



Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum 2 East 91st Street, New York, NY

Five-year Strategic Plan 2007–2012

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Smithsonian
Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum

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Executive Summary



Design Life Now: National Design Triennial 2007

Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum is the only museum in the United States devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. With an internationally renowned collection of 250,000 artifacts spanning twenty-four centuries, the Museum is a uniquely valuable resource for the scholarly community and public alike. From its foundation in 1897 and subsequent assimilation into the Smithsonian Institution in 1967, Cooper-Hewitt has been dedicated to improving the quality of life through design and to enhancing the public's understanding of this most accessible form of visual culture.

All areas of society benefit from an enhanced awareness of design and its impact on the cultural, aesthetic, and economic aspects of our lives. A better understanding of design and current practice enables the American public to make more informed choices about their surroundings—the location and layout of their homes, retail and office spaces, public amenities and transport infrastructure—creating environments that are both visually uplifting and efficient. Informing teachers how to incorporate design practice into their classrooms helps young people improve problem solving skills and encourages teamwork and better communication. In addition, students learn about the exciting career opportunities offered by the design and creative industries and unlocking their talents enriches the fields. Finally, in the “knowledge economy” of the twenty-first century, design is increasingly recognized as a strategic business tool, adding competitive advantage to products and services from MP3 players to search engines.

Design impacts quality-of-life issues ranging from aesthetics to the stewardship of natural resources. Design decisions, both good and bad, have a great impact upon daily life, from buildings and transportation systems to the PCs and desks that we use at work. Design and technology sit at the intersection of science and the visual arts and, as such, have vital roles to play within the Smithsonian Institution. This document presents the case for enhancing and greatly expanding the activities, audience, and financial base of the Smithsonian's National Design Museum, thereby advancing the public understanding of design history and contemporary practice.

Mission, Strategic Vision, and Summary of Goals

Mission: *to advance the public understanding of design across twenty-four centuries.*



A City of Neighborhoods
Education program

Given the increased public discourse on design in contemporary culture, it is important that Cooper-Hewitt move beyond its current status as a metropolitan museum attracting 200,000 visitors a year to fulfill its mandate as *the* national design authority with greatly increased audiences across the country.

Strategic Vision: *to establish Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum as the design authority of the United States and to communicate its preeminence as an historic and contemporary design museum on the international stage.*

The following strategic goals will realize this vision:

1. Create the Online National Design Museum
2. Engage Larger Audiences in Preeminent Programs
3. Revitalize the Museum's Physical Space
4. Create Financial Strength

Key:

This five-year plan refers to goals in the short, medium, and long terms, understood as follows:

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Short Term: | 2008 |
| Medium Term: | 2008–2010 |
| Long Term: | 2010–2012 |

Strategic Goal One: Create the Online National Design Museum

In order to fulfill its strategic vision of becoming the national design authority, Cooper-Hewitt will entirely revision its Web site, creating the world's most influential online resource for design education, engaging larger, new audiences with original content and facilitating access to the collection.



Provoking Magic: Lighting of Ingo Maurer 09.14.07—01.27.08

Strategic Goal Two: Engage Larger Audiences in Preeminent Programs

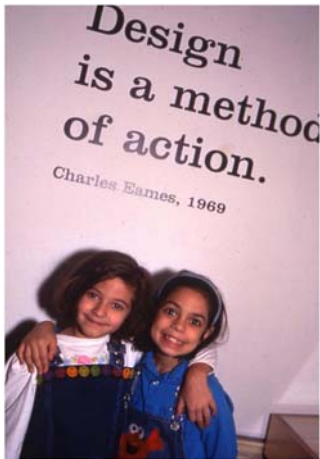
The Museum witnessed a 50% growth in visitors from 2005 to 2007. Cooper-Hewitt will increase average weekly visitor numbers from 3,800 per week in 2007 to 5,700 by 2012, through original and engaging exhibitions, education programming, and events. In addition, Cooper-Hewitt will pursue the continuing acquisition of quality master-works for its collection with an emphasis on innovation and process; and maintain the collections at the highest level of care and preservation.

Strategic Goal Three: re:Design the Museum's Physical Space

In addition to establishing Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum's virtual presence and solidifying its education programs, Cooper-Hewitt will revitalize and expand its physical site through its re:Design project. Exhibition space will increase from 10,000 sq ft to 17,000 sq ft and the library and back-of-house exhibition preparation areas will be modernized to conform with 21st century museum standards.

