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Get comfortable with  
the Neuberger's foray  
into architecture and design



By Mary Shustack

The Neuberger Museum of Art's new chairs don't reflect a new decor. They reflect a new direction. The creations by artists and designers including Frank Gehry, Mies van der Rohe and William Wegman mark the first step in the Purchase museum's exploration of architecture and design.

"Take a Seat," which opens tomorrow and continues through June 10, is an exhibition filled with 80 chairs, rugs and other objects, including ceramic works. The display kicks off "Home Is Where the Art Is," a series that delves into themes of home and design and also includes a house tour, a lecture and a benefit evening and auction.

But the new show's focus are the chairs, and Thom Collins, the Neuberger director, says they serve several purposes.

"Some of them are actually functional as chairs," he says. Others are interpretations of seating as a concept. All are part of the new territory for the Neuberger, now in its fourth decade and best known for its collection of modern, contemporary and African art.

"I have an interest in architecture and design, personally," Collins says.

Those topics, extending into urban planning and domestic themes, are fields Collins says the museum is beginning to explore.

"As we edge toward doing more with architecture and design, we're looking for it to have more of an educational benefit," he says.

That's why this exhibition offers up a bit of history, paying homage to design classics while also looking at works of today.

"There's been such a move in the last decade where studio artists have been getting interested in architectural issues," Collins says.

The chairs offer a way to explore both philosophy and advances in technology, materials and production.

Take the "Lama Chair," from ApparenzA Design Studio in Mahopac. The low seat is designed to hold someone in the lotus position, says ApparenzA's Frank Spano. It's a creation that he and fellow designer Thom O'Leary refer to as "The Hold-My-Calls Chair."

As Spano says, "It's so much what the world needs right now."

Many chairs were designed specifically for the exhibition and will be featured in the Neuberger's benefit auction next month.

"Of course, we have some pieces that will be displayed for context, that won't be on sale," Collins adds.

At the end of the show, Collins hopes visitors will take something away about chairs.

"We're hoping to really engage people in thinking about them in a more progressive way," he says.

The museum hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Admission is \$5, \$3 for senior citizens and students and free for those ages 12 and under.

The museum is on the campus of Purchase College, at 735 Anderson Hill Road. Call 914-251-6100 or visit [www.neuberger.org](http://www.neuberger.org).