

# GOLDSTEIN MUSEUM OF DESIGN

College of Design, University of Minnesota  
364 McNeal Hall, 1985 Buford Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55108  
<http://goldstein.design.umn.edu>

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## **How Secretaries Changed the 20th-Century Office: Design, Image, and Culture**

February 6 – May 23, 2010; Opening Friday, February 5, 6-8 pm

Chances are that you, or someone you know has been a secretary. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women poured into offices all over the U.S. to work as “typewriter girls,” stenographers, and secretaries. New spaces, furnishings, and clothing emerged to meet their needs, while popular culture glamorized them. *How Secretaries Changed the 20th-Century Office: Design, Image, and Culture* explores transformations in the workplace and women’s lives and features office equipment and furniture plus office fashions, trade and fashion magazines, satirical postcards, and typing speed awards.

Co-curators Midori Green (Prelinger Fellow, and Ph.D. candidate, Art History) and Katherine Solomonson (Associate Professor, School of Architecture and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Design) mined archives from New York to Los Angeles, researched office design, and talked with scores of women who had been secretaries. The resulting exhibition reveals the ways design and secretaries’ changing image and experiences were intertwined. How, for instance, did clothing relate to information technology and the design of office furnishings, functionally and aesthetically? As increasing numbers of women entered previously male-dominated offices, how did women and men negotiate working and personal relations, power, and status? (This was a focus of public debate as rules of respectable behavior—especially in regard to sexual conduct—were challenged.)

Curatorial talks will reveal additional research findings and a film series will explore 50 years of the office in popular culture. As part of an innovative Secretaries’ Summit, people who were or are secretaries will reflect upon and share their stories on life in the contemporary office. During the exhibition, GMD will also collect donations of gently used women’s office wear for Women Achieving New Directions, a 20-year-old organization providing career and job services to low-income single mothers.

This exhibition and programs are supported in part by Friends of GMD, the College of Design, and the Fashion Group Foundation of Minneapolis/St. Paul, Inc. GMD funding provided in part by a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and private funders.

## **Related Program**

### CURATOR’S TALK



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## SHAPING OFFICE CULTURE: SECRETARIES AND DESIGN, FROM *MISS REMINGTON* TO *MAD MEN*

With exhibit curators Kate Solomonson and Midori Green

Thursday, February 18, 6 PM, 33 McNeal

Exploring changes in office design, technology, and visual representation through the lens of women clerical workers who contributed to the radical transformation of the workplace.

## SECRETARIES' SUMMIT

Saturday, March 27, all day, 33 McNeal

An innovative symposium featuring the stories of women and men who were or are part of the community of office workers, with a focus on how their experiences affected the contemporary office.

## COFFEE BREAK SERIES: THE OFFICE ON FILM

All films at 6:30 PM, 33 McNeal

April 20	<i>Skyscraper Souls</i> (1932)
April 21	<i>The Best of Everything</i> (1959)
April 22	<i>Nine to Five</i> (1980)

## General Information

The Goldstein Museum of Design (GMD), part of the University of Minnesota's College of Design, supports teaching and research in design through exhibitions, publications, programs, and community partnerships. GMD celebrates diverse cultures through its collections and programs by promoting the appreciation and interpretation of design within social, cultural, aesthetic, and historic contexts.

## Visitor Info

GMD Gallery is on the second floor of McNeal Hall, 1985 Buford Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108.

### Gallery Hours

The GMD Gallery is open Tuesday, Wednesday, & Friday 10 am–4 pm, Thursday 10 am–8 pm and weekends 1:30–4:30 pm. The Gallery is closed Mondays and all University holidays.

### Admission and Parking

Admission is free. Parking is in Gortner Ramp at 1395 Gortner Avenue. The ramp and McNeal Hall are both handicapped accessible.

### Public Transit

Route 87 or Campus Connector. For bus information, call (612) 373-3333.

