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COOPER HEWITT PRESENTS “ACCESS+ABILITY” FEATURING MORE THAN 70 INCLUSIVE DESIGNS EXHIBITION ON VIEW DEC. 15 THROUGH SEPT. 3, 2018

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Providing a major platform for the growing movement toward accessibility and inclusive design, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum presents products, projects and services developed by and with people with disabilities—physical, cognitive and sensory—that expand their ability to lead independent lives and engage more fully in the world. On view Dec. 15 through Sept. 3, 2018, the “Access+Ability” exhibition features more than 70 works, from adaptive clothing and eating implements that assist with daily routines to apps and “smart” technologies that aid in social interactions and navigating the environment.

“Cooper Hewitt is committed to accessibility in its broadest sense, with exhibitions and programs that involve all communities in thinking about how design can empower users,” said Caroline Baumann, director of the museum. “The diversity of works on view in ‘Access+Ability’ embrace the latest developments in digital technologies and fabrication methods, along with a user-driven focus on enhancing what people can do when given the opportunity. In partnership with the New York City Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, the exhibition will be accompanied by our first-ever Cooper Hewitt Lab, a two-week-long series of programs in the Barbara and Morton Mandel Design Gallery to further the dialogue about inclusive design.”

“Access+Ability” will be installed in the museum’s first floor Process Galleries and organized into three sections: Mobility, Connecting and Daily Routines. To inform the selection of objects, co-curators Cara McCarty, Director of Curatorial at Cooper Hewitt, and Rochelle Steiner, Curator and Professor of Critical Studies at the University of Southern California, engaged with users, designers, caregivers, activists, occupational therapists and neuroscientists, among others.

From increasingly versatile canes and customized prosthetic leg covers to shirts with magnetic closures and shoes with a wrap-around zipper system, the exhibition shows how products created over the past decade are not only becoming more accessible and functional, but fashionable. Through the integration of groundbreaking assistive technologies, 3-D printing and haptic feedback, new design solutions are also extending sensory perception, providing new ways to navigate and negotiate the environment, and promoting greater access to sports and recreation.

A variety of interactive elements will be installed throughout the exhibition to engage visitors, underscoring the importance of prioritizing users throughout the design process. These include: Blindways, an app designed and developed by Perkins School for the Blind, which guides pedestrians who are blind to bus stops using community crowdsourced clues; the eye-tracking, speech-generating devices of Tobii Dynavox, which enable hands-free communication and computer access; and several of Apple’s accessibility apps that operate via Switch Control, VoiceOver or voice-command software.



In an effort to respond to the proliferation of new products, a gallery adjacent to the exhibition will be devoted to several rotations of new work as well as crowd-sourced suggestions of innovative, accessible objects and services. The museum will also host a stimulating, ongoing online conversation on cooperhewitt.org, with contributions by prominent figures in the accessibility movement.

Highlights of objects on view include:

- Racing Wheelchair, 2016, designed by BMW Designworks, in collaboration with athletes Tatyana McFadden and Chelsea McClammer. Using 3-D scans, the wheelchairs were customized to improve aerodynamics, safety, durability and ergonomics, leading McFadden and McClammer to win gold and bronze medals, respectively, in the 2016 Summer Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.
- PillPack, 2013, designed by Gen Suzuki and collaborators at IDEO, a service that assists people with managing multiple daily medications, pre-sorting and organizing medication into pouches, labeled with the day and time for each dosage.
- The inclusive Los Angeles County Voting Booth (prototype; to be produced for the 2020 election), 2015, designed by IDEO, Digital Foundry and Cambridge Consultants, addresses all types of voters, including people unfamiliar with technology and who speak languages other than English, who are hard of hearing or have limited vision, in wheelchairs, and with learning disabilities.
- Prosthetic Leg Covers, ca. 2011, designed and manufactured by McCauley Wanner and Ryan Palibroda for ALLELES Design Studio, which adorn and add a human silhouette to prostheses in a large variety of colors and patterns and the ability to shop in the same way they choose clothes.
- Emma Watch, 2016, developed by Microsoft researchers Haiyan Zhang and Nicolas Villar, is a wearable device that uses haptic vibration technology to allow users with active tremors to regain the use of their hand.
- The SoundShirt, 2015-16, designed by Francesca Rosella and Ryan Genz for CuteCircuit, translates the experience of listening to music for the deaf and hard of hearing. By embedding 16 sensors corresponding to each part of the orchestra—strings, woodwinds, percussion, etc.—into the fabric of a specially designed shirt, music is felt as an immersive experience of tactile sensations.
- Developed by Tech Kids Unlimited, LOLA (Laugh Out Loud Aid), 2015, is an app that engages youth on the autism spectrum to learn digital tools and collaborate through technology.
- From a partnership between Cooper Hewitt and Pratt Institute, a selection of six products that students designed in 2016 in collaboration with CaringKind, a nonprofit dedicated to Alzheimer's caregiving, to meet the needs of the community with empathy and care.

