

pull up a **chair**  
and **swing** with  
the **cultural heritage**



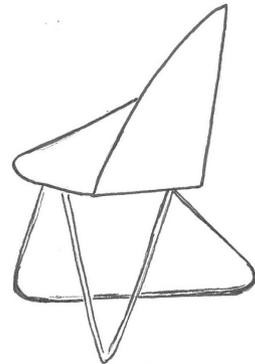
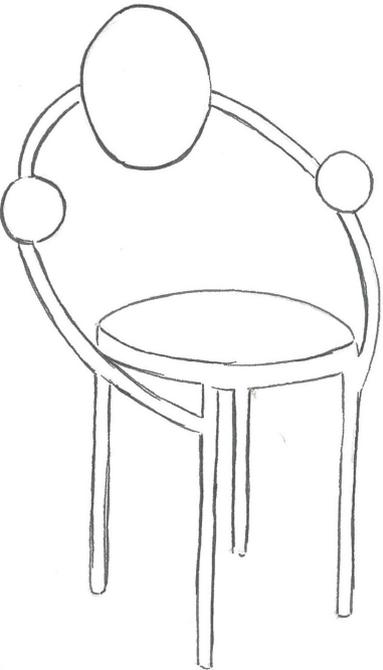
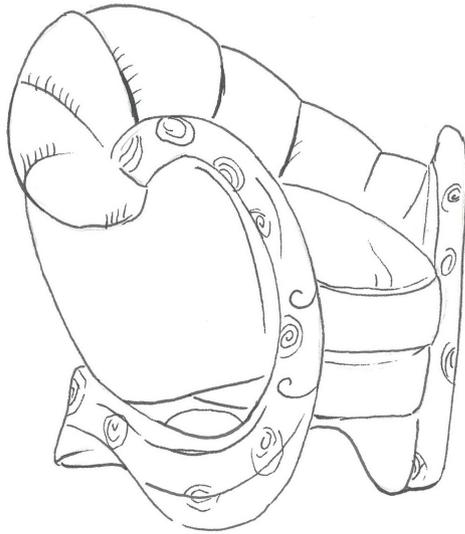
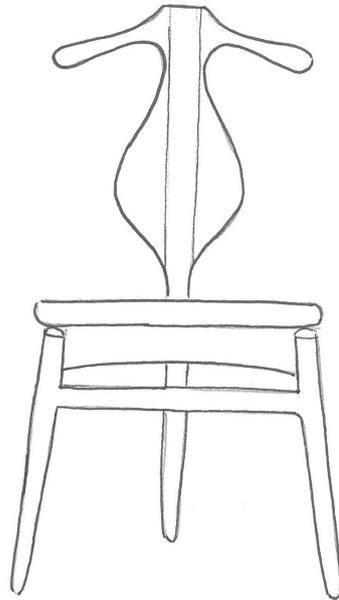
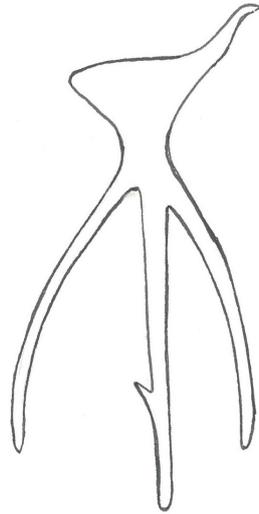
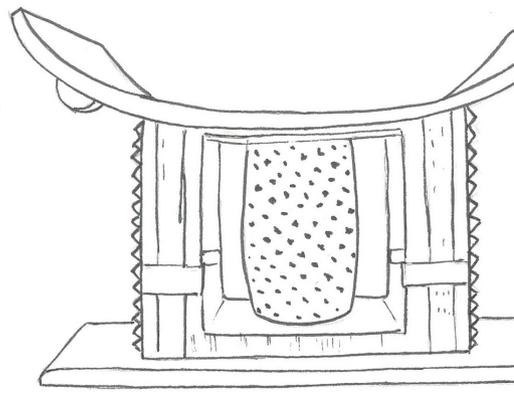
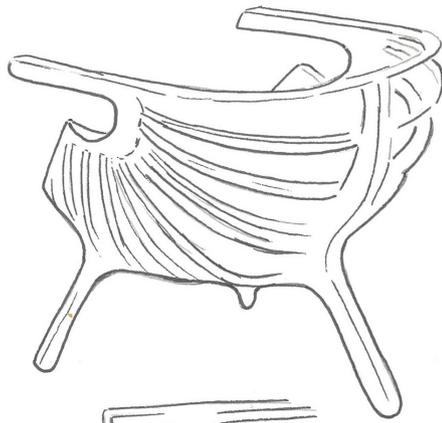
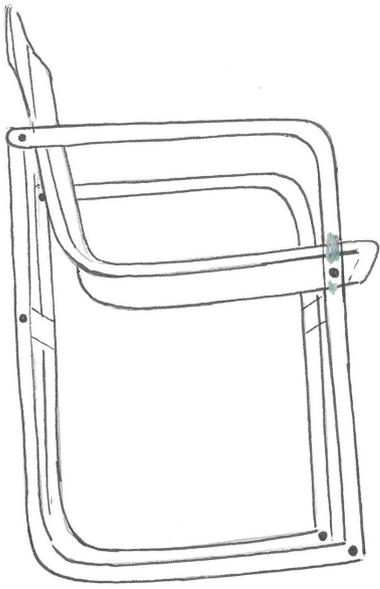
ANA MARÍA FERNÁNDEZ GARCÍA & FÁTIMA POMBO (coords.)

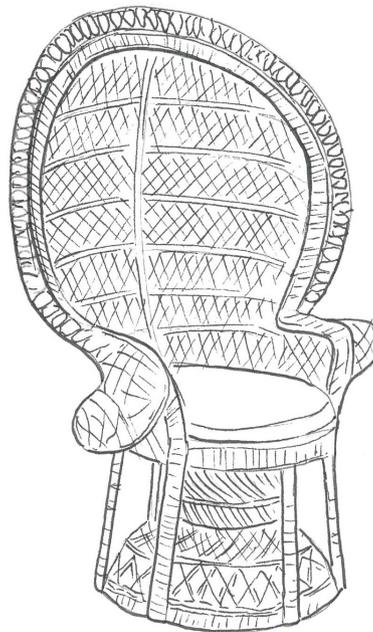
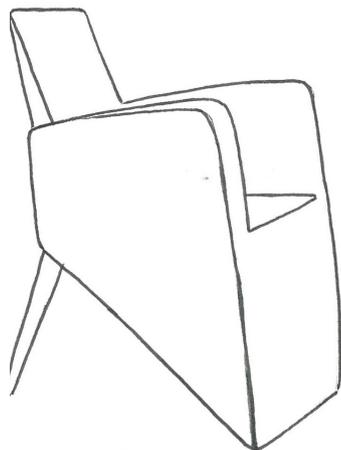
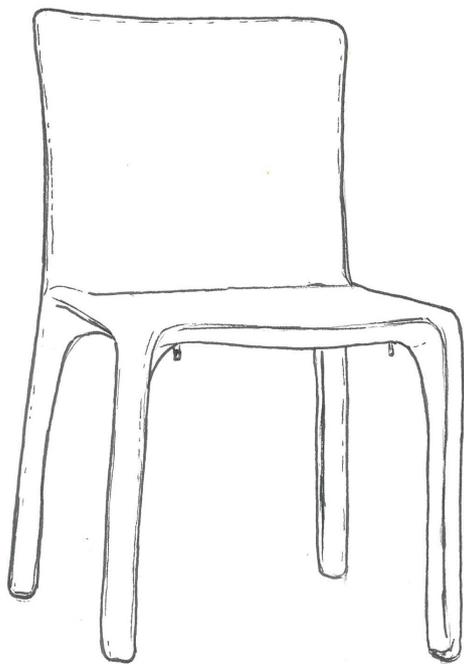
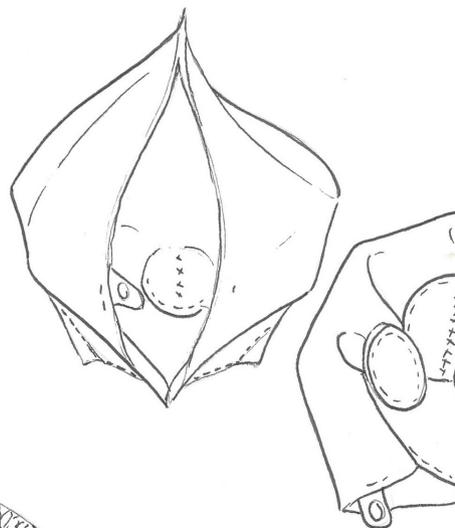
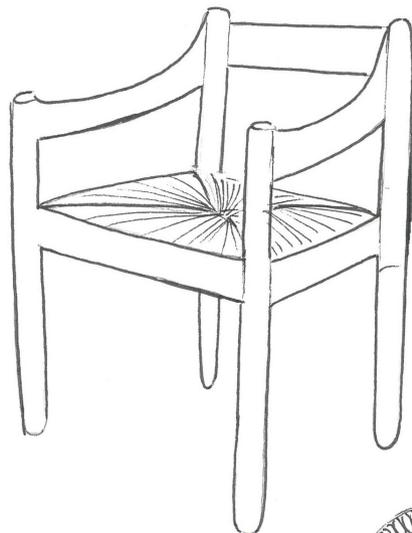
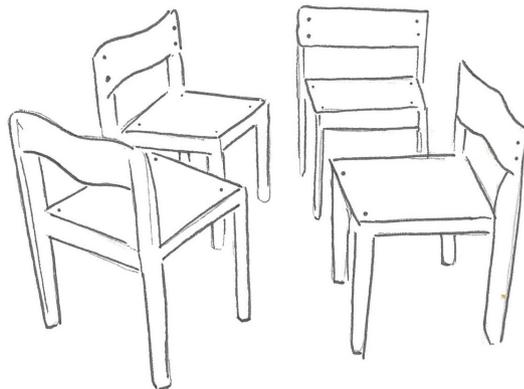
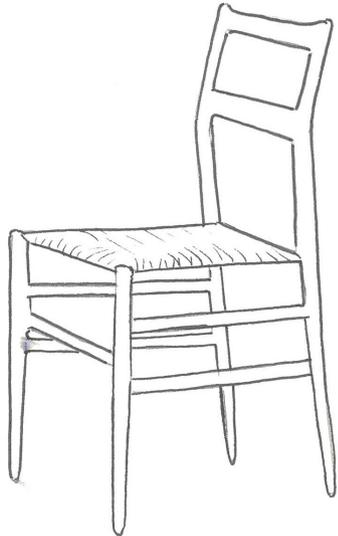


Universidad de Oviedo



universidade de aveiro  
theoria poiesis praxis







# pull up a chair and swing with the cultural heritage

ANA MARÍA FERNÁNDEZ GARCÍA & FÁTIMA POMBO (coords.)



Universidad de Oviedo



universidade de aveiro  
theoria poiesis praxis

Title

Pull up a chair and swing with the cultural heritage

Coordinators

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Llara Fuente Corripio

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The graphic design and layout of this publication aims to be a reflection of its contents, a varied compilation of a unifying and universal element: the seat. To that end, while wishing to maintain a line of union in its structure, we have played with the diversity of distribution, colours and images. Each of the texts is accompanied in the left vertical margin by the date of the work, as a guide and as it appears in the index, as well as the name of the work and the author when known, in the upper left horizontal margin. These three elements use the chromatic range of the chair to which they refer, giving dynamism to the structure of the book. Likewise, the union of photography, watercolours and sketches aims to evoke design notebooks.

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*'We look at an old chair and  
wonder  
whose bottom once sat there.  
Was it someone Royal  
or someone posh  
with lots and lots of dosh,  
or was it someone poor  
that treasured a comfortable seat.  
No matter whom it was,  
just look and wonder  
at the history of that old chair,  
then just sit on it  
and put more history there'.*

David Harris





100 chairs

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Llara Fuente Corripio

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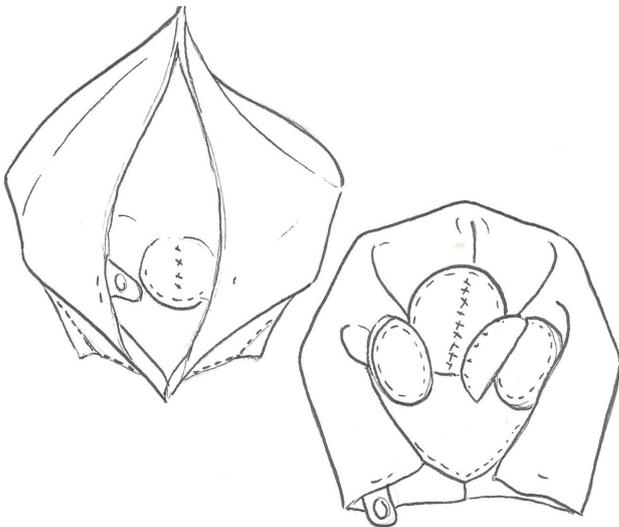
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introductory  
articles

# The Traveller Chair and other 100 chairs

Fátima Pombo

## **1. The Departure in Skagen - Denmark**

The chair is probably the most iconic piece of furniture ever. In this book it is for sure the main protagonist. The core of this study happened with the approval of the European project CRAFT -Building links between education, research and innovation on the foundation of our shared cultural heritage in 2018. Anna Marie Fisker gathered a very enthusiastic team to submit an application in 2018 to the European Union. Fisker from the University of Aalborg in Denmark was the project leader and the other official members were from Oviedo University in Spain, the University of Aveiro in Portugal, Ljubljana University in Slovenia, with partners Hans Thyge & Co from Denmark, and AMAT- Associazione Marchigiana Attivita Teatrali from Italy. Many other people, however, were actively involved from the above mentioned universities and countries.

Based upon the application with the reference code CRAFT- KA203-2018-010 it is important to paraphrase the following statements concerning the project's aims:

CRAFT took its point of departure in the celebration of the European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018), whose slogan was 'Our Heritage: where the Past meets the Future.' CRAFT builds upon the objectives related with cultural heritage and further contributes to them by working on the theme connecting sustainability and education in a joint multidisciplinary approach on research based education and innovative creative practices. In particular, CRAFT has been connecting higher education with civil society stakeholders, manufacturers, companies and cultural actors and thereby follows the recommendations of the European Council (Council of the European Union, 2009: 4). Therefore, this new joint multidisciplinary curriculum expects to have a high impact on the students at higher educational institutions across Europe, who will gain new, necessary skills within innovative practice, creativity and entrepreneurial thinking built on shared cultural heritage and sustainability concerns. CRAFT promotes cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in Europe, in the belief that culture is a driving force for innovation and creative endeavour, bearing in mind the Lisbon Strategy for jobs and growth. Also, by placing shared cultural heritage and sustainability as a main element and focus area in the dissemination

of the new curricula and training schemes, and the implementation and results of CRAFT in practice, the project has been fostering understanding of the European Union's external relations with other parts of the world.

The results obtained during CRAFT contribute to social and educational value of European cultural heritage and sustainability working with innovation within the topics:

- developing, implementing and testing the effectiveness of CRAFT's joint multidisciplinary approaches to promote creativity, entrepreneurial thinking and skills;
- supporting and ensuring the transfer of the latest research outputs back into education;
- promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in Europe through the newly developed joint multidisciplinary curriculum and training scheme and the dissemination of these based on shared cultural heritage;
- new joint multidisciplinary tools for learning, teaching and training at higher education, based on the interlinking of innovation, research and education - the three sides of the 'knowledge triangle';
- new joint multidisciplinary methodologies for innovation developed in collaboration between educational and cultural institutions, manufacturers and other relevant cultural actors from the European Union;
- contributing to higher education with impact on future jobs and growth and its international attractiveness.

The innovative approach of the multiple and diverse goals and actions of the project within the framework of cultural heritage elected the chair as the trigger to inspire many tasks along the 3 years of the project's duration. The symbolic reference to all chairs that would cross CRAFT in many different scenarios and purposes was the minimalist Monobloc Chair. This chair manufactured in one piece, of which no patent was claimed for its design, has spread since the 1970s all over the world and it can be found in a multitude of places and many environments such as the beach, a spectacle with a seated public, a terrace of a café, public or private gardens... The chair made of thermoplastic polypropylene is very affordable, stackable and resistant to sun, sand and water, so its use outdoors is attractive, simple and unpretentious.

After the good news that the project was elected for funding, Anna Marie Fisker called Craft's partners to the first meeting that took place in Skagen, Denmark. It was also the starting point of an exciting 3 year trip for all of us and for the Monobloc chair. It was at this meeting, in October 2018 that the seeds were sown of the task of creating a website of the project with a section on chairs. This task ended up to become the origin of this book to keep the story about 100 chairs alive, once the website has a deadline to be maintained. Let's tell the story.



Figure 1. The Monobloc Chair



Figure 2. Armchairs in Skagen. This picture with the 2 armchairs reminds of the stay of the CRAFT partners in the hotel in Skagen and belongs to the first set of chairs posted on the project's website.

## 2. The Arrival: From the Website to this Book

All the partners were given a small assignment: to write entries for the Craft website <http://craft-culturalheritage.eu> according to specific calls along the months in which the project was running. Ana Maria Fernández García was in charge of all the phases of this assignment. The collection of chairs was growing and the digital showcase of knowledge around them was also taking shape.

The contributions came from both professors and students. It was a key criterion to offer students the possibility of participating in this task and learning with it. Therefore, there are many different styles of writing and in this diversity lies the richness of such a world, made up of tradition and innovation, pragmatism and symbolism. The collection displayed in this book stems from 5 continents and includes as many countries as possible. In diagram 1 it is clear that Europe has the largest representation followed by the United States of America. Within Europe, countries such as Italy, Denmark, Portugal, Spain and Slovenia are highly illustrated which is justified by the partners' nationalities and by the fact that Western History of Design cannot be narrated without Germany, Italy or Scandinavia.

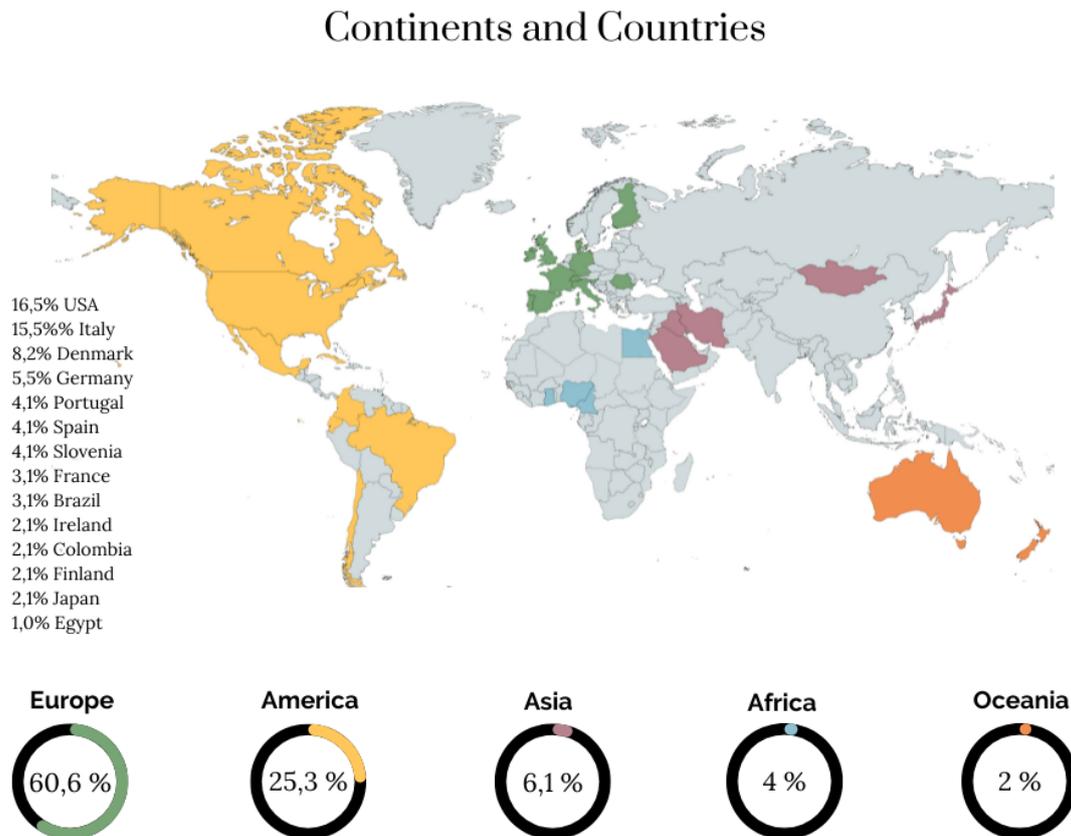


Figure 3. Diagram 1

On the other hand, this book is not only framed with the more erudite expression of culture referring to a chair as a designed piece of furniture and consequently chairs are also connected with popular culture and with artistic contexts such as theatre, cinema and visual arts, as shown in diagram 2.

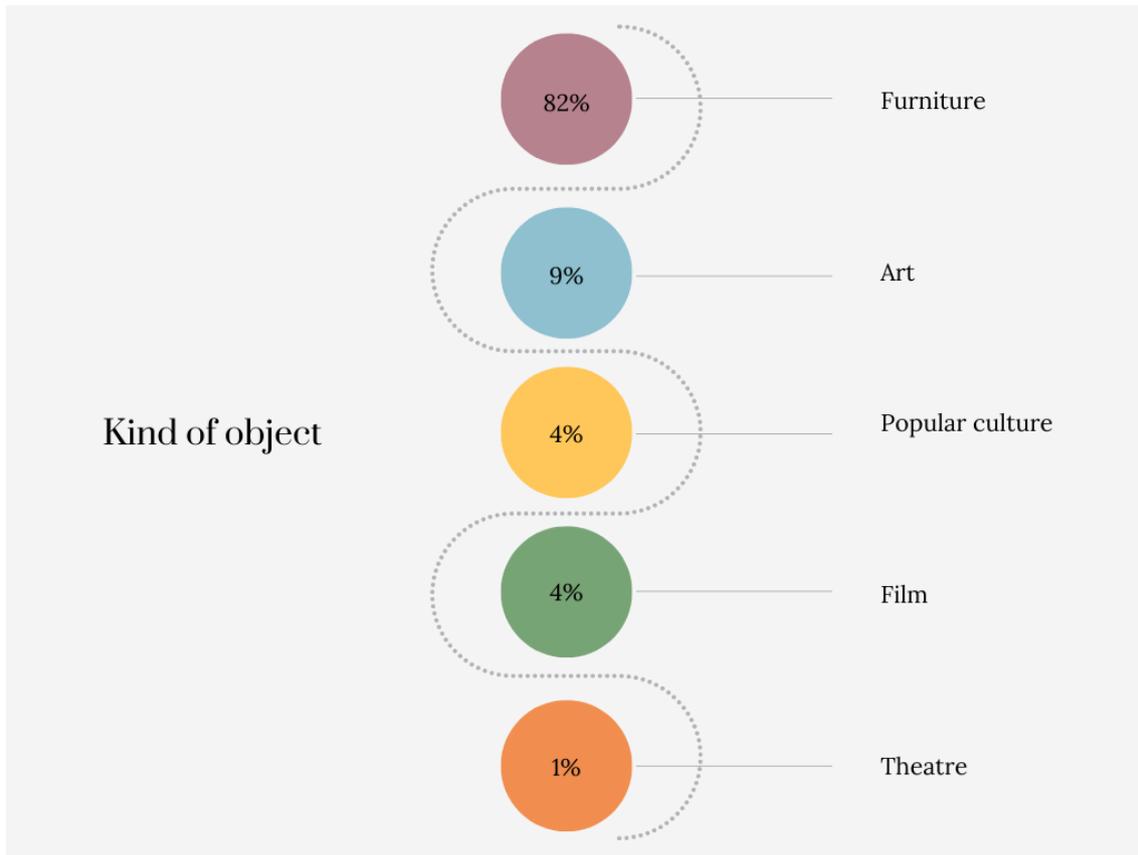


Figure 4. Diagram 2

The selection of chairs also breaks the patriarchal vision of design as a matter of male professionals. Diagram 3 shows the distribution of the authorship by gender and it can be seen that female designers or partnerships of female and male designers already constitute an important slice of authors even if men still have a predominant presence. Some anonymous pieces are also highlighted as contributors to the chair collection and stand side by side with pieces with a designer's signature.

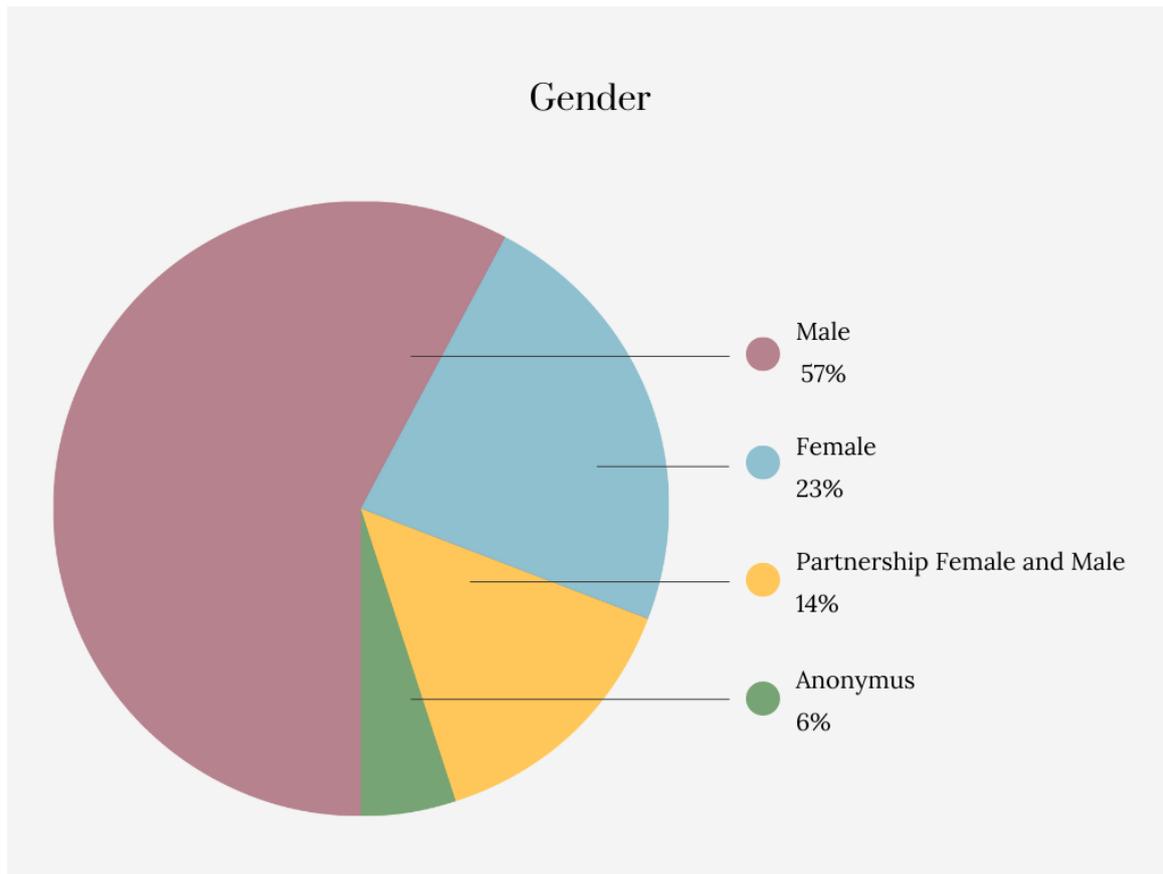


Figure 5. Diagram 3

Apart from the moments of departure and arrival of this story about 100 chairs, there are many stops along the way where the chair has always played the leading role.

### 3. The Stops

#### 3.1 University of Aveiro - Portugal

Among the diverse activities that were organised in March 2019 at the University of Aveiro within the project, the chair was the principal character in lectures, workshops and a final exhibition on the *Portuguese Chair: Form, Materiality and Technology*. Figures 6 and 7 illustrate the stage on which a workshop took place about Portuguese traditional techniques, types of wood and furniture making tools with a focus on chairs. These examples of craftsmanship were taught to students on site by an experienced woodcarver. Students also participated by contributing sketches and drawings of a seat responding to the statement: *A Sustainable Forest and the Creative (re)Design of Furniture*.



Figure 6. Chairs displayed in the room of the workshop



Figure 7. The room of the workshop

#### 3.2 Ljubljana University - Slovenia

Diverse activities within the project were organised at Ljubljana University in May 2019, namely lectures that focused on the chair as a central piece. *Chair in a Public Place*, *A Landscape to a Bench* and *Utsep* by Jørn Utzon were the lectures that took place at Pritličje Bar, a special place that brings together culture and community in the city centre. There, a group of young architects and landscape designers discussed the Ljubljana's bench that won the competition in 2010 for benches in public spaces in the city.

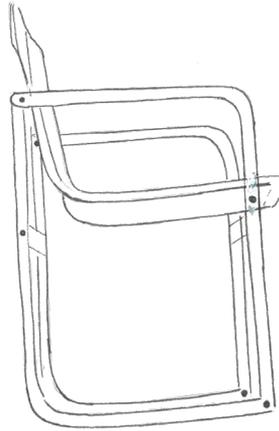


Figure 8. Branko Uršič -  
L Chair (1981) (see p. 89)

### 3.3 Venice - Italy

Among the diverse activities that took place in Venice concerning the project CRAFT, there is the experience of two workshops during the Art Venice Biennial 2019 and the Architecture Venice Biennial 2021. Both workshops lasted from Monday to Friday, five complete days in September, bringing together students, teachers and assistants from many nationalities, with a multidisciplinary background and a clear plan to foster with innovative practices and critical experimentation the assignments involving ‘the Monobloc’ as a protagonist of stories of cultural heritage. Venice Art Biennial 2019: May You Live in Interesting Times was the inspiration for the workshop that took place in an impressive room in Arsenale. Some lectures were given in situ to set the scene for further students’ exploration: 1. Full/Empty-Rialto Bridge; 2. Mystery-Borges Labyrinth in San Giorgio Maggiore Island; 3. Time-Arsenale; 4. Playing with Scale-The City of Venice; 5. Place-Piazza San Marco; 6. Body/Santa Lucia-The railway station. During the week more than 500 posters were created to interpret the chair in the plots suggested by the lectures. A relevant sample was displayed in an exhibition in Art Biennial open to the public and all the posters were printed in a book (figure 9).

In Venice Architecture Biennial 2021: How Will We Live Together? the tasks were planned with a key use of technology due to the constraints of Covid, which were still restrictive. The Monobloc Chair was investigated through four topics: 1. Venice, Merchants & Theatre; 2. Venice and Death; 3. The Monument to the Partisan Woman; 4. Ruskin, Dragons and other Monsters and 16 interpretative videos were shot after listening to lectures in situ, with free perception of the places and interdisciplinary team work (figure 10).

Both events in Venice, which were an explosion of creativity, were the implementation of an interdisciplinary problem-based concept with a new training scheme to be performed in an innovative context of research and education in Design.



Figure 9. Cover of the Poster Book

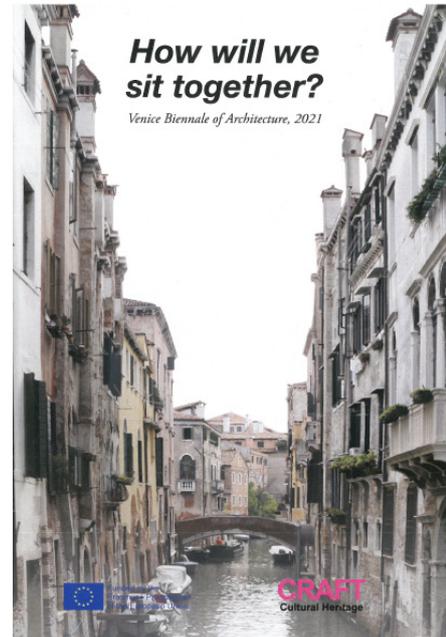


Figure 10. Cover of Craft Agenda

### 3.4 Oviedo University in Spain

Among the diverse activities organised at Oviedo University within the project, an exhibition can be highlighted that ran in October 2021, displaying several everyday objects designed by Spanish creators since the 1940s. It gathered daily life utensils, singular packaging, the well-known Spanish Chair and some icons of the national Design History.



Figure 11. Joan Casas (see p. 112)

Also of note is the special issue of the journal *Res Mobilis*, an International Research Journal of Furniture and Decorative Objects, edited and published by Oviedo University. The issue was devoted to research on cultural heritage and aligned with the core of the project, giving the leading role to the Monobloc chair.

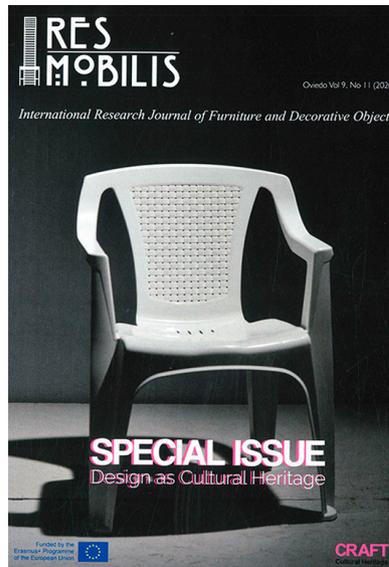


Figure 12. *Res Mobilis* Journal, special issue.

### 3.5 Pesaro in Italy

The last activities of the project took place in Pesaro, Italy, organised by the partners AMAT in October 2021. The chair was naturally present again. An International Design Competition was promoted during 2021 under the theme *A Chair With a Story. Design a chair with a strong element of Cultural Heritage*. The 3 winners were announced in Pesaro...



Figure 13. Poster of the Competition Winners' Announcement

... and their proposals displayed in an exhibition in an open public space at Chiesa Dell'Annunziata. About the 1st prize, Manta Chair (figure 14), the jury considered:

The project is a refined balance between inspirational sources and modern expression, based on our cultural heritage. The simple structure with the shepherd's crook, converted in an armrest or signature of the chair, enhance the project with both humour and refined reference to our heritage. Taking its starting point from the life of the shepherd, delving into mythical references of nature, man and his herd, this was transformed into a storytelling of a high level. The chair is well proportioned, and the simple upholstery wrapped around the structure also gives it an intriguing balance between something noble and yet simple and rough. As such, the project opens chains of associations and references to cultural heritage, which makes the project rich and complex while still simple and direct.

The project is a fine example of how we can use our cultural heritage and transform it into a relevant object of our time.



Figure 14. 1st prize: Manta Chair - project by Clara Serrano, Cristiana Farinha, João Paulino, Rui Fernandes from University of Aveiro, Portugal.

About the 2nd prize HDWM Chair (figure 15) the jury said:

The project is a fine modern version of the old steam bending Viennese chair combined with Bauhaus influences. The contrast between the tight expression of “New Nordic” of our time blended with the romantic simplicity of bended round sticks creates an interesting hybrid. The chair evokes something familiar in us and at the same time it provokes very dry and formal attitude. It is harmonic and functional as well as minimalistic. The project is presented in a tasteful vibrant graphic layout which underlines the modernity of the project sitting on the shoulders of one of the most archetype iconic chairs of our times. The chair will have some constructional challenges, which can be solved, and the jury misses a clearer storytelling of the historic references, which leads to the fine final solution.



Figure 15. 2nd prize: HDWM Chair - project by Gaëlle Pillault from the University of Aveiro, Portugal

And about the 3rd prize, Albicastrense Chair (figure 16), the jury noted:

The project combines an old poetic and refined handicraft technique, normally used for cloth, with a piece of upholstered furniture. The delicate embroidery is placed on the square architectural form almost like a mural on a building which creates a nice contrast between the formal and the expressive. The research composed of poetic sketches shows nicely the power in the local iconography in the 1800s of the Castelo Branco regions in Portugal and the contrast between the formal archetypal form and the fine detail based on cultural heritage in the decoration is an interesting theme. The jury however, felt the project lacked a more distinct attitude in the design of the structure and in the overall visual approach of the presentation.

## ALBICASTRENSE CHAIR

### Main materials



Structure: Walnut  
Wood



Filling: Soft foam



Lining: Linen cloth



### Dimensions

Height: 75 cm

Width: 55 cm

Depth: 65 cm

ID: 2019/0789

03/03

Figure 16. 3rd prize: Albicastrense Chair - project by Mariana Cardoso Lopes from Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco, University College of Applied Arts, Portugal.

The last activity of the project, called Opera CRAFT, celebrated the chair in a creative performance involving many participants, namely students.



Figure 17. Poster announcing Opera Craft

This intense and joyful journey about chairs and with chairs allows us to extend in many directions the meaning of a chair starting with the first layer which is to seat in a comfortable and pleasant way.

#### Acknowledgement:

This work is financed by national funds through the FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the scope of the project UIDB/04057/2020.

# Some reflections on the chair in the visual culture of modernity

Ana María Fernández García

The chair is one of the most representative articles of furniture of contemporary design. It can be said that there is no designer who has not experimented with this typology, so versatile in its uses, shapes, materials and components. It may at first appear a simple piece of furniture, with legs that serve to hold a seat and a backrest, allowing the user a comfortable position to carry out different everyday activities. However, throughout history, the basic model of popular culture made with wood or other natural materials, has tended to be more and more complex and the modern design has become an icon of the evolution of modernity. A look at the history of the chair from the Modern Movement has already been carried out in numerous more or less complete compendiums (Yates, 1999), so it is not worth focusing on this aspect. On the other hand, we have considered it pertinent to offer in this book some transversal ideas on modern chair design with examples that in some cases are included in the catalogue and, in others, are new contributions. It is not an exhaustive study of the chosen topics, but rather an article that integrates some of the different points of view that analysis of the chair comprehends scientifically. We have focused on three important issues as they have been key in recent times: chair legs, the presence of these items of furniture in the visual media and the use of chairs in some works of modern art.

The chair symbolizes the definitive sedentarism of developed society. An average citizen develops practically all their life, changing from one chair to another: the chair at home, the chair in the office, chairs where they socialize, and even gaming chairs or wheelchairs of the elderly or those with mobility problems. The percentages are very eloquent. Since 1950 in the United States, sedentary jobs have increased by 83% and only 20% of tasks involve physical activity, which indicates that most of the time at work is spent sitting down (Brownson et al., 2005). It has been calculated that 25% of Americans spend more than eight hours a day sitting down. This situation increases certain circulatory illnesses, favours obesity and increases mortality (Ekelund et al., 2016). In a world which spends an ever-increasing part of its everyday life sitting, the chair had to be one of the star objects of modern design. It can be said that

it is an element which exemplifies democratization and social equality, because in primitive societies or in the Old Regime, chairs were at a premium, and they were often occupied by leaders or heads of the family and by the wealthy classes, while the rest of society had to suffice with rudimentary benches or simple footstools. Never before the XX century was there such a typological, material and formal variety of chairs, since in no other moment in the history of the west was its use so widely linked to office work, home life and leisure. Industrialization also allowed for serial production and reduced its production costs, making it an everyday object of homes, offices, classrooms and places of socialization. There is no human environment, even urban avenues or pathways, that does not have seating elements incorporated.

### **About legs and chairs**

It is clear that in the morphology of the chair, the legs are an indispensable element. In this aspect the typological variety is enormous in terms of material, shape, decoration and number of supporting pieces. Generally, for a chair to be stable, it needs to have at least three or four legs. In this way stability is achieved and the user does not need to make any effort. However, the use of a different number of legs is one of the elements that designers have played with in their creations. One example is the recent design of Benoit Malta titled *Inactivité* (figure 1), which consists of a single piece of two legs which does not stand on its own and so needs continuous tension of the person who sits on it. The objective is that the act of sitting is not passive, the muscles must be maintained tense and, therefore, the physical tone of the back is improved. It is obviously not a conventional chair but rather a product more for therapeutic purposes than for rest or work. In any case, it is an alternative design to domestic sedentarism and transits the margin of tolerable discomfort to transform the standards of everyday behaviour and also to become aware of the body. He has managed to transform a place of rest into a dynamic piece.



Figure 1. *Inactivité*

Modernity has also modified the logic of four legs with surprising and imaginative solutions that nevertheless have respected the stability of the article of furniture. Single-leg models were proposed such as the 1956 Eero Saarinen Tulip Chair for the American company Knoll (see p. 124). The Finnish architect aimed to achieve a futuristic design, with a modern material, plastic, (although with internal cast aluminium reinforcement), and with a support in the shape of a wine glass that made it possible to create space in the lower part of the chairs and of the table that completes the set. A more recent version of a similar shape is Jean-Marie Massaud's Flow chair for MDF in 2009. Both proposals have horizontal rotation that allows the users to swivel and interact with their colleagues of table or conversation. More groundbreaking is Peter Bristol's recent proposal Cut Chair (2016) (figure 2) that apparently maintains the conventional four legs, but with the novelty that three of them are cut, so it is just supported by one. It is in fact an optical illusion because the cantilever structure that gives balance to the chair is hidden under the carpet that accompanies the piece.

Other chairs with a single supporting element are the Verner Panton, which will be analyzed later, or the Wiggle Side Chair (1972) of Frank Gehry (today produced by Vitra), (see p. 98), made of corrugated cardboard with hard board edges to provide durability. Its organic shapes coincide with the formal concerns of the architect in his architectural projects. Despite the apparent simplicity of its folded planes, it is a comfortable chair which can almost be considered a sculpture. These unoccupied spaces of the serpentine ribbon of cardboard chain together antagonistic concepts characteristic of sculpture, inherited from constructivism: the concave and the convex, matter and space, shadow and light or full and empty. Today this chair is also valued for its anticipation of an ecological design and for the use of recycled and recyclable materials.



Figure 2. Cut Chair

A well-known two-legged model is the Cesca Chair by Marcel Breuer and produced for some years with the signature Thonet under the name n.º B32. The predecessor was the Wassily Armchair (1927), named in honour of his friend Wassily Kandinsky (Sanchis Gisbert, 2020). The structure was made of chrome-plated steel, material which he discovered with an Adler bicycle when the Bauhaus moved to Dessau and he used one for his daily travel. He realised that the bent tube could be used in furniture instead of wood and he also applied it to the Cesca. Thanks to the curved material, two parallel support lines grip the floor creating an unprecedented suspension. The model of cantilever chair had already been tried by Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich (Canosa, 2021) in their 1928 models MR10 and MR20, which were used in the pavilions of the German delegation at the Barcelona International Exhibition of 1929 (see p. 142).

There are some interesting examples with three legs such as the original version of Arne Jacobsen's Ant Chair (1952), a very light piece, stackable with the seat and continuous backrest made of laminated wood (see p. 130). When it became a very popular piece due to its ease of transport, comfort and simplicity, a four-legged version appeared, which is currently the best-known version. Its creator defended its design as the most appropriate for the small houses that were being built in the postwar period in Denmark (Solaguren-Beascoa, 2014, pp. 16-23). Another recent piece with three legs is Chair no 19 from the Berlin studio Yuue. It recalls the classic tubular curved aluminium structure with sharp angles and two back legs that balance and link with a third at the front. Also from the year 2021 is the Wong chair, by Milk Design, a studio in Hong Kong directed by Chi Wing Lee. It is inspired by the classic Chinese furniture of the Ming dynasty with a very austere finish of solid wood. It is designed to distribute the weight of the user equally and to offer an updated review of traditional furniture.

The logic of four legs was also altered by functional chairs such as office chairs, with wheels incorporated. Although there are examples with four legs, such as the colourful Synthesis 45 (1972) (figure 3) designed by Ettore Sottsass for Olivetti, most pieces have five legs with their respective wheels, giving greater stability to an article of furniture that moves, as happens with the Eames' Lounge Chair. One of the most well-known versions of office chair is that of the English designer Frederick Scott, who in 1979 introduced the Supporto Office Chair, an ergonomic aluminium design inspired by his work with wheelchairs for people with specific needs, produced by Hille International, the British company leader in the manufacture of modern furniture. It was based on a thorough study of the needs of the user, previously tested to ensure good posture of the office worker and it became one of the most popular designs in office equipment worldwide. This concern for ergonomics was continued in another design of office chair by the same company introduced in 1990 (Beverland et al., 2015), the Meridio Chair, by Michael Dye. It is a very original aluminium model conceived to maintain a correct body position when working at a desk. The tilting base allows a gentle rocking and the backrest ensures the correct position of the spine. In recent years a type of alternative seat to the traditional ergonomic office chairs is becoming more popular, such as fitness balls or kneeling chairs, which allow neutral positions and reduce muscular immobility.



Figure 3. Synthesis 45 Chair

### **The photogenicity of chairs in film, television and advertising**

Both in photography and in audiovisual presentations, the chair has been a constant element that has been part of the sets and narrative or advertising settings. Likewise, on social networks the use of photographs with specific chairs is not by chance, but rather is linked to the type of communication that the influencer wants to transmit. It has to do with the concept of ‘mediation’, defined by Grace Lees Maffei as the relationship between the manufacture of designer objects and their consumption, which helps to convey a set of meanings about the piece (Lees-Maffei, 2009). There are even works that, thanks to their media exposure over the years, end up as icons (Lees-Maffei, 2015), in recognizable visual shapes that transmit a significative idea (of sensuality, equilibrium, modernity, daring, barroque or simplicity). For the advertisements of the written press, television adverts, cinema, television series or news programmes, each chair chosen by those responsible for the setting or marketing has contributed to develop a discourse in line with the script or with the message devised by the publicists.

The relationship of chairs and people/characters established between the visual media and spectators is curious. During filming, both the director and the main actors or actresses have their own personalized seats, chairs appear on the sets and in any type of chair all over the world there will be spectators contemplating the film, the programme or the series. This continuous circle of people sitting is prolonged in time and occurs in any part of the planet, in such a way that the same film can be seen in a hammock in Haiti, a comfortable British armchair or a stool in Africa. It is even possible that the chair that appears on their devices might be the same as the one that some spectators are sitting on. A curious circuit of seats is part of the magic of the screen, where reality and fiction intermingle and converge continuously.

Thus, pieces as common in homes and places of sociability such as the Thonet chair (see p. 153) have been present in extremely famous films of Laurel and Hardy or of Charles Chaplin. Any cinema fan will remember the big black leather chair where Vito Corleone stroked his cat while receiving his partners and employees (Molatore, 2007) or the Iron Throne of the Lord of the Seven Kingdoms of the series *Game of Thrones*, made by a thousand swords of defeated enemies (see p. 70). But perhaps one of the most used chairs in films was the Emeco, designed for the United States Navy in 1944 (see p. 134). It is also known as the Navy Chair or Chair 1006 and is a very resistant piece as it is made of aluminium. It showed its unbreakable character during production tests by being thrown from a sixth-floor window at the Chicago furniture fair. It exemplifies the times of rapid development of the postwar period and the age of triumph of logistics. It has been identified as the American chair par excellence, being produced in recent years in recycled materials (Fuller, 2014). It has appeared in *The Simpsons*, *Sex in New York*, *House*, *Terminator* and even in some *Batman* films. For its part, Eero Aarnio's Ball Chair has been another recurring piece in films such as *Mars Attacks* (1996) or *Men in Black* (1997).

A very special case was the famous Panton Chair (see p. 114), the first seat element designed in moulded plastic. It was designed in the shape of an 's' in 1967 by the Danish designer Verner Panton. Its sinuous, sensual shape which presents analogies with the female body (Satell, 2016) was quickly appreciated by those in charge of advertising of the company Vitra, reinforcing the message of a household product linked to the woman and her naked body. It was thus presented in the 1971 campaign (*How to undress in front of your husband*) published in the magazine *Nova*, with a sequence of images of the same woman undressing with the chair as support (Arias Laurino et al., 2017).

A simple review of current social networks reinforces that identification of certain chairs with the sensuality of a naked female body, such as the Egg chair (see p.105), which constantly appears associated to eroticism (mobiliariocuvic, for example). In 1963, the photographer Lewis Morley photographed Christine Keeler to promote a film based on the Profumo Affair (*The Killer Affair*, 1963, which was never released). He chose Jacobsen's simple Series 7 Chair (see p. 123) which was part of the domestic and functional interior decoration of the British middle classes and was mass-produced by the company Habitat. Its shape, the simplicity of its design and the fact it appeared facing the wrong way with the naked body of the showgirl straddling the seat, made this image an icon of sensuality and moral ambiguity (National Portrait Gallery, 2019), especially when it was reproduced by the *Sunday Mirror* to undermine the British Secretary of State for War who had been the young lady's lover. The chair of Morley's photograph today belongs to the Victoria and Albert Museum (VAM, n.d.) and, before it was donated, the photographer wrote on the inside of the seat the names of other celebrities who were also portrayed on it. Morley's photo was as imitated and versioned since the sixties as Jacobsen's Chair: from the sensual covers of the magazine *Playboy*, promotional photos of the female bands *The Spice Girls* and *The Saturdays*, the cover of *The Charlatans'* 1997 single *Tellin' Stories* or the more recent promotional image of

the pop star Sinitta (2010) with the same chair and pose as the photograph of Keeler.

The Barcelona Chair by Lilly Reich and Mies van der Rohe (see p. 142), has also appeared in films as famous as *American Psycho* or *Casino Royale*. Another of the most relevant pieces used in films was the Djinn (1965) by the French designer Olivier Mourgue (figure 4), a polyurethane seat on a structure of steel tubes and rubber straps, that Stanley Kubrick incorporated into the 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The design of organic shapes of the chair fits perfectly with the science fiction scenario that the director meticulously put together with the designer Harry Lange, who had previously worked for Nasa, with padded, monochromatic and futuristic interior designs (Whitehead, 2019). Another recurring piece used in films is the Tulip Chair by Eero Saarinen, included in the recent filming of Wes Anderson's *The French Dispatch* (2021). This Danish Chair can be traced in historical photographs as famous as that of Picasso in his house in Mougins in France, which appeared in the magazine *Life* in 1967 (Modern Design, n.d.) or the photo of Georgia O'Keefe sat on one in the Hamilton studio in 1981 (Knoll, n.d.), as well as the well-known publicity campaign of American Airlines under the slogan 'Think of her as your mother' (Alex, 2019) of 1968, where an attractive air hostess is photographed sitting on the famous chair. It does not seem coincidental that a chair with very modern lines, rounded shapes and an innovative material such as plastic has been chosen to highlight the conceptual tension in the traditional idea of motherhood: the personal attractiveness of the young stewardess who also looks after the well-being of the passengers.



Figure 4. The Djinn Chair

The Eames married couple (Ray and Charles) had a close relationship with films. They designed, for example, the set of John Houseman's film *Executive Suite* (1954), which fittingly dealt with the succession of the president of a furniture company. They collaborated on the stage design of several films of their friend Billy Wilder for whom they designed the Eames Billy Wilder Chair (also known as the model H106) with the aim that the director could take a nap during shooting (Quirós, 2019, pp. 158-174). The Eames also worked with the director and scriptwriter Philip Dunne and with the actor Alexander Knox.

The Eames Rocking Chair arose precisely from the suggestion of the actress Doris Nolan, wife of the Canadian actor, who during her maternity let them know how good it would be to have a chair that rocked and was especially comfortable to sleep the baby held in her arms. Some of the most well-known chairs, such as Soft Pad Chair EA 222, appeared in Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* and even in some of Otto Preminger's films such as *The Moon is Blue* (1953). Another example is that of the most famous psychiatrist on television, *Frasier*, who used the Eames' Lounge Chair, which has always been lauded as a model par excellence of comfort. With the combined use of leather, steel and dark wood, it also transmits a notion of masculine elegance which is in line with its principal clientele, entrepreneurs or men relaxing at home after work, but it is also an instrument to reduce tension during psychological therapy.

The always photogenic Lounge Chair Wood or the Dining Chair of the Eames used plywood which was patented in 1865 by John K Mayo in the United States and also employed in the production of chairs by Alvar Aalto. The industrial process was perfected during the Second World War, as this multilaminata was optimal for the manufacture of boats and gliders, achieving curves with heat (a technique which recalls the curved Thonet Chairs). The Eames had employed this technique in their work during the war effort, specifically in making stretchers.



Figures 5, 6 and 7. Eames Chairs - Rocking Chair, Chair Wood and Lounge Chair

The Eames couple always had a penchant for filmmaking and, throughout their life, created around one hundred and twenty-five shorts to explain some topics that concerned them, such as mathematics, technology, lifestyles of the different nationalities, science and, of course, furniture. In 1956 they made

a promotional short film a little more than two minutes long about the assembly process of the Eames' Lounge Chair, with music by Elmer Bernstein (composer of soundtracks as well-known as *The Magnificent Seven*, *The Ten Commandments*, *The Great Escape*, *To Kill a Mockingbird* or *Ghostbusters*). The video would serve to reinforce the explanation about the Charles chair that he gave live on the *Today Show* (Kirkham, 1990, p. 138) and today still represents a unique historical sequence about the conception of the famous article of furniture by its creators.

In the case of Spain, there are notorious examples of the cinematographic use of iconic elements for the history of furniture such as the Gatepac Chair (1932), by Aizpurúa and Labayen which was included in the setting of the film *'El bailarín y el trabajador'* (The dancer and the worker) by the director Marquina in 1936 (Muñoz Fernández, 2021, pp. 355-381). In the films of Pedro Almodóvar, always very attentive to detail in the sets, the Utrech Sofa (1935) by Gerrit T. Rietveld was used in the film *'Los abrazos rotos'* (Broken hugs), where the item of furniture took over the interior scene due to the roundness of its shapes and the vivid colour of its upholstery.

Another interesting topic is that of chairs in television programmes. The classic daily news programmes were born with a newsreader seated behind a table, looking at the camera, reading from some pages and, a few years later, reading the teleprompter. Since then, things have changed and we have seen how the previously seated newsreader, normally with the chair hidden from view, now walks around the set or leans on a designer table, interacting with the guests. On the other hand, in debate programmes, chairs play a decisive role in shaping areas of dialogue. On Spanish television, the famous programme *La Clave* (The Key), directed by José Luis Balbín, apart from being the first debate programme with freedom of opinion since the death of General Franco, Wassily Chairs (figure 8) were on show for those taking part, as modern as the conception of the open dialogue which admitted opinions of all political and social shapes and sizes. The chairs chosen visually indicated the modernization of the Spanish transition in the same way as the format of the debate, which would have been unthinkable during the dictatorship. In the United States, the seating elements chosen on Oprah Winfrey's show are very well-known. In 2021 when she interviewed Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, in full media expectation for their withdrawal from the Royal family, a model of seat was chosen from the collection of Christopher Knight Home, created by the actor Peter Brady, with a mixture of fibres and lightly coloured wood, very different to the references of the historical English furniture of the British royal palaces. In this case, like in other famous interviews with Oprah, the set and the chairs were not chosen randomly. They had been created for an ex-actress, such as Markle, and her fresh and light style was more suited to the profile of a wealthy professional couple from California than to authentic royals.



Figure 8. Wassily Chair

### **Chairs in current artistic creation**

The connections between chairs and artistic proposals are also constant in today's world and perhaps start very convincingly in Gauguin's *Chair* or *The Empty Chair* (1888) by Vincent Van Gogh, a representation of an inanimate object that encloses the emotion of his friend's farewell. Also very well-known are the proposals of Joseph Kosuth or Andy Warhol included in this book (see pp. 108 and 109), or the Mae West sofa designed by Salvador Dalí in 1936 to be part of the Dalí Museum in Figueras. The connection between chair design and the plastic principals of some of the historical avant-gardists is evident. Thus, some iconic pieces of modernity, like Gerrit Rietveld's *Red Blue Chair* (1918) which investigates the interaction between horizontal and vertical planes (as does the painting of Mondrian) and chooses primary colours also associated to the pictorial work of neoplasticism. It is made entirely of wood and looks more for comfort of spirit than physical comfort as the architect, like other members of the Stijl group, believed in harmony to generate a new human order.

Chairs also appear in many works by the Belgian artist René Magritte who, in his enigmatic works, sought a reaction of surprise from the spectator. In *The Legend of the Centuries* (1950) he offers a trompe l'oeil with a large stone chair, in the manner of a giant megalith, on which another wooden chair with cabriolet legs rests. The author surprises with a realistic but illogical image, by means of illusionism that manipulates the scale and perspective of inanimate objects, so frequent in his repertoire. Chairs have also been abundantly represented in cubism such as Picasso's *Still Life with Chair Caning* (1912) or Juan Gris's *Guitar with a Chair* (1913), both examples of synthetic cubism. The Irishman Francis Bacon was particularly obsessed with seating his characters on different chairs, sometimes on rotating models as in the *Portrait of George Dyer in a mirror* (1968), others in bourgeois chairs as in the triptych *Three Studies*

of Lucian Freud (1969) and even in the electric chair of the portrait of Pope Innocent. In any case, chairs underline the tormented isolation of deformed, desperate men who often shout without being heard and writhe with a subjugating expressionist aesthetic (Deleuze, 2014). Leonora Carrington's *The chair Daghdha Tuatha dé Danaa* (1955) deserves special mention. A chair, or rather a throne, appears belonging to the Celtic God of knowledge Daghdha, with solar symbols, a face surrounded by petals and a solar disc which emanate a 'cosmic force' (Guiral, 2017, p. 44).

Recently, in 2013, the Japanese artist Tadashi Kawamata presented in the Abu Dhabi Biennial a great installation with chairs piled twenty metres high, with an aesthetics of waste recycling close to the approaches of Italian povera art, and which also pays tribute to diversity within unity, and by extension to the interconnection of cultures. They are projects that are found halfway between sculpture and architecture and that question the differentiation between what is useful and what is aesthetic. Ten years earlier, the artist Doris Salcedo had presented a similar work in the Istanbul Biennial. In an empty lot she stacked more than one thousand five hundred chairs, anodyne objects which became witnesses of the individual memories of the families that made everyday use of them in their daily lives. It looked like a mass grave of memories, of experiences, of home life without a home. In 2002, specifically on November 6, a chair was placed by Doris Salcedo hanging from the façade of the Palace of Justice of Colombia, the same day and time that the first victim of the assault on the Palace of Justice was killed seventeen years earlier (figure 9). In the following hours almost a hundred chairs were placed to commemorate the Colombians who were killed. Those suspended chairs, items of furniture that come from an indoor space, took over the public space, directly highlighting the great problem of the country's 'almost intimate relationship with violence' (Beltrán Valencia and Restrepo, 2015). The work, titled 'November 6 and 7', lasted for exactly 53 hours, the same time as the attack, a time as ephemeral and intense as that of the violence.

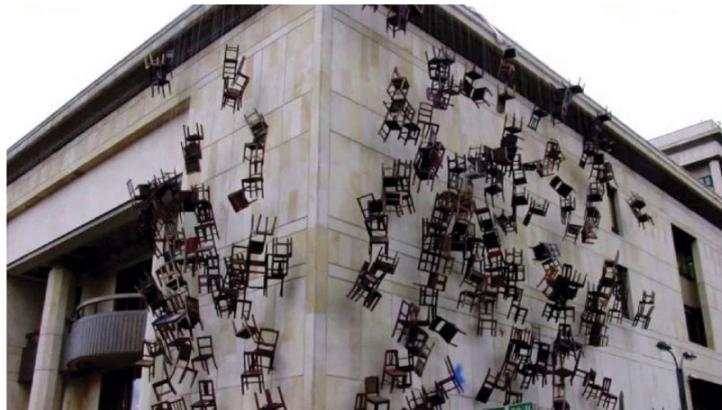


Figure 9. Doris Salcedo - Palace of Justice of Colombia

Another artist who has used chairs in her performances is the Spanish artist Esther Ferrer who presented at the VII Festival Milan-Poetry in 1989 'Action for 36 chairs, 36 shoes and an alarm clock' (Fundazione Bonotto, n.d.), in a very common line of her work, she reflects on the absurdity of contemporary life through situations of incongruous actions. The artist moved around the stage with a clock, setting out chairs on the stage and asking each time she sat what time it was. It is reminiscent of waiting rooms where people sit impatiently, continually asking about the time. In the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona Esther Ferrer's Zaj Chair (1974) is also on exhibit, a wooden chair accompanied by the sign: 'Sit on the chair and remain seated//until death us do part', which sums up the spirit of irony and irrationality of the Zaj group to which she belonged.

Within conceptual art, Joseph Beuys' Grease Chair must be mentioned (figure 10). An ordinary article of furniture with a wedge of grease on the seat, preventing it from being sat on. He uses the grease and copper (which is coiled in a top thread) as a living account of his accident during World War II. His plane crashed down in the middle of a snowstorm in Crimea and he had to be rescued by the local population who used felt and grease to keep him alive in extreme weather conditions. But apart from the chair, with a triangle of overflowing grease, he refers to human anatomy, to defecation –as did Duchamp- he plays with homophones as the words chair and excrement are similar in German (Sanchís, 2019, p. 49).



Figure 10. Grease Chair

To finish this brief review of the relationship of chairs with contemporary art we would like to refer to the recent work of the artist and activist Ai Weiwei. In 2011 he was detained by the government of his country at Beijing international airport, as a warning that no-one is immune to governmental control. His arrest originated a wave of international protests that led to his release three months later. From New York the critic and curator Steven Holmes initiated the campaign 1001 chairs for Ai Weiwei, asking people to take chairs to the Chinese consulates and embassies on April 17 at one in the afternoon,

as a peaceful appeal for his release. One month later, the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego organized a silent protest of museum staff, journalists and volunteers who for 24 hours took turns to sit on two traditional Chinese chairs. These acts of protest placed the emphasis on chairs because they have been very repeated elements in the material and conceptual repertoire of the artist (figures 11 and 12). In 2007 Weiwei presented at the Documenta Kassel the monumental installation of a thousand and one chairs of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Fairytale managed to gather a thousand and one Chinese in the German city for the duration of the event. There was a previous selection in which the applicants had to answer ninety-nine different questions, one of them about their dreams. At the same time, a thousand and one restored wooden chairs were distributed, in groups or in lines, in resting places for the public. It was truly a 'social sculpture' as Weiwei's aim was to analyze the unpredictable relationship between the Chinese visitors and the German citizens. In what was an artistic experience almost like a social laboratory, since, although the venue, clothes and furniture were all perfectly designed by Weiwei, there were no rules or instructions and the Chinese of the experiment were not a heterogeneous group, neither in their origin nor in their training or work. In such a complex project, the chairs served as resting places for the visitors, working as a link of the action with the material history of China. They also broke down the artificial barriers between what is considered a work of art, the spectator and the author, as the chairs could be interpreted as a prop for resting, artistic pieces or merely a complement, in the same way that the thousand and one Chinese guests were the stars of the show and its audience.



Figures 11 and 12. Ai Wei Wei - Chairs as a conceptual repertoire

In the hall of the MoMA in New York, in 2010, the artist Marina Abramovic presented the performance - The artist is present (figure 13). It consisted of a lightly coloured wooden table and two chairs. She sat on one and looked in silence into the eyes of the visitors who occupied the other. She met a thousand strangers who over a period of three months felt different emotions sitting opposite her. According to the performer, the visitors only aspired to make contact, to make a connection to stop them feeling alone, some even cried. The chair was always occupied by people with their feelings, memories and sensations. That chair in the MoMA symbolized all the chairs of the world that, whatever their design, offer a place to sit for humans that work, dream, write, draw, love or speak. One hundred of these chairs are gathered in this book as a particular compendium of their history and of the possible stories that they have amassed over time. That has been the intention of its authors and of my colleague Fátima Pombo and of myself as editors.

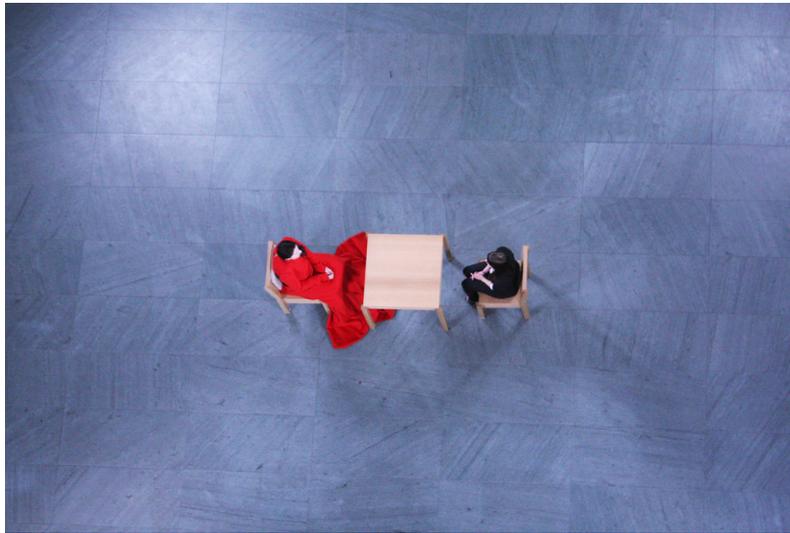


Figure 13. Marina Abramovic - The artist is present

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# Sit properly

Llara Fuente Corripio

‘Objects, material culture, furniture... reflect the changes of mentality that have occurred over time and, therefore, are an essential source in historic reconstruction (...). This is a complex task, as the sources which we have as historians are scarce. On many occasions we find a descriptive or stylistic approach of the different typologies, and on others, just cataloguing. Furniture, therefore, has seldom been studied by historians interested in the social field’ (Granados Nieto, 2007, p. 3). Likewise, in this sense ‘anthropology has researched very little in terms of the human body. Most of these studies are dedicated to the biological and affective parts of social behaviour. There is virtually nothing written about what body postures can say’ (Ulfe, p. 267).

In this book, by means of a compendium of a hundred types of chair, we can observe how focusing on a single item of furniture and the corresponding action of the user (the act of sitting), we will discover multiple typologies and the various interests to which they correspond, as the link of this element of furniture with the user makes its study very illustrative of the different questions that have motivated its metamorphosis.

## **The chair**

New theories and chronologies mark the dawn of humanity according to successive archaeological discoveries. However, two of the principal questions remain: standing on two feet and the fabrication and use of tools. Throughout history, humans have known how to take elements from nature and adapt to the environment, and adapt the environment to their needs (Miguel Álvarez and Nuere Menéndez-Pidal, 2018, p. 144), from the most archaic tools to surprising modern innovations. Within these adaptations, one of the concerns and occupations has been to create an environment conducive to live in, hence the emergence of the chair, along with other elements of furniture, is a natural consequence of settlement.

Equally, humans have tried to seek elements, the use of which makes them stand out within their group. Chairs have also accompanied them in this task. Chairs are social and historical objects, and, as an element produced in a specific time and space, within the framework of a given society, they convey us information about said society, giving us insight into their beliefs, production methods, clothing etc. If we want a general definition, we can say in the words of Lucía Feroglio that the chair is ‘(...) one of the most anthropomorphic articles of furniture that exists. In general, they are made up of a seat, a back

and legs, sometimes arms and on occasions elbows, knees and feet'. (Feroglio, 2015, p. 6), but as we will see from the examples gathered here, their diversity, both in shape and in meaning, is so wide that it is difficult to try to delimit the concept.

In general, it is normally accepted that the chair has its origins in ancient Egypt and its first uses are closely linked to the need for legitimacy of an individual (the pharaoh). Since then, its design has gone through different stages, in relation to symbolic, functional, artistic or technological questions, many of which can be observed in each one of the chairs featured and that we will now endeavour to generally outline.

### **The importance of gestures**

Gestures are an inherent part of communication and as such, they involve and contain a high degree of information about the individual that makes them, as well as about their social and cultural environment. Precisely, sometimes these gestures are involuntary inherited actions, and although they are part of our everyday life, we do not know their origin, carrying them out in an automated manner, without transmitting a message, or at least we are unaware of them doing so. On other occasions we use gestures which we do not know the origin of, but we do know their meaning. To clarify this concept, we can see some of the examples given by Antonio Bustamante (2018), such as the gesture of removing one's hat to show courtesy, something that has exceeded the bodily barrier and has been included in the semantics of language, as well as other actions-expressions such as kneeling or kissing someone's hands. The third case we can encounter are those gestures or actions carried out in a voluntary and meditated way, pursuing a clear objective, transmitting a specific message, which leads us to create ritualized and symbolic gestures and postures that on many occasions are maintained throughout history and are inherited as part of our social and cultural background through repetition. It is not surprising that the word "posture" itself has two very related semantic meanings: the way in which the body or part of it is positioned and the attitude that one adapts regarding a certain issue (Massey, 2011).

### **The act of sitting**

Of all the gestures we carry out in our everyday lives, one of the most widespread among humans is the 'not so trivial act of taking a seat' (Bustamante, 2018, p. 10) on a chair -or not-.

In most cases, the act of sitting down is one of those actions almost as automated and unconscious as breathing. However, and although we do not always realise, sitting has had and continues to have a meaning beyond the purely functional aspect as part of that symbolic behaviour we have mentioned, playing a very important role in communication. Therefore, we must consider that not everybody has been or is able to always sit (at least not on a seat) and that, equally, not everybody, in all cultures, even less in all

epochs, has sat in the same way.

Synthetically and starting from the analysis of Lucía Feroglio (2015, p. 7), we divide the act of sitting into four dimensions that at times can be linked with each other.

- A symbolic dimension that can be related to social appearance and to the show of power as part of the public ceremony of certain social spheres; gestural codes differentiated by gender; other symbolic connotations such as the attribution of special characteristics, occasionally mystical, to this article of furniture, etc.
- A functional dimension, as an organic necessity of humans who look for a posture between standing and lying, allowing to rest and remain still.
- An aesthetic-formal aspect that has to do with the chair as an artistic element.
- A technological dimension, linked to the productive and material developments of each era.

### Ways to sit

Currently, despite the globalized world we live in, the meaning of objects and gestures continues to vary notably. In the case of the seat, the dichotomy between east and west is very illustrative. In the western world, the use of chairs (understood in their broadest sense including all types of shapes and designs) is widespread and ingrained, whereas generally, the eastern world continues to overlook these, opting for other ways to sit, either for cultural or even religious reasons, like the traditional Japanese posture *seiza* or the Hindu, Buddhist and Taoist postures such as *bhadrasana* or *virasana*. However, in many of these cases, despite the absence of the chair, other types of seat are used such as the Japanese *zabuton* or specific types of floor and different from those in Europe, like the *tatami*. There is no single reason for this difference, rather it is related to many factors: when you sit opposite another person, it is a cultural demonstration of respect and of attention, linked to meals, helping digestion, linked to meditation, stimulating the vagus nerve.

Although we have used the east-west case as a general example, the differences of seats and ways of sitting globally are very diverse. In the same way that this book gathers numerous samples, we find other initiatives such as Matteo Guarnaccia's research project Cross Cultural Chairs (CCC), which, within this tendency of standardization, looks to highlight the cultural differences between seats and ways of sitting by means of eight chair typologies in eight of the most populated countries in the world.

However, we must consider that these differences are not integral, as we have mentioned the contact between cultures, and therefore the exchange of their material culture, is a widespread phenomenon, not just currently but throughout the ages in all periods. For example, although not in a generalized way, in the east we find typologies of chairs, mostly folding, within the China of the emperor Ling around the year 175 B.C. Another example, in this case contemporary, is the presence of chairs even in remote pla-

ces, as we can see in one of the photographs of the Lina Bo Bardi Institute of two children belonging to an African tribe sitting on a basic bamboo structure (Fernández García and Ribeiro dos Santos, 2022).

But seat typologies and ways of sitting are not only related to cultural customs, learnt socially, but they also cover other issues such as status, social hierarchy or gender differences. In these cases, through a gesture and a material element that becomes a symbol, the aim is to accentuate the differentiation between groups of people.

### **Symbolic element**

The emblematic nature of the chair can be treated from multiple dimensions, because from its beginnings onwards we can find clear references of its use as a way of reinforcing the authority of certain groups, but we can also find examples in which the seat has been endowed with specific properties. To exemplify this richness of the symbolic value of the chair, it is worth mentioning the aptly worded title of the article by Ibar Anderson (2020) ‘the chair, that cult article of furniture’.

The most well-known and studied aspect that we can relate to that sentence is the use of the chair by different power elites, either in a religious or administrative environment, as a way of legitimising their power, differentiating themselves from those who could and should only sit at a lower height. As María Eugenia Ulfe points out ‘to place someone on top of something is to give them the possibility of expressing their status through their body posture’ (Ulfe, 1996, p. 283) (figure 1 and 2). Already in its origins, with the aforementioned throne of Tutankhamun (see p. 159), we see how the seat is an element of prestige in the same way as a sceptre or a crown. The relationship is very clear if we observe historic moments such as the monarchy of the Sun King, with regal, meticulously cared for furniture. These throne chairs sometimes do not stand out for their luxurious ornamentation, although they often had carvings, polychrome, precious materials or noble wood, but rather their meaning as a symbol of authority focuses on the object itself, as can be observed in the Throne Chair of King Minos of 1450 B.C. in the Palace of Knossos, with a formal simplicity, which however counteracts with the importance of the element. In relation to the object itself, ceremonials would also be developed that reinforce its symbolic meaning, such as a new ruler taking the throne or in moments of conquest. This fact can be seen further strengthened when to the furniture itself are added ornamental motifs that dignify, such as laurel crowns in the Napoleonic era, linked to the Roman triumphal crowns.



Figure 1. The height at which the characters sit, as well as their location (left or right), can be seen clearly in numerous pictorial works.



Figure 2. In the image we can see the page of an Aztec codex where the person of highest rank is represented at a greater size and height and on a seat.

This view of the chair as an object intended for the privileged classes can be clearly seen in a passage of Fray Bartolomé written in 1492, where he narrates how native American Indians receive the Europeans solemnly, offering them chairs while they sat on the floor: 'had received with great solemnity (...) in wonder and believing that they had come from heaven, and so they were given to understand, on their arrival the most venerable of the village carried them to the main house and gave them two chairs and all sat on the floor around them' (Bustamante, 2018, p. 60). We see thus how a chair not only serves so that the upper classes can assert themselves, but also it can even be used by a group to exalt others whom they consider 'superior'. This differentiation by means of the seat, between those who are above and common mortals is taken to an extreme when the chair itself is carried by servants or slaves or when these are at times used as chairs (figures 3 and 4).



Figures 3 and 4. A European woman in a sedan chair and a high ranking Korean official in a sedan chair. In some typologies, such as hand chairs (also called a litter or palanquin) which have been used globally and in many eras, we see how the chair is carried by people considered from a lower social class, sometimes even slaves.

But these symbols of prestige do not belong exclusively to the hierarchies, other social groups also use this resource. In Rome, there is the particular case of the *curul*, a stool that could only be used by councillors, magistrates who take their name from their seat, reserved for their social rank.

The other aspect of the sentence and less well-known, is that which gives importance to the chair itself as an object of cult and of power, regardless of the person who occupies it. Following the global vision that this book aims to give, we are going to focus on the case of Africa, where we find numerous tribes in which the seat is the axis of rituals and it is even treated as an entity endowed with special qualities.

In relation to ceremonies, acts such as the taking of the throne go a step further in some tribes in which the future king only attains such a rank when he sits on a stool to which properties such as containing the wisdom and strength necessary to be king are attributed, something which is only transmitted the moment he sits on it. In other rituals, the future king is carried to the so-called room of benches, a room containing the seats of ancient rulers, where he chooses one of them and this will determine his reign, based on the personality of the owner of the bench chosen. The link between seats and power is such

that tribes like the Luba refer to the king or leader as ‘the throne’. Moreover, in the same way that the rulers only appear in certain acts, the benches are hidden from the view of the tribe and are cared for by those in charge. To the south of Ghana, we find the Asanti tribe with what are known as the blackened benches and the Golden Bench (see p. 154). The latter is the object of most value for the Asanti, as it preserves the spirit of the nation. It even has its own throne and, as in the case of the Luba, the bench is hidden from the community, except for certain acts in which it is displayed. On the other hand, the blackened benches are linked with the different ancestors of the tribe and are given this name due to their traditional black colour, result of being painted with the blood of sacrifices. The bench is thus linked to the ancestors and heritage of the tribe. However, despite this status enjoyed by the seat, it is not always an exclusive element, and in the case of the Asanti for example, each member of the community possesses one (Uffe, 1996).

Although we have stopped to consider the African case, we can find similarities with practices carried out in other territories. For example, in indigenous America ‘the local chiefs had pages who were exclusively in charge of their seat. They were dedicated to guarding it and if any other person used the bench, they were punished (...) the seat was personal, unlike the European idea where the seat remains and is inherited’ (Gutiérrez, 2016).

But, as we have commented, the symbolic value of the chair covers many dimensions. Within the relationship between chairs and religion, in addition to being an element of prestige reserved for the most powerful classes within the religion, we can find a more mystic side, with curious examples such as the Spanish case of the armchair of Andrés de Proaza of the XVI century, a seat that the anatomy student used as a way of talking to the devil and increasing his knowledge. This is a peculiar but not a specific reference. For example, we can observe that in different primitive cultures and tribes, shamans had seats which were recognized as having magic powers to connect with the spiritual world, obtain knowledge and use it on the earthly plane to cure diseases among other things (Gutiérrez, 2016).

Focusing on this spiritual world, we must also consider the existence of numerous chairs as funerary items in many cultures -and also as wedding trousseau-. This practice is linked to the concept of ownership of the object and the conception of the afterlife in different religions, where in some of them functional and prestigious objects are needed. In fact, it is an element that is not only placed in the tomb materially, but it is also commonly represented pictorially or through reliefs. One of the most well-known cases of burials in Ancient Egypt is that of the Queen Hetepheres of the IV Dynasty, in which different seats were included: a canopy, a hand chair, an armchair and a chest. There are other examples such as Princess Sat Amon or Tutankhamun himself (Ahmed, 2014), but this practice can also be found in indigenous America (Gutiérrez, 2016).

Within the meanings that the chair provides and relating it with its functional aspect, we can find differences in its treatment with more or less comfortable designs, depending on who they are meant for. This

is something that can still be seen today in means of transport such as aeroplanes, but was already evident at the outset of the use of the railway. 'The railway carriage in Europe was built on the principle that the masses deserved little consideration-more than 80% of the travellers sat huddled on rough wooden benches- only the highest strata of society could ensure a certain level of comfort' (Anderson, 2020, p. 8).

Likewise, the chair serves as an element of differentiation not now of classes according to their economic level or their social strata, but also in issues of gender, as we must not forget that often women have been -and are- placed at a lower level than men. One example is the existence of typologies of furniture with a disparaging connotation towards women, such as the *caquetoire* of the old Regime. A chair whose name makes reference to communication between women as 'cackling' (Sánchez Pérez, 2019, p. 20). At the other extreme we find furniture reserved for men such as the Italian *cassapanca*, in the shape of a throne (Sánchez Pérez, 2019, p. 30).

Regarding women and the gesture of sitting, there are numerous manuals of behaviour for young ladies, so popularized in the XIX century and even in the last century in certain contexts such as the Franco dictatorship in Spain. In these, the aim was to establish a guide of what is considered good behaviour for women and together with a whole compendium of religious, domestic and social duties, we find behavioural norms relative to ways of speaking, eating, sitting... gestures which must be -and must not be- carried out (figures 5 and 6).



Figures 5 and 6. Ways in which young ladies should sit and others less adequate.

To conclude this section on symbology, we will comment on the use of the chair, especially nowadays, as a vindicative element that expresses political, artistic and social positions. As with any work of art, ar-

tists as well as focusing on aesthetic issues, send out vindicative messages, such as the Favela Chair (see p. 80), critical of the infra-dwellings on the outskirts of many Brazilian cities or the two references of Laura de Miguel and Silvia Nuere (de Miguel Álvarez and Nuere Menéndez-Pidal, 2018), where the chair is used within the artistic framework as a symbol. An example of this use is the installation of chairs of the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei in 2013, through which the traditional Chinese stools are vindicated against the invasion of western chairs, linked to the globalization process. Another less evident example can be found in the giant chair of Geneva, a monument that symbolizes the rejection of anti-personnel mines and cluster bombs.

### **Functional element**

We have seen how an everyday object can become an object of power, but the chair, in addition to granting authority, communicate, etc., is a functional element, a characteristic that, although present from its origins, has taken on special relevance with the passing of time until reaching the present day, where a practical space that lacks one is practically unthinkable, especially in the western world.

In its beginnings, the chair as a functional element linked to all classes was an element that had a simple design, often without a backrest, like a stool and on other occasions, it was even linked to other typologies of furniture and other functionalities such as chests, which served as wardrobes and seats. To eat, attend church, perform household chores... chairs have always played a practical, as well as symbolic and aesthetic role. However, their proliferation as affordable furniture for all social classes is produced with the advances in large-scale manufacturing, linked to the Industrial Revolution and new advances in production. It was then that chairs began to become popular and went from being an object which was exclusive and restricted to a certain part of society, to being a need and reality in any room. This is not a fortuitous use of the word room, as the presence of the chair in our environments goes beyond the home, and its utilitarian typologies are manifold and diverse, ranging from work chairs such as the traditional barber's chair or the modern office chair; medical chairs such as the birthing chair, the dentist's chair or wheelchairs; toilets, and even in their most macabre functional use, torture chairs such as the Roman iron chair.

Some of these functional typologies have been maintained with few changes, such as the stool. Others, however, have experimented different metamorphoses, and some are no longer used for the purpose for which they were conceived. With regard to the user, changes have also been produced and we can see how some types of chair reserved for the elite, are affordable in our everyday lives and how others, however, have maintained their link.

As we have done in previous sections, since samples are invaluable, we will deal with some cases as examples.

Within the separation of the functional element between upper and lower classes, we go back to the medieval period, at which time the use of the chair is very polarized between the powerful, within the church and the government, with striking and potent designs in noble wood, carved and on occasions polychromed, and the more functional and poorer seat furniture of the lower classes, such as stools or chests and other domestic objects used in various ways. It was an expensive article of furniture, so it is not surprising that that the humblest classes did not possess one and if they did, it would belong to the most important member. The Renaissance is the moment in which the chair starts to be used on a daily basis, but it is not until the end of the XVIII century, (Feroglio, 2015, p. 6) due to the Industrial Revolution, the design, manufacture and commercialization does not begin its true peak. 'The French Revolution put an end to the old history (absolutist monarchies, kings, palaces and, also their furniture) and gave way to a new history, accompanied by the Industrial Revolution and the incipient bourgeoisie' (Anderson, 2013, p. 10). From the XVIII century onwards there is a multiplicity of styles and chairs: unique pieces of artisanal production gave way to industrial production of large series and then to mass production in the middle of the XX century. If we must put a starting point in the use of the functional chair by the majority of the population, we must refer to Thonet 14 (1853) with his technique of curving wood by pressure with the use of steam and bolting parts that were later assembled in the assembly process, saving space and making transport much easier.

Going back to ancient Greece, and within those chairs made to carry out some type of work, we can highlight the *klismos*, with legs curved outwards and without a backrest. It was an eminently functional and relatively widespread type of seat, linked to the female gender and spinning work, hence its design adapted to the body (Sánchez Pérez, 2019). Taking a jump forward in history, we can find sewing chairs in the XIX century, related to new inventions and production on a larger scale, for which we see continuity in the use of the chair for certain functions.

At present, the chair as a work element is also an object which conforms new spaces such as spaces of coworking. 'Chairs are essential for well-being as co-workers spend long periods sitting on them' (Pombo, 2021, p. 332). In addition to solving practical work-related issues, designers also try to find answers to everyday problems. 'In the XIX century, with the proliferation of travel, sun loungers and camping chairs, light and foldable, became popular' (Feroglio, 2015, p. 9). Related to inventions and the Industrial Revolution of furniture are chairs to prevent seasickness which arose with the development of sea travel or the improvement of wheelchairs, originated in the XVI century.

Returning to the case of chairs and religion that we dealt with in the previous section, we can see how beyond their use as an element of power, we also find examples in which their design responds to practical needs and gives us information of a social moment in time. One case is the introduction of hinges in church seats in the Middle Ages, allowing the seats to be folded and so facilitate kneeling during the service (Anderson, 2020).

The uses of all these functional chairs provide us with outstanding anthropological data. For example, we can see how 'in primitive cultures women chose to give birth in vertical positions, squatting or sitting down, as it favoured physiological labour and birth. Support instruments such as the birthing chair emerged to facilitate these postures' (Mosquera et al., 2015, p. 28).

Finally, the chair is interesting as a functional reflection of the needs or interests of a specific moment, like the manufacture of chairs of great austerity and formal simplification, seeking designs within the Protestant ethic (Anderson, 2020, p. 21).

### **Artistic element**

The chair, apart from being a material object, has been represented in numerous reliefs, paintings and sculptures. Examples can be found in the reliefs of Ancient Egypt or in the outstanding pottery of Classical Greece. Likewise, the chair has also been an element subject to the different artistic currents of each epoch, something which can be seen clearly in the Middle Ages and in the Gothic period. In those times the typologies of chairs were modified according to the style, with the use of large ascending backrests, canopies and decorations that emulate the traceries of the vaults and the chairs aimed to reach heaven and God, just like the cathedrals.

However, in this section we will focus on the chair as a work of art related to the artistic currents of the XX and XXI centuries, time in which this article of furniture multiplies in shapes, materials and modes of production.

In the XX and XXI centuries there is a plethora of new and disruptive artistic currents. New aesthetics, ideas and experiments with art are increasingly applied to new scenarios and typologies. In the case of the chair, although it has always been related to the artistic currents of the age, it is in the XX century that the examples multiply and we begin to see true chair statues, chair architecture or experimentations with the chair beyond the dimension of its objective. Accumulation, Ekstrem, Hush Chair, One and Three Chairs... 'Of the designs made, some are uncomfortable, not practical to sit on and becoming more something to be observed, and in turn to criticize' (Anderson, 2020, p. 16). This treatment of an element of furniture as an ornamental element and also as an artistic element, sometimes results in a dichotomy between the aesthetic and the functional. Occasionally we can link shape and design to the transmission of a message of a specific artistic movement, as a sculpture could. However, on other occasions the chair is simply a new canvas on which to experiment with techniques, materials and give free rein to the designer's ideas, although not always what may seem ergonomically crazy is quite so bad. After all, seeing it is not enough, rather we have to sit on it.

## The future of the chair

Currently, although widespread in our globalized world, the use of the chair and above all, the design of chairs, is under review. New concepts such as postural hygiene or ergonomics come to the fore in the sedentary life of the XXI century and Ai Weiwei, with his installation, vindicated the influence of the west on the ways of sitting and eastern seats. In the west we find numerous articles about anatomy and the advantages for our body of sitting on the floor as a better option for our vertebrae (Bustamante, 2018) and even today, ‘a considerable proportion of the population sit on the floor to eat, work or relax’ (Massey, 2011, p. 6).

Similarly, as a witness of the present age, the chair faces new challenges and social paradigms and together with ergonomics we find sustainability, new methods of production, new currents of industrial design, gender studies, etc.

In short, the culture of the chair is an area full of meanings, present in our daily lives, but also in the crucial and outstanding moments of the life of a person, a key element of history. Remembering the popular saying ‘sit properly’ that we have been told so many times at school, at home or even at work, we reflect through this selection of chairs, the multiple ways of sitting and the numerous shapes that one element of furniture can take (figure 7).



Figure 7. Ways to sit

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compilation of 100 chairs

# 2020 Poppea School Chair anti-Covid 19 Ximo Roca

Facing the health emergency generated by Covid-19, many schools have been forced to replace their old benches or desks in order to return to classrooms during autumn 2020. The Spanish designer Ximo Roca study proposed, in record time, a type of chairs that, due to their shape and materials, can be used in educational environments, minimizing the risk of contagion. It is, actually, a reinterpretation of a previous design from 2017 and adapted to school furniture. It had several previous versions for offices and homes thanks to its simplicity and versatility.

This school chair, which has already been purchased by several European governments, is made of polypropylene, an easily sanitized material. Curved shapes have been used in the design as the right angles present cleaning problems. It also has a comfortable seat, adjustable in height, and its wheels allow to organize students' groupings according to the classroom needs. Its tray, between the seat and the wheels, is designed to keep student's school materials and avoid leaving belongings in common areas, which also helps prevent infections. It is a good example of the adaptation of design to society urgent needs and the commitment of creators and producers to the current health emergency.

Author: Ana María Fernández García



# 2020 Talking Stool Lany Adeoye

It is difficult to find genuine African designs, and even more so, female influence in African design. The designs tend to be American or European elements inspired by African aesthetics. However, this artist raised in Nigeria has created a distinctive personal brand, with international recognition.

All of Lani Adeoye's creations in Studio Lani are based on a fusion of tradition and modernity. Using organic materials such as rattan, wood, leather or textiles, Lani Adeoye sculpts original forms that remind us of the material and immaterial heritage of Africa. In this case, Talking Stools bring to mind the music of the traditional djembes in a ceremony or a party, and as their name implies, it is a piece that congregates the community. Furthermore, on closer inspection, we notice that the pattern is based on hand-women mats, adding textiles to this piece, another important cultural tradition.

Despite the fact that Lani Adeoye has international repercussions, most of the pieces are made in the city where she was raised, Lagos. This choice helps to maintain the traditional artisan fabrication methods and show the wealth of the country to the world.

Author: Llara Fuente Corripio



# 2019 Vertebra03 Work Chair

## Fumie Shibata

In recent years, advances in Information and Communication Technologies have made it possible to carry out work from almost anywhere. Teleworking has diversified work spaces, and on numerous occasions, especially due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the home itself has become an office.

These new shapes and work environments have inspired the Vertebra03 Chair, designed by Fumie Shibata for Itoki.

It is a new version of Ambasz and Piretti's Vertebra, of 1976, defined by the Metropolitan Museum as 'the first automatically adjustable office chair, designed to respond and adapt to the user's body movements, providing comfort and support'.

The Vertebra03 features advanced ergonomic and biomechanical functions, namely a pivoting backrest and sliding seat, naturally leading to a correct sitting posture.

Another aspect that characterises the Vertebra03 is its adaptability as it is available with wheels or legs, and in a wide range of colours and materials which can be freely customised, in such a way that the future user has the possibility of getting involved in the design process.

Winner of the German Design Award 2022, the Vertebra03 is a light and simple chair that maintains the principles of ergonomics and comfort, and thanks to its hybrid design approach, it adapts to the different work styles and environments, being especially oriented to conditions in the home.



Author: Lucía Salomé Vallina Valdés

# 2019 Armonia Chair Alejandra Segura

Industrial design would be meaningless without the user. The Colombian designer Alejandra Segura Nariño is very clear about this premise, and not only seeks that her creations are functional, but also that on many occasions the user is at the same time the inspiration for her works. This link can be seen in her Armonia (Harmony) collection, a double chair design based on the equilibrium between two elements, conceived for two people and revolving around the idea that in life, the union between two people can also contribute to generating the same equilibrium as that generated by the two parts of her chair, one complementing the other.

With a single stainless steel tubular structure, sometimes painted in satin black, Armonia comes in three different styles depending on the pieces with which it is finished. Armonia Urbana (Urban Harmony), where the structure is completed in oak boards, Armonia Cristal (Glass Harmony), the wood is substituted by transparent polycarbonate and Armonia One (One Harmony), upholstered as a sofa. In this way, a single idea is adaptable to different spaces, exterior and interior, parks, offices or homes, among others. However, the versatility of the collection goes beyond these three models and we can find it in its placement, as its modular structure favours the union of different pieces, creating pairs of seats, adaptable to larger or more reduced spaces. This idea of continuity is reinforced, not by the use of right angles, but rather by continuous waves, forming successive rhombuses, conferring dynamism with a flow of lines. Likewise, the fact of attaching the boards to the tubular structure using invisible welding reinforces this concept of a continuous whole.

With this design, Alejandra Segura Nariño won the 2018 Iron Design Award.



Author: Llara Fuente Corripio

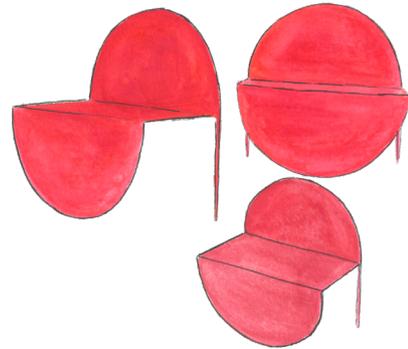
# 2018 Celeste Chair Lara Bohinc



'A funny thing about a Chair:  
You hardly ever think it's there.  
To know a Chair is really it,  
You sometimes have to go and sit'.

Author: 'The Chair' by Theodore Roethke, from  
The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke  
Anchor, 1974

# 2017 La Redonda Chair Bodegón Cabinet



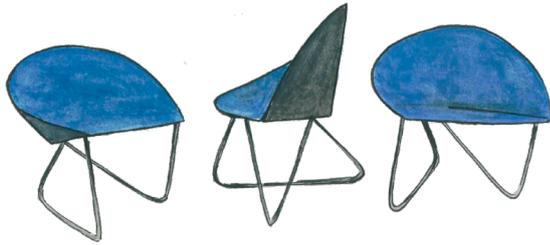
Seating on this chair is like to seat on a stretched red dot made of a single sheet of galvanized steel.

Bodegón Cabinet is a multidisciplinary studio based in Barcelona focused on architecture, interior and furniture design. This studio created the chair from a pure and simple geometric form, transforming a flat circle in a 3D object which looks at the time as a modern sculpture. According to the perspective from which one glances at La Redonda, its shape assumes a different frame maintaining a sculptural impression. At a certain distance, it remains a red dot cut in the horizon. Bodegón Cabinet states that in the origin was a little model in paper and that from there, in collaboration with local craftsman, it was possible to develop prototypes to different scales till achieving the model that is currently on the market. La Redonda may still appear in other colours, other materials and even other sizes, say the architects who designed the chair.

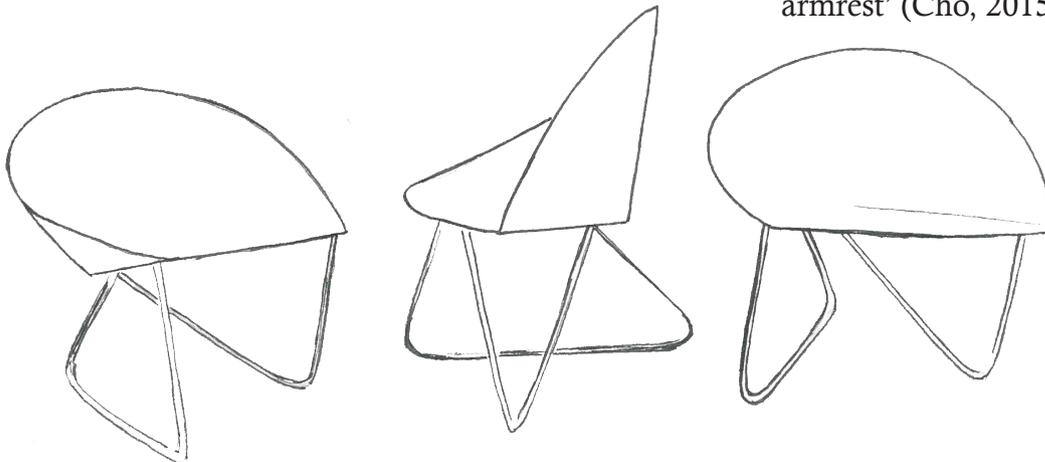


Author: Fátima Pombo

# 2015 Curved Chair Nina Cho



Let's give the word to Nina Cho, Asian American designer, who in an interview in June 2015 spoke about the Curved Chair she had recently designed: 'As a continuation of my research into planar material, I created the shell of a chair through a single, broad bend. (...) I started out by making a bunch of small-scale models with paper. I was experimenting with different forms and colours to study their respective effects, and after carefully considering the various forms, I was inspired to apply the form to a chair design. I started to build the prototype of Curved Chair with my colleague, designer Hannah Vaughan, who helped me to fabricate the chair. First, we cut a pie-shaped piece away from a circular sheet of thin-gauge steel. We then formed a gentle curve in the metal using a slip roll. We quickly connected the edges with sturdy weld. This simple gesture creates the envelope of the chair shell. When we made the legs, we used a torch to heat up the steel bar and quickly bent it over a custom jig. We made several iterations of the legs to create a beautiful outline and a stable structure. The form of the legs echoes the sweeping curve of shell's perimeter. The wide seat invites users to have freedom with their posture. The long line of the outside curve also functions as an armrest' (Cho, 2015).



Author: Fátima Pombo

# 2014 Gray 24 Chair Paola Navone

Gray 24 Chair is part of the Gray collection developed by the Italian designer Paola Navone (1950) in which she features minimalist lines that evoke the Scandinavian aesthetics with a tint of Gustavian style or of Arts & Crafts. From the very modest colour that gray might be it is possible to add multicoloured accents by joining, for example, a cushion on the seat or in the back in a range of fabrics and patterns. However, the chair despite its name is also available in natural lacquered American walnut or oak and in white, blue or black lacquered oak. And gray, of course. Navone states that she likes to ‘create friendly objects, capable of being forgotten in a house. (...) I love furniture that sits in a space like it’s always been there’ (Navone, 2018). The Gray 24 Chair has that potential of adapting to different living scenarios and therefore to remain in a space even if other elements go out or come in. It has also the potential to adapt to different times. It is possible to imagine it at grandma’s home, in the illustration of a children’s book or at an urban apartment. This is what timeless design also means.

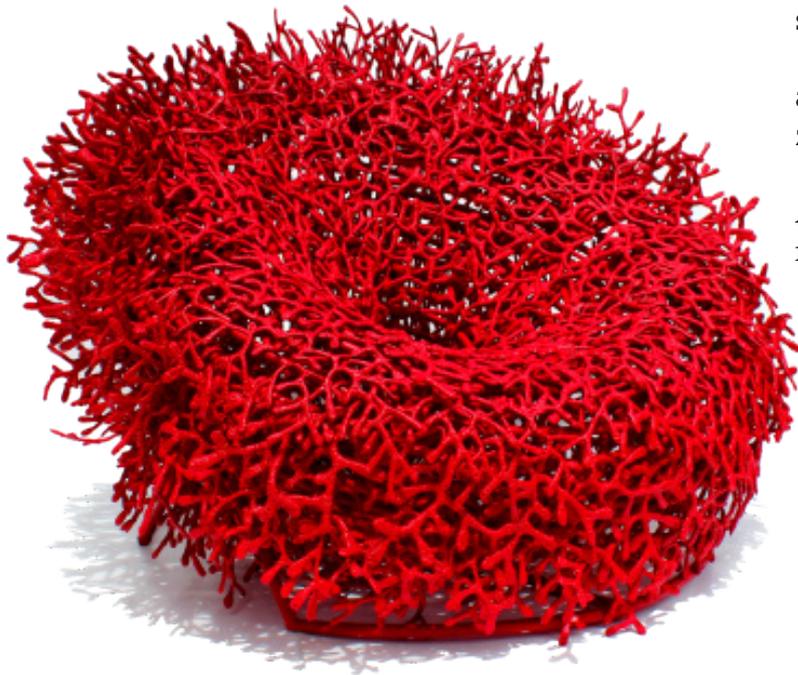
Author: Fátima Pombo



# 2014 Armchair Acaú Sérgio Matos

‘Nasci numa onda verde  
Na espuma me baptizei  
Vim trazido numa rede  
Na areia me enterrarei  
Na areia me enterrarei

Ou então nasci na palma  
Palha da palma no chão  
Tenho a alma de água clara’.



Meu braço espalhado em The song Beira Mar from Gilberto Gil celebrates the deep relation between the man and the sea, the sand, and the white seafoam. The soul itself is made of clear water (tenho a alma de água clara) and the poem resonates that beautiful intimacy.

It was in the beach of Acaú, located in the municipality of Pitimbu, in the state of Paraíba in the Brazilian northeast, that the Coral reefs inspired the Brazilian industrial designer Sérgio J. Matos (Paranatinga, 1975) to design the armchair Acaú engaging fifteen local artisans.

The idea is based on a combination of coral modules and discarded seafood shells stating sustainability as a conceptual tool to design. To the assemblage of each armchair are used around thousand modules with structure in wire, covered with a layer of wire rope, resin and a very resistant paint. All this material is worked by hand from a frame of steel circumferences.

Armchair Acaú expresses the power of the sea and the delicacy of the corals, evoking a trip to Brazilian beaches of warm and transparent waters.

Sérgio J. Matos tells that the texture of armchair Acaú materials translates ‘the fidelity to the inspiration that rests under the tides’.

Author: Fátima Pombo and Júlio Fernandes

# 2012 Babafelt Chair Charlotte Kingsnorth

The designer Charlotte Kingsnorth (1985) declares that 'I am all about organic curves. (...) I am not really a fan of straight lines'. Her Babafelt chair (and all versions of it) is an invitation to cocoon in the thick merino wool felt. The wool fibres are mechanically pressed through the use of heat and softly folded in the walnut timber structure made by craftsman, creating a form that accompanies the movements of the body while wrapping it in a kind of hug. There is a picture of Bill Gates in the cover of a British newspaper sitting in a Babafelt and it seems very comfortable indeed. Charlotte Kingsnorth is a London-based designer who cares for ecological materials with a long lasting life. She explores the materials tactility to sculpt her pieces of furniture usually giving it asymmetrical biomorphic shapes in metaphoric allusions to the bonds between people and their seats, be it a chair or a sofa. The designer emphasizes her reinterpretation of furniture shaping forms and choosing materials by imagining the intertwining between the user and the furniture piece that might be developed over time of use.

Author: Fátima Pombo



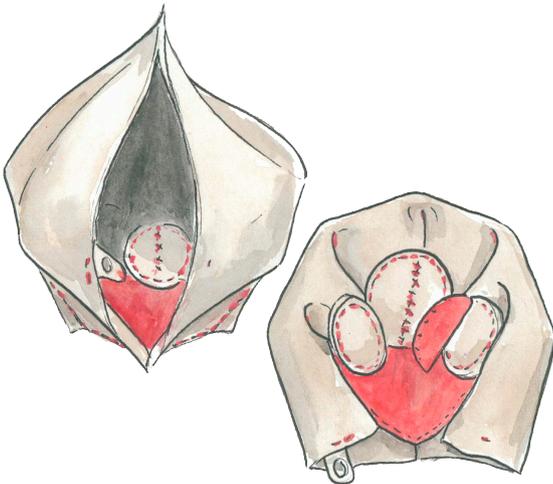
# 2012 Hush Chair Freyja Sewell



Our society is constantly changing, so art needs to constantly reinvent itself. One of these modern approaches is to link art with sustainability, which is vital, as the design is a fundamental part of how we behave. This union of environment and design can be seen in several aspects of the Hush Chair by Freyja Sewell.

Inspired by a flower that protects us, it can be opened and closed creating different designs with a single piece. It is made of biodegradable wool, felt and recycled, all sewn by hand. This material makes the piece very light, but also versatile. In summary, we have the inspiration from nature, the respect for the environment with eco-materials, handmade manufacture, and also, minimalistic living concepts, using a single piece in different ways according to our needs. All in all, this chair is a complete and functional design, that reflects our origins in nature, but also looks to the future with original ideas.

Author: Llara Fuente Corripio



# 2011 Iron Throne

‘Throne as a symbol of authority’.

‘Have you ever seen the Iron Throne? The barbs along the back, the ribbons of twisted steel, the jagged ends of swords and knives all tangled up and melted? It is not a comfortable seat, ser. Aerys cut himself so often men took to calling him King Scab, and Maegor the Cruel was murdered in that chair. By that chair, to hear some tell it. It is not a seat where a man can rest at ease. Ofttimes I wonder why my brothers wanted it so desperately’.

– Stannis Baratheon to Davos Seaworth, Game of Thrones



The Iron Throne is the main object in Game of Thrones, American fantasy drama television series created by David Benioff and D. B. Weiss. The story of the series focuses primarily on alliances and conflicts among the dynastic noble families either vying to claim the throne or fighting for independence from the throne. The Iron Throne is the throne upon which the King of the Andals and the First Men sits, located in the Great Hall of the Red Keep in the city of King’s Landing. Besides the seat of the monarchs, the Iron Throne is also a metonym referring to the monarchy that rules the Seven Kingdoms and the authority of the monarchy. The throne was allegedly forged from the 1,000 swords that had been surrendered to Aegon in the War of Conquest by the lords who had offered their fealty, though the actual number of the swords is less than two hundred. These were subsequently melted down by the fiery breath of Aegon’s dragon, Balerion the Black Dread, then beaten and bent into a throne of imposing appearance.

Author: Martina Malešič

# 2011 Z-Chair Zaha Hadid

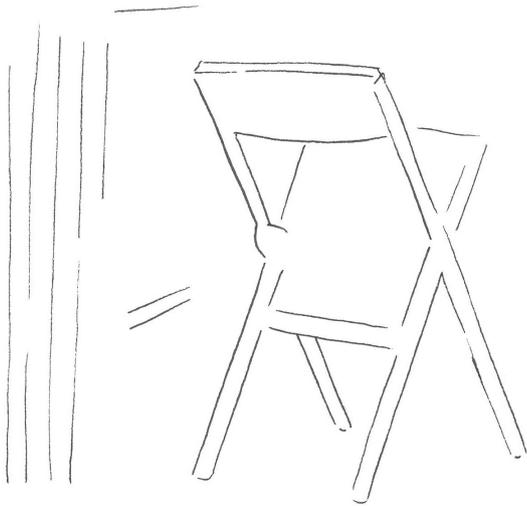
The British Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid, the winner among others of the Pritzker Prize in 2004, was the creator of the Z Chair. This piece of design is characterized by its soft curves and its different planes that generate different images depending on the point of view. Despite its solidity, made with stainless steel, the curved shapes give it dynamism, and also, the holes remove material and help to offer a certain lightness. Likewise, the steel makes the light slide through the piece, creating different visual perceptions of the chair, reminding us of elements such as waves on a lake or the wind moulding shapes, with continuous zigzag lines. It is precisely the organic forms of nature that are Zaha's source of inspiration. Likewise, we can link the piece to a very important component of the artist's work: the use of drawing in the sketches. A fluid line that reminds us of works such as Roy Lichtenstein's Brushstroke. Like his architecture, this piece is closely linked to abstract deconstruction.

The result is an elegant piece, made with industrial and modern materials, but with connections to nature as a source of inspiration. Also, despite first appearances, it is a very comfortable piece of furniture.

Author: Llara Fuente Corripio



# 2011 Piana Chair David Chipperfield



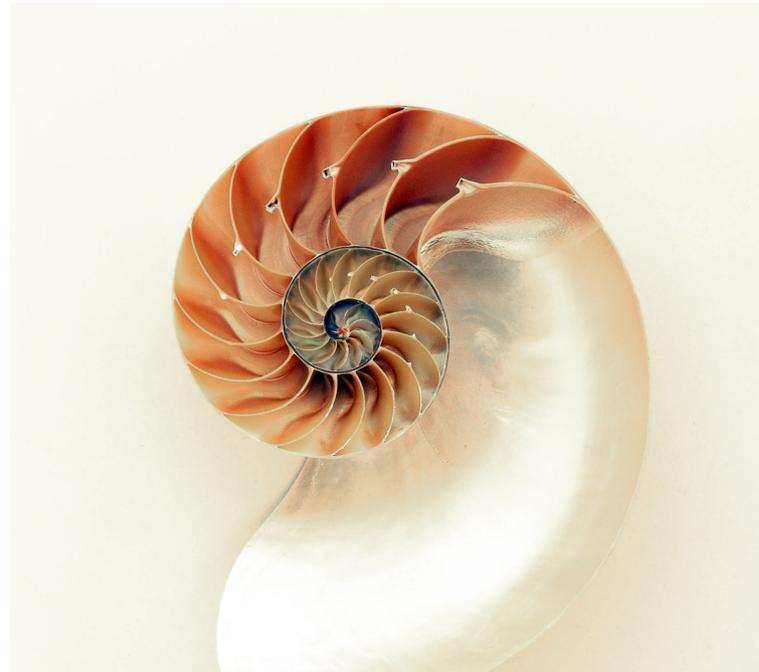
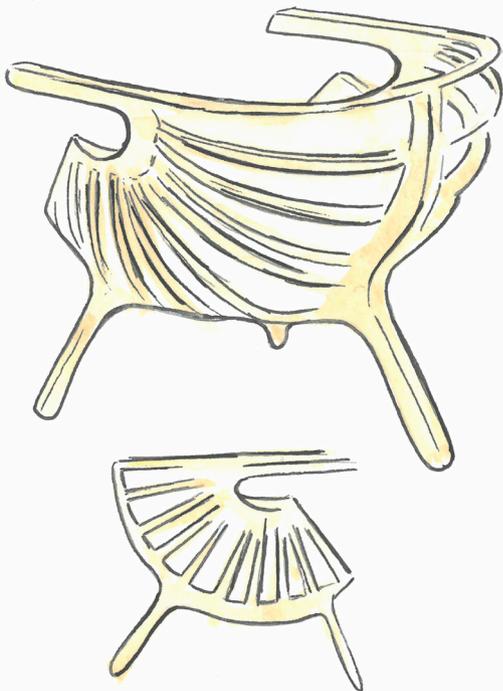
Piana is a chair made in 100% recyclable polypropylene reinforced with fibreglass, rotating around a single axis for public or home use indoors and outdoors. In six different colours with a matt finish it matches the scenery of a dining room, a meeting room, a kitchen, a terrace or a garden. It appears in a delicate and light form but it is robust, resistant, utilitarian, comfortable, minimalistic and environmentally friendly. The chair folds completely flat, it is stackable and easily can be leaned against a wall or hanging on a wall hook to spare space as it is shown in Ill. 13. The British architect David Chipperfield designed the chair for Alessi in 2011 and describes it in his professional site underlining that ‘the visual language of the object is a simple statement about its function and role, giving the chair a timeless quality’<sup>1</sup>. In Ill. 13 is also to observe the drawings of Chipperfield that illustrate Piana from different perspectives. Ill. 13 displays the chair in all colours as a piece of art in a brilliant and vivid Alessi showcase in a Milan’s busy street. The sculptural configuration of Piana’s exhibition in a white room with big windows was a creative initiative that, in effect, drew the public’s attention.

Author: Fátima Pombo

# 2009 Shell Chair Marco Sousa Santos

The wooden lounge Shell Chair designed by the Portuguese Marco Sousa Santos (1962) is a hand-assembled piece made out of plywood. Green dot awarded the chair is made out of an array of wooden pieces disperse into a cocoon shape and supported by organically emerging legs. Its ribs are designed with the intention to hold pillows and cushion which would adjust to different persons' body shape while allowing each user to personalize their own seating arrangement. It appears to be a shell and its form evolves like a natural body composed by vertebra and spine, working as natural force and weight distribution. The birch plywood is digitally cut and then each piece is hand assembled by Portuguese artisans incorporating both modern and traditional techniques. As Marco Sousa Santos explains, the goal is to unite 'Portuguese craftsmanship traditions with contemporary aesthetics (...) to reignite the bygone era when products were developed with patience, expertise, knowledge and integrity, aiming to truly reach the level of a high-end international product brand'.

Author: Fátima Pombo and Filipe Bento



# 2006 Chaise-Longue Antibodi Patricia Urquiola



The Spanish designer, Patricia Urquiola, who has developed most of her professional career in Italy, created this non-upholstered chaise-longue that (in this natural colour) for Moroso could bring us memories of the film *Splendour on the Grass* (Elia Kazan, 1961).

The fabric reversible materials: felt-wool fabric and wool fabric and leather can present two different eye-catching models. One with petals facing upwards that looks like a vegetable seating element and the other, with a cosier quilted-look. Both sides create an original piece of furniture that although it seems to have been thought for terraces and gardens, has been designed just for interiors.

Author: Marta García-Sampedro Fernández-Canteli

# 2006 Zody Chair

## Ito Design and Michael Welsh (Haworth Design)

In spite of its invisibility at the Design Museums, this chair was the star in offices all over the world during the last decades. It was conceived as a high-technology piece with an intensive research process in order to find comfort and wellness. Zody chair includes an original asymmetrical lumbar adjustment that was imitated by other office chairs manufactures. In addition, the chair was designed using the Cradle to Cradle protocol. It is 95% recyclable and contains up to 51% recycled content. Obviously, it is PVC free and it was the first task chair recommended by the American Physical Therapy Association. Although its ergonomic design, affordable price and sustainable solution, Zody is a versatile chair that offers seat range height. It can be supplied in a wide variety of materials and colours to be adapted to any space or interior decoration.

Due to its popularity in working interior spaces, Zody was included in the design set of many tv series such as House, CSI New York, Bones, Revenge, House of Lies, Grey's Anatomy or The Good Wife. It was also used in films just as The Call or 27 dresses. The Zody Chair's utilization in those films epitomises its success as an essential piece in office decoration in any sort of companies all over the world.

Author: Ana María Fernández García



# 2005 Drop Chair Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa (SANAA)

The Drop Chair appears as a metaphor for the creative mindset of Kazuyo Sejima (1956) and Ryue Nishizawa (1966) from the Japanese architectural office SANAA: nature as inspiration. The armless chair, sustained by three thin legs in tubular steel, is designed to evoke a raindrop falling down. The choice for aluminium facilitates the imagery of the light reflections in the drop of water and at the same time cuts the shape adequate to seat. This piece was specially created for the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, in Kanazawa, Japan also designed by the architects Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa. Several Drop chairs, placed outside the museum, mirror the surrounding in a playful game of images that change according to the movement of the day and the changes in the landscape. Displayed in a circle the Drop chairs are used for moments of rest outside, stimulating the interaction between the visitor, the environment and the architecture.

Author: Fátima Pombo



# 2004 Chair\_One / Magis Chair Konstantin Grcic



‘Each chair can be so different, designing them never ceases to be challenging. We may ask similar questions with every chair: “What is it for?” “What is the location?” “Who is it for?” “Who sits on it?” “And what is a chair, anyway?” But the answers are always new. Of course, a chair is a fascinating thing because you come into such direct physical contact with it more than with any other piece of furniture. You may sit at a table, or you’ll open a closet with your hands, but with a chair you have prolonged, direct physical contact. And just think of the many ways we sit in chairs — there’s no one fixed position, but a multitude of different postures. A good chair becomes part of you, it dresses you. There’s a famous test where people rate chairs for comfort, once blindfolded, once not. Their verdicts turn out to be contradictory. Blindfolded, they experience only the physical comfort of the chair. But when they actually see the chair, they let themselves get seduced by its looks. A chair that you find beautiful appears to be more comfortable — it is a psychological thing, it’s not purely rational. These kinds of considerations are what my work revolves around. There’s an infinite, ever-changing potential within those most common, mundane things’.

Konstantin Grcic (taken from an interview by Felix Burrichter in PIN-UP 23, Fall Winter 2017/18)

# Bishop Stool

## India Mahdavi

Originally conceived as a bar stool for an exclusive New York nightclub, the Bishop has become the most emblematic piece of the Iranian architect and designer India Mahdavi.

Popularly known ‘the queen of colour’, her elegant and optimistic oriental pop style has transformed her into one of the most sought-after architects by fashion firms, hotel chains, restaurants and even airlines.

Available in twenty different colours, the graphic shapes of the Bishop are inspired by the chess piece from which it takes its name, and although originally made of wood, the material with which it is now identified is enamelled ceramics.

India Mahdavi’s commitment to local craftsmanship is clear in the Bishop Apple Blossom, a limited edition carried out in collaboration with Émaux de Longwy, a workshop known for its detailed enamelling technique, *cloisonné*, which dates back to 1798.

Another of the characteristics that defines the Bishop is its versatility: it can be used as a seat, a side table or a stand. It even has its own accessories: the Peanut, a walnut tray which combines the shape of two stools, joining them; the C.O.D (complement d’objet direct), an enamelled ceramic tray which fits onto the top part, turning it into a side table; and the Cocktail, a larger enamelled ceramic tray which transforms the Bishop into a cocktail table.

About to turn twenty-five, and in full development, the Bishop forms part of the Museum of

Decorative Arts collection in Paris and constitutes a best-selling phenomenon with long waiting lists.

Author: Lucía Salomé Vallina Valdés



# 1994 Monkey Chair 1961 Judy McKie

The Monkey Chair from 1994 is a delightfully elegant furniture designed by the American designer Judy Kensley McKie – a design where McKie fused everyday function with charming zoomorphic forms inspired by African and pre-Columbian art.

Initially designing and making straightforward, spare furniture while she learned woodworking, she began in 1978 to explore forms and techniques outside usual furniture repertory. Judy McKie joined a cooperative furniture shop called New Hamburger, and continued to explore the use of fanciful creatures and figural elements in her furniture, even making models that were cast in bronze.

Her carved work has inspired many other makers to use carved figural elements, and exploring the possibilities of cast versions, incorporate color, and use of various materials to realise their ideas.

Rather than showcasing applied decorations as an end unto itself, her work springs more from an artistic process in which she conceives the idea, figures out how to solve the technical issues, builds the actually object – oftentimes adjusting her ideas as she proceeds – and integrates the decoration as she builds.

Author: Anna Marie Fisker





# 1961 Favela Chair Campana brothers

The brothers Fernando (1961) and Humberto Campana (1953) designed in 1991 The Favela Chair in a project that leads us to poetic and engaged provocations. Favelas are miserable but also creative communities in a country of contrasts as Brazil. Like the Brazilian film director Fernando Meireles, who launched in 2002 the film 'City of God', portraying crime and art in the Brazilians' favelas, this chair also points out contrasts between aesthetics and politics. The film expresses that incongruity already in the title itself. Could that community really be from God? The chair designed by the Campana brothers refers to a throne made of rags, which brings us to an apparent irony.

But what does a Brazilian designer want by adding the concept of 'favelas' to a chair? The chair is made of discarded wooden boards or of affordable pine wood. Its shape, which refers to a throne, contrasts with the simplicity of the material, and together these discourses promote an engaged and creative dialogue.

Favela chair is manufactured by the Italian company Edra. In 2011, while celebrating 20 years, it gained its miniaturization, produced by Vitra along with other famous chairs.

The Campana brothers can be considered the most outstanding Brazilian designers in the international press. They have numerous products awarded prizes in competitions and fairs. His creations are part of the collection of museums such as

MoMA in New York, Center Georges Pompidou in Paris, Vitra Design Museum in Rhein and Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich.

Author: Fátima Pombo and Paula Valadares



1990

# My School Chair

MY FIRST SCHOOL CHAIR. MY  
SHELTER.

My chair was green.  
White classroom. High white ceiling. A huge  
school.

The nun sitting on a green chair on the  
platform. Very far.  
She could not listen to me. I was very shy.  
I was nearly three.

Her chair was green. Bigger than mine.  
I was very short. My feet did not touch the  
floor.

Tired and bored.  
I was nearly three.  
School was full of green chairs. We had desks  
too.

Toilets were also green.  
Blackboards were not black, were green.  
Was green a school colour at that time?

It was the end of the sixties.  
I was nearly three.  
Plastic flowers in the vases. The sound of a  
piano tune.  
I was nearly three.

The green toilets stank. The basins were too  
high to drink.  
I was nearly three.

A very noisy playground.  
Shouting girls.  
Hide and seek.  
I was nearly three

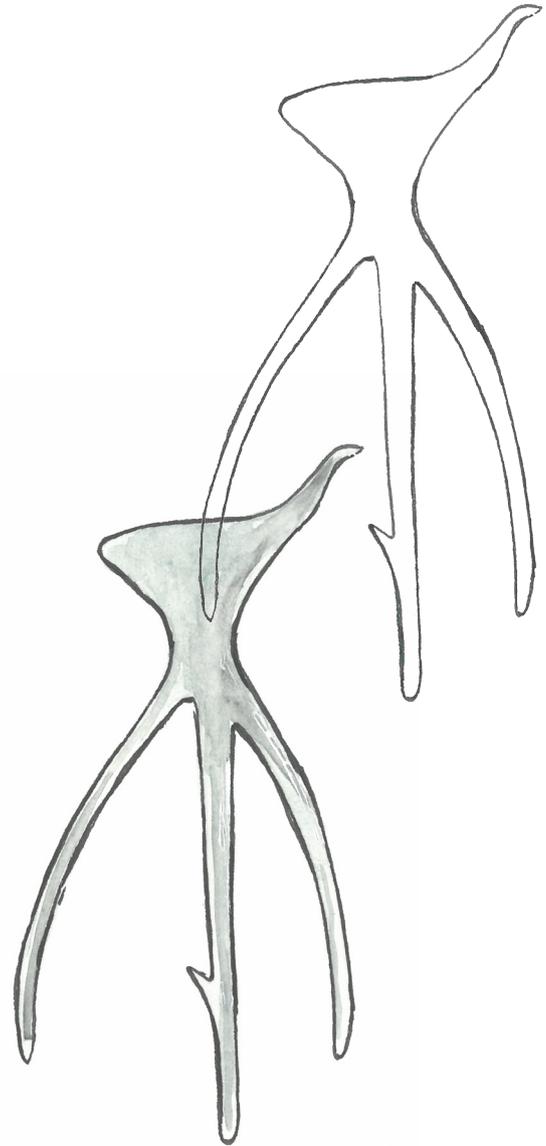
It was freezing.  
My feet hurt.  
I wanted to go home.  
I was nearly three.  
Everybody taller and bigger than me.  
I did not feel safe in the playground.  
Back to the classroom. Quickly to my green  
chair. Home.  
I was nearly three

Author: Marta García-Sampedro Fernández-  
Canteli



# 1961 W.W. Chair Philippe Starck

According to its own phrase, the mint green enameled aluminium stool contains the ethereal signature of Philippe Starck as ‘the future is synthetic, synthetic, synthetic’. Two w, not three, just two. It is not the beginning of a research link, but the initials of his client. The W.W. Chair stems from a telephone conversation between the French designer and the film director Wim Wenders, who commissioned a chair which would allow himself to work standing up. This type of relationship should not seem new, since contact between film directors and artists has always existed, for the sets to be designed for the movies. More than a chair itself, this seat refers to nature. The surreal design of its lines is reminiscent of the flourishes of branches or roots which shoot sprouts. Just thinking of sitting in it takes us to a scene of avoidance, idealization and back pain. We can not ignore the fact that this chair does not serve as a seat for the user, but to support itself while performing their tasks. This would explain its verticality and the absence of comfortable and rest elements. This imaginative office furniture was warmly welcomed by Wenders, who made use of it for years, until it was handed over to the Wim Wenders Stiftung in 2012. Meanwhile, the design had been replicated in limited series, since 1990, thanks to the company Vitra at Weil am Rhein, Germany. In this case, it could be said that the W.W. Chair is on the border between work of art and furniture design.



Author: Carmen Estrada Fernández

# 1987 Ghost Chair 1961 Cini Boeri

This is the chair with ghost in the name and a very alive soul in the design. In 2013, Cini Boeri (Milano, 1924) stated that she ‘designed this chair, with its ghostly transparency, at a time when I was terribly tired of designing armchairs and sofas, but that was what everyone was asking me to do. So I said to myself: Let’s make one you can’t see!’ (Boeri, 2013). At the time of this Boeri’s decision, the Japanese architect and designer Tomu Katayanagi was working in her Studio and both designed the Ghost Chair. However, since 1987, when the chair was produced by the Italian company Fiam, it cannot remain a more visible piece of furniture. As a monolithic armchair in 12mm-thick curved glass, it is a statement by itself of a successful outcome over a technological challenge. A single sheet of glass was cut and bent to give form to a comfortable, solid chair (says who already tried it) that is also a sculptural piece of art. Its transparency agrees with all sceneries and styles but it is not possible to declare that it stays unnoticed.

Author: Fátima Pombo



# 1986 Lounge Chair, Serie Lang 1961 Philippe Starck

The Lounge Chair is designed by Philippe Starck in 1986 as part of a series called Lang, which also includes dining tables and dining chairs to the famous Royalton Hotel in New York. Today Driade in Italy produces the chair.

The chair is made of a tubular steel shell with spring units, upholstered with fixed leather and one large cast polished aluminium leg. From the front, the chair would seem like a classic nineteen-eighties lounge chair, but as you walk around it, a secret reveals itself. Almost like a wasp, it exposes 'the sting', a freestanding long leg that pushes the chair in a dynamically way to stand on its toe. The significant leg makes the chair somehow float between stability and instability, making it almost impossible to remove your eyes from it, as one cannot stop studying this sculptural mix of chair and creature.

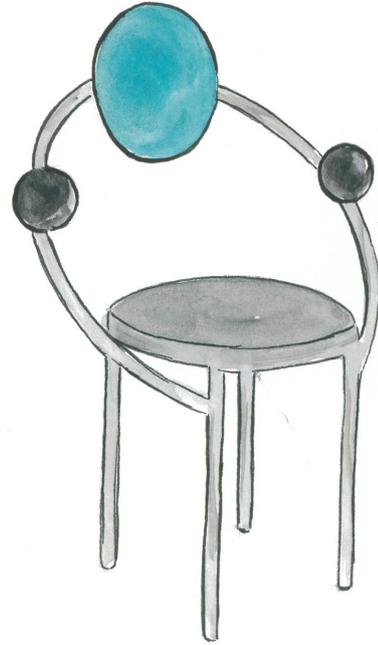
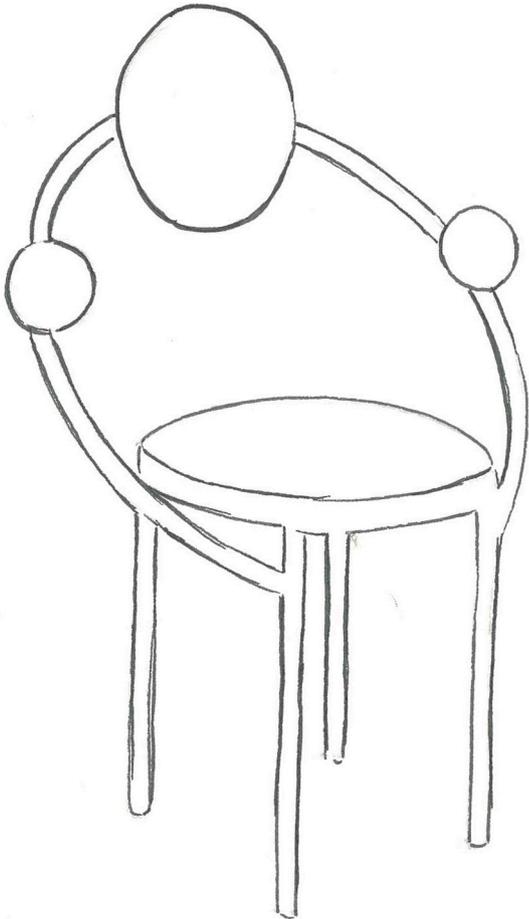
The chair is one of Philippe Starck's first classics. In many ways, it reassembles his career – balancing on the edge of the ingenious and provocative.

I am not having apiphobia, but the obscurity of this chair as a kind of storyteller has a certain wickedness surrounding it, which, for me, makes this chair hard to fall in love with.

Author: Jeppe Heden Christensen



1983  
 First Chair  
 Michele de Lucchini  
 for Memphis Milano



Striking and bold, this chair designed by Michele de Lucchini in 1983 for Memphis is a unique accent piece. The Memphis designers incorporated geometric forms and color in their response to the modernist philosophy, which they disdained for its rational, unemotional, functionalist approach to design. The goal was a more diverse aesthetic, to provoke people with their decor and ironic shapes. The sophisticated design of the 'First Chair' evokes planetary orbits in a combination of enameled wood and metal, creating silver, blue, and black elements connecting to each other, to create the seat and cut-out backrest. Michele created a chair that is both post-modern sculpture and a furniture.

Author: Patricia Overgaard Christensen

# Queen Anne Chair

## Denise Scott Brown (& Robert Venturi)

The design of the Queen Anne Chair embodies the design duo – Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi’s – collaborative approach, based on the furniture style developed during and after the reign of the British monarch from 1702 to 1714.

The significance of the Queen Anne Chair is most obvious when you put it in a line-up of famous architect chairs. Although given the same visual flattening treatment, making the designs look like they had been squeezed through a mangle, the carved shapes and flourishes used to identify each of these styles all remained apparent in the silhouettes.

The most distinctive pattern added to the designs was the Grandmother print. Scott Brown and Venturi combined the repetition of a tablecloth, belonging to American architect Frederic Schwartz’s grandmother, with a flecked black and white motif, commonly found on the front of school notebooks.

The Queen Anne Chair gave furniture design at the time a much-needed injection of colour and pattern. In a way, it was also about looking at the overlooked, taking inspiration from one of your granny’s textiles, a fuddy-duddy old chair, printed plastics, and re-imagining their appeal for a contemporary audience.

Author: Anna Marie Fisker



# 1982 Armchair 810 Richard Meier

'In my product designs, as in my architecture, I adhere to a Modernist vocabulary, focusing on proportion, scale and the manipulation of basic, strong geometry' Richard Meier has explained.



Standing in front of his Armchair 810 the ebonized bent maple and laminated maple armchair, number 810, is breathtakingly elegant and unique.

Armchair 810 has black hand-rubbed lacquer urethane finish and is U-shaped with hard-edged square profile members. The flat crest-rail and arms in one horizontal bent member and makes the geometry of the chair eminent. Front vertical legs are extended to meet the top bent member at a right angle and the straight back legs at curve also rise to meet the crest rail. There are two conforming evenly spaced supports between the crest rail and seat, which is a solid scoop-seat with a saddle. A conforming U-shaped stretcher connecting the bottom of the legs complete the chair.

Today a rare chair to sit, but finding it in an interior, with references to historic icons of design, such as Josef Hoffmann, Meier's designs gains clarity and timeless refinement owing to their perfect proportions.

Author: Anna Marie Fisker

# 1982 Seconda Chair 1961 Mario Botta

As a young architect, I went for the straight lines in furniture, so the Seconda designed by Mario Botta for Alias, with its extremely characteristic geometric shapes such as straight lines, right angles and cylinders, was indeed a favorite. This chair is not only an eccentric piece of seating furniture, but equally a design object that fits well in public spaces as in the living or dining room.

The frame of the Seconda Chair is made from painted steel. The seat of the chair is made from perforated sheet steel and the back is made from two cylindrical polyurethane elements for maximum seating comfort.

Seconda is more than a chair; it is architecture that you sit upon. Designed in 1982, this iconic chair shows the influence of all of Mario Botta's mentors including Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn and Carlo Scarpa. The architectural lines of this chair design are reminiscent of Botta's design for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art building, his first building in the U.S. Often cited as the chair design that epitomizes the 'matte black' aesthetic of the 80's and a rationalist response to the Memphis design movement.

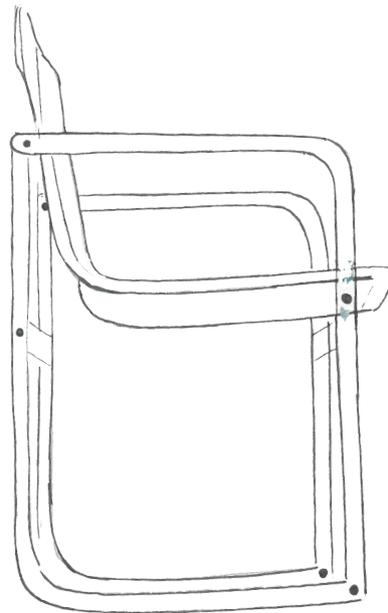
Author: Anna Marie Fisker



# 1981 L Chair 1961 Branko Uršič

In 1980, Branko Uršič, one of the leading designer in Slovenian furniture factory Stol, invented furniture system L. Due to the technological limitations in the process of pressing plywood only one curve in a single mold was feasible. It was a rectangular curve in the form of letter 'L'. Two L elements combined in a rectangular shape provided a structure for a simple but original solution for complete furniture system from lamellar beech wood: a chair, an armchair, a table and a club table. Natural wood and light colour scheme of textile used for chairs gave those objects almost Scandinavian appeal and modest alternative to the wild aesthetics of the 80's.

Author: Martina Malešič



# 1981 Mickey Mackintosh Chair 1961 Wendy Maruyama

The Mickey Mackintosh Chair from 1981, in maple wood with zolatone paint by Wendy Maruyama, is one of the American Studio Craft movement's most renowned designs. The 1980s avant-garde approach of combining an iconic, high-backed classical chair form with the legendary Mickey ears makes this chair a subtle and unique piece.

The idea is a simple one: What if a Charles Rennie Mackintosh high-backed chair had a pair of Disneyesque mouse ears? The result is a witty and concise object, which employs classic postmodern 'pastiche' technique, the unexpected juxtaposition of historical points of reference, and is also rendered in the flat, highly legible, 'semiotic' style, common to furniture of that era.

The surface of the chair is true to its period. In an ad hoc spirit, Maruyama covered up the wood with zolatone paint – a sprayed product, usually used in the interiors of automobile boots, that creates an automatic 'spatter' effect. This appropriation of a kitsch, industrial material might be compared to Memphis's adoption of plastic laminates in the same year.

Following the Mickey Mackintosh chair Maruyama developed her style, often expressing her own identity as a Japanese-American, hearing-impaired woman in a largely white, male-dominated field.

Author: Anna Marie Fisker



# 1980 Parigi Armchair 1961 Aldo Rossi

Aldo Rossi envisioned and designed the Parigi Chair for the Italian furniture maker Unifor in 1980, around the same time as he designed the world theatre previously described. The armchair and its functionality is tailored to the needs of the contemporary office environment, according to Aldo Rossi, as a domestic space for working. Thus, the armchair is capable of adapting to both living and working environments. By first sight, the armchair reminds of a rigid wood chair, but the chair is actually experienced as soft and comfortable. It is made from a unique geometrically aluminum tube construction, painted black, polstered by a self-supporting seat and back made from foam. The seating is masterfully completed by a red lacquered finish, resulting in the Parigi Chair being an iconic piece of Italian design. The chair is tilted, which creates a subtle tension, both for the observer, and the inhabitator.



‘Perhaps it is snobbery but the more I see the world, the more I feel being a citizen of it and the more I want to go back to the old way of things’.

- Aldo Rossi



Author: Martina Malešič

# 1978 Proust Armchair 1961 Alessandro Mendini

The Italian designer Alessandro Mendini described his Proust Armchair from 1978 as 'an intellectual exercise'. The chair, which was launched by Cappellini in 1978 and its design combines a Baroque-style shape with a pattern of tiny hand-painted pointillist coloured dots across its wooden frame and upholstery. It was first presented in the Palazzo dei Diamanti in Ferrara during the exhibition 'Close encounters of architecture', where this piece of postmodern furniture captured the attention of connoisseurs and design enthusiasts on an international scale.

Mendini paved the way for Postmodernism in design, described as the 'saturnine conceptualist of Italian Postmodernism'. The Proust Armchair was the first in a series known as Redesigns. The series brought together the designer's academic theories on the importance of historical context for design, and the significance of surface appearance in a fast-moving world.

As one of the personalities behind the Radical Design, Alessandro Mendini stated shortly before his death in 2019: 'that there is no more ideology in design and that the industry has lost its critical edge'. Luckily, we still have the Proust Armchair being one of the most iconic chairs of the last century and a precursor to Postmodern Design.

Author: Anna Marie Fisker

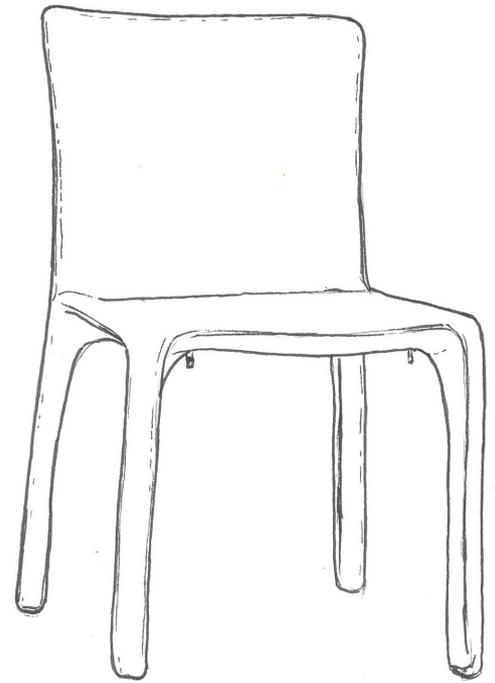


# 1977 410 Cab Chair 1961 Mario Bellini

Like skin on a skeleton, Mario Bellini's Cab Chair consists of a leather cover stretched over a minimal tubular steel frame. 'This was a new kind of chair, constructed totally out of leather'. Thus, Mario Bellini describes the Cab Chair, a best-seller that he designed in the 1970s, which is now a signature piece in Cassina's Contemporary Collection.

The Cab Chair was the first-ever chair to feature a free-standing leather structure, inspired by how our skin fits our skeleton. The upholstery consists of sixteen pieces of saddle leather that undergo fourteen procedures by hand. The pieces are sewn together only when their outer edges have been trimmed to ensure a perfect fit. Once assembled, the cover is attached to the chair's steel skeleton and held in place by means of a zipper fastening, as in a bespoke tailored garment. The only additional reinforcement is provided by a plastic plate, which supports the seat. Bellini's innovation lay in using zippers to fasten the leather cover to its frame; a zip runs up the inside of each leg, sealing the cover in place. Bellini's decision to completely envelop the supporting structure lends the chair a unified appearance enhanced by the natural leather and the chair surely age with great beauty.

Author: Anna Marie Fisker



# 1977 Valdés Chair 1961 Cristian Valdés

‘Ode to the chair  
A chair in the jungle:  
under the severe lianas  
a sacred tree trunk creaks,  
tangles of vines press high,  
in the shadows  
bloody beasts cry out,  
majestic leaves descend from the green sky,  
the rattles of snakes  
quiver like bells.

A bird spanned the sprawling greenness,  
like an arrow shot through a flag,  
and branches hoisted high their violins.

Insects  
pray in stillness,  
seated on their wild bouquets.

Feet sink into  
the black sargasso  
of the watery jungle,  
into the rainforest’s tumbled clouds.

I only request one thing  
for the stranger,  
for the desperate  
explorer,  
a chair in the tree of chairs,  
a throne,  
disheveled and plush,  
the velvet of a deep easy chair,  
eaten away by creepers.

Yes,  
a chair,

loving the universe,  
for the walkabout man,  
the sure  
foundation,  
the supreme  
dignity  
of rest!

Behind thirsty tigers,  
bands of bloodthirsty flies,  
behind the black expanse  
of ghost-ridden leaves,  
behind the low waters,  
the thicket like iron,  
perpetual snakes,  
in the middle  
of the thunder,  
a chair,  
a chair  
for me,  
for everyone,  
a chair not  
only for the weary body’s  
rescue,  
but also for everything,  
and for everybody,  
to renew lost strength,  
and for meditation.

War is wide like the light-starved jungle.

Peace  
begins  
in  
a  
single  
chair’.

A Chilean Poem to a Chilean Chair. Pablo Neruda (1904-1973). Translated by Maria Jacketti

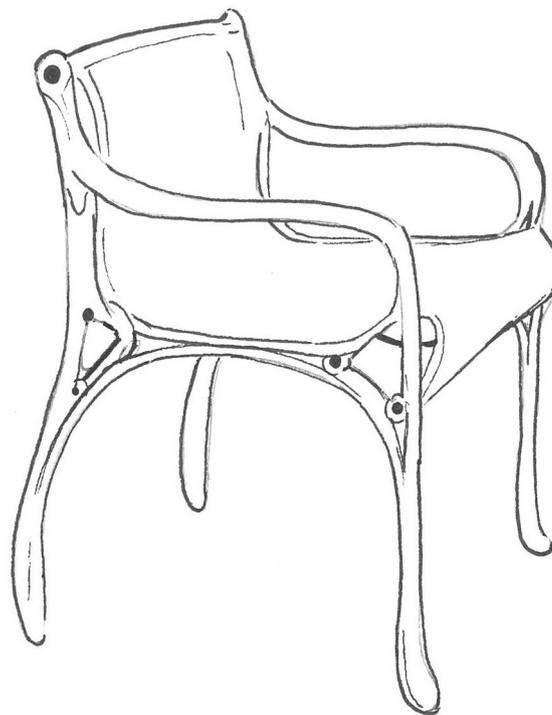
Architect Cristian Valdés (Chile, 1932) who won the Chilean National Architecture Prize in 2008 states that ‘architecture and furniture design born from an intention of building something; what matters is the origin, not the size of the thing. The process that matters is the definition of such intention as well as knowing from where it comes’.

Well, Valdés deals very skilfully with materials namely wood, steel and leather using them beyond their functional properties. He wants to design objects that inspire an aesthetical pleasure and that are also rigorously constructed. For the chair Valdés analyzed with detail the structure and constructive principles of the tennis racket Dunlop which is based on laminated wood frames joined with Ulmo wood wedges. Such constructive principles were then applied to other models.

The Valdés chair is a reference for Chilean industrial design and by the geometry of form with soft curves, ingenious constructive and structural process, comfort, elegance and creative language it became almost a cult object. Besides becoming an icon of the Chilean furniture, the successful Valdés chairs are also represented in the collections of MoMA in New York and were chosen to integrate the renovation project of Museum of Natural History in Paris.

I do believe this chair can respond to the declaration of Neruda that ‘Peace begins in a single chair’.

Author: Fátima Pombo

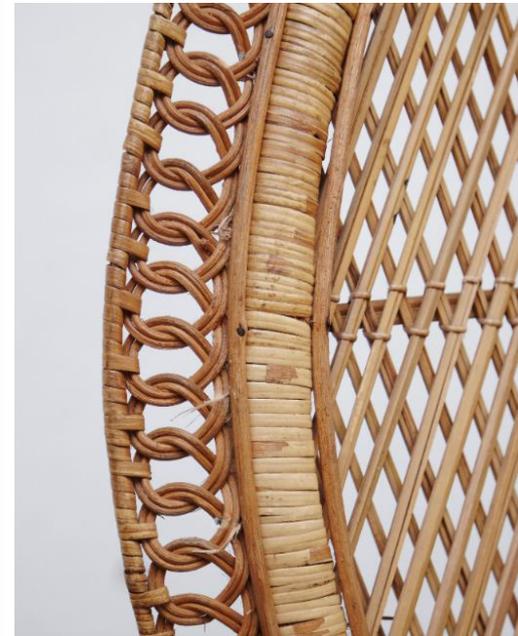
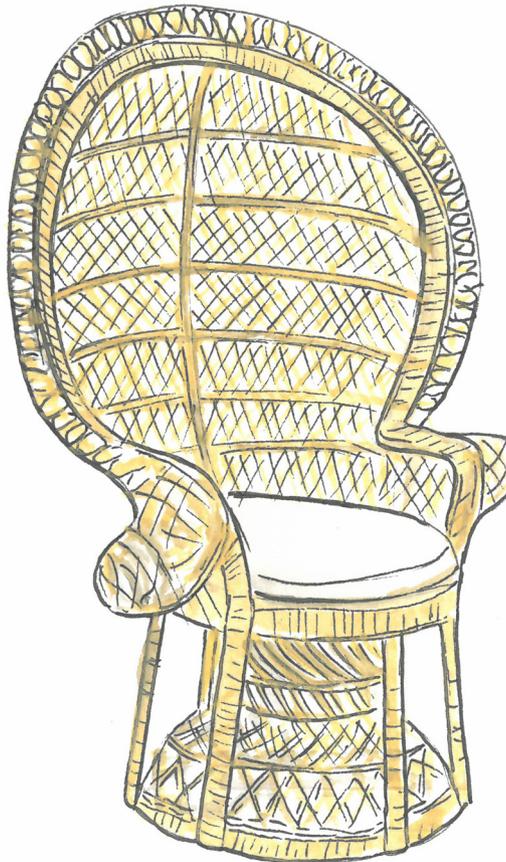


# 1975 Emmanuelle Armchair

In the 1970s, this wicker or rattan chair became an icon of sensuality and female eroticism thanks to the film *Emmanuelle*. So much so, that it ended up adopting the name of the protagonist and the film's title. Since then, it has become a recurring object in photographs of prestigious fashion, advertising and art firms as a synonym for sensuality and beauty. Although this is one of the most famous, rattan chairs are common throughout history and we can find many similar models with slight variations.

The origin of this chair is not clear, but it is believed that it was used as a royal throne in Polynesia and in the late 19th century it was discovered by the French, who began to use it in their homes in the colonies of the South Pacific. In France, it is known as Fauteuil Pomare (name of the dynasty that ruled Tahiti) and in other places as the Peacock Chair since its large backrest imitates the unfurled tail of a peacock. It is made of a single piece of wicker or rattan and filigree, and it was typically used outdoors. Definitely, an indispensable piece in interior or outdoor decoration.

Author: Llara Fuente Corripio



# 1975 Africa Dining Chair Afra & Tobia Scarpa

For Tobia it shouldn't have been easy to find a place in architecture and design away from the surname of his father Carlo Scarpa. It also didn't have to be easy for Afra Bianchin to make a name for herself in a historically masculinized world and profession. However, since they were students at the University Institute of Architecture of Venice (IUAV), Afra and Tobia, who years later would form a marriage, also joined forces in the workplace, carving out a bright future in furniture design for many of the large international industrial production companies. One of these creations in common was the Africa Dining Chair, part of the Africa Artona Series which includes a matching dining table, armchairs or a sofa. This chair, made of walnut wood and upholstered in leather on the seat for Maxalto in 1975 stands out for its robustness, its symmetry, its clarity of lines tending to horizontality and the exoticism and the elegance in the combination of the brown tones of the wood and leather with the black circular patterns on its back made in two pieces. Due to these characteristics, it's easy to imagine her hosting guests at dinners in the most luxurious dining rooms of the Italian homes of the 70s, or as a current vintage decorative brooch in modern and sober lofts in dark tones, because if we can be sure of something, it is that its design continues to remain attractive over time, like so many other great creations by the most renowned designers, among whom Afra and Tobia Scarpa have established themselves.

Author: Beatriz Rodríguez Sánchez



# 1972 Wiggle Side Chair Frank Gehry



The Wiggle Side Chair is part of Frank Gehry's furniture series 'Easy Edges' from 1972, with which he succeeded in bringing a new aesthetic dimension to an everyday material – cardboard. Cardboard is usually considered as cheap and shabby stuff, mostly used for packaging. Gehry transformed it in a modern and nice-looking material, which gives the object firmness and durability, but at the same time also softness and patina.

In 1969 Gehry was asked to give the artist Robert Irwin's studio a quick makeover. Being limited with a budget, he came up with something simple yet subtly futuristic: seating made from cardboard that he kept in the studio for making models. With alternating the direction of layers he discovered that the finished board had enough strength and a uniform, velvety texture on all four sides. Wiggle Side Chairs are still being produced (by Vitra) and make, using recyclable material, almost 30 years old model how to be sustainable and modern at the same time.

Author: Martina Malešič

# 1972 Ovejo Chair 1961 Jaime Gutiérrez Lega



The praised Colombian designer Jaime Gutiérrez Lega (Bucaramanga, 1932) tells about the origin of the Ovejo Chair (Sheep Chair): 'I was going often to Villa de Leiva. There, it was easy to find in the markets large amounts of sheep skins, leather straps, Eucalyptus wood already cut for firewood. Those materials made me think in a perfect seat to rest'. This chair evokes the country roots of the place that stimulated it. Villa de Leiva, three and half hours by car from Bogotá, is a beautiful touristic colonial place, located in a high altitude valley of semi-deserted ground that preserved its original atmosphere. Many buildings date from the sixteenth century and most of the streets are still paved with original cobblestones. Jaime Gutiérrez was inspired by the countryside environment and the materials available in the Villa, and created one of the most recognized Colombian furniture icons. In effect, this chair is a perfect seat to rest, it is comfortable, cozy and particularly shaped to temperatures that ask for warmth around the body. The frame in wood completes the kind invitation for a smooth experience.

Author: Fátima Pombo



# 1971 Quadratura Chair 1961 Daciano da Costa

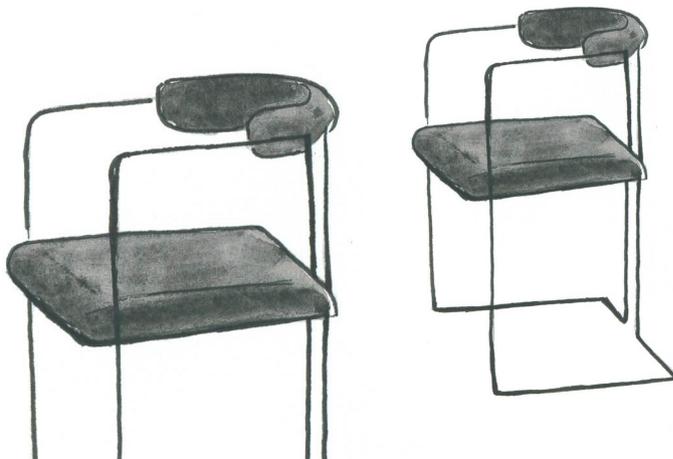
Stopped reading, put the book down and sensed a delicate weightless body. Getting up and watching the beauty, the mind flows as an encounter for a precious second.

The fusion of the anthropomorphic with the construction of the rational is solved in the Quadratura line through the connection between two distinct dimensions: the union between the delicate, almost dematerialized structure and the support surfaces revealing evanescence, based on the minimal expression of its formal complexity.

Quadratura Chair was developed in 1971-1972 for the cafeteria of the Documentation Center of the LNEC (National Civil Engineering Laboratory) as part of the interior design intervention, which also included the furniture of the congress hall, meeting rooms, exhibition hall, library. Produced in the Metalúrgica da Longra with the chrome steel structure, seat and back in wood covered in black leather, the Quadratura Chair has other support elements such as table, sideboard, bench and shelf.

The Quadratura line was born at a time when Tomaz Maldonado stated the need to 'determine the possibilities and also the limits of our contribution' as designers. Daciano da Costa (Lisboa, 1930-2005) architect, designer, painter, and professor emerges as a reference in the area of Equipment Design in Portugal promoting interior architecture as a global project. Faithful to his practice of 'Design in context' he made interventions through his life at the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Centro Cultural de Belém, Expo 98, Casa da Música and many other iconic spaces in the Portuguese panorama.

At present Quadratura Chair can be found in its original state in the CCB (Centro Cultural de Belém) as a result of the equipment and furniture project that Daciano da Costa developed in 1990-1992 for this space.



Author: Fátima Pombo and João Castro

# 1970 Sena da Silva Chair

## António Sena da Silva and Leonor Martins Machado

The Sena da Silva Chair belongs to a scholar furniture set of tables and chairs designed by the Portuguese architect and designer António Sena da Silva (1926-2001). The project had the collaboration of his wife, the architect Leonor Martins Machado (1930-). Since the 1960s, his Studio promoted the research about scholar equipment considering the learning process. The furniture system that includes this chair is an iconic example of the results. In several documents and communications, Sena da Silva mentioned the importance of ergonomics and its relation with the wellbeing of children, who spend a lot of time at school.

The piece was produced in beech wood by Olaio factory in the beginning of 1970s. The simplicity of the design and the constructive optimization are remarkable. The way the chair fits its users, and at the same time, the easy way to be inverted and stackable forming a self-supporting vertical tower of virtually unlimited progression are distinctive features of Sena's Chair, just as the designer stated.

This model of chair proudly belongs to the Portuguese Furniture History and is on display in the permanent exhibition of MUDE (Museum of Design and Fashion) in Lisbon.

Author: Fátima Pombo



# 1970 My School Chair

I remember our first encounter when you greeted me at school. 'This is going to be your seat', my teacher said, and from that point on you carried me through the years. I knew nothing about you. Nor then, or now. But, you were my first place in life, a place reserved for me.

I remember your seat as warm, and your frame as cold, a combination that created numerous sensations as I sat distracted in class. We established several relationships. Standing on top of you, I was taller, gazing over my classmates, hiding behind you, I felt protected from the older kids and balancing on your two back legs, I was thrilled by the risk of falling over, and elevated by the control of not doing so.

These early experiences have left their marks, which I sense, as I see you here. What a life you must have had with hundreds of companionships formed. You must have carried more kids than I can imagine. They all left their marks on you I see. Karen, Søren, Sofie and Peter are all scratched in the wood underneath your seat. Many destinies, which you carry with you. And, perhaps you made your mark on them, as you did with me. Now you trigger a memory when your hiding place is discovered. Have you become an artefact of a generation?



Author: Elias Melvin Christensen

# 1968 Bubble Chair Eero Aarnio

Imagine a go on a swing not in your balcony or in your backyard but in your living room! Go further and imagine the swing as a comfortable soap bubble-like a cocoon, not of silk but made of a transparent acrylic on a steel frame, letting the light getting inside. It hangs from the ceiling in solid stainless steel. You may fly in your living room in a floating bubble swing. You can even have it with removable upholstered cushions in silver leather (the original version) or in other colours and in fabric upon your request. Well, the Finnish designer Eero Aarnio (Helsinki, 1932) though about such piece and designed the so-called Bubble Chair in 1968. He inspired himself in the Ball Chair designed by him in 1963. Both chairs are symbols for the aesthetics of 1960s and are both famous and iconic. The Bubble Chair has been featured in movies sets (as *Across the Universe* directed by Julie Taymor in 2007) in all type of advertising (it was cover of *Playboy* in December 2000), fashion events (from New York to Berlin), airport lounges (as in the *Aspire Lounge* at Helsinki Vantaa Airport), museum collections. It can also be found in diverse spaces of so many homes where people are lucky enough to enjoy such a swing.

Author: Fátima Pombo

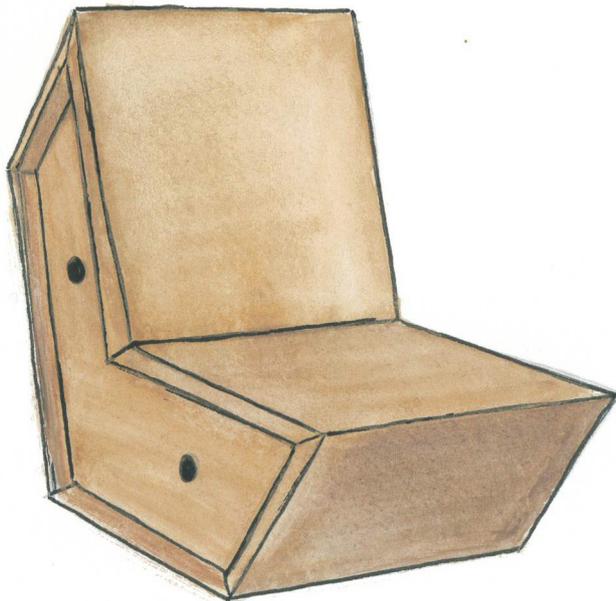


# 1968 Cardboard Chair Otto

## 1961 Peter Raacke

This chair designed in 1968 by Peter Raacke (Hanau, 1928) is the first piece of furniture in this material to be manufactured industrially. Otto is to find in some museums like MoMA, Vitra Design Museum or Deutsches Technik Museum. However, nowadays, as it was again put in the market, it is possible to have the chair at home or set in a multiple kind of spaces. And then, each of us can customize the chair by painting it with any patterns just by following the flow of imagination. Cardboard furniture responds to many demands of nomad life let alone the key issue of sustainability that urges to be implemented in big and small scale. Cardboard furniture is cheap, light and can be assembled and disassembled in the twinkling of an eye when it's time to move. It is suitable for living in tiny spaces. It is durable, reliable, recyclable and therefore expands an eco-friendly statement. Otto, especially, stands out in a room as a chair that suggests a low profile attitude and a contemporary lifestyle pointing towards movement, flow, transformation.

Author: Fátima Pombo



# 1967 Ovalia Egg Chair 1961 Henrik Thor-Larsen

The sensational Ovalia Egg Chair is designed by the Danish designer Henrik Thor-Larsen and was originally exhibited at the Scandinavian Furniture Fair in 1968, then sold worldwide for a decade until production stopped in 1978.

The chair is a classic furniture design, it resembles Eero Aarnio's Ball Chair, but has more narrow proportions. The Ovalia Egg Chair has a lot of attitude, the design comprises an egg-shaped reinforced fibreglass shell, painted glossy white, with a portion removed from the front. Coloured padding surrounds the small space inside, and extra cushions upholstered are added to the seat and back.

Henrik Thor-Larsen first designed and built sports and racing cars on Porsche chassis, and was then discovered by Saab in Sweden and asked to design seats for their sporty model Sonett. His interest turned increasingly to industrial design and he took the step from car seats to chairs.

The retro-futuristic chair is perhaps best known for its starring role in the films *Men in Black* and *Men in Black II*. The design exudes attitude, especially with Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones in two black and white Ovalia Egg Chairs for the poster of *Men in Black II*, showing the actors sat in matching versions of the design. The chair went back into mass production as a result.



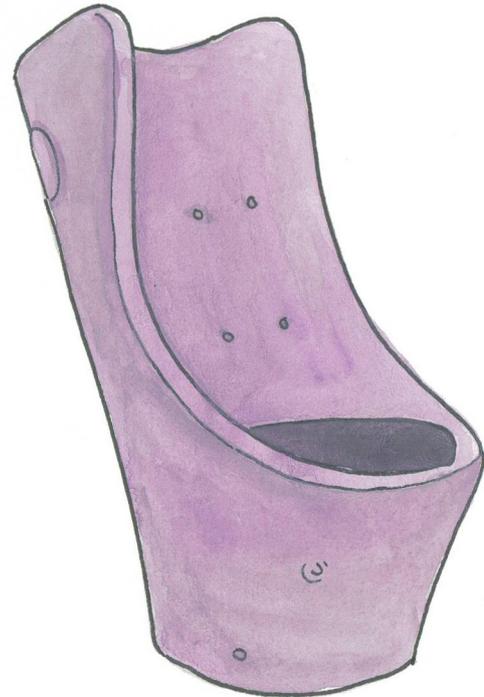
Author: Anna Marie Fisker

# 1967 Expo Mark II Sound Chair Mary Bronwyn Currey and Grant Featherston

The Sound Chair created in 1967 by Mary Bronwyn Currey in collaboration with Grant Featherston. These well-known Australian designers, who had specialised in furniture production, becoming icons of the Atomic Age, stood out particularly for the models of chairs created in the 50s, such as the case of the Contour Chair R160. Mary Featherston, the more well-known of the two, was also famous for her research and designs for children's educational spaces, combining this work with teaching at the School of Architecture and Urban Design of the RMIT University.

The wing chair was one of the pieces created for the Australian Pavilion at the International and Universal Exposition of Montreal, Canada, in 1967. The piece, upholstered with fabric, is one of the 240 chairs with speakers designed as a resting place for the exposition visitors, while they listened to famous Australians describing the contents of the exhibition. They have a high backrest with two speakers inserted in the upper part, a circular seat and cushion at the base and an integral headrest at the top, providing the comfort that their particular function demanded.

Author: María del Carmen Bermejo Lorenzo



# 1966 Prato Chair

## Gruppo Strum - Pietro Derossi, Giorgio Ceretti and Riccardo Rosso

The Prato Chair was inspired from the word *pratone* that means ‘big lawn’, and is a chair that has the shape of long green stalks. The design is light years away from our usual furniture; the blades of grass flexible, making the chair suitable for lounging, hiding, and playing.

The chair was conceived during the anti-design Cultural Revolution, and responds directly to the restrictive aesthetics of the period. Its grass-like appearance supplies a biological and natural element, which is then abstracted and ultimately combined with the artificiality of its industrial materials. The Prato Chair plays with proportion and material incongruities, developed of polyurethane foam creating a seat and a lounging surface that can be used in many different positions, as it flexes its shape, to fit around the user.

The unconventional concept is designed in 1966 by Gruppo Strum, a group of Italian architects; Pietro Derossi, Giorgio Ceretti and Riccardo Rosso united in opposition to the functionalist International Style. It was produced from 1971 by the company Gufram.

The action of sitting is complicated by the design, suggesting that we can no longer rely on the habitual bend in the hips’ movement associated with sitting – a gesture intended to free people from social conditioning.



Author: Anna Marie Fisker

# 1965 One and Three Chair 1961 Joseph Kosuth

*Chair, silla, cadeira, sedia, chaise, stool...*

Different signs for the same meaning: *a seat with a back, and often arms, usually for one person (...)*. Next to this meaning, we see the object that makes it concrete: a chair. To the left side of the chair, we find its photograph, as a representation of the object.

These are the three elements that make up One and Three Chairs, a work created by the artist Joseph Kosuth in 1965, fundamental to understand the Conceptual Art postulates. Kosuth relates the linguistic aspects to the objectual and the representational ones, decoding the system of the discourse. He explores different representation forms of the same concept: chair.

The work requires a reflective work of the spectator: the exhibited object is not the fundamental thing because the artist exhibits, in equal conditions, his own photographic representation and a dictionary definition. It incites us to pay attention to an object of daily use, which in this case, is useless. When the chair was moved from its daily use to the sacralized space of the museum, it assumed a new meaning as a piece of art.

It is only then that we understand that the object acquires its meaning through our use of it. In the same way that art can be configured in the space of mediation that exists between the object-work and the spectators.

Author: Renata Ribeiro dos Santos



# 1964 Electric Chair 1961 Andy Warhol

The Electric Chair was supposed to be invented by employees at T. A. Edison's workshop in New Jersey in the late 1880 s. Edison was in favour of abolishing the capital punishment but meanwhile he thought electrocution would be a better solution than hanging. Consequently, the inventor's involvement in the chair designing process is rarely found in indexes.

Electric Chair by Andy Warhol is a medium-size canvas screen printed with silver acrylic paint. This unoccupied Electric Chair is set in an empty room. The chair bears leather straps for feet and hands and a cable can be seen running out from under the seat. A sign that reads 'Silence' can be hardly seen behind the chair, which provides a sinister air that blankets all the painting, if possible.

Author: Marta García-Sampedro Fernández-Canteli



# 1964 618 Chair 1961 Carlo Scarpa

Carlo Scarpa (1906, Venice, Italy–1978, Sendai, Japan) was an Italian designer and architect influenced by the materials, landscape, Venetian and Japanese cultures, and Modernism. His architecture is related to history and pays attention to the minimum details and the integration of ancient crafts within modern aesthetic. In 1964, Carlo Scarpa looked up the meaning of the word ‘furniture’ in the Crusca vocabulary and in the etymological dictionary of Battisti, under this heading there was the definition: ‘provide for what is necessary’. Battisti adds that ‘furniture’ means “to take care’. This was the starting point for the design of this chair for Meritalia. An armchair with a solid wood structure covered in leather, particularly comfortable and with a minimalist look. An almost square plan of 57 x 55 cm, rests with four vertical elements of a height of 45 cm. From the structure of the seat a particular backrest rises from the center that seems to rotate in itself to wrap the customer’s back. In this chair the harmonic geometries of Carlo Scarpa peek out, where simple forms are combined with pure functionalism.

Author: Ana María Fernández García



# 1963 GJ Bow Chair 196 Grete Jalk

The GJ Bow Chair constructed of two folded plywood pieces has a side table to play along. Chair and table may play a role in theatrical scenery for imaginary narratives happening at an ambiguous hour. The chair's story itself has dramatic notes. In 1963 the Danish designer Grete Jalk (Copenhagen, 1920-2006) won the British Daily Mail International Furniture competition with this chair built in collaboration with the cabinetmaker Poul Jeppesen. However, despite the prestigious award, only approximately 300 pieces were produced due to the technical complexity and daring method of production it asks for. On the other hand, the unique elegance, grace and unconventional lines of this chair attracted the attention of MoMA in New York. The Museum bought the chair in the same year of the competition and displays it on permanent exhibition. The limited number of copies may probably explain the impressive high prices it achieves in international auctions. Since 2008 the Bow Chair and Nesting Table were put in production again and the icon recovers the possibility of being released for contemporary times.

Author: Fátima Pombo



# 1963 Barcino Chair

## 1961 Joan Casas

It is an outdoor chair designed by the commercial artist, publicist and industrial designer Joan Casas for the Spanish company Indecasa. The company, whose slogan has always been 'sit well to feel good', had been created a year before in Manresa (Barcelona) to innovate in the use of aluminium applied to the exterior of furniture. It had, until then, been manufactured in Spain in iron, which was expensive, heavy and short-lived. Aluminium, which is light, easy to maintain and long-lasting, was applied in this stackable design with a curved ergonomic structure which is assembled with very few screws, with a seat and back originally of cattail, and today produced with synthetic hand-spun fabric.

The seat represents a design proceeding from the autarky of the Franco dictatorship in Spain, a country where self-production contributed to overcoming the difficult years of the post-war and international isolation. Strangely enough, this chair is currently internationally recognized as the 'Spanish Terrace Chair'. Today it is manufactured 4 cms taller than the original prototype because, as the management of the company jokes: 'the chair was adequate for Spanish height in the 60's, but now we have grown'.

Author: Ana María Fernández García



# 1962 Accumulation Chair Yayoi Kusama



At the beginning of the 1960s, Yayoi Kusama (Matsumoto, 1929), a woman and artist, born and educated in the conservative and traditional Japanese environment, was fully introduced to the cultural environment of New York City, where the air of sexual liberation and counter-culture was beginning to be felt.

This confrontation between the traditional and the transgressive moulded her particular psychic condition even more complex, as she sought in the

obsessive repetition of forms a comfort for her anxiety and hallucinations that had accompanied since her childhood. Moved by these impulses, Kusama transferred her obsession from the two-dimensional support, papers and fabrics used until then, to the three-dimensionality of sculpture. It was at this point that she began the production of a series of objects conceived under the title Accumulation.

It was not by chance that the element selected to start the series was an armchair (Accumulation n.1, 1962, MoMA). The artist chose an everyday object, part of the domestic landscape, the habitat per se of women. To the armchair, usually synonymous with comfort, she sewed by hand, one by one, filled and painted phallic volumes, until this repeated form dominated the object, sexualizing it fully. Later, Kusama accumulated the small protrusions in other furniture that flooded entire rooms, creating soft installations or sculptures that were fundamental in the conception of Pop Art, Performance and feminist claims in art.

Author: Renata Ribeiro dos Santos

# 1960 Panton Chair 1961 Verner Pantan

The experimentation of the swinging 60s found its way into the realm of Danish design with unconventional ideas of furniture and interior designer, Verner Pantan. Classified as the most *Italian* of Scandinavian designers, he brought pop art ideas into the furniture aesthetics of his time and place, creating wholesome interior spaces, full of colour and imaginary shapes.

Pantan's fluid-like forms and daring furniture look doesn't follow function at all – it follows FUN! His signature futuristic and widely influential graphic aesthetic produced bold forms – therefore an idea of a cantilever chair made from one single material appeared. The Pantan Chair was envisioned as a curvaceous statue, extremely innovative both in materials used and colour combinations available. Besides the imagination embodied, the chair offers an additional function of sitting, which is attractive not only to adults but also to children (Pantan Junior). Its presence on the market was unique and it became very popular with consumers due to attractive shape and resistance of the material, which still allows its use indoors and outdoors.

This chair, as well as Pantan's aesthetics in general, embodies emotionality and his effortless approach to enjoying life. It is a timeless design that indubitably makes it a design icon.



Author: Katarina Bogataj

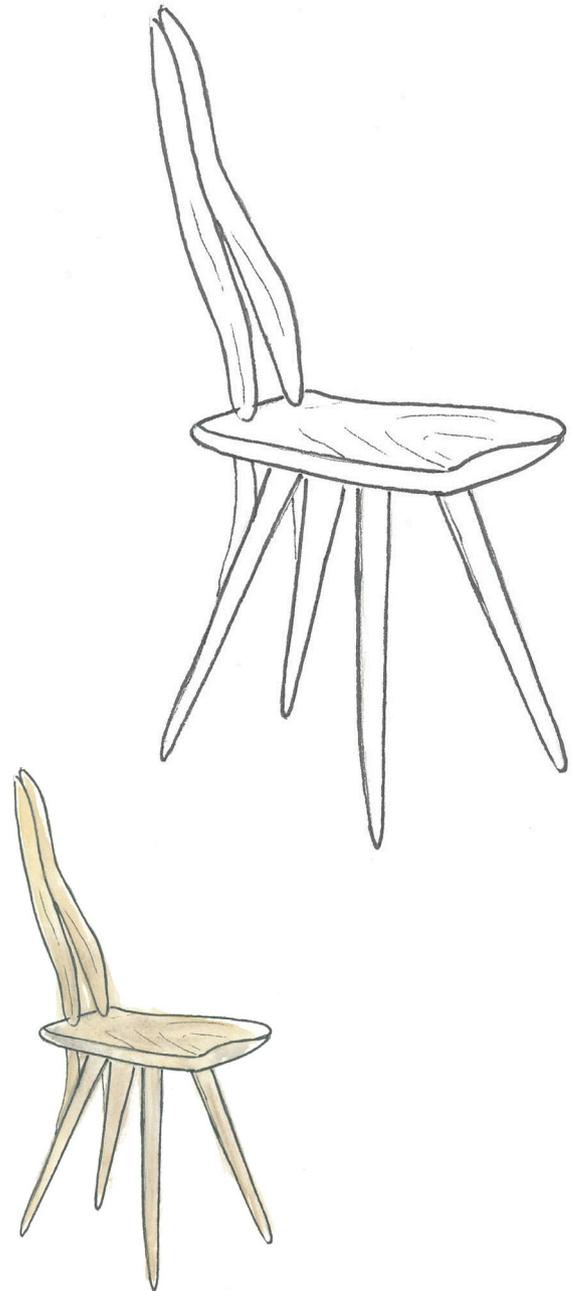
# 1959 Chair for Mollino Office Carlo Mollino

Carlo Mollino designed the chair in 1959 for his office at the faculty of Architecture in Torino, where he later in his life became Head of Faculty. Carlo Mollino started working in interior design between the 1930s and 1940s. He was an eclectic man: he was an architect, a car and airplane pilot, a ski instructor, a writer and a photographer. His creative talent and brilliant mind allowed him to, in a completely original way mix natural shapes and artistic elements from Baroque, Rococo, Art Nouveau and Surrealism.

Especially his chairs were distinctive, many made from sculptured wood. The Chair for Mollino Office originally designed for Mollino's own personal use, was later reissued by Zanotta in 1986 and called the 'Fenis' Chair.

Carlo Mollino's furniture clearly highlights his unique style: his pieces are free from the influence of mainstream style, which typically reflected geometry and rationalisms. The Chair for Mollino Office is a chair with anthropomorphic lines and organic inspiration, a tangible proof of the high level of harmony that Mollino could reach between artisan skills and experimentation. The chair is like a domestic sculpture, creating furnishing that is highly contemporary and represents and expresses design with the idea of a highly theatrical interior architecture.

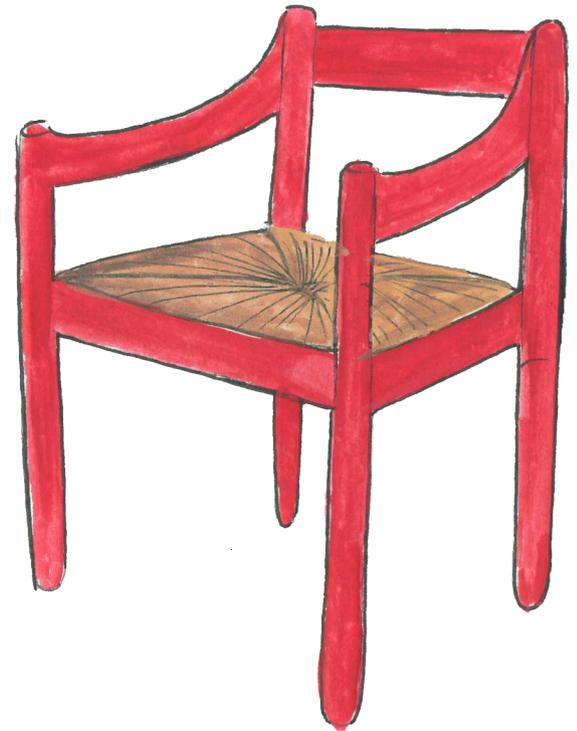
Author: Anna Marie Fisker



# 1959 Carimate Chair 1961 Vico Magistretti

'Her

While the chair does its work, people rest.  
 The chair is a spatial dimension within all houses.  
 The chair is the Cartesian axis of westerners.  
 The chair is a place of discrimination of women.  
 The chair is the guarantee of having a place to work.  
 The chair is 16 hours from Rome to Tokyo.  
 The chair is the worker facing the machine.  
 The chair is an excuse to eat with the family.  
 The chair is the back of a running horse.  
 The chair is like the whole world placed beneath you.  
 The chair is balancing your legs above the Grand Canyon of Colorado.  
 The chair is a tree trunk cut at the base.  
 The chair is an invention for starting conversations.  
 The chair is like a bed in which it is impossible to sleep.  
 The chair is the 'body' of a friend.  
 The chair is a synonym of Thonet.  
 The chair is crouching when there is no chair available.  
 The chair is the illusion of elderly people.  
 The chair is a stool in the corner of a cell.  
 The chair is the emptiness left behind if I throw myself out of the window.  
 The chair is a swing to dispel thoughts.  
 The chair is dying electronically.  
 The chair is that thing which lies in wait for you every morning.  
 The chair is crossing your legs'.



Fragment of the text read by the architect Alessandro Mendini in the commemoration of the anniversary of 'Twenty Chairs in Twenty Years' by Vico Magistretti in 1980

# 1958 Egg Chair 1961 Arne Jacobsen

The Egg Chair, one of the Arne Jacobsen's most iconic creations, was designed in 1958 for a special purpose. It was designed to adorn the SAS Royal Hotel in Copenhagen, Jacobsen's most prominent work. This project closely connected a unique group of resounding names: the Scandinavian Airlines as its commissioner, Arne Jacobsen as its creator, and Fritz Hansen as the manufacturer. Their goal was to build a grand new hotel for the Jet age, a luxurious and impressive building that would reflect values and quality on the inside as well as on the outside.

The Egg was initially designed in a sculptural manner as Jacobsen was exploring its form through experimenting with different materials. He decided on an organic egg-like shape and clad the chair in natural colours. He was also interested in how the characteristics of a particular material influence the form of a design. The Egg Chair was intended to stand out and dominate the space that it is placed in with its unusual form. Compared to Jacobsen's other designs, it is big and voluminous while his designs are mostly simple and functional. Like some of Jacobsen's other designs, the Egg was considered somewhat too modern at one point, but through time its spirit and liveliness have helped it to become an enduring classic.



Author: Katarina Richter

# 1957 Superleggera Chair Gio Ponti



‘Archetype of a chair’.

The Superleggera is a lightweight (only 1.7kg!) dining chair, designed by Italian architect and designer Gio Ponti for the Italian furniture manufacturer Cassina in 1957. The Superleggera was a result of intense collaboration between designer and manufacturers. The challenge was to strip back the ash frame until its legs and back became triangles so slim they seem barely to be there at all. Already creating a triangular frame with 18mm-thin edges was a huge technical achievement, but Ponti wanted the chair to be suitable for mass production and strong enough for daily use too. His solution was an ingenious slot-together construction method that made the Superleggera tough enough to survive being hurled from a fourth-floor window, and so simple to build that it has been in continuous production for 61 years. The Superleggera became the essence of modernity, yet it was also friendly familiar in its form. Ponti’s chair is rooted in Italy’s craft-based furniture heritage. Ponti, the architect of the famous Pirelli building in Milan, was in the 1950’s searching for other sources outside modern architecture. He looked for the inspiration in traditional furniture and found it in fishing villages of Chiavari. The Superleggera was made out as an echo of the ladder-back Chiavari chair, ubiquitous on the Italian Riviera since the 19th century and became widely used throughout Italy.

Author: Martina Malešič

# 1957 Mole Armchair 1961 Sérgio Rodrigues

In the words of his designer, Mole armchair 'is a super lazy chair!'

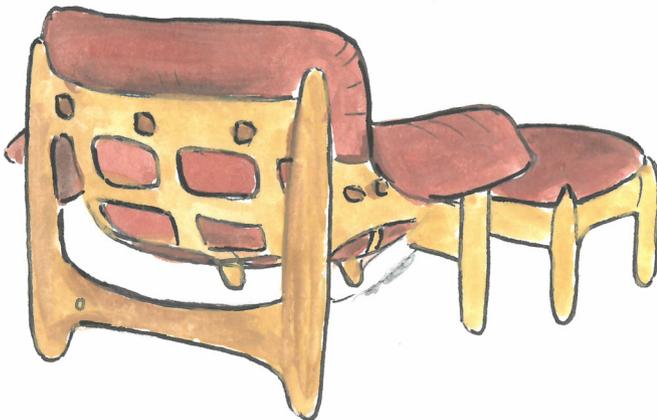
The iconic Mole was designed in 1957 by the Brazilian architect and designer Sérgio Rodrigues (Rio de Janeiro, 1927-2014). Forerunner of fashion photography in Brazil, photographer Otto Stupakoff (São Paulo, 1935 – 2009), commissioned a chair that people would feel 'comfortable and comfortable', he repeated. Sitting on such chair should be an experience of feeling at ease and completely relaxed.

The Mole Chair was a statement against the decorating lifestyle in the 1960s. The designer's irreverence flouted all the standards at the time, creating the Mole Chair in *Dalbergia nigra*, an extremely durable and resistant wood also known as Brazilian rosewood.

Also known as Sheriff, the armchair entered the list of design icons in 1961, when it won the 4th International Furniture Design Contest in Cantù, Italy for allowing the real way to sit. Currently, it is part of the permanent collection of the Museu da Casa Brasileira, in São Paulo, and MoMA in New York.

Sérgio Rodrigues designed around 1200 furniture pieces, mostly chairs, in more than 60 years of professional life. He brought the Brazilian identity to his design, both in the drawings and in the traditional materials like leather, straw and wood, extolling Brazilian and indigenous culture. Through the knowledge of the techniques of Brazilian carpentry, he revealed mastery regarding constructive solutions of his furniture. As a pioneer in the production of prefabricated houses in Brazil, he was the founding partner of the furniture industry OCA which produced the Mole Chair.

Author: Fátima Pombo and Cristiane Menezes



# 1956 Photograph of The Chairs Eugène Ionesco

‘At this moment the audience would have in front of them... empty chairs on an empty stage decorated with streamers, littered with useless confetti, which would give an impression of sadness, emptiness and disenchantment such as one finds in a ballroom after a dance; and it would be after this that the chairs, the scenery, the void, would inexplicably come to life (that is the effect, an effect beyond reason, true in its improbability, that we are looking for and that we must obtain), upsetting logic and raising fresh doubts’.

Author: Eugène Ionesco, The Chairs (Les Chaises), 1952



# 1956 Rex Chair 1961 Niko Kralj

‘Royal chair for common use’

‘The foundation of design is the organic union of all functions that may legitimately influence the forms; here no dominant should be anywhere detectable. In this way, designed objects will be neutral: they will express only themselves and will fulfil the task assigned to them’. With this words, Niko Kralj described his idea of a good design (in a conversation with Mika Cimolini in 2004), incarnated also in the Rex Chair, designed by him for Stol furniture company in 1956. The well-known folding Rex Chair was the last result of several development phases of bigger Rex series of furniture, made with the technology of moulded, perforated plywood which allows ventilation, reduces the weight and is designed for mass production. The first predecessor was produced in 1953, already with perforated spatially curved panels for sitting and backrest but still not foldable. The best-known chair in the Rex family, Rex 5654, a foldable variation, was patented in 1958. It has been produced in different colours and in various styles depending on its assigned use, as a club chair, a high-backed chair or an auditorium chair. Following its accessibility and modernity, this iconic Slovenian modern design has become a compulsory object of interiors and outdoors, for homes, offices, halls, terraces and gardens. The chair, named after its designer (Kralj), whose last name in Slovenian means king (rex in Latin), is still being produced today.



Author: Martina Malešič

# 1955 Gonçalo Chair 1961 Gonçalo Rodrigues dos Santos

Seat on a Portuguese typical esplanada (terrace) and very probably you will seat in a Gonçalo Chair or in a variation of the original model. These chairs appeared during the 1930s and 1940s but the definitive model was mastered by the Portuguese locksmith Gonçalo Rodrigues dos Santos in the 1950s. Since ever, in Portugal, we socialize in esplanadas, chatting about this and that or just contemplating the ocean if the esplanada is placed in the waterfront. The chair is exported to everywhere namely to countries so distant as Australia or United States of America. The popularity of Gonçalo chair contributed to its nickname of Portuguese Chair becoming an attractive and inspiring vintage icon that draws the attention of architects and designers. And after all it is a metallic painted chair, in a tubular steel structure, composed by four elements, namely two tubes, a backrest and a seat: 1) a tube that defines the two back legs, the support to the arms and the upper contour of the backrest; 2) a tube that defines the two front legs and the contour of the seat; 3) a curved and slightly inclined backrest; 4) a seat slightly reclined with a curved edge.

Author: Fátima Pombo



# 1955 Series 7 Chair Arne Jacobsen

In 1955, Arne Jacobsen set a new standard for chair design when he created the Series 7 – a design he claimed was fit for the future. For eternity, one could maybe say, because series 7 has become a style icon and can certainly be seen as one of the finest examples of timeless design.

Series 7 has remained popular for six decades – a period of profound changes in technology, culture and lifestyle, but with very few changes in the original design.

The pressure-moulded veneer chair is a further development of Jacobsen's classic Ant Chair, and the four-legged stackable chair is in many ways the culmination of the use of the lamination technique. The visionary Arne Jacobsen exploited the possibilities of lamination to perfection resulting in the iconic shape of the chair.

Series 7 has now reached its 60th anniversary and is still in perfect shape to continue its journey towards new generations with new demands and new standards for design. Still, in my mind, it is Lewis Morley's photograph of Christine Keeler sitting naked the wrong way round on a copy of an Arne Jacobsen Chair, which gives the most defining images of this functional chair from the 1960s. I sit on a Series 7 Chair nearly every day, and it does indeed tell the story of a unique chair.



Author: Anna Marie Fisker

# 1955 Tulip Chair 1961 Eero Saarinen

I Let me introduce the Tulip Chair – mostly defined by its formal unity and unique organic shape – the chair has been a symbol of futuristic thinking in furniture design since it was first introduced by Knoll as part of Eero Saarinen's pedestal series in the 1950s.

A Chair with just One Leg – that is the dichotomy of Saarinen's Tulip Chair, but many other terms could be added; *futuristic, classic and organic*.

Saarinen was well aware of the non-existence of a one-legged chair, so he deliberately took upon himself the challenge of creating one. With its pedestal base, the Tulip Chair made history as one of the first one-legged chairs, a pedestal swivel chair with an aluminium base and a moulded fiberglass shell. The use of fiberglass was very innovative at the time, and the material provided a lot of flexibility with a formal expression that allowed Saarinen to achieve a fluently organic piece. Its overall form is evocative of a flower that seems to grow out of the ground.

The Tulip Chair can be spotted in many famous places, but my favorite interior with this highly valued antique is the apartment of the architect and engineer, Carlo Mollino in Torino. Here Mollino set 8 Tulip Chairs around the dining table with a hidden meaning of the concept of infinity –  $\infty$ .

Author: Anna Marie Fisker



# 1954 Wheelchair - Rear Window

L.B. Jefferies, the main character in *Rear Window* (1954), is a photographer with a broken leg who has to spend the whole summer resting because of an accident at work. Boredom makes him to spy on his neighbour's daily activities and Hitchcock uses this situation as the starting point of one of his most remarkable and remembered films.

The relevance of the wheelchair in this film is undeniable. If it had not existed, Jefferies would not have been able to move around his flat while he resting his leg comfortably, and if he had not been able to move, he would not have been able to observe his neighbours' lives.

Although we might think the history of the wheelchair is rather contemporary, the first representations of furniture with wheels are found in Greek and Chinese art from the 6th century B.C. It is said that the first appearance of a wheelchair in Western Europe was due to the Spanish king Philip II's mobility problems in 1595. From this moment onwards, wheelchairs started to be improved technically until the 1930s, when Harry Jennings, an American engineer, designed and registered the patent for his own wheelchair in 1937. Jennings and his friend Everest founded 'Everest & Jennings', an enterprise which monopolised the market for wheelchairs until the 1960s.

Thus, maybe Jefferies' wheelchair could have been made by this company.

Author: Noelia Fernández García

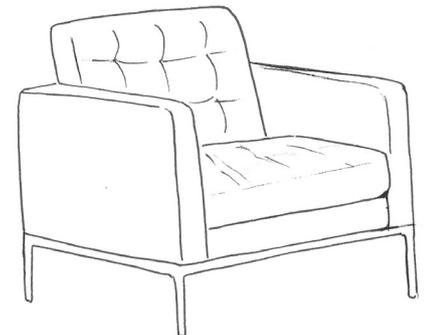


# 1954 Lounge Chair Florence Knoll



Florence Knoll (1917-2019) designed the Lounge Armchair known by her own name in 1954 in line with her global conception of inhabiting a space. As a pioneer American architect and furniture designer, she contributed to create the mood and look of the American post-war lifestyle both in domestic and in office environments. Florence Knoll revealed a functional approach in consonance with the Modernist principles within she was trained but at the same time mastered the expression of an understanding for design beyond that language. Knoll Associates was a company she ran with her husband that became leader in innovative furnishings and interiors during the 1950s and 1960s. This Lounge Armchair designed to receive different fabrics and colours has to be placed in the large picture of using and enjoying a place as an overall composition. Therefore, function is a feature among many others in order to unfold an atmosphere warmed up with a human-scaled perspective. I suppose that such a chair shelters all reasons to smile while sitting on it.

Author: Fátima Pombo



# 1953 Armchair No. 100

## 1961 Niko Kralj

Niko Kralj, Slovenian architect and designer, widely known for his famous folding Rex Chair, designed several furniture items for Stol furniture company during the '50s. One step among many different successful experiments in the process of improving the technology of moulded, perforated plywood was also the armchair number 100. Likewise its predecessor Rex the accessible and modern new chair no. 100, with cane seat and backrest, became a compulsory object of new post-war modern homes. As one of the iconic items of Slovenian modern design the Armchair No. 100 has its place also in the design collection of the Museum of architecture and design in Ljubljana (MAO).

Armchair No. 100 – a chair which smells of wild strawberries with whipped cream

A few years ago we were tidying up my grandparents' house where many of my childhood memories resided. The joy and happiness of those years were easily triggered by the smell of softly pink roses from the garden which usually came along with carefree early summer laughter and a full cup of wild strawberries covered with whipped cream. Strawberries were from the garden, carefully picked by my grandma in the morning and stored in the fridge for an after-lunch treat. The old fridge was still there and besides also 3 chairs No. 100. I took those chairs, restored them and brought them home, along with sweet memories and the smell of wild strawberries with whipped creme.



Author: Martina Malešič

# 1953 Valet Chair Hans Wegner

Wegner conceived the Valet Chair in 1953 after a long talk with Professor of Architecture Steen Eiler Rasmussen and Designer Bo Bojesen about the problems in folding clothes in the most practical manner at bedtime. With the Valet Chair, Wegner united the demanded functions with a sculptural design, and it is one of Wegner's most innovative chairs. A signature piece fusing a chair and a clothes hanger. Underneath the seat hides a box for storing your watch, wallet and keys and when the seat is raised, it functions as a hanger for a pair of trousers.

The first version of the chair was created for the Copenhagen Cabinetmakers' Guild Exhibition in 1951, where the Danish King Frederik IX saw the chair and immediately ordered one. However, Wegner was dissatisfied with the first version, and continued working on the design for another two years, before the King could finally receive his chair. By then it was a three-legged version, created in pine with a teak seat to stretch the exclusivity of the design.

It was part of Wegner's mind-set that a piece of furniture was not manufactured before it was fully developed. There are many stories about the fact that Wegner let King Frederik IX wait for the Valet Chair. Nevertheless, the Danish King ended up ordering a total of ten Valet Chairs.

Author: Anna Marie Fisker



# 1951 Bowl Chair

## 1961 Lina Bo Bardi

Lina Bo Bardi (Roma, 1914 – São Paulo, 1992) the Brazilian Italian architect – fundamental in the development of Brazilian aesthetic thought in the second half of the 20th century – showed her interest in the versatility and sociability of everyday objects of indigenous and *Caiçara* communities, such as hammocks and *tigelas*.

In the case of Bowl Chair, a circular morphology very similar to the vernacular *tigela* was chosen. It is supported by a metal ring with four and equidistant feet. A portion of sphere rests on it – a *cuia*, *cumbuca* or *tigela* (bowl) – covered by a light layer of leather and foam and with a small circular cushion inside. In Lina's own words, in the Bowl Chair, it is possible to 'read, think, lie down, nest and sleep'.

This chair project keeps two fundamental points of the architect's creative thought. She claims for the popular and defends the recognition of the vernacular in the structuring of modern models, a characteristic that persists practically in all her work. She vindicates the social character of design and architecture. Lina thinks of architectural space as a habitat, so the user is always a special element of the project.

In Bowl Chair, she made particular emphasis on the relationship between the woman's body and the object, as it can be seen in the photos published in 'Interiors' (1953) in which the architect herself demonstrates 'in different poses' the versatility of her design.



Author: Renata Ribeiro dos Santos

# 1951 Ant Chair Model 3100

## 1961 Arne Jacobsen

Ant Chair Model 3100 is a chair designed by Arne Jacobsen in 1952. It was designed for Danish pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk, and a second commission for Jacobsen, since he already designed their factory in 1935. The chair itself is important for numerous reasons. First of them is its representation of beginning of Jacobsen's career as industrial designer. Importance also lays in the design of the chair itself. Its intended use was in a canteen of a Novo company, and Jacobsen achieved numerous goals with it. As the name itself applies, his inspiration came from nature. The chair, with its outline, resembles the shape of an ant with its head raised. Inspiration for the three legs comes from agricultural heritage, since his main model was a design of Danish stools, which were made to stand firmly on uneven floors of Danish farmhouses. In the end he combined this with practical use, since the shape of a chair enabled them to be stackable, which made a process of cleaning or setting up the canteen much easier. This also enabled that legs became less easily entangled. If put into context of canteen dining and relaxing, we can easily envision, that resting on this kind of chair is also made more comfortable. The shape of a seat is adjusted to humans back, and is most wide in the upper section, where the pressure from leaning backward is most powerful, which provides strong support to a seating person. Design also enables a person to bend legs less and have them in more comfortable position. With all this we can easily

admit, that Ant Chair not only provides physical pleasure of seating, but also aesthetic pleasure of just observing organic design with inspiration from tradition and nature.

Author: Rok Kajzer Nagode



# 1950 Eames Plastic Side Chair 1961 Charles & Ray Eames

The Eames Side Chair was designed by Charles and Ray Eames, an American couple of industrial designers who made significant historical contributions to the development of modern architecture and furniture. Eames combined the organically shaped seat shell, made from plastic or fiberglass, in a variety of colors and with metal, wooden or a rocker base. It was firstly produced by Zenith Plastics, afterwards by Herman Miller and later by Vitra.

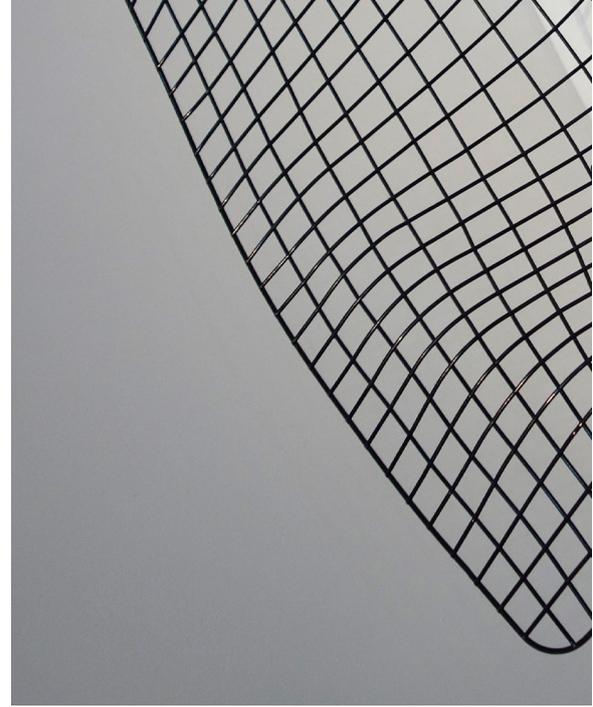
The Eames Plastic Chair has become one of the most desirable types of the dining chair series, to such an extent that today we could find numerous replicas, fakes and variations. This problem was present already in the 60's – Charles Eames and Herman Miller in 1962 designed back cover of Arts and Architecture magazine with clear message: 'Beware of imitations. Enjoy the comfort of the real thing'.

Author: Martina Malešič



# 1950 Diamond Model 421LU Harry Bertoia

The Diamond Chair, one of the classics of modern furniture design, was envisioned by Harry Bertoia in early 1950s. As a multimedia artist, with artworks spanning from sculpture to sound sculpture, it seems to have been the material in relation to the human body that intrigued Bertoia. A play of shape and form, the chair is constructed from a simple starting point of a rhombus-shaped wire rack, developing into the perfect union of organic shapes and industrial rawness of material. Taking its name from diamonds, which are essentially carbon under pressure, the Diamond Chair showcases diamond forms in its overall shape as well as the gaps between the wire grid. The wire is designed to adapt to the body completely, offering support to the sitter in order for them to lounge comfortably. Resting on a steel frame, which, when viewed from the side, conducts two trapezoid shapes, the wire frame seems sturdy, sharp and cold, almost uninviting. It is its shape that yields to the human body, encloses it, wraps it in, creates a nest-like form. Ironically, the wire grid is not only composed of metal, but of the free space between the steel rods too. This creates an intricate contrast between the hard material of the wire grid and the legs on which it rests on the one hand, and the flowing organic form, derived from the outline of a human on the other. The clash between natural and industrial is the very essence of the Diamond Chair.



Author: Vida Jocif

# 1947 Peacock Chair 1961 Hans Wegner

The Peacock Chair designed in 1947 is one of Danish designer Hans J. Wegner's most famous chairs. It is named by its resemblance to the feathers of the outspread tail of the peacock. A name given by his colleague Finn Juhl upon his first encounter, but, the decorative back gives the character to the chair, but at the same time provides support, as the flat parts is positioned where the back is in direct contact with the chair, when you sit in it. The Peacock Chair is a modern version of the classic British Windsor chair produced since the 17th century, but with a modern elegance and less stylistic details. Originally, it took several weeks to produce one chair. Still today, seven workers need almost two weeks.

Wegner's lifelong search for understanding the nature of wood in chair designs, perhaps originated from him being a trained woodworker, the function and the quality of sitting always came first. He challenged the materials, traditional furniture construction and beauty in a sculptural functionalism. All aspects, which is recognizable in the Peacock Chair.

Author: Elias Melvin Christiansen



# 1944 Emeco 1006 / Navy Chair Emeco Company

The Emeco 1006, also known as the Navy Chair, is an aluminium chair manufactured by Emeco (Electric Machine and Equipment Company). It was originally designed for the US Navy during World War II, which needed a strong but lightweight chair for the deck of battleships that could withstand water, salt air and sailors. The chairs had eye bolts under the seat, so they could be attached to a ship-deck using cables. The chair is welded together from 12 pieces and is manufactured by hand through a 77-step process which includes forming, welding, grinding, heat-treating, finishing and anodising for superior quality and strength.

First built for use on submarines in 1944, the Navy Chair has been in continuous production ever since. After the war, Emeco started selling 1006 chairs to prisons, hospitals and government offices. In the 1980s and 1990s, it was popular for the restaurants, in the 2000s it became a designer chair. The Emeco 1006 Chair is featured regularly in design magazines, its indestructible design and 'industrial chic' look makes it ideal for modern dining corners or kitchens. It frequently appears also in movies, as 'The Prison Chair' especially in the interrogation scenes.

Author: Martina Malešič



# 1938 BKF Chair

## Antonio Bonet, Juan Kurchan and Jorge

This chair was created by two Argentinian and one Spanish architect who had worked with Le Corbusier in Paris and who had founded that same year the Austral Collective, a group interested in the renewal of architecture, design and urban planning in the Southern Cone of South America. The name of the chair comes from the initials of the three designers, although internationally it is known as the 'Butterfly', a name which has been legally commercialised in the United States by a number of manufacturers. The creators forgot to take out a patent in time to detain disrespectful and indiscriminate imitation which was carried out with all types of materials. The original prototype was formed by two metallic loops with small, curved spokes of solid iron which served as a support for the leather which forms both the seat and the back of the chair. When a person sits on the leather it adapts like a hammock, which allows for different positions, from the most upright to a reclining position as well as a foetal position. It is a very simple and economical model and due to this, it was easily copied. But it has also been such a comfortable, light and versatile design that in Los Angeles alone during the fifties three thousand pieces were manufactured each week.

The popularity of the BFK has turned it into a cult design of the twentieth century. It is in the MoMA in New York, it formed part of the furniture of Wright's Falling Water House and it was taken



up by North American youth of the fifties as an almost anti-establishment element since it did not allow for a conventional posture and women could only sit in it if they were wearing trousers.

Author: Ana María Fernández García

# 1936 Chair for Johnson & Son Frank Lloyd Wright

In 1936 the architect and designer Frank Lloyd Wright began the project of the S.C. Johnson and Son Administration Building in Racine, Wisconsin. Two years later, the building and their 40 different pieces of furniture were finished. Our chair was a part of this integral project and shows us the importance of harmony with the surroundings, even paying attention to color, with the building's characteristic Cherokee Red. Wright uses the circle as an organic form, duplicating it for the seat and backrest, and finishing the design with the curvatures of the circle for the legs. Originally, the version was heavier, but finally its design was lightening. In addition, we have to take into account that we can find two versions of the chair, one with three and another with four legs. The first had stability problems because the worker had to be in a specific position, with both legs on the ground, to achieve balance. It is useful if we think about postural hygiene, but complicated to maintain in practice. In short, this chair is a symbol of integral aesthetics and design together with functionality. Beauty and functionality are often seen as a dichotomy. At one extreme, extravagant shapes that only seek the aesthetic impression. In the other, functional designs that forget the importance of enjoyment and the positive attitudes that a beautiful environment creates in the human being. In this case, Frank Lloyd Wright not only takes into account the location, beauty and functionality, but also takes the user himself as a participant in the design, completing it.



Author: Llara Fuente Corripio

# 1935 Butaque Chair 1961 Clara Porset

It has been said that the Butaque Chair was a hybrid created in the 16th century, influenced by the Spanish X-frame chairs together with the pre-Columbian ritual little seats called *duhos*. Nevertheless, the Butaque Chair is widely known currently thanks to the 20th century Cuban designer Clara Porset (1895-1981).

After moving to Mexico in 1935, Porset decided to re-elaborate the *butaque* basing on her ideas of modern design and craft tradition in order to provide the country with a prevailing identity in the current world. After different formal analysis and ergonomic studies, she created a new *butaque* in which curved legs, seat and back were made from small boards very easily joined. Moreover, due to her intention of placing value on Mexican craftspeople, she decided to use different materials for the seats such as leather, upholsteries with different patterns or materials like *ixtle*. The use of rustic and natural materials in her furniture was narrowly linked to the interest in creating a psychological affinity between Mexican people and furniture, thereby generating a relation among design, culture and society. Finally, as a result of her research, she was able to develop the *butaque* in diverse proportions, finishes and fabrics.

Clara Porset designed a functional chair which turns out to be a strong aesthetic proposal with national-identity features, since design and architecture were essential to the construction of new ideas for Mexico's true cultural identity.



Author: Noelia Fernández García

# 1934 Standard Chair 1961 Jean Prouvé

Can you think about a chair? There are plenty of chairs in the world, each one has her own characteristics. Jean Prouvé created the “Standard Chair” in 1934, for Vitra. Based on the fact that when we sit down, we exert more pressure on the back part of a chair. This force is discharged into the back legs. This particular chair shows this discharge in the back legs clearly. The front legs are thin tubular metal and make an angle close to 90°, while the back legs have a more opened angle and they are a triangular shaped metal. There is also a version known as Standard Chair SP (‘Siège en plastique’- ‘Plastic seat’, in english) that as it says has the seat and the back in plastic. When I first look for the pictures of the standard chair the first memory that came to my mind was the school chairs. They are very similar to these ones if you don’t look at the back legs, which makes the Standard Chair so unique. These legs details on the Standard Chair gives it an elegance and simplicity that sets it apart and makes it easily identifiable and ideal for offices. Besides the ones that have the seat and the back in plastic there is also the ones in wood. This chair also uses few materials, facilitating the production steps.

Author: Verónica Castro



# 1931 Armchair 41 / The Paimio Chair

## 1931 Alvar Aalto

Aalto's furniture pieces are always distinguished by clarity, functionality, simplicity and endurance. All those characteristics are timeless design principles, making individual furniture pieces timeless as well. The same pieces produced in the 1930's, more than 80 years ago, are still being manufactured and sold worldwide today. Aalto always understood architecture as a bridge between human and nature and that view is apparent in furniture designs as well. His aim was to serially produce everyday objects using natural materials like wood and put an emphasis on sinuous, tactile form, purposefully placed in space to achieve a flowing organic unity. His furniture was always carefully designed to be positioned in a space, which was understood as a continuum of nature. Nature is also reflected in the curvilinear curves of the furniture pieces. And yet furniture designs by Alvar and his partner and wife Aino, have a unique voice and can stand on their own. Even though they are serially produced they retain an almost hand-made quality about them, the essence of the human touch Aalto was always trying to keep. Aaltos' aim with the Paimio Chair was to combine functionalism and beauty, which is a timeless aesthetic principle.

Author: Nina Misson



# 1930 American Scene, a fabric with Chairs Ruth Reeves

Ruth Reeves was a painter and an Art Deco textile designer. She was also an expert on Indian handicrafts. Evoking the ‘the American way of life’, based on the American dream, Reeves made the American Scene, a textile that, unlike the industry’s norm for furnishing fabric florals or formal brocades and damasks, celebrates everyday life. Scenes with productive work, sports, the happy family and the chair in many domestic situations.

Reeves combined imaginary rooms in a country house, where her given textile would have meaning.

The American Scene pattern recalls eighteenth century textiles with repeating groups of picturesque figures, surrounded by arabesques or foliage, however; this particular type of pattern was also typically used in Art Deco fabrics.

Reeves also referred to Cubism, Futurism, Folk and Tribal Art for inspiration. She took an eclectic approach in her design and choice of fabrics, she employed. Like many of her contemporaries, she embraced modernism, which served to move design away from old-fashioned historical styles and create sleek, abstract forms appropriate for modern life. She was able to incorporate both the modern and primitive in her designs that combined old and new, as a synthesis of primitive vitality and machine-age sophistication.



Author: Anna Marie Fisker

# 1930 Milking Stool

It is thought that Neolithic farmers in Europe may have been the first to milk cattle for human consumption. These farming activities may have been started around 6,000 years ago. It is also believed that this activity may have been started first in Europe than in other ancient civilizations.

If this information is true, we must presume that the milking stool has been invented at the same time the milking activities started. Milking stools have been historically made of wood and they can have two, three or four legs.

Author: Marta García-Sampedro Fernández-Canteli



# 1929 Barcelona Chair

## Lilly Reich and Mies van der Rohe



Work carried out in 1929, together with the pavilion and other furniture, to represent Germany at the World Exposition of Barcelona in 1929.

The project, traditionally attributed to Mies Van der Rohe, is nowadays more accurately recognised as the work of Lilly Reich (1885-1947), associate architect of the former, with whom she worked from 1926 to 1938.

Lilly Reich is a renowned artist, architect, furniture, interior and fashion designer, first woman director of the Deustcher Werkbund. Apart from a noteworthy artistic production, she was also director of the Bauhaus interior and fabric design workshop both in Dessau and Berlin. From 1938 she worked alone in her architecture and design studio until her death.

The Barcelona Pavilion Chair, part of the side table and Ottoman table set, is one of her best-known works. Representative of the modern movement, the support is made of polished stainless steel, which brings lightness to the set, on which are placed the seat and backrest in pigskin. The components of the piece are exhibited as an example of the technical advances applied to design, without concealing structural aspects such as the frame or springs, achieving functionality and maximum aesthetics based on sincerity.

Author: María del Carmen Bermejo Lorenzo

# 1926 Bibendum Chair Eileen Gray

In 1926, at a time when primarily male designers and architects were authenticating their leading positions by introducing modern furniture pieces that later became influential icons, Eileen Gray (1878-1976) designed the curvaceous and inviting Bibendum Chair.

Gray named it after a voluptuous male figure: the legendary Bibendum man, the shapely body of this friendly character, created in the late 19th century for the Michelin Company. The Bibendum Chair spoke the modern design language fluently: it was a fresh interpretation of the machine aesthetics advocated by Le Corbusier.

The result was a chair, a minimalist piece composed of an upholstered white-leather seat and a back supported by a chrome-finish steel base. Nevertheless, Gray's piece displayed an original and feminine take on the geometries and proportions prevalent at the time. The three tire-like rolls that made this chair visually bold and enticing were comparable only to the proportions and silhouette of the Michelin man.

Bibendum is one of a kind; Eileen Gray used this chair in a few of her interiors, among these in E-1027, a place that has become mythical.

Author: Anna Marie Fisker



# 1921 Peacock Side Chair 1961 Frank Lloyd Wright

It is possible that shortly before lunchtime on September 1st, 1923, several guests sitting in a Peacock Chair in the banquet hall of the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo felt the force of the earthquake that struck the Japanese capital. Conceived by Frank Lloyd Wright and opened a year before, the hotel was one of the buildings that survived the Kanto earthquake, as well as providing shelter for people whose homes were destroyed in the devastating event. This episode reinforced the aura of genius that haunts the architect.

Wright was in charge of the building's design and its complex ornamental project -putting together Mayan Revival style, native Japanese elements, and geometric abstraction. In his design, he sought to capture an organic representation that would symbolize the relationship between East and West. The Peacock Side Chair is one of the pieces created by Wright that reflects this intention. Made from oak wood and leatherette upholstery that creates a great contrast, it has an octagonal seat and a hexagonal backrest. The hexagonal shape is repeated in the framework of the chair legs that are joined to the backrest through three elegant and simple wooden strips. These geometrical shapes can be seen again in the internal and external decorative elements of the building, possibly alluding to a simplification of the recurrent forms in Japanese art.

Nowadays, after the demolition of the hotel in 1968, some examples of these chairs are dispersed in different collections around the world.



Author: Renata Ribeiro Dos Santos

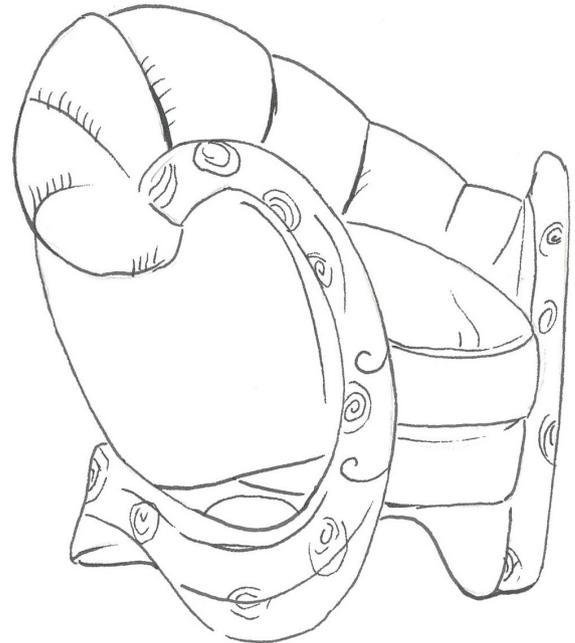
# 1917 Dragons Chair 1919 Eileen Gray

The Dragons Armchair is a piece of furniture designed by the Irish architect and designer Eileen Gray between 1917 and 1919. For years, the unique piece was part of fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent's living room.

The chair is a wooden, upholstered armchair featuring two stylized lacquered dragons. The dragon imagery and clouds depicted on the chair have been likened to those found in the iconography of traditional Chinese art. Gray worked on the chair lacquering the piece by hand and letting the lacquer set in her humid bathroom before spending days polishing the piece.

The chair's first owner was Gray's patron, Suzanne Talbot, the chair then had several owners before it was acquired in 1971 by the Parisian art dealer Cheska Vallois, who in 1973 sold the Dragon Chair to Yves Saint Laurent. After his death, the chair was put up for sale as part of the Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé collection in February 2009 at Christie's auction house in Paris. It was sold for €21,905,000, establishing a new record for a piece of 20th-century decorative art, the buyer of the chair was once again Cheska Vallois who later said that the cost of acquiring it was 'the price of desire'.

Author: Anna Marie Fisker



# 1902 Hill House Chair 1901 Charles Rennie Mackintosh

It is made of dark wood. The basis is geometrical. Ladder-like horizontal lines go from the bottom way up above where a human head would rest and end with a grid. From up-front, it seems two dimensional, but a closer look reveals that the seat is actually curved, so the chair occupies a different, less rigid volume in space. However, a low and rather small upholstered seat and elongated back do not really call for a rest. Instead of enabling comfort, Hill House Chair primarily decorates the space. Charles Rennie Mackintosh designed it exclusively for the main bedroom of the Hill House (1902–1904) in Helensburg near Glasgow. He made two of a kind. One occupied space between two wardrobes while the other marked an entry to the most intimate area with a bed under the vaulted ceiling. The precise positioning of both of them indicates that the Hill House Chair was not meant to be just an object to sit on, but object d'art. Inspired by Japanese simplicity and timelessness, the chair was incorporated into a white interior, resembling a garden, with stylised rose as leitmotiv appearing on the closet door, glass lamp, carpet, curtains and walls. Blossoms were neatly arranged in a framework and so was the custom-made chair, inseparable from the architecture it still belongs to. Let's imagine how this bedroom would have looked like without the two slender chairs. And how differently would we perceive Hill House Chair outside its original environment. In both scenarios, either of Mackintosh's works – the chair or the house –

would lose its full meaning. Because they were designed simultaneously and meant to stay together indefinitely. Recently built construction that covers Hill House does not favour the exterior, but it will – at least – protect the building from moisture and preserve the masterpiece as a whole.

Author: Urška Gabric



# 1898 Argyle Chair 1898 Charles Rennie Mackintosh



The Argyle Chair was created by Mackintosh for the Argyle Street Tea Rooms in 1898, featuring long, tapering uprights that is intersected with an enlarged oval headrest; here a stylised shape of a swallow in flight is carved out to give it an artistic and emblematic quality.

The chair's combination of simple and sculptural elements with an emphasis on natural forms echoed the ideas propounded by the Arts and Crafts movement, of which Mackintosh was an admirer.

An important figure in Mackintosh's career was the Glasgow-based businesswoman Catherine Cranston. Cranston came up with the idea of opening a series of tearooms with artistic interiors. She invited Mackintosh to work alongside architect and designer George Walton on the design of Cranston's Argyle Street Tea Rooms, with Mackintosh focusing on the furnishings.

The unusual height of the Argyle Chairs meant that they formed a screen around the tables, creating the feeling of a room within a room.

In 1900, the Argyle Chair was exhibited at the Eighth Exhibition of the Vienna Secession in Austria, where Mackintosh's work was held in high regard, and strongly influenced the work of the artists, architects and designers of the Wiener Werkstätte community.

Author: Anna Marie Fisker

# 1892 Director's Chair

The Director's Chair is familiar to all of us even if we are not a film director. Cinema made it real to the world, once many directors chose that seat for decades. A stereotypical image of a director in the set is the director's chair embroidered with the personal name giving to it the feeling of a unique piece of a unique 'genius'.

Take n. 1 – The design of this chair goes back to the 15th century when the chairs were used by coffer-makers. Some even trace its roots to the Romans' time. Take n. 2 – In USA the modern American style directors' chair made its international debut during the lead up to the Chicago World's Fair Columbian Exposition in 1893. Take n. 3 – In 1892, Wisconsin Camp Furniture's folding chair – the director's chair – was awarded a gold medal for excellence in casual furniture design. Since then the chair became a star and the company known as Gold Medal Furniture Company. Take n. 4 – it is said that Napoleon was known to use one too. Well, he was a kind of imperial director. But the use of the chair diversified over the years and it is possible to find this chair in many contexts and environments. It is without a doubt a very comfortable seat. Take n. 5 – it is a lightweight chair that folds side-to-side with a scissors action. The seat and back are made of canvas or a similar strong fabric which bears the user's full weight and can be folded; the frame is made of wood, or sometimes metal or plastic. The seat and scissors members work together to support and distribute the sitter's weight.



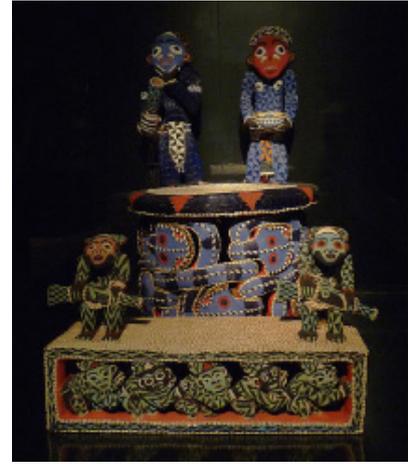
Author: Fátima Pombo

# 1890 Mandu Yenu Throne Old Bamum Kingdom

Bamum Kingdom was a pre-colonial state located in the northwest of present-day Cameroon. The Bamum are an ethnic group of Tikar origin, who spread through the Grasslands territories and established a political entity in the 17th century, reaching its splendour around their capital, Foumban, along the 19th century.

The Bamum were a hierarchical society, in which the king (*fon*) was the highest authority. The use of certain materials, objects and symbols were monopoly of the monarch, who used them as a power symbol. This privilege could be extended to other levels of the hierarchy, which granted status to whoever possessed them, and showed the relationship between the king and his subjects, and amidst the monarch, the nobility and other strata. According to this, the Bamun Kings' Throne is considered an excellent example of political art at the service of power.

The Bamum Throne consists of several solid pieces of assembled wood, lined with a mesh of European glass beads and cowrie shells (*mbüüm*) (used as currency, payment of dowries, etc.). The seat of the throne is cylindrical and carved with two-headed serpents (an attribute of royal power). At the back, attached to the seat, we find two human figures representing a pair of twins of both sexes who are monarch's protective guardians, carrying ritual objects. At the front of the throne, a rectangular prism-shaped footrest is placed, which is carved with a frieze of subjugated enemies at the front,



and spiders on the sides. On the footrest, there are also two warriors armed with rifles on both sides of the throne. This multi-coloured scenery creates an iconographic and symbolic atmosphere that envelops monarch's events, emphasizing his earthly and spiritual power.

In 1902, the German colonizers approached to the Kingdom of Bamum. Unlike other Cameroon areas where the occupation was brutal, this territory remained relatively stable, thanks to the acceptance of the German rule and King Njoya's pacts (c. 1860 – 1933). The Berlin Ethnologisches Museum, similarly to other European museums that were staring colonial art collections, tried to seize the throne through arduous negotiation between German military personnel in 1905. Finally, the fon Njoya agreed to give the throne to Kaiser Wilhelm II as a friendship sign, and ordered a throne copy for his personal use, which today remains in the Foumban Museum.

Nowadays, there is a debate about the return of African art pieces obtained by European powers during the colonization of Africa.

Author: Santiago Rodríguez Pérez

# 1882 Beach Chair Wilhelm Bartelmann

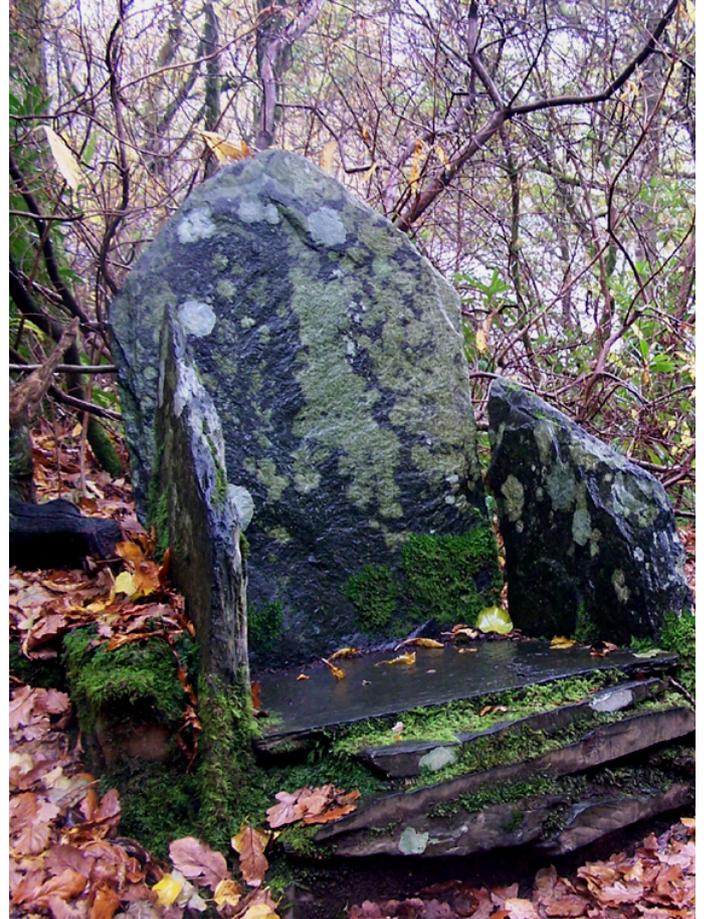
In the spring of 1882, the imperial basket-maker Wilhelm Bartelmann in Rostock, Germany was visited by Lady Elfriede von Maltzahn. She ordered a special chair to protect her from the wind and the sun on the beach. He wove the first single-seat covered beach with cane and willow. Other bathers marveled at this extraordinary seat requested him to make some. As demand increased rapidly in a very short time, he and his wife founded the first beach chair rental near the lighthouse in Warnemünde. At the same time, Bartelmann also built the first two-seater, which he also fitted with footrests, awnings and side tables. By 1900, Mr. Bartelmann family company had established six additional rental premises on the Baltic Sea, including Kühlungsborn, Graal and Müritz. Many North Sea resorts also received beach chairs, as can be seen from the old trade documents. The business continued to expand, but as Bartelmann did not want to see himself as a manufacturer, put great emphasis on being a craftsman, making every beach chair by hand.

Author: Marta García-Sampedro Fernández-Canteli



# 1870 Ruskin's Chair 1881 John Ruskin

It can be difficult to categorise John Ruskin, for his influence extended profoundly into such diverse areas as architecture, literature and social philosophy. The Arts and Crafts movement emerged during the late Victorian period in England, its designers sought to improve standards of decorative design, to create environments in which beautiful and fine workmanship governed. Ruskin's writings on architecture did much to foster the Victorian Gothic Revival, advocating medieval architecture as a model for honest craftsmanship and quality materials. Ruskin's persuasive rhetoric influenced the movement's figurehead William Morris. Ruskin's home Brantwood was a magnet for famous figures in the literary and art worlds, the 30 acres of gardens that surround his house, included the Professor's Garden, where Ruskin grew native fruits and flowers. Ruskin created different garden 'rooms' as a kind of living laboratory to experiment with his ideas on social and environmental philosophy, from a fern garden to a medieval herb area. One garden highlight is 'Ruskin's Chair', a seat made from local slate. The chair does not face the garden itself but rather it faces a small stream where a waterfall tumbles down the hillside.



Author: Anna Marie Fisker

# 1860 Rocking Chair 1881 Michael Thonet

Michael Thonet (1796-1871) has gone down in history as one of the most important woodworking masters. His work entailed a transition from manual furniture production to industrial production, which started in 1859 with the No.14 Chair.

Thonet was born in Germany, where he investigated and discovered how to bend wood using steam. The bentwood and the tubular steel furniture are the two constant product lines in his work. Undoubtedly, the bentwood technique has been a fundamental influence on the furniture industry.

The curved lines of the Rocking Chair are a reflection of the dynamism of this piece and the leather seat evinces its comfortability. Fluid lines of wood and sinuous holes are capable of transforming an ordinary chair into a whole new image of resting. Even though nowadays rocking chairs convey a feeling of relaxing, comfort and ease, in their beginning they were seen as something vulgar and tacky. It would not be until Thonet created his Rocking Chair that they turned into true pieces of art.

Author: Pelayo Rubio Rodríguez



# 1859 The Thonet No. 14 1881 Michael Thonet

‘The chair that has seated millions’.

The Thonet No.14 chair was the result of years of technical experiments by the 19th-century German-born cabinetmaker Michael Thonet. Thonet perfected a process of bending wood into strong, smooth curves. He created a durable and comfortable chair, which consisted of the fewest parts possible and standardised shapes and became the world’s first successfully mass-produced chair. When the No.14 was launched in 1859, it was the first piece of furniture to be both attractive and inexpensive enough to appeal to everyone and be suitable for every use. It consists of six pieces of wood – two circles, two sticks and a couple of arches – held together by 10 screws and two nuts. Efficient and minimalist use of materials followed also easy, efficient shipping (30 of them could fit in a one square metre box). By 1900 factories all over Central Europe produced already 4000 pieces a day, by 1930, some 50 million No.14 had been sold, and millions more have been snapped up since then. The Thonet No.14 is a classic that has been praised by many and it continues to inspire furniture designers today. Among others, young Dutch designer Maarten Baas staged his own homage to Thonet by setting fire to a No.14-style wooden chair as part of the ‘Where There’s Smoke’ collection of furniture.



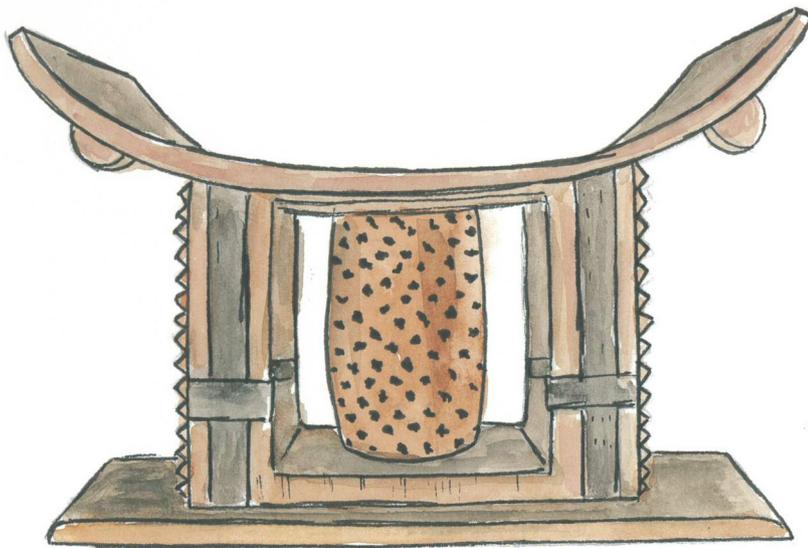
Author: Martina Malešič

# 1650 Stool Mmaa Dwa 1691 Asante Culture

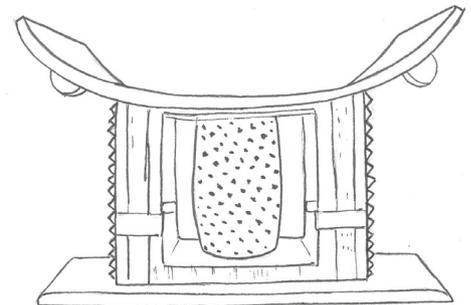
The origin of the Asante culture can be found in the Akan ethnic groups that inhabited West Africa around Lake Volta and the Gulf of Guinea. The Asante formed a strong confederation that developed from the late 17th century, with the founding of the city of Kumasi, whose economy was based on trade, gold mining and slave traffic. They are the most important and larger ethnic group in Ghana and were one of the few African states capable of resisting European imperialism.

Within the material heritage and furniture of the Asante people, some of the most outstanding pieces are the ceremonial stools, being the Golden Stool (*Sika Dwa Kofi*) the main symbol of the Asante kingdom, which according to tradition, descended from heaven at the end of the 17th century and contains the spirit of their nation. Within the typology of the stools, we find specifically female pieces, the *Naaa Dwa*. These are stools carved from a piece of wood, with a hollow central column and four corner supports, upholding a curved seat. Depending on the status of the owner, the complexity of the design could vary, including carvings and metal plates.

The stools *Mmaa Dwa* have traditionally been associated with women and queen mothers in the various local chiefdoms, being an attribute of their power, as only women can sit on them in public. Oral tradition attributes them to symbolic values, such as references to the transmission of power through the queen-mothers. The stool is a symbol of female fertility and propagation and represents queen-mothers as a pillar of their community and family. The link between furniture and owner is very close, becoming identified with his/her soul. In the case of the Asante stools, only the owner can sit on them throughout their life, and on their death, the stool can be placed in an ancestral shrine.



Author: Santiago Rodríguez Pérez



# 1350 Jamuga Nazarí Granada Workshop XIVth century

In the Spanish-Muslim house, it was habitual to sit in a kneeling position with crossed legs on the floor on top of soft carpets and cushions. Also to be found in these social domestic spaces were some elements of furniture, though only a few, like the Jamuga Chair.

The Jamuga is a chair which characterizes the Spanish-Muslim court atmosphere. In reality, it is a folding, wooden hip-joint chair with a seat and back of embossed leather or cloth. The wood is worked with silver, ivory or an inlay of fine woods, always with geometric or plant motives styled thus due to the prohibition of figurative representations imposed by Islam. The technique of inlaying of wood and metal is known as 'taracea' which comes from the word 'Tarsi' (incrustation) in Arabic and appears to have begun to develop in Spain from the time of the Almoravide invasion in the 12th century. During the 14th and 15th centuries, these workshops in Granada were famous and returned to the form of the Roman curule seat, enriching it with magnificent decorative woodwork. After the expulsion of the Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula, Jamuga Chairs continued to be made, but of considerably poorer quality as the years passed because of the increasing loss of knowledge of the Arab craft of inlaying. During the Christian period, it was a chair for authorities, dignitaries and nobles and so it appears in many portraits of Church and civilian authorities from the Renaissance. Today it

is a type of chair which is still crafted in Egypt and Syria.

Author: Ana María Fernández García



# 1200 Saddle Mongolian Culture

It is said that the first saddles were simple fabric strips which were wrapped around a horse back that have evolved over time. The improvement of this item was an innovation and an important advancement especially in the military field. Thanks to the saddle, the riders weight was better distributed, fact that favoured both the horse, whose suffering was minor and endured longer distances, and the rider, who was also able to travel further distances due to the higher level of comfort.

In addition, the inclusion of the stirrups, simple strips of clothing with rings that allowed the rider to climb the horse more easily, was a key fact in the evolution of fighting on horseback. Thanks to these elements, the rider could control his posture and also the animal, only with his feet. Therefore, hands were free to, for example, shoot an arrow. In the sense, the Hun people stood out among many others.

Historically, horses have been extremely relevant in Mongolian life. This evidenced in its religious culture in which there are prayers for the horse spirit Jayagagchi, the shamanist tngri of Fate. Its own language also reflects this importance since it includes a wide range of words related to these animals and their care.

The Mongolian Saddle is made of a wood frame whose shape changes depending on the style or the area, but it typically presents a high pommel covered in leather or cloth and a pair of leather panels at both sides. These panels usually show decorative



designs, which can be made of metal or fabric. Sometimes, decorative elements can be embossed on the leather panels.

Author: Noelia Fernández García



# 500 Manteña Culture Chair

The people belonging to the Manteña Culture were the first to maintain contact with the Spanish colonizers who arrived to the coast of the current Ecuador in the 1526 year. Their social structure, agricultural crops and commerce of the *Spondylus* shell, in addition to their complex settlements, appear with singular amazement in the chronicles of the conquerors on that period. However, the studies about this culture were eclipsed and its trace practically erased and forgotten, as it happened with many other pre-Columbian peoples.

In 1907, the American archaeologist Marshall H. Saville is usually pointed out as the one responsible for 'rediscovering' the Manteña Culture and 'presenting it' to the Western world. The professor from Columbia University began the excavations at Cerro de Hojas-Jaboncillo where he unearthed, among other objects, about 60 chairs or U-shaped seats that were sent to the collections of the National Museum of the American Indian in New York.

These chairs, known today as Silla Manteña or Manabí, became the symbol of Manteña Culture and the territory where it was settled. The municipalities of the region currently use it as a commemorative element and tourist attraction, appearing their replicas in public monuments, interpretation centers, parades and local festivities.

The Manteña Chair was sculpted in a single block of zeolite or sandstone. It usually sizes about seventy centimeters high and its upper part forms an inverted arch, a kind of U that sits on a compact carved base, representing men or animals -usua-

lly a jaguar, a sacred animal, common to different pre-Columbian cultures. The shapes of the base are always presented with its four extremities touching the ground.

There are several hypotheses about their functions or symbolism. The most extended one suggests that the object represented a strong hierarchical component and it was a symbol of power in the manteña society: the zoomorphs were used by shamans in religious ceremonies, while the anthropomorphs were owned by individuals of high political or economic rank.

Author: Renata Ribeiro dos Santos

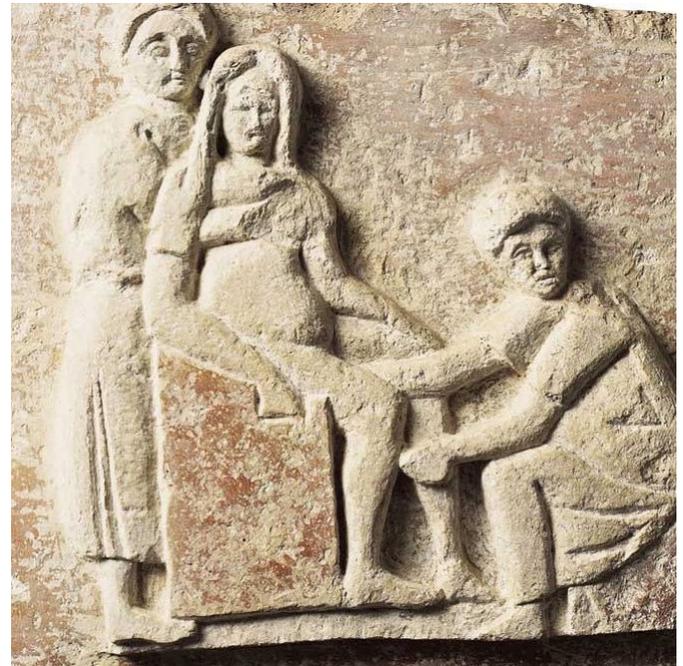


# Birthing Chair

## Scribonia Attice Tomb in Isola Sacra Necropolis

Since ancient times, women have given birth in an upright position, sitting or squatting, which is the natural way of expelling a fetus. Archeologically, delivery chairs are known in dynastic Egypt and Mesopotamia, and even in the Bible book of Exodus there is a reference to a piece of furniture for this purpose.

In all ancient cultures, midwives or relatives who assisted childbirth were placed at a lower level than the parturient, as it can be observed in this high relief of Ostia Roman Necropolis discovered in 1925. The woman who is giving birth is sitting in a wide chair with wide arms to lean on. Its shallow depth allows the midwife to be aware of baby's arrival. Giving birth in a similar chair or in a squatting position remained as a usual practice in Europe until 18th century when childbirth medicalization began, since it was treated as a disease more than a natural act of delivery. Placing women in labour-on chairs or beds, in a lying or semi-sitting position with their legs up benefits doctors' visibility, but do not favour women's comfort or delivery speed. Currently, several designs, such as Relaxbirth, conceived by the Finnish midwife Elija Pessinen, rescue the delivery chair idea from antiquity, in which the woman in labor is sitting or almost squatting, which achieves a faster and less instrumentalized delivery.



Author: Ana María Fernández García

1334 B.C.

# Golden Throne of Tutankhamun

## Egyptian 18th Dynasty

Tutankhamun, the last ruler of the royal line of the Egyptian 18th Dynasty, was the son of the Ate-nist Akhenaten and pharaoh during the New King-dom (1334-1325 BC).

The rediscovery of his tomb by Howard Carter in 1923 is widely known due to the rumours about a curse. This tomb is also exceptionally relevant because of its well-preservation together with the number and variety of the items found there.

Within this treasure, several seats and thrones were discovered. This particular Golden Throne stands out among them as it is not just a chair to sit down, but it conveys a deep and extraordinary symbolic meaning.

Made of wood and covered with gold leafing, silver, glass and semi-precious gemstones, its legs simulate lion claws and present the heads of two of these animals in the front part, while the armrests show symbols of the unification of Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt such as the double crown and the cobras. The throne is complemented with a wooden footstool, covered with stucco and gold leafing, on which the enemies of Egypt are represented and trampled by the pharaoh's feet. The back of the throne shows one of the most famous and intimate scenes in Art History: the young pharaoh appears sitting and being regaled with an ointment by his wife Ankhesenamon.

The throne meant, not only the link between the worlds of Gods and the people, but also majesty, stability, safety and balance. Since pharaohs were



considered Gods on earth, it may not be difficult to imagine Tutankhamun imposing his divine will over the rest of mortals while sitting on this golden throne.

Author: Noelia Fernández García

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*Sit properly*

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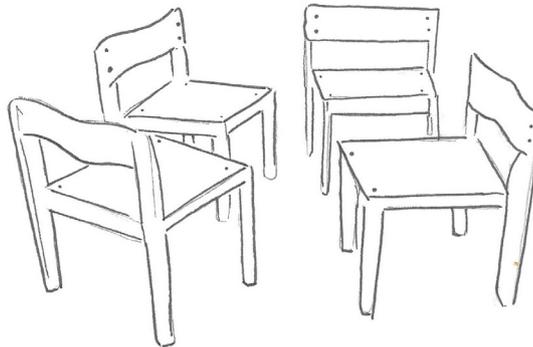
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escenarios para el arte

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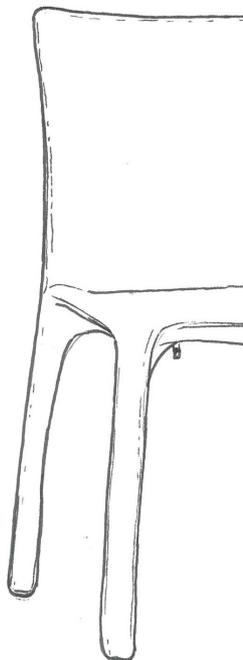
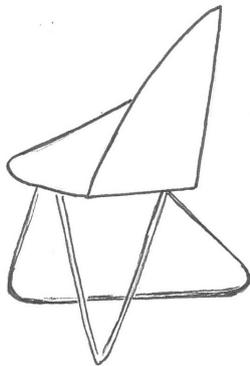
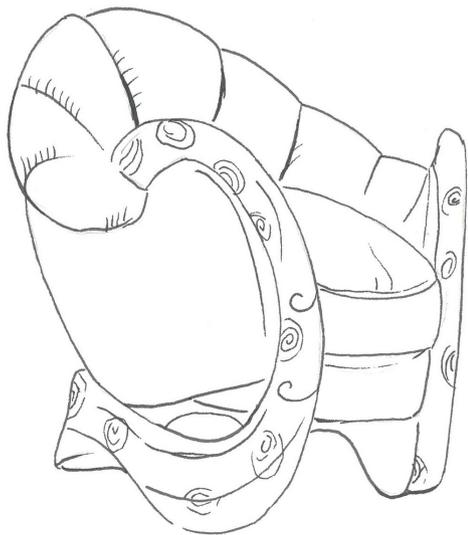
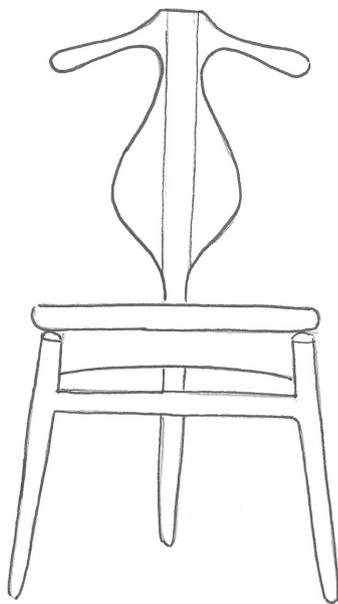
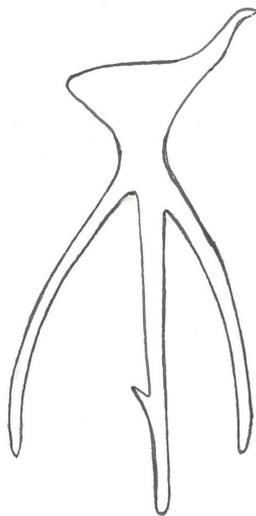
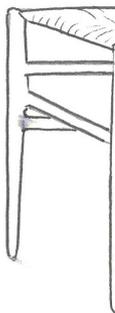
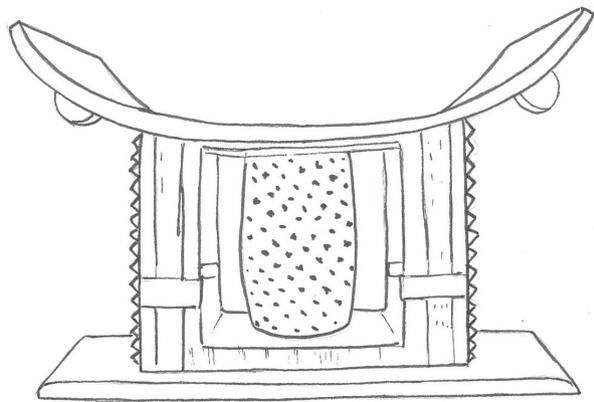
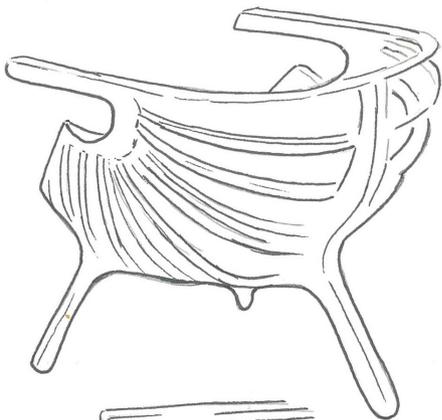
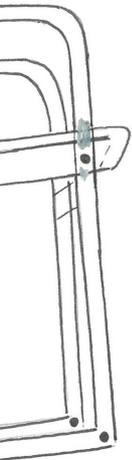
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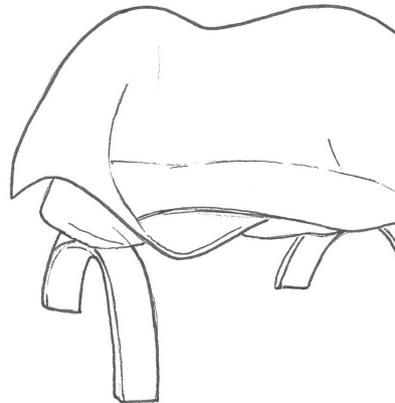
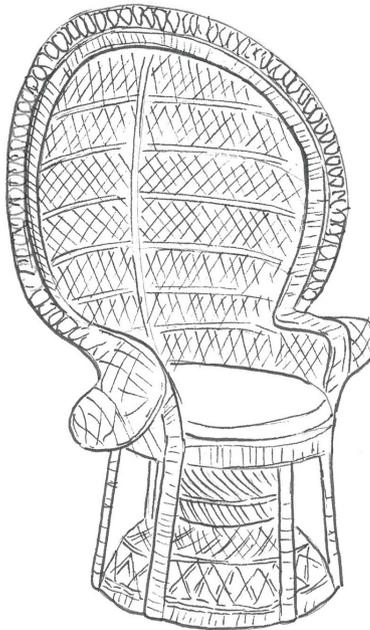
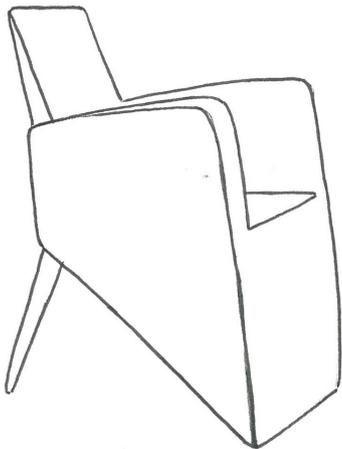
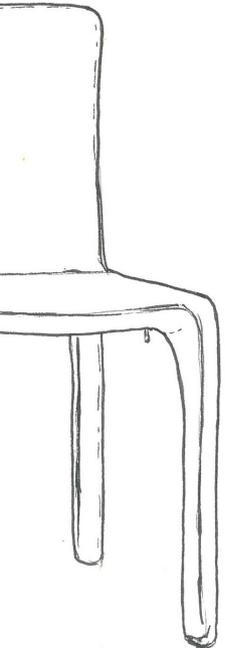
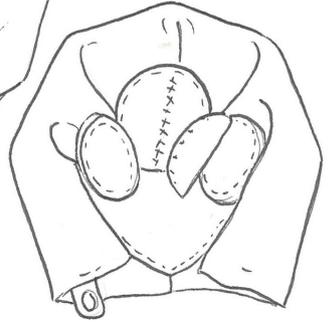
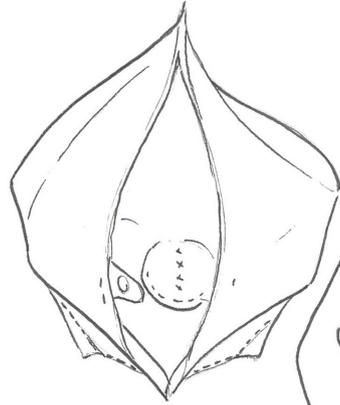
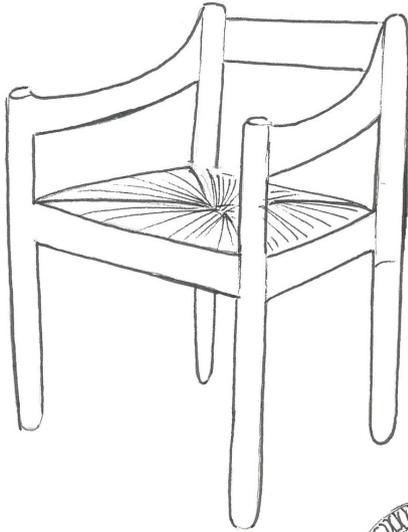
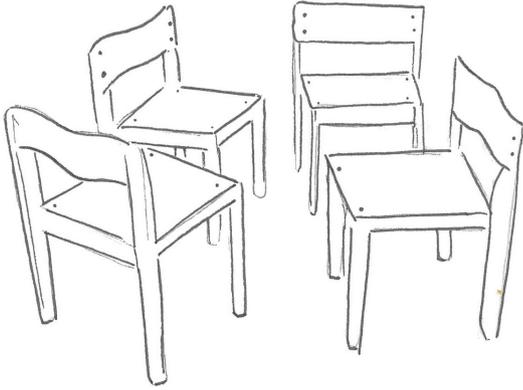
