

Press release 4 December 2015

## EERO AARNIO RETROSPECTIVE TO OPEN AT DESIGN MUSEUM IN 2016

**In April 2016, the most extensive overview thus far of the work and thought of designer Eero Aarnio will open at Design Museum. Aged 83, Professor and interior architect Eero Aarnio has had an exceptionally long career and is one of the internationally most widely known names in the history of modern design in Finland.**

The Eero Aarnio retrospective will be a comprehensive exhibition of the designer's work in furniture, lamps, small objects and unique one-off pieces from the 1950s to the present. Along with objects it will also feature more rarely seen original drawings and sketches demonstrating the designer's work. Visitors to the exhibition will be shown the less-known aspects of Aarnio's design process with materials collected from the designer's own work table and the production lines of the factories. The exhibition is curated by Suvi **Saloniemi**, Chief Curator at Design Museum, and the exhibition architecture is by **Ville Kokkonen** and **Florenzia Colombo**.

*– In addition to objects related to design, the exhibition will present Aarnio's dynamic personality and the colourful stages of his life with photographs, personalia, early experiments in design and films, says Chief Curator Suvi Saloniemi of Design Museum, who is responsible for the exhibition.*

*– Eero Aarnio's work combines the irrational and the rational in an almost schizophrenic way. The combination of the comical and unruly with reduced modern form creates an interesting tension, notes Saloniemi.*

### **A designer who is known everywhere**

Eero Aarnio became internationally known with the Ball chair, first made in 1963 and introduced at the Cologne Furniture Fair in 1966. Aarnio's work is displayed in the collections of the world's leading museums and continues to appear in numerous international films, music videos and fashion catalogues.

*– I began to design furniture, because a piece of furniture is the most important and most prominent product of an interior, and a chair is the most difficult and most fascinating thing to design, observes Eero Aarnio.*

According to him, ideas for products come about either purely from dreams and the imagination or from a desire to solve a problem or update a new product – depending on

whether the objective is purely a work of art or a utility object. – *It is also possible to create a new need, a good example of which is “Puppy”, which I designed. No one needs it, but there are so many who want to have it.*

According to Eero Aarnio, a successful product opens up an immense chain of production in addition to its practical, aesthetic and form-related properties. – *It begins with the suppliers of materials, employees, packaging staff, shipping, billing, marketing and many other minor things alongside them. It is about this, and this alone, even now in Finland – jobs must be created, Aarnio points out.*

### **A book on Eero Aarnio jointly produced by Design Museum and WSOY publishers**

A richly illustrated book on the work of this popular designer will be published in connection with the exhibition. It will take a fresh approach through the perspectives of design professionals on Aarnio’s international work in design, his personality and interesting phenomena in the field from the 1960s to the present. The book will contain previously unpublished articles photographs and drawings, and an index of works. The editor is design journalist **Aila Svensberg**, and the articles are by **Silvana Annicchiario**, director of the Triennale Design Museum of Italy, journalist **Laura Houseley** of the UK, industrial designer **Sanna Simola** and design writers **Anna-Kaisa Huusko, Hannu Pöppönen, Aila Svensberg** and **Sami Sykkö**. The graphic design of the book is by Jesper Bange of the Bond design agency. The book will appear in Finnish and English versions in April 2016.

### **Eero Aarnio in a nutshell**

Born in Helsinki in 1932, Eero Aarnio studied at the Institute of Industrial Arts in Helsinki, graduating as an interior architect in 1957. After graduating, he worked in the offices of designers Ilmari Tapiovaara and Antti Nurmesniemi and for the Asko furniture factory before becoming a freelance designer in 1962. Over the course of his career, Aarnio has been successful in many international furniture design competitions, among others in Cantu in Italy in 1959 and 1964. In 2008, he was awarded the Compasso d’Oro prize for his Trioli chair and the Kaj Franck Design Prize in Finland. He received the Pro Finlandia medal in 2010 and the Finland Prize of the Finnish Ministry of Education in 2005. Aarnio’s works are included in the collections of leading international museums, including MoMA in New York, the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Centre Pompidou in Paris, and the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein.

### **Main works**

Aarnio became known in the 1960s for his futuristic chairs of reinforced plastic, of which the Ball chair (1963) in particular aroused wide international interest. His other works include for example the Chanterelle table (1966), the Pastil and Bubble chairs from 1968, the Tomato chair from 1971, the Pony chair (1973), the Screw table (1991), the Formula chair from 1998, the Double Bubble lamp (2001), the Parabel table (2002), and Puppy from 2005.

### **Textile designer Kirsti Rantanen to be featured at Design Museum in the autumn of 2016**

During the autumn season of 2016, Design Museum will stage an extensive exhibition of work by the significant Finnish textile artist and designer **Kirsti Rantanen**. Opening in January in Design Museum’s Gallery is designer Ilkka Suppanen’s Torsten and Wanja Söderberg Prize exhibition currently on show at the Röhsska Museum in Gothenburg, Sweden. In April, Gallery will feature new works by **Daniel Palillo** employing painting,

sculpture and textile installations to explore fashion, the fashion business and current phenomena of society.

**Design Museum's main exhibitions: Eero Aarnio 8 April– 25 September 2016, Kirsti Rantanen 9 October 2016–26 February 2017**

**Exhibitions in Design Museum's Gallery: Ilkka Suppanen 30 January–27 March 2016, Daniel Palillo 8 April–29 May 2016**

The Eero Aarnio exhibition is produced in association with:

**eeva**

*Design Museum is a national specialist museum in the field of Finnish design. The museum researches, collects, acquires and documents design, and displays it in Finland and in international touring exhibitions.*

**Street address:**

Korkeavuorenkatu 23, 00130 Helsinki  
www.designmuseum.fi

**Opening hours:**

Winter season, 1 September–31 May  
Tuesdays 11 a.m.–8 p.m.  
Wed.–Sun. 11 a.m.–6 p.m.  
Mondays closed.

**Entrance:**

Adults €10, pensioners €8, students €5, visitors under 16 years of age free of charge.  
Free entrance with the Museum Card (initial cost €54)  
Joint ticket to the Museum of Finnish Architecture and Design Museum €12.

**For more information, please contact:**

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**Press photos:**

<http://media-bank.designmuseum.fi/fi/>

**Bulletins and press releases:**

<http://www.designmuseum.fi/fi/media/#tiedotteet>

# PRESS PHOTOS

Design: Eero Aarnio  
Bubble chair  
Materials: acrylic, steel, leather  
Manufacturer Keraplast Oy  
Designed in 1968  
Manufactured in the 2000s  
Photo: Harri Kosonen



Design: Eero Aarnio  
Puppy  
Material: rotation-cast polyethylene  
Manufacturer Magis  
Designed in 2005  
Photo: Magis



Design: Eero Aarnio  
Ball chair  
Materials: fibreglass frame, woollen fabric, cast metal leg  
Manufacturer Asko Oy  
Designed in 1963  
Manufactured 1966  
Photo Design Museum / Rauno Träskelin



Design: Eero Aarnio  
Cognac chair  
Materials: Fibreglass frame, upholstery fabric  
Manufacturer Artekno Oy  
Designed in 1966  
Manufactured in the 1960s  
Photo: Design Museum/ Rauno Träskelin



Design: Eero Aarnio  
Tomato chair in Lake Saimaa  
Material: fibreglass  
Manufacturer Artekno Oy  
Designed in 1966  
Photograph from the 1960s  
Photo: Eero Aarnio



Design: Eero Aarnio  
Pipe Ball chair  
Photograph from 1966  
Photo: Eero Aarnio



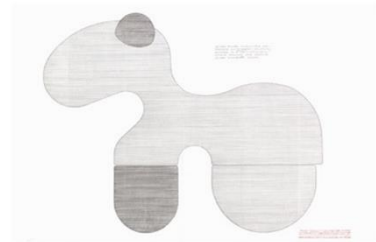
Eero Aarnio, 2013  
Photo: Marjukka Törmi



Eero Aarnio in the Pastil chair in his studio, 1968  
Photo: Pirkko Aarnio



Design: Eero Aarnio  
Pony chair, working drawing  
Pencil on sketching paper  
Designed in 1973  
Photo: Archives of Eero Aarnio



Eero Aarnio in the Ball Chair, 1963  
Photo: Studio Pietinen



Please address enquiries regarding the photos of the exhibition to Päivi Balomenos, PR & Communications, Design Museum, tel. 040 753 67 25, [paivi.balomenos@designmuseum.fi](mailto:paivi.balomenos@designmuseum.fi)

The photos can be downloaded at: [www.designmuseum.fi](http://www.designmuseum.fi)