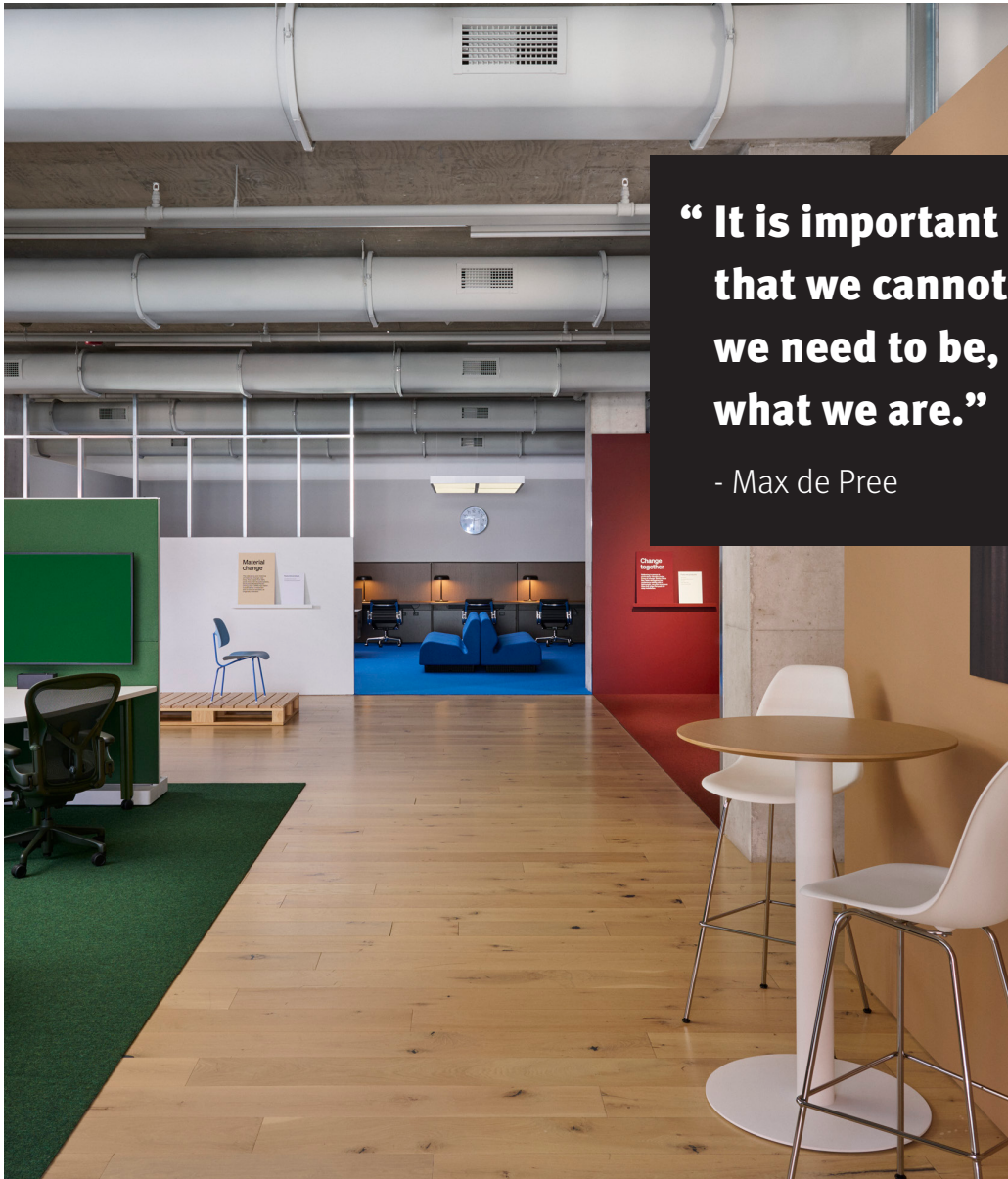


Powering Design



**“ It is important to remember
that we cannot become what
we need to be, by remaining
what we are.”**

- Max de Pree

For the past five Design Days, MillerKnoll has focused on how to combine their brands while maintaining their own design identities. Merging two powerhouse companies is no easy task (especially with as much design heritage as each one has) and something their creative and brand teams knew could not be rushed.