Strategic Goal Four: Create Financial Strength

Cooper-Hewitt will move from short-term, reactive management to long-range strategic planning. This involved the launch of a Capital Campaign in 2006 (silent phase) with a goal of \$54 million for the renovation project and \$10 million for the endowment. Cooper-Hewitt will increase its earned income from 23% of total budget, to 30% by 2011. In line with the growth of gallery and Education Center space, the Museum's retail operations will increase online.



School tour

Conclusion

Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum faces an exciting but challenging future. In order to realize its goals, Cooper-Hewitt must embrace a new vision that encompasses all aspects of its operations. With intellectual vigor, distinguished staff, modernized management systems, and robust Board support, Cooper-Hewitt will realize its strategic vision within the given timeframe, revitalize its physical space, and lay down the foundations for sustained future growth through endowment support.

Strategic Goal One: Create the Online National Design Museum

Overview

The internet presents extraordinary new opportunities for museums and educational organizations to offer distance learning, teacher-training, and networking opportunities. It is also an extremely cost-effective way to reach millions of people across the world, regardless of where they live or their previous experience with design.

No comprehensive design education Web site currently exists in English. Cooper-Hewitt has therefore made it a priority to be the institution that creates this resource and in 2006 began in earnest to transform its Web site into the Online National Design Museum (ONDM). The overall aim of the ONDM is to be an open theater of ideas, providing a unique forum for visitors of all ages and experience levels to participate in the design discourse. In addition, by attracting new visitors to this “museum without walls,” Cooper-Hewitt will significantly expand its audience, not only by reaching new, broader audiences online, but by driving visitation back to the Museum itself as Web users are encouraged to enjoy the galleries and activities online.

The ONDM now serves as an interactive extension of the Museum’s public space, attracting 12 visitors for every physical visit to its campus. It is becoming a substantial, web-based education resource for teachers, scholars, students, and researchers around the world who wish to access information about historical and contemporary design. A selection of what the site now offers includes:

1. 200 downloadable lesson plans for school teachers aligned to national standards.
2. Professional development programs for K–12 teachers incorporating design thinking and language across the curriculum.
3. Pod casts for exhibitions and curator blogs.
4. Public programs on video.
5. Online shop.
6. A Design Map of America, citing all design events scheduled throughout the year across the 50 states.

Major strides have been taken, but more needs to be done to realize the Museum’s goal of creating the ultimate resource for all design inquiries, particularly in regards to online access to the Museum’s collection, and increasing the range of interactive educational resources beyond K-12.

The total start-up cost of creating the ONDM is \$2M during 2006-2008. The ongoing maintenance and staffing of the ONDM will be met from an unrestricted endowment fund and corporate sponsorship.

Performance Indicators:

Qualitative

- Position Cooper-Hewitt's Web site as a "museum without walls."
- Embrace Cooper-Hewitt's mandate as the national design authority of the United States.

Quantitative

Short to Medium Term:

- Contract a Web company to construct those parts of the site that cannot be built by in-house staff.
- Create a forum for design school professors to exchange research internationally.
- Include searchable content derived from the Museum's original publications, exhibitions, and lecture programs aimed at educators, college students, and the general public as well as access to relevant content from other Smithsonian institutions.
- Increase the number of online videos that help educators integrate design practice into their teaching.
- Increase range of interactive educational resources beyond K-12 such as games for the general public aimed at increasing visual literacy and enhancing design problem-solving skills.
- Launch first phase of Collection information online, including images.
- Create online lesson plans that use examples from the Collection.
- Create a design 'timeline'.
- Offer National Design Council membership to educational institutions, including privileged access to select online education resource material and networks.

Strategic Goal Two: Engage Larger Audiences in Preeminent Programs

Since 2005, Cooper-Hewitt has witnessed a 50% increase in visitation, driven largely by the enhanced quality of the temporary exhibitions program and the sustained level of high-quality press which the exhibitions have received.

Special Exhibitions and the Collection

The strategic plan for Cooper-Hewitt's curatorial program will:

- Portray design as a historic continuum, balancing contemporary with historic

concerns; viewing historic periods through twenty-first century eyes, and pinpointing themes of enduring relevance to design “then and now.”

