

Carnegie Institute Project Information

Major Project Activities:

Peter Muller-Munk (b) (6) was among the 20th century's most successful industrial designers and an international leader in the field. He and his firm, Peter Muller-Munk Associates (PMMA), are responsible for the design of hundreds if not thousands of products, from hearing aids to household appliances, mass transit vehicles, and futuristic exhibitions. On the faculty of Carnegie Mellon's fledgling industrial design department for nearly a decade, he helped develop the country's first degree-granting program. In 1938, he launched PMMA. His clients included Alcoa, Bayer, Porter Cable, Texaco, US Steel, and Westinghouse. He was president of Society of Industrial Designers and International Council of Societies of Industrial Design, which he co-founded. In 1959, *Fortune* magazine ranked PMMA among the nation's top ten design firms. Muller-Munk died at the height of his career. Too few today, even in the design field, know his name or his contributions to 20th-century American design.

On November 14, 2015, Carnegie Museum of Art will open *Silver to Steel: The Modern Designs of Peter Muller-Munk*. More than 120 objects will be on view, representing the full range of his work from Art Deco silver to his firm's major yet little known contributions to US Steel's *Unisphere* for the 1964 New York World's Fair. The culmination of two decades of research, *Silver to Steel* will include original drawings, photographs, print ephemera, and models, much salvaged by designers Paul Wiedmann and George Scheuring after devastating office floods. Along with a dozen other retired PMMA employees, they provided invaluable firsthand accounts on the firm's process, projects, and client relationships.

Educational programs will increase familiarity with Muller-Munk's work and raise awareness of design's pervasive presence in our lives. Participatory workshops will offer visitors firsthand experiences with the design process, and forums with active professional designers will open a public dialogue on the essential characteristics of good design and why design matters.

The museum's staff is actively pursuing an exhibition tour with several institutions. The Pittsburgh presentation will be the largest at 9,000-sq-ft. The touring version is adaptable for smaller venues. The exhibition includes large digital reproductions of archival imagery of designs for trade show exhibitions, scientific laboratories, and domestic interiors. A downloadable app will allow visitors to hear recorded interviews of Muller-Munk and members of his firm. Interactive components will encourage visitors to explore the design process.

The exhibition and catalogue will secure Muller-Munk's place in American industrial design history and challenge the prevailing narrative that design innovation occurred in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles to the exclusion of cities like Pittsburgh. Further, the exhibition will increase recognition of the museum as a site for the presentation of exceptional design.

Outcome Narrative: Briefly discuss how your project directly addresses the selected NEA outcome. You may also discuss any additional outcomes of your own that you have established for the project.

Visitors will engage with objects that reveal industrial design as equal parts creative problem-solving, aesthetics, and engineering. They will recognize an array of iconic mid-century products as the creative output of the industrial design consultancy Peter Muller-Munk Associates (PMMA) and identify Pittsburgh as an important site for innovation in the field of industrial design. The exhibition will establish the firm's role in the history of American 20th-century industrial design and present drawings, photos, models, and archival materials never before accessible to the public.

Educational programs will examine the influence of industrial design on everyday life, from improving the

function of familiar objects to products that anticipate unrealized needs. Programs will engage the local design community, enable visitors to explore product design firsthand, and underscore the value of the design process as a model for solving other types of complex challenges.

Performance Measurement: Briefly describe the performance measurements you will use to provide evidence that the outcome was achieved, including plans for documenting and disseminating the project results, as appropriate.

The museum regularly conducts general visitor satisfaction surveys and also gathers information from comment cards and website feedback. Data are shared with appropriate museum staff to improve and enhance the visitor experience. Education staff ask public program and class participants to complete evaluations. These results inform the development and presentation of all programs. The museum's visitor services and marketing staffs collect data and track exhibition and program attendance, print and broadcast media coverage, critical reviews, website visitation, and postings on social media sites. All are measures of public response and the success of an exhibition. Evaluations are summarized and reported to staff and exhibition funders.

The exhibition's design and installation will be fully documented in digital photographs. All interpretative gallery text, videos, audio recordings, and downloadable apps will be archived for future reference.

