes catalogues, brochures, note cards, posters, price lists, blueprints, photographs, clippings, and publications related to the modern home and office furniture manufacturers Knoll and Herman Miller. The material spans from 1933-1998 with the bulk of material dedicated to Herman Miller. Well represented designers in the Collection include Charles and Ray Eames, George Nelson, and Gilbert Rohde. The collection also contains transcripts of Sekely's interviews with D.J. DePree, James Eppinger, George Nelson, and Robert Propst of Herman Miller dated 1967-1972.

The collection is arranged into two series: *Knoll* and *Herman Miller* which have been maintained in their original order. The contents were initially housed in three large bankers boxes labeled *Knoll, Oth.Book*, *Miller Book Cat.* and *Miller Etc.* Both collections contain a wide range of printed publications and ephemera. In addition, both series contain a card catalog of note cards for each folder inventorying its contents. It appears that the note cards may have been produced by someone other than Sekely himself.

The *Knoll* series is comparatively smaller in size than the *Herman Miller* series and consists of twenty-five folders. The series is largely comprised of printed publications created by the Knoll Furniture Company. The series contains materials dating from 1950-1982 including furniture catalogs promoting the work of designers including: Harry Bertoia, Marcel Breuer, Robert DeFuccio, Florence Knoll, Isamu Noguchi, Warren Platner, Eero Saarinen, Kuzuihide Takahama, and Mies van der Rohe. In addition, the collection contains several catalogs promoting various design collections including: Albinson Chair, Bertoia Collection, Breuer Collection, Bussman Manufacturing, Christen Landscape System, Leisure Collection, Mangiarotti Marbles, Morrison / Hannah Collection, Platner Collection, Pearson Chairs, Pettitt Chairs, Pollock Chairs, Rasmussen Chair, Saarinen Collection, Stephens Chairs, Mies van der Rohe Collection, and Wegner Chairs.

A small amount of material included in the *Knoll* series consists of material not produced by the Knoll Company. These materials are located primarily in the *Clippings / Excepts Mentioning Knoll* and *Dezso D. Sekely Notes* folders. It should be noted that the file *Dezso D. Sekely Notes* contains a large selection of interviews and biographies on both Knoll and Herman Miller employees. Subjects include: D. J. DePree, James Eppinger, George Nelson, Robert Propst, and Gilbert Rohde.

The *Herman Miller* series is arranged into two subseries: *Book Catalogues* and *Subject Files*. Materials are housed in 67 folders and span from 1951-1998.

The *Book Catalogues* subseries contains largely printed catalogs published by the Herman Miller Company including president's reports (annual reports), advertisement posters, and furniture and wallpaper catalogues from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. In addition, the subseries contains limited publications by other sources including Monsanto's *House of the Future* pamphlet, *The Design of Herman Miller* by Ralph Caplan, and an exhibition catalog from the 1998 Miller exhibition at The Walker Art Center.

The Herman Miller *Subject Files* include a wide variety of material amassed by Sekely from various sources including black and white photographic prints of furniture, magazine and newspaper articles, pamphlets, and printed publications arranged by designer. Designers collected in the *Subject Files* subseries are: Burdick Group, Don Chadwick, Charles & Ray Eames, Poul Kjaerholm, George Nelson, Isamu Noguchi, Robert Propst, Peter Protzman, Gilbert Rohde, and Ray Wilkes. In addition to the many subject files containing iconic Herman Miller designs, *Miller Antique* features historic black and white photographs of the Herman Miller furniture factory and more traditional pieces produced in the early years of the company. Of note, are extensive black and white photographic prints of furniture by George Nelson, Charles and Ray Eames, and Gilbert Rohde.

This collection does not contain any correspondence.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into two series: 1. Knoll 2. Herman Miller. The second series, Herman Miller, is divided into two subseries: A. Book Catalogues B. Subject files. All series, subseries, and contents are maintained in their original order:

Series 1: Knoll

Series 2: Herman Miller

Subseries A: Book Catalogues

Subseries B: Subject Files

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Archives and Manuscripts Collections July 26, 2012

Restrictions on Use

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Provenance

Gift of Dr. Susan Kallos Sekely in memory of her husband, Dezso D. Sekely.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Anna J. Clarkson and Joy Davis in July of 2012.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Herman Miller, Inc.
- Knoll Associates, inc..