- Present a clear, accessible thesis and opinion in each exhibition.
- Engage guest curators who bring fresh and unexpected perspectives to the interpretation of the collection in the Nancy and Edwin Marks Gallery.
- Present themes and theses which are congruent with the domestic scale of the Carnegie Mansion, offering a “chamber” experience which offers a “contextual” view of design.
- Use the Garden as a “laboratory” for contemporary design, technology, or architecture during the summer months.
- Increase the size and enhance the quality of gallery spaces, reducing annual downtimes (12 weeks of partial or totally closed galleries in 2005).
- Refine the collections going forward, aiming for excellence and quality following the new Acquisitions Strategy, developed in winter 2005, which prioritizes the top 50 most pressing acquisitions to be made in each of the four departments.

Performance Indicators:

Qualitative

- Create sound programming balance between historic and contemporary themes i.e. *National Design Triennial* (2006 and 2010) and *Rococo: The Continuing Curve* (2008).
- Create balance in every exhibition between new scholarship and public accessibility.
- Widen the aperture on contemporary design to include international innovations.
- Serve as the “design lens” of the Smithsonian and its collections.
- Select themes and theses that can realistically be accommodated within the domestic scale and architecture of the Carnegie Mansion.
- Ensure exhibition catalogues define new scholarship in the field.
- Acquire design work for the collections of the highest quality and significance, with an emphasis on innovation and process. Acquisitions will be based on the curators’ top fifty priority objects.

Quantitative

Short Term:

- Two collections-based displays per year.
- Make touring each exhibition nationally to at least one other venue a metric of success.
- One *Solos* exhibition per year of international contemporary design/architecture.
- One Garden exhibition per year of contemporary design, technology, or architecture.

Medium Term:

- Increase average weekly visitor numbers above current 3,800 per week in 2007.
- Research and write the in-depth Collections Plan in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution, reviewing all aspects of the Museum’s collections.

Long Term

- Increase average weekly visitor numbers to 5,700 per week and decrease exhibition “downtimes” (Cooper-Hewitt experiences twelve weeks of closure per year to accommodate exhibition installations within restricted confines of its historic site).

Education Program

Cooper-Hewitt will continue to run its highly successful education programs aimed at K–12 students, educators, undergraduate and postgraduate students, and the general public in New York City. The Master’s Program in the History of Decorative Arts and Design will continue to operate in close collaboration with the curatorial departments, offering object-based teaching by curators and adjunct faculty.

Design practice facilitates multiple levels of problem solving that reinforces the importance of collaboration and improves communication skills. Cooper-Hewitt will strengthen its role of national leadership and design advocacy and will aim to create greater impact on a national level by “influencing the influencers”: educating teachers and teacher-trainers how to incorporate design practice into their classrooms. In addition, a new category of membership in the National Design Council for educators will facilitate a greater national network and presence.

The following initiatives will be pursued:

- Increased emphasis on “teaching teachers,” thereby creating greater impact long-term. Best practices of integrating design thinking and practice into a variety of subject areas will be presented and use examples from the Museum’s collection to underscore the message.
- Continue to offer the Master’s Program in the History of Decorative Arts and Design, which doubled its student body between 2000 and 2004.
- Increase public programs in new Target National Design Education Center.
- Increase online lectures, film, and downloadable resources with the objective of making Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum the world’s largest provider of design education services in English.
- Create educational resources that help teachers incorporate design thinking and language across the curriculum.
- Grow college tours and continue school tours.
- Convene symposia on critical contemporary themes i.e., rebuilding New Orleans

Performance Indicators

Qualitative

- Disseminate the Museum’s message nationally and internationally via the Web becoming the “intelligent portal” to other design sites.
- Generate long-term loyalty towards Cooper-Hewitt among future generations of design/art teachers and their communities.
- Record an increase in schools nationally using Cooper-Hewitt resources.

Quantitative

Short Term

- Increase number of long-term partnerships to deliver professional development programs on a national scale, for example initiatives currently offered in Philadelphia; Ed Couch, Texas; and New Orleans.
- Offer conferences or public programs related to exhibitions twice annually.
- Build current teaching provision (on- and off site) with resource packs that illustrate best practices and are aligned to educational standards.
- Increase high school and college tours.
- Establish *National Design Journal* as an authoritative magazine with high circulation, key to asserting Cooper-Hewitt's national authority.
- Offer "National Design Week" a national initiative every Fall.

Medium Term:

- Engage corporate sector via National Design Council programs such as Design = Bottom Line, instilling greater understanding of design strategies within the decision-making process.

Strategic Goal Three: Revitalize the Museum's Physical Space

The Smithsonian Institution's 2004-2006 master plan, conducted by architects Beyer Blinder Belle, confirmed the need for the revitalization and expansion of Cooper-Hewitt's physical site.

