

## **David Chavez's Braille Watch Concept to be on Display at Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum**

*David Chavez's Haptica Braille Watch Concept will be a featured designer at Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum's exhibition, "National Design Triennial: Why Design Now?," from May 14, 2010 - January 9, 2011. Haptica enables the user to get a quick and accurate time reading while maintaining user discretion.*

January 13, 2010 (FPRC) -- SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. — David Chavez will be a featured designer at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution exhibition, "National Design Triennial: Why Design Now?" His internationally recognized Braille Watch concept "Haptica" will be on display during the exhibition, which runs from May 14, 2010 - January 9, 2011.

Inaugurated in 2000, the museum's Triennial program seeks out and presents the most innovative, forward-thinking designs at the center of contemporary culture. The "Why Design Now?" exhibition, which launches in the spring, specifically explores the work of designers addressing human and environmental problems across many fields of design from architecture and product design to fashion, graphics, new media and landscape design. The exhibition, sponsored by GE, showcases design solutions from the last three years that promote environmental stewardship, social equity, accessibility and creative capital in more than 125 projects.

"The invitation to participate in the 2010 National Design Triennial came as a welcomed milestone as well as an opportunity to bring attention to a consumer market that is often overlooked," said Chavez. "Unfortunately people with disabilities are often resigned to using clumsy and poorly designed products. Because people with disabilities constitute somewhat of a niche consumer market, opportunities to improve their day-to-day life often times go unexplored. For me, the aesthetic value of this Braille watch was just as important as its functionality."

According to Chavez, current Braille timepieces help users orient the watch hands in relation to the watch face but can lead to a slow and inaccurate time assessment. Digital devices use sound to communicate the time, thus inhibiting the user from checking their watch unnoticed. "Haptica is a Braille watch concept, which by function, enables the user to get a quick and accurate time reading while maintaining user discretion. Through form, Haptica elegantly negates the stigma of a disability while providing an intuitive ergonomic interface."

"By eliminating the stigma that can often come with a disability and providing an intuitive user experience, Haptica effectively communicates both the time and the value of thoughtful design," Chavez noted.

Chavez's design also earned a bronze award in the 2008 International Design Excellence Awards (IDEA) competition sponsored by BusinessWeek and the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA). The IDEA competition is a celebration of the most innovative and exciting product and product concept designs of the year and one of the world's most prestigious design competitions. Chavez's Braille watch concept was selected from 1,517 entries from around the world. Chavez's concept also won a Spark! Award in 2008. The Spark design competition recognizes the best ideas and best designs of professionals and up-and-coming designers. The Spark! Award was only given

to 17 designs of the hundreds of entries.

Drawn to its vibrant design culture, Chavez recently moved to San Francisco. "During this past year, I traveled to San Francisco frequently and had the opportunity to meet many wonderful, talented people," said Chavez. "San Francisco has an established reputation for world class design and is home to many renowned designers so it was an obvious choice for me. In many creative disciplines it is common for individuals to seek out opportunities to associate with masters of their craft, so to speak; an environment in which they can thrive and grow. I appreciate the cohesiveness of the Bay Area design community in general."

According to Chavez, an American born designer of Dutch, Mexican and Scottish descent, "My maternal grandfather is an innovator in his own right, holding patents for machinery and processes in the food industry." It is also claimed that through that same maternal parentage, Chavez is a descendant of William Murdoch a Scottish engineer and inventor who most notably invented the gas light circa 1790. Chavez recalls his own inquisitive nature as a youth that often led to the dismantling or repairing of an object. He says he spent many occasions in the company of his grandfather who seemingly at every opportunity would pose the question, "Why?" As a designer, Chavez approaches design purposefully as an innovator, problem solver and humanist; ever exploring what design is and how it can effect the human experience. He believes that ideal design provides solutions and expedites processes through thoughtful innovation and a clear conscience.

"Why Design Now?" is the fourth exhibition in the National Design Triennial series featured at Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution in New York City, NY. The exhibition series previously featured "Design Life Now" in 2006, "Inside Design Now" in 2003, and "Design Culture Now" in 2000. "Why Design Now?" will be on view from May 14, 2010 through Jan. 9, 2011, and will explore the work of designers addressing human and environmental problems across many fields of design from architecture and product design to fashion, graphics, new media and landscape design.

Cooper-Hewitt curators Ellen Lupton, Cara McCarty, Matilda McQuaid, and Cynthia Smith will present the experimental projects and emerging ideas for the period between 2006 and 2009 in the exhibit "Why Design Now?" The Triennial reflects the connectedness of design practices and the need for international cooperation to solve the world's problems. Visit [www.cooperhewitt.org/exhibitions/triennial/why-design-now.asp](http://www.cooperhewitt.org/exhibitions/triennial/why-design-now.asp) for more information about the upcoming exhibition.

For more information about David Chavez and his work, visit [www.david-chavez.com](http://www.david-chavez.com) or contact him at [info@david-chavez.com](mailto:info@david-chavez.com).

About Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution

Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum is the only museum in the nation devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. Founded in 1897 by Amy, Eleanor, and Sarah Hewitt—granddaughters of industrialist Peter Cooper—as part of the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, the museum has been a branch of the Smithsonian since 1967. The museum presents compelling perspectives on the impact of design on daily life through active educational programs, exhibitions and publications.

The museum is located at 2 East 91st Street at Fifth Avenue in New York City. Hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 6 p.m. 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, \$15; senior citizens and students ages 12 and older, \$10. Cooper-Hewitt and Smithsonian members and children younger than age 12 are admitted free. The museum is fully accessible. For further information, please call (212) 849-8300 or visit <http://www.cooperhewitt.org>.

**Contact Information**

For more information contact Anne Monaghan of Monaghan Communications  
(<http://www.david-chavez.com>)  
949-722-2933

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