

COOPER HEWITT

2 E 91ST STREET
NEW YORK NY 10128

COOPERHEWITT.ORG

MEDIAONLY

LAURIE BOHLK
COOPERHEWITT
212.849.8420
BOHLLK@SI.EDU

JENNIFER NORTHROP
COOPERHEWITT
212.849.2954
NORTHROPJ@SI.EDU

JULIA ESPOSITO
POLSKIN ARTS
212.715.1643
ESPOSITOJ@FINNPARTNERS.COM
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COOPER HEWITT ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF NEW NAME, GRAPHIC IDENTITY, TYPEFACE AND WEBSITE

“COOPER HEWITT” FONT AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC FOR FREE

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NEW YORK—Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum today announced its new name, graphic identity, custom typeface and website to herald the Dec. 12 opening of the transformed museum. Formerly Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, the new name replaces “National” with “Smithsonian” and eliminates the hyphen, simplifying the design while emphasizing the heritage of the institution. This bold new identity has been designed by Eddie Opara of Pentagram and the new typeface “Cooper Hewitt” was created by Chester Jenkins of Village.

“Our mission is to educate, inspire and empower people through design,” said Caroline Baumann, director of the museum. “A contemporary design museum needs a strong visual identity, modern typeface and dynamic website to reinforce its purpose. We are sharing this new design by making our elegant new typeface, Cooper Hewitt, available as a free download on our website, as well as acquiring it and the corresponding drawings for the permanent collection as an important example of the design process. We look forward to seeing what designers, students and the public create using the Cooper Hewitt typeface.”

Created by Pentagram in partnership with the museum, the Cooper Hewitt wordmark forms a perfect rectangle that can easily be scaled, positioned and colorized without losing its strong visual presence. The new identity is grounded by the foundation of “Smithsonian Design Museum,” which uses the Smithsonian’s existing institutional identity, designed by Chermayeff and Geismar in 1997. The new identity and typeface will come alive in dynamic new signage designed by Pentagram partner Michael Gericke.

“Cooper Hewitt’s new identity is straightforward with no play on visual or theoretical complexity, no puzzling contradiction or ambiguity, no distracting authorship,” said Opara. “Function is its primary goal.”

The new typeface, Cooper Hewitt, is a contemporary sans serif, with characters composed of modified-geometric curves and arches. Initially commissioned by Pentagram to evolve his Polaris Condensed typeface, Jenkins created a new digital form to support the newly transformed museum. The new font can be downloaded free of charge as installable fonts, Web font files and open-source code on www.cooperhewitt.org/typeface.





"Developing this typeface specifically for Cooper Hewitt has been enormously gratifying," said Jenkins. "Instead of building on the Polaris structures, I drew everything from scratch, using the existing forms as a rough guide for letter widths and master-stroke thicknesses."

To complement its physical transformation, the museum's new website communicates a reinvigorated Cooper Hewitt and serves the expanding digital needs of the museum. Slimmed down and optimized for mobile devices, the website is the home for all the activities of the museum—its collections, programs and content. A new e-commerce website, shop.cooperhewitt.org, also debuts today.

Among the new content offerings on the website, Design Dictionary is a brand new video series that vividly illustrates a wide variety of creative techniques. Covering everything from glassblowing to bobbin lacemaking to 3-D printing, the series aims to demystify the making of objects by providing a highly visual, behind-the-scenes look into designers' studios, schools and homes as they work. Each video in the 14-part series is under three minutes long and features a different designer or artisan hand-picked to demonstrate their skill in action.

A global effort, the visual design for www.cooperhewitt.org was created by Pentagram's New York office and is being implemented in WordPress by Matcha Labs, based in Cardiff, Wales, in conjunction with the museum's in-house digital team. The website is a beta launch as development is ongoing, and the museum's award-winning online collection continues to develop in parallel.

ABOUT PENTAGRAM

Pentagram is the world's largest independent design consultancy. For more than four decades, the firm has embraced the philosophy of design as a collaborative discipline. The firm was founded in 1972 and is run by 19 partners, a group of friends who are all leaders in their individual creative fields. Working from offices in New York, London, San Francisco, Austin, Texas, and Berlin, Pentagram specializes in different areas of graphic design, industrial design and architecture, producing identities, publications, environments, products and interactive media for a wide range of international clients.

ABOUT VILLAGE

Village is a loose co-op of a dozen foundries from around the world, founded in 2004 by graphic designer Tracy Jenkins, a graduate of Yale's MFA program, and Jenkins. Village types are used around the world in newspapers and magazines, for corporate branding, universities, museums and other cultural institutions. Jenkins, alone and in collaboration with his colleagues, has created bespoke typefaces for BlackBerry, Maharam, Avinor and the National Football League, among others.





ABOUT COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM

Founded in 1897, Cooper Hewitt is the only museum in the nation devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. The museum educates, inspires and empowers people through design, presenting compelling educational programs, exhibitions and publications. International in scope and possessing one of the most diverse and comprehensive collections of design works in existence, the museum's rich holdings range from Egypt's Late Period/New Kingdom (1100 B.C.) to the present day and total more than 200,000 objects.

Cooper Hewitt is located at 2 East 91st Street at Fifth Avenue in New York City. Hours are Sunday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. The café and garden open two hours prior to the museum. The museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Public transit routes include the Lexington Avenue 4, 5 and 6 subways (86th or 96th Street stations) and the Fifth and Madison Avenue buses. General admission, \$18; senior citizens and college students, \$12. Cooper Hewitt members and children younger than age 18 are admitted free. Pay What You Wish, every Saturday, 6 to 9 p.m. The museum is fully accessible.

For further information, please call (212) 849-8400, visit Cooper Hewitt's new website at www.cooperhewitt.org and follow the museum on www.twitter.com/cooperhewitt and www.facebook.com/cooperhewitt.

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