Genre(s)

- Transcripts

Personal Name(s)

- Breuer, Marcel, 1902-1981
- Eames, Charles
- Eames, Ray
- Eero, Saarinen, 1910-1961
- Knoll, Florence, 1917-
- Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig, 1886-1969
- Nelson, George, 1908-1986
- Noguchi, Isamu, 1904-1988
- Platner, Warren, 1919-2006
- Propst, Robert
- Rohde, Gilbert, 1894-1944

Subject(s)

- brochures
- catalogs
- Illustrated books
- pamphlets
- Posters

Collection Inventory

Knoll 1950 - 1982 25.0 folders		
	Box	Folder
Notecards undated	1	1
Poster from Krakow 1966	1	2
Contemporary Design Index 1950, 1954	1	3
Knoll International Catalogs 1969, 1971, 1972	1	4
Chairs 1967-1968, 1970-1971	1	5
Design Collections 1967, 1969, 1970, 1973-1974, 1977-1978, no date	1	6
Gavina Group 1969-1969	1	7
Source Group undated	1	8
Miller Tradition 1976	1	9
Group 48 by Warren Platner 1978	1	10
Advertisement Inserts undated	1	11

Knoll

Otto Zape 1976, 1978	1	12
Knoll Publications 1954, 1961, 1962, 1966, 1976, no date	1	13
Clippings / Excerpts Mentioning Knoll 1957, 1961, 1964, 1966, 1976, no date	2	1
"Der Spiegel" 1960	2	2
"20th Century Design: U.S.A." 1959	2	3
"Introduction to 20th Century Design" 1959	2	4
"Useful Objects Today" undated	2	5
Dezso D. Sekely Notes 1982	2	6
Knoll Office Systems 1975, undated	2	7
"A Modern Consciousness" 1975	2	8
Pricing Lists 1977-1978, 1980	2	9
Residential Pricing 1981	2	10
Textiles Catalogue and Pricing 1980	2	11

Herman Miller

Herman Miller 1952-1998 67.0 folders		
Book Catalogues 1952-1998 22.0 folders		
	Box	Folder
Notecards undated	3	1
"Design History" undated	3	2
Catalogue and Sales Guide 1939	OS 1	1
Pricing Lists 1952, 1957-1958, 1961, 1962, 1967, 1973-1974, 1976, 1978-1979	3	3-7
"Furniture For the Home" Catalogue undated	3	8
Action Office 1976, 1978-1980, undated	3	9
"Co / Struc: A Coherent Structures System for Hospitals" 1971, 1976, undated	4	1
Seating 1974-1978, undated	4	2
President Reports 1971-1973, 1975, 1976	4	3
"The Design of Herman Miller" 1978	4	4

Subject Files

"The Office" 1968	4	5
Furniture Templates undated	4	6
Walker Art Exhibition 1998, undated	OS 1	2
Advertisement Posters 1972, undated	4	7
Girard Wallpapers undated	4	8
Eames Celebration 1966	OS 1	3
Action Office Installation Guide 1975	4	9
Monsanto Magazine 1957	4	10
"The Herman Miller Collection" 1955	OS 1	4
Subject Files 1933-1981 45.0 folders		
	Box	Folder
Notecards undated	5	1-5
Herman Miller 1974, 1976, 1978, undated	5	6
Miller General Materials 1966, 1971, 1975-1977	5	7

Subject Files

Miller Booklets 1977-1979, undated	5	8
Burdick Group 1980	6	1
Miller Tradition 1976	6	2
Danish Miller undated	6	3
Girard 1977, undated	6	4
Nelson 1958, undated	6	5
Nelson Chairs 1972, 1974, undated	6	6
Nelson Cabinets 1950, 1952	6	7
Nelson Desks 1958	6	8
Nelson Tables 1972	6	9
Nelson General 1950, 1952, 1956, 1972, undated	6	10
Noguchi undated	6	11
Eames Chairs 1975, 1977, 1979, 1981, undated	6	12
Eames Tables 1974, 1976, undated	6	13

Subject Files

Eames 1951, 1966, undated	6	14
Eames Etc. undated	6	15
Nelson Office 1945-1954, undated	6	16
Hospital Systems 1973, undated	6	17
Propst Hospital 1972, 1975-1978, undated	7	1
Protzman 1970, 1971, undated	7	2
Propst 1973, undated	7	3
Rohde (1) 1933-1937, 1940-1942, undated	7	4
Rohde (2) 1935, 1937, 1942, undated	7	5
Propst A02 undated	7	6
Paton undated	7	7
Rohde Booklets undated	7	8
Rohde Seating undated	7	9
Rohde Cat undated	7	10

Subject Files

Rohde Catalogue 1935, undated	8	1
Rohde EOG undated	8	2
	Book	Folder
Rohde Blueprints 1941, undated	8	3
	Box	Folder
Wilkes 1973, 1974, undated	8	4
Chadwick undated	8	5
Kjaerholm undated	8	6
Haller Program 1975, undated	8	7
Miller Antique 1938, no date	8	8
Miller Mixed Etc. undated	8	9
Nelson undated	8	10