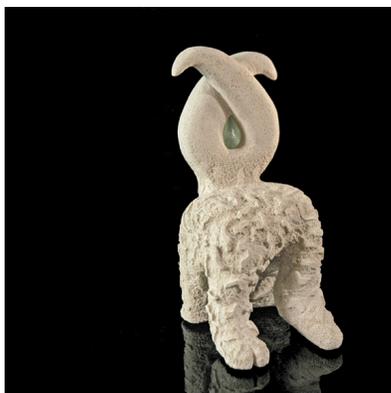


**AUSTIN MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS**  
***THE TEXAS CHAIR PROJECT***

**AT AMOA—DOWNTOWN NOVEMBER 15 – FEBRUARY 8**

AUSTIN, TEXAS – September 29, 2008 - The Austin Museum of Art is proud to continue its tradition of supporting Texas artists by showcasing *The Texas Chair Project* beginning November 15th, 2008. Eighty Texas artists, including 26 living in the Austin area, will have works on display through February 8, 2009 at AMOA-Downtown located at 823 Congress Ave.

*The Texas Chair Project* is a unique artist exchange conceived by Damian Priour, a seventh generation Texan artist. In 2007, Priour created 100 miniature chairs using his signature combination of glass and limestone and mailed them to fellow artists throughout Texas as a gift. Priour included a letter inviting each artist to create a chair of their own making to be shown at the Museum and mail it back to him in the same 8 x 8 x 8 inch box in which his gift was sent.



Damian Priour  
 From *The Texas Chair Project* by Damian Priour, 2006  
 Limestone, glass  
 8 x 8 x 8 inches  
 Collection of Ellen Abbott and Marc Leva



Ellen Berman  
*Studio Rocking Chair*, 2007  
 Oil on board  
 7 x 5 inches  
 Courtesy of Damian Priour

The project garnered an overwhelming response; Priour received 80 chairs from his colleagues—some of whom were his friends, others were strangers. Yet all the artists are united by their collaborative efforts to produce a truly Texas-sized exhibition. *The Texas Chair Project* will feature a selection of Priour’s chairs and all of the responses created by noted Texan artists including Kate Breakey, David Hesser, Sara Hickman, Jesus Moroles, Margo Sawyer, Bob Schneider, James Surls, Sydney Yeager, The Art Guys, and 71 more.

After the exhibition, these response chairs will join Priour’s already extensive chair collection which inspired *The Texas Chair Project*. Priour and his wife Paula have been collecting chairs since the 1970s. Priour explained his passion for chairs and what they represent, saying:

“Chairs are a ubiquitous part of our lives. They are all around us and can represent so many things. Chairs are a natural derivative of the human form; its parts—the leg, back, foot—are named after parts of our body. They can be comforting, like sitting in your mother’s lap, or austere, as a place for punishment.”

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# AUSTIN MUSEUM OF ART

Chairs bridge the gap between art and functionality, and they often represent power, authority, domination, and autonomy. They have been reinterpreted in the art community for centuries and have been the source of inspiration for some of the world's most renowned artists. Vincent van Gogh's *Self Portrait as a Chair* (1888) and Andy Warhol's series of electric chairs (1967) both demonstrate the multitude of meanings a chair can express.

Dana Friis-Hansen, Austin Museum of Art Executive Director, explained that because chairs have such a long design history, it is a form familiar to almost everyone. Chairs can be seen in most cultures and are universally understood, yet *The Texas Chair Project* challenges the boundaries of what we normally consider to be a chair. "Nearly 100 artists have applied their imaginations to revise and re-envision, and even reinvent the chair as we know it," Friis-Hansen said.

The chairs featured in this exhibition are distinct to each artist's particular style, though many used the project as an opportunity to begin working in a new direction. The artists made their chairs using a variety of media, either two- or three-dimensional, and they were encouraged to use elements for which they are known. Creativity was the only requirement.

Some of the responses are photographs or prints of chairs; others are chairs made of books or wood. *Sitting Pretty* by Eric McGehearty, has a sharp, painful look. It depicts a common school desk, with a unique twist: this desk has a long point shooting from the middle of the seat. McGehearty, whose résumé includes college professor, in addition to accomplished artist, often uses school supplies such as books and pencils as a recurring theme in his art.

Other materials used in *The Texas Chair Project* include felt, buttons, ceramic, resin, sawdust, twigs, books, and cardboard.

*The Texas Chair Project* builds upon the long-standing tradition of artists exchanging their works with one another. This practice, an extension of the art itself, has existed for centuries and has evolved into a way for artists to communicate with each other, keeping with the spirit of the artist community. Many artists also use trade to show their appreciation for others' ideas and skills. Priour explained trading work is a sign of respect in the art community and provides artists "a way to have the things they love surrounding them."

To fully experience the mystique and intrigue behind these one-of-a-kind chairs, visit the Austin Museum of Art-Downtown at the intersection of 9th and Congress Avenue from November 15, 2008, to February 8, 2009.

For more information about the exhibit, visit the Austin Museum of Art Web site at [www.amoa.org](http://www.amoa.org) or *The Texas Chair Project* Web site at [www.thechairproject.net](http://www.thechairproject.net).



Eric McGehearty  
*Sitting Pretty*, 2007  
Steel and auto paint  
5 x 4 1/2 x 3 inches  
Courtesy of Damian Priour



David Hesser  
*Attack Chair*, 2007  
Steel, leather, and wood  
5 x 6 x 6 inches  
Courtesy of Damian Priour



Michael Reese  
*The Orchid Chair*, 2007  
Metallic flip-flop paint over nylon plastic  
7 3/4 x 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches  
Courtesy of Damian Priour



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