COOPER HEWITT LAB: DESIGN ACCESS (FEB. 2-17, 2018)

The first-ever Cooper Hewitt Lab: Design Access, taking place in the Barbara and Morton Mandel Design Gallery, will be a hub for conversations, activities, workshops and events for all ages and communities on the topics of accessibility and inclusion. Programs include a Designing Accessible Cities Symposium, which will unite policy makers, designers and educators as well as the public. Additional programming includes an installation of student projects from universities nationwide; Teen Access Design Challenge; Visual Description Storytelling Salon with Columbia University; film screenings in partnership with ReelAbilities; Museum Access Consortium Universal Design Workshop; Google Accessibility Hackathon; Mark Morris Dance for Parkinson's Program; and Creative Growth Rug-Making Workshop. More information and a full roster of events will be posted on cooperhewitt.org/events.

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES AT COOPER HEWITT

The exhibition "Access+Ability" and Cooper Hewitt Lab: Design Access are part of Cooper Hewitt's greater, ongoing effort to broaden access and awareness to its campus, exhibitions, programs and online presence. From wheelchair accessibility to sign-language interpretation to touch tours and braille signage, the museum offers a variety of services for visitors who are deaf or have limited mobility or vision loss. Morning at the Museum, a free program for visitors with cognitive and sensory processing disabilities, takes place on select Saturdays one hour prior to the museum opening. For more information, visit cooperhewitt.org/accessibility-at-cooper-hewitt.

ABOUT COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM

Founded in 1897, Cooper Hewitt is the only museum in the United States devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. Housed in the renovated and restored Carnegie Mansion, Cooper Hewitt showcases one of the most diverse and comprehensive collections of design works in existence. The museum's restoration, modernization and expansion has won numerous awards and honors, including a Lucy G. Moses Preservation Award from the New York Landmarks Conservancy, a Gold Pencil Award for Best in Responsive Environments and LEED Silver certification. Cooper Hewitt offers a full range of interactive capabilities and immersive creative experiences, including the Cooper Hewitt Pen that allows visitors to "collect" and "save" objects from around the galleries, the opportunity to explore the collection digitally on ultra-high-definition touch-screen tables, and draw and project their own wallpaper designs in the Immersion Room.

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., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. The Arthur Ross Terrace and Garden and Tarallucci e Vino cafe open at 8 a.m., Monday through Friday, and are accessible without an admissions ticket through the East 90th Street entrance. The museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Public transit routes include the Lexington Avenue 4, 5 and 6 subways (86th or 96th Street stations), the Second Avenue Q subway (96th Street station), and the Fifth and Madison Avenue buses. Adult admission, \$18 in advance via tickets.cooperhewitt.org, \$18 at door; seniors, \$10 in advance via tickets.cooperhewitt.org, \$12 at door; students, \$7 in advance via tickets.cooperhewitt.org, \$9 at door. 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, call (212) 849-8400, visit Cooper Hewitt's website at



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www.cooperhewitt.org and follow the museum on www.twitter.com/cooperhewitt,
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