Schedule of key project dates:

The timeline for the exhibition and catalogue follows:

11/2013 to present: planning and research in process; preliminary checklist assembled; loan letters sent. 8/2014: graphic designer for catalogue and exhibition selected; catalogue co-publisher secured. 9/2014: catalogue design approved; 10/2014: exhibition concept design presented. 11/2014: catalogue essays submitted to editor; checklist finalized; programming plan presented; planning for multimedia/technology scope and components begins. 1/2015: exhibition schematic design presented. 3/2015: marketing plan set; interpretive strategies finalized. 4/2015: catalogue text finalized and sent to design. 5/2015: catalogue design complete; plan for casework, framing, equipment, furniture reviewed; multimedia plan finalized; graphic identity finalized. 6/2015: initial press release sent. 7/2015: catalogue to printer; plan for gallery components finalized; programming finalized; all interpretive text finalized. 8/2015: construction drawings submitted; docent training; design for gallery tech components and lighting finalized. 9/2015: website content launched; all content for multimedia/technology final sent to production; gallery construction begins. 10/2015: object, graphic, multimedia installation completed; lighting completed; catalogue delivers. 11/14/2015: exhibition opening; educational programs begin; documentary photography completed. 3/2016: exhibition closes; de-installation, loan returns, evaluation completed.

Selection of Key Individuals: Briefly describe the process and criteria for the selection of key individuals that will be involved in this project.

Rachel Delphia and Jewel Stern are exhibition co-curators and authors of the catalogue. As Carnegie Museum of Art's curator of decorative arts and design, Delphia has spent 6 years researching Peter Muller-Munk and preparing for this exhibition. Her exhibition design and installation experience includes a major renovation of the museum's 8,000-sq-ft decorative arts and design galleries. She has an undergraduate degree in industrial design and wrote her master's thesis on early ergonomic handle design in the 1940s. Jewel Stern is an independent curator and scholar with a special interest in Peter Muller-Munk. She is the author of award-winning publications on American silver, decorative arts, and design. Catherine Walworth is

curatorial research assistant for the exhibition. In 2008 she completed a curatorial fellowship at the Cleveland Museum of Art, where she helped organize the large international exhibition *Artistic Luxury: Fabergé, Tiffany, Lalique*.

Selection of Key Organizational Partners: An organizational partner is an outside entity that will provide resources (other than money) to support the project.

Selection and Description of Key Works of Art: Briefly describe any key works of art that will be involved in the project.

More than 120 objects in metal, glass, and plastic, as well as works on paper, will be on view in the exhibition. They range in date from early works in silver, such as a 1928 pair of stunning candelabrum, to drawings of the *Advanced Concept Train*, an award-winning mass transit vehicle designed by the firm in the early 1970s. Among the objects on view will be the iconic chrome *Normandie Pitcher*, 1935, featured on a 2011 U.S. postal stamp, the Waring “Blendor,” c. 1938-39, and a commissioned model of the 1964 New York World’s Fair’s *Unisphere* by the same model maker who built the original model for structural testing. These objects represent the full scope of Muller-Munk’s work from silversmithing and product design to material innovation, design pedagogy, international design advocacy, branding, and wayfinding. Original objects will be presented alongside interpretive materials, audio and video interviews, period advertising, and recreated architectural and environmental components.

Intended Beneficiaries (Audience/Participants/Community):

Briefly describe the intended beneficiaries to whom the project is directed. In your response, address the expected benefit.

Target audiences include residents of a five county market area; designers; K-12, college, and university students and faculty; youth in museum classes and out-of-school enrichment programs; and non-traditional visitors. The exhibition’s themes and programs align with goals for increasing participation and impact among special audiences. These include: youth, especially low-income teens, for whom the teamwork and problem-solving involved in design thinking reinforces personal agency; families interested in discovery-based fun; and millennials for whom design is central to everyday life.

Special and general audiences will benefit from programs under consideration: social-learning forums inviting designers to present accessible, affordable product design; hands-on workshops; classes and enrichment activities where students use object design as a case study for problem solving; and a lecture series with Carnegie Mellon’s interdisciplinary design, engineering, and technology programs.

Have the intended beneficiaries been consulted in the development of this project?

