

 SHOP

TODAY We are Open from 11am to 5pm

Cranbrook Art Museum



© Michael McCoy. Photograph by R. H. Hensleigh and Tim Thayer.

Cranbrook Art Museum



Maker: John Guse for McCoy & McCoy, Inc., Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Manufacturer: Arkitektura, Inc., Princeton, New Jersey

Lacquered wood with metal hardware

30 7/8 x 21 5/8 x 17 inches

Gift of the Designer

CAM 1989.42

Michael McCoy designed the *Door Chair* during his tenure as Head of Cranbrook Academy of Art's Department of Design, which he co-chaired with his wife Katherine. In 1986, the chair based on this prototype was produced in limited edition for Arkitektura, marking a shift in the role of design.

The modernist dictum of "form follows function" had been a mantra for decades, leading to the design of slick, corporate glass-box buildings and anonymous, beige typewriters in the 1970s. By the 1980s young designers were desperate for a more expansive vision of design and McCoy's chair began a new discussion. Its whimsical and metaphorical references alluded both to how it works and to its context within an architectural space. Suddenly, designed objects could (once again) speak about more than utilitarian "function" and shifted to "product as text." With research into semiotics and communication, postmodern design thinkers like Robert Venturi, Ettore Sottsass and Michael McCoy revitalized the design scene and inspired the next generation of young designers to "inform" their designs with metaphor, narrative, decoration, fashion and imagination.

Scott Klinker

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Decade(s): [1980s](#)

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