

Media Contact: Dennis Lawson • Manager of Public Relations
302-571-9590 ext. 515 • dlawson@delart.org

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**DELAWARE ART MUSEUM PRESENTS
GARRY KNOX BENNETT: CALL ME CHAIRMAKER**

Wilmington, DE (June 9, 2008)—The Delaware Art Museum presents *Garry Knox Bennett: Call Me Chairmaker*, featuring 52 one-of-a-kind sculptural chairs created by one of the foremost contemporary studio furniture makers in America, on view June 28 – September 21, 2008. Bennett is inspired by well-known furniture designers and architects such as Gerrit Rietveld and Frank Lloyd Wright, causing his wit and imagination to come to life with such chairs as *Great Granny Rietveld* and *Wiggle Wright*. By using bold new forms and constantly expanding traditional boundaries, Bennett makes furniture a form of art. Each chair incorporates precious materials, such as rosewood and yellow satinwood, with unconventional materials, including plywood, aluminum, brass, plastic, and paint.

“Garry Knox Bennett’s sense of humor is immediately infectious, but it belies an incredible technical virtuosity which demands a second, closer look,” said Margaretta S. Frederick, Curator at the Delaware Art Museum.

Beyond the 52 chairs that are part of *Call Me Chairmaker*, a newly created chair is going on view at the exhibition’s entrance. The Delaware Art Museum commissioned Garry Knox Bennett to craft a piece inspired by *The Arming of a Knight*, 1856 – 57, a chair made by William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti that is part of the Museum’s Pre-Raphaelite collection. Bennett’s new work is titled *Was Madox Brown Here?*, an irreverent reference to the artist Ford Madox Brown, who was associated with the Pre-Raphaelites but not an original member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. *The Arming of a Knight* has been moved from the Pre-Raphaelite galleries to be displayed beside *Was Madox Brown Here?* during the run of *Call Me Chairmaker*.

“A good joke is better than bad art,” said Garry Knox Bennett. “To understand my art, a viewer has to understand jokes. Good jokes build piece by piece, the little fact that is dropped into the story line, the

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accumulation of illogical data that flip-flops logic until the unexpected is understood with a joyful rush of logic and justice. The best of jokes gives clues so that you understand the joke just three beats after the teller gives you the punch line.”

Most of the chairs in the exhibit are functional; however, several operate more as symbols than actual seats. Comfort would be impossible; sitting down is even a stretch. All 52 chairs are sculptural in quality and each one will awaken a different emotion for the viewer.

One example is *Great Granny Rietveld*, a creative take-off on the 1934 ZigZag Chair designed and built by Dutch architect Gerrit Rietveld. Bennett’s version does the unthinkable by design standards, wrapping a retro delicate floral-pattern upholstery around an ultra modern hard-edge functionalist design. Another homage to Rietveld is the *Wing Chair*, where Bennett has added metallic wings as a pun on the classic colonial wing-back chair—modernism meets colonial Williamsburg.

Bennett studied painting and sculpture at the California College of Arts in Oakland, California. In the 1960s, he used the skills he learned by creating metalwork sculpture to found a metal plating business, specializing in handmade jewelry. In the 1970s, he began building clocks and then expanded into furniture-making. In 2001, he had a retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Art and Design in New York City. Bennett is represented in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian Institution’s Renwick Gallery; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Oakland Museum of California, as well as in many private collections.

This exhibition has been organized by Bellevue Arts Museum and has been made possible through the generosity of the Microsoft Corporation.

In Delaware, this exhibition is made possible, in part, by grants from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency dedicated to nurturing and supporting the arts in Delaware, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support is provided by the Delaware Art Museum Council.

Press Preview

Members of the press are invited to preview *Garry Knox Bennett: Call Me Chairmaker* on Thursday, June 26, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Delaware Art Museum. Margaretta S. Frederick, Curator at the Delaware Art Museum, will lead a tour and answer questions. Please RSVP by Monday, June 23.

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Special Events

- **Preview Reception with Garry Knox Bennett**

Friday, June 27 | 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Delaware Art Museum Members Free | Non-Members \$25 | Call to RSVP

Join Garry Knox Bennett for a tour of *Call Me Chairmaker* focusing on select favorites, plus the unveiling of his latest masterpiece, a work inspired by a Morris/Rossetti chair from the Pre-Raphaelite collection. Includes hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar.

- **Musical Chairs Family Day**

Sunday, July 20 | Noon – 3:30 p.m.

Admission waived on Sundays

Families are invited to enjoy art activities and games inspired by the Museum's special exhibition *Garry Knox Bennett: Call Me Chairmaker*. There will be a huge game of Musical Chairs in the Sculpture Garden, and kids will have miniature chairs to decorate inside. As an added bonus, Music & Motion Dance Productions is coming to the Museum on this day to present a dance performance titled "Continents, A Global Village."

- **"Take a Seat" Fall Fundraiser**

Saturday, September 20, 2008 | 7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.

Ticket prices TBA

The Delaware Art Museum is throwing a chair-themed party inspired by the exhibition *Garry Knox Bennett: Call Me Chairmaker*. There will be a live auction of chairs created by artists and craftspeople, and a silent auction of "seats" to nearby restaurants, theaters, and sporting events. The Museum will also present fireworks over the Copeland Sculpture Garden, live music, cocktails, and delicious cuisine.

Images

Images of works from *Garry Knox Bennett: Call Me Chairmaker* may be downloaded here:

<http://delartsales.org/pafiledb/pafiledb.php?action=category&id=24>

Please enter the following information for access: Username = delartmuseum | Password = images

About the Museum

The Delaware Art Museum, located at 2301 Kentmere Parkway, Wilmington, DE 19806, is open Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Sunday noon – 4:00 p.m. Admission fees are charged as follows: adults (18 – 59) \$10, seniors (60+) \$8, college students \$5, and youth (7 – 17) \$3, with children 6 and under entering for free. Admission fees are waived every Sunday thanks to support from

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AstraZeneca. For more information, call 302-571-9590 or 866-232-3714 (toll free), or visit the website at www.delart.org.

Founded in 1912, the Delaware Art Museum holds a world-renowned collection that focuses on American art and illustration from the 19th century to the present as well as the British Pre-Raphaelite movement. The Museum offers the outdoor Copeland Sculpture Garden, the Helen Farr Sloan Library & Archives, studio art classes, the interactive Kids' Corner learning area, the delART Café featuring free Wi-Fi access, and the Museum Store with distinctive books and gifts.

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