Yes

Briefly describe any consultations, plans for consulting, or reasons for not consulting with the intended beneficiaries.

The education and curatorial staffs are partnering with members of the local and regional design communities, as well as university faculty and students, in the planning of public forums on design and the development of hands-on participatory events that allow visitors to explore design both as a creative and extended, problem-solving process. Projects for museums classes and after-school enrichment programs are developed with input from students and their program advisors. Activities are designed to be flexible, adapting to the needs and interests of participants.

In addition, the museum's staff conducts ongoing surveys of members and visitors to measure their level of satisfaction, determine their interest in classes and programs, and obtain suggestions for improving the overall visitor experience. Informal and formal evaluations provided by students and audience members who attend lectures, performances, and other events are used in the development of educational programs.

Has your organization worked with these beneficiaries in the past?

Yes

Briefly describe your previous work with these beneficiaries or relevant work your organization has done that will help you reach these beneficiaries.

Through exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and special events, the museum regularly engages and has earned a loyal following among the public, professionals, students, and faculty with a special interest in design. The museum's youth programs have been developed over time by partnering with youth-serving agencies and continue to benefit from collaborative planning.

The design of playgrounds figured prominently in the *2013 Carnegie International* exhibition and was the catalyst for a series of programs for adults and children focused on designs that inspire play and social engagement. Approximately 700 students in the museum's summer camps designed playgrounds inspired by the works on view in the exhibition. The museum's collaborations around the theme of playground design are continuing through a project to rebuild a playground in North Braddock, a low-income community on the outskirts of Pittsburgh. This museum-led initiative involves community residents, students, and local designers.

Is this project intended to reach a population historically underserved by arts programming and/or does the project target a specific audience based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, or age?

Yes

From the options below, select all descriptors that best describe the intended audience and/or other beneficiaries to whom the project is directed.

Race/Ethnicity

American Indian or Alaskan Native

Asian

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
White

Age Ranges

Children/Youth (0-18 years)
Young Adults (19-24 years)
Adults (25-64 years)
Older Adults (65 years)

Underserved/Distinct Groups

Individuals with Disabilities
Individuals below the Poverty Line
Military Veterans/Active Duty Personnel

Describe how the project will benefit the underserved community.

Discounts and funding for field trips, scholarships for children's classes, and foundation supported community-based after-school programs will enable low-income adults and children to visit the museum, gain firsthand experiences with objects and themes in the exhibition, and through extended learning opportunities explore design's pervasive role in our lives.

Students in classes and after-school programs will consider case studies, such as simple air filters and solar-powered stoves, which demonstrate the power of design to transform lives around the world. They will learn that good design can be affordable and accessible independent of brands and the luxury product market. And they will be introduced to careers in the industrial design field.

The museum offers free or discounted admission for active duty military personnel and their families. All galleries and public spaces are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities, and special tours can be arranged on request.

Promotion & Publicity: Briefly describe your plans for promoting and/or publicizing the project.

The marketing budget supports a local and regional print media campaign with ads in local daily and weekly newspapers, as well as monthly and quarterly magazines. Online paid advertising will reach national and international design audiences through the *New York Times* and other outlets. Radio advertising will focus on the regional market, airing on several public radio stations.

Promotion for education programs will also rely on monthly electronic newsletters to members and other subscribers, posters at retail outlets, and outreach to affinity groups, such as the Industrial Designers Society of America which celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2015. The website is a primary vehicle for raising awareness of exhibitions and programs and allows viewers unable to visit an opportunity to explore the content of exhibitions. The museum's well-established social media presence provides continual updates on events and programs while expanding the museum's audience.

Accessibility: Explain how you will make your project accessible to individuals with disabilities in compliance with federal law and regulations through access accommodations for both facilities and programs, such as audio description, sign-language interpretation, closed or open captioning, large-print brochures/labeling, etc.

All facilities, galleries, and installations meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and comply with federal regulations. This includes district and state-mandated school facility and classroom instruction standards for students with physical challenges. Specific scrutiny is given to the architectural design of built projects, exhibitions, and installations to ensure ADA compliance. Cell phone audio tours or complimentary audio recorders are available to enhance the exhibition experience for all visitors. Sign-language interpreters are available as needed.