For three years, they continued to occupy separate showrooms that we would walk 7 city blocks between and hope it wasn't a 100-degree day or raining in June. Then, two years ago, they made the move to occupy the same building and demonstrated how Herman Miller and Knoll could continue to exist separately, and carefully curated a floor to show how they are now stronger together. This is MillerKnoll and why the brands came together – so a designer can have virtually any solution they want at almost any price point, without sacrificing quality and aesthetic.

This year, the company took it back to their roots – reinforcing what they do best and what has gotten them to be so successful for the last 100 years. “Powering Design” was MillerKnoll’s 2026 Design Days overarching theme. But what does that mean? Plugging something in? Well sort of, actually. It was about showcasing and focusing on research-driven insights, product innovations and how people themselves power design from start to finish.



The Innovation

Famous for innovation and challenging industry ideals, Herman Miller has always been at the forefront of designing for the future of workplace. Their philosophy of pushing the boundaries dates back to the company's beginning with founder Max de Pree who famously said, "It is important to remember that we cannot become what we need to be, by remaining what we are."

At Design Days 2026, MillerKnoll once again demonstrated their forward thinking by previewing a new workstation power system, the first of its kind. Off the bat, this doesn't sound glamorous or groundbreaking – you are probably thinking, "but what was the cool new chair?" There was a lot of that too, don't fret, but the star of the show was the smallest USB-C power module.



Designers know the dreaded email from contractors well : where do the floor boxes need to go? But with Herman Miller, this could be a question of the past. They are creating an industry-leading power system that will convert power from AC to DC *at the workstation* without the need for large convertor blocks or floor whips that never seem to align with your block of workstations just as you imagined – a true nightmare for us detail-obsessed individuals. Being able to convert power inside the station means that you will soon be able to power a six-pack of desks off just a three-prong plug (pause for reaction). This DC Power System shows adaptive change with innovative capabilities for immediate floorplate shifts without requiring an electrician's assistance, not only impacting Day 1 functions, but also those Day 2 and beyond.

The People

Their level one Exhibit was called “Craft Work” – a space designed to showcase individuals within the MillerKnoll family, emphasizing their expertise and tradecraft. Together, the images celebrate the human hands and collective knowledge that bring products to life. From day one, Herman Miller and Knoll have been companies centered around craftsmanship and detail – and it’s important to show that as time goes on, demand for product grows, and new products are developed – this foundation and way of working does not change. People are at the heart of everything they do.

Being in this space is something you truly must experience, because each image showcased so many attributes. Even more impactful was that the curator of the exhibition knew each one of the captured craftsman’s names. So, over the weeks of travel taking these photographs with Balazs Gardi, they built relationships with these individuals, which helped make the photographs even more captivating.

Every designer we toured through the exhibit gravitated towards a different image. Drawn in by either a specific characteristic, the skill being performed, or even just how something so dynamic was able to be documented in a single still image. I personally, was drawn in by the first woman right as you entered the space. She was sewing the buttons onto the Barcelona chair. To see a design that is so well known, that is in my office, is still created by hand really resonated and reminded me of the quality commitment of the brand. That no matter how advanced technology becomes, some tasks and details will never be done right without the right skill.



This strong history of craftsmanship that truly brought Herman Miller and Knoll to where they are today was woven throughout other spaces in each showroom. A “Means and Methods” display detailed the archival tools and techniques that had to be developed to mass produce these iconic designs. Bringing original prototypes out of the archives amplifies the dynamic of that collaboration between design and manufacturing that has been critical over the past 100 years. It was Charles Eames who said, “There is nothing more inelegant than a product that cannot be produced” and this sentiment still carries throughout all MillerKnoll manufacturing facilities as they look at how to streamline and become as efficient as possible.



The Lasting Impact

These goals of innovation, philosophy of craft, and shared ideologies that weave them together are what drive MillerKnoll at every level. From the first Eames LCW molded plywood chair to Aeron Chairs that can come off the line as fast as every 19 seconds, the vision has always been clear for these brands. And now with an industry leading power solution on the way, they are sure to be at the forefront of a new wave of technology and all of the rippling effects to follow.



About John A. Marshall Co.

Founded in 1923, we are a fourth-generation business with a legacy of long-lasting relationships with our customers. Our 102+ years of success comes from knowing our clients and understanding their needs. We have a highly experienced team with diverse capabilities and offer a comprehensive range of services from space planning to flooring options and furniture applications. As a top-performing, nationally-acclaimed MillerKnoll Certified Dealer, we leverage world-class research, products, and processes. We combine our access to the Certified Dealer network with our expertise, time-tested processes, and best-in-class customer care to optimize your time and budget and help your business thrive.

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