Current Challenges

Quality of Space

The Museum lacks an uninterrupted, neutral gallery space suitable for thorough, scholarly appraisals of themes or major retrospective exhibitions. Many of Cooper-Hewitt's exhibitions of contemporary design demand a controlled environment, complex floor loading, a neutral backdrop, and access to sophisticated electrical supplies, Internet, and AV for the presentation of multimedia works.

Quantity of Space

Mounting major international exhibitions generally calls for 12,000 square feet of contiguous exhibition space: Cooper-Hewitt currently has only 10,000 square feet. With increased space, and improved quality of space, Cooper-Hewitt will be capable of hosting and touring exhibitions to and from its international peer institutions, thereby offering a large New York audience the opportunity to enjoy major international touring shows.

re:Design Plan

The major components of the re:Design project are:

- Creation of a dramatic new, 7,000 square foot gallery on the third floor of the Carnegie Mansion, which currently houses the library and administrative staff. (This new gallery, along with the expanded 2nd floor gallery, will increase the Museum's total space for the display of decorative objects and design works from 10,000 to 17,000 square feet; a 70% increase).
- Dedication of entire second floor to exhibition space.
- Relocation of the National Design Library next to the Masters' Program in the Cooper-Hewitt townhouses, thereby unifying resources for graduate students.
- Improved and enlarged facilities for exhibition preparation and collections management.
- Relocation of staff and administrative offices to the Cooper-Hewitt townhouses.
- Creation of a 20,000 square foot curatorial center at a new facility off-site housing nearly 80 percent of the collection; conservation labs; and a photo studio for digitizing the collection online.

Funding

Cooper-Hewitt will raise a minimum of \$42 million towards the renovation project; it is anticipated that the Smithsonian will provide an additional \$12 million from congressionally appropriated funds over the long-term.

Performance Indicators

Qualitative

- Create appropriate public and back-of-house spaces befitting the National Design Museum.

Quantitative

Short Term

- Fit out and move into new, 20,000 square feet, offsite facility.
- Complete design schematics.

Medium Term

- Select final design.
- Raise minimum of \$42 million for the renovation project by summer 2009.
- Confirm \$12 million from congressionally appropriated funds.
- Secure \$12 million from NYC.
- Renovate Cooper-Hewitt townhouses adjacent to the Carnegie Mansion.
- Relocate library next to the Master's Program area in Cooper-Hewitt's townhouses.
- Relocate staff in Carnegie Mansion to the townhouses.

Long Term

- Create new 7,000 sq ft gallery on the third floor of the Carnegie Mansion.
- Ensure that each space on the first and second floors of the Carnegie Mansion is renovated, as appropriate, with upgraded lighting fixtures, new or renovated floor finishes, and that wall, window blind, and decorative solutions are of a standard commensurate with the design finishes in the new third floor and National Design Library.
- Open renovated facilities in fall 2011.

Strategic Goal Four: Create Financial Strength

Financial Background

In fiscal year 2008 Cooper-Hewitt will operate on an annual budget of \$13.967 million plus additional infrastructural support (lighting, heat, security, etc.) from the Smithsonian which is not recorded in the Museum's annual profit and loss statement.

(figures in millions):

| | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Fundraising | \$ 5,000 |
| 2. Federal Appropriations | \$ 3,381 |
| 3. Smithsonian Trust Funds | \$ 1,511 |
| 4. Earned Income (admissions, café, shop) | \$ 3,196 |
| 5. Earned Income from MA tuition | \$ 250 |

Total government support therefore represents 34.5% of total revenue in FY2008. The Museum has a staff of approximately 75 (full and part-time). Payroll costs, including benefits, are a prudent 51% of total expenses. The Museum is currently constrained by its short-term, reactive approach to financial planning, exacerbated by an over-reliance on the delayed Federal process of annual budget negotiation under which the Smithsonian is obliged to operate and the erosion of its Federal funding as a result of mandated but unfunded salary increases.

Capital Campaign

With the full support of Cooper-Hewitt's Board and the Smithsonian, Cooper-Hewitt has launched the RE:DESIGN Capital Campaign to raise \$42 million in private funding for the renovation project and \$10 million for the endowment; this is the largest campaign in the Museum's history.

Endowment Funds

Healthy, ever-increasing endowment funds, similar to those of other successful cultural organizations, are crucial to Cooper-Hewitt's future. To ensure that key curatorial and educational programs, as well as the Museum's general wellbeing, are shielded from the decline in public-sector support and that investment is

provided for future growth, Cooper-Hewitt will raise at least \$10 million to increase its current endowment to \$17 million. A \$17 million endowment will generate \$850,000 per year, assuming a rate of 5% interest. Donors will be asked to contribute to one of the following areas:

1. Unrestricted Endowment (including the ongoing maintenance of and payroll for the Online National Design Museum)
2. Education
3. Exhibitions

Unrestricted Endowment

Annual general operating expenses for FY2008 are budgeted at \$7.765 million, of which \$2.645 million was provided by Federal government and Smithsonian payroll sources. Given research thus far of comparable museum Web sites, Cooper-Hewitt predicts an additional ongoing maintenance and payroll need of at least \$300,000 for the Online National Design Museum. Therefore, in the immediate term, a \$2 million budget, at minimum, will be required annually for general operating needs. General operating dollars are traditionally the most challenging funds to secure. Efforts in this area have so far resulted in the establishment of the *Enid and Lester Morse General Operating Fund* and the *Abigail Rose and Michael J. Blum General Endowment Fund*.

Education Endowment

Education programs are budgeted at \$2.092 million in FY2008: \$1,043,000 allocated for programs, \$312,000 for federally-funded salaries, and \$737,000 for salaries for which Cooper-Hewitt currently fundraises on an annual basis. Endowing the Education department would nurture strategic growth and allow the Museum to enhance its individual programming while also adopting a truly national network of delivery in partnership with key educational institutions. In FY2007, the Museum was pleased to announce the creation of the *Lily Auchincloss Design Education Endowment* with a major gift from the Lily Auchincloss Foundation.

Exhibitions Endowment

In 2008, the all-inclusive cost of staging an annual exhibition programs are budgeted at \$4.110 million: \$2.27 million to be raised by Cooper-Hewitt, and \$1.84 million provided by Federal and Smithsonian payroll sources. However, an "inbuilt shortfall" exists each year, as the all-inclusive costs of exhibitions are greater than the financial support that the sponsorship market will bear. For example, a major exhibition like 2007's *Piranesi as Designer* was budgeted at \$711,000, but sponsorship income did not exceed \$200,000. This shortfall is too great to be met by earned income from ticket sales or by fundraising efforts aimed at general operating support. A larger exhibitions endowment will alleviate some of the shortfall incurred by the exhibitions program and enhance the quality of scholarly research, which is so essential to authoritative, landmark exhibitions. In FY2006, the *Esme Usdan Exhibition Endowment Fund* was established with a major gift from Cooper-

Hewitt Trustee and Exhibitions Committee Chair, Esme Usdan. In FY 2007, the *Ehrenkranz Fund* was established to support curatorial purposes with a generous gift from Anne Ehrenkranz, Cooper-Hewitt Trustee and Secretary.

Of course the Museum will continue to fundraise assertively to meet the all-inclusive costs for staging exhibitions and running an Education department. However, with this invaluable endowment support, the programs would be better shielded from the vagaries of the corporate sponsorship market and better able to deliver the Museum's core mission.

Performance Indicators

Short Term:

- Grow the Board to 40 members, in particular, focusing on leaders from design-led corporations.
- Secure annual needs of \$5.0 million with greater alacrity from widened donor pool with enhanced development department.
- Secure 50% of exhibition goal 18 months in advance of the exhibition opening.
- Increase Individual, Foundation, and Corporate gifts by 25% each year.
- Launch planned giving program.
- Increase numbers and augment profit margin on all membership categories.
- Secure National Design Awards sponsor one full year in advance of event, and increase net revenue exponentially each year.
- Enter public phase of campaign (once 50% of goal is met) in fall 2008.

Medium Term:

- Grow general endowment fund toward minimum \$17 million goal.
- Raise minimum of \$42 million to fund the renovation project (it is anticipated that the Smithsonian will provide an additional \$12 million from congressionally appropriated funds).
- Continue growth of Individual and Foundation gifts by 20% annually.

Conclusion

Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum faces an exciting future. In order to realize its goals, Cooper-Hewitt must embrace a new vision that encompasses all aspects of its operations. With intellectual vigor, distinguished staff, modernized management systems, and robust Board support, Cooper-Hewitt will realize its strategic vision within the given timeframe and lay down the foundations for sustained future growth through endowment support. This plan will be reviewed annually by the Under Secretary Art of the Smithsonian Institution, the Board of Trustees, Cooper-Hewitt's Director, and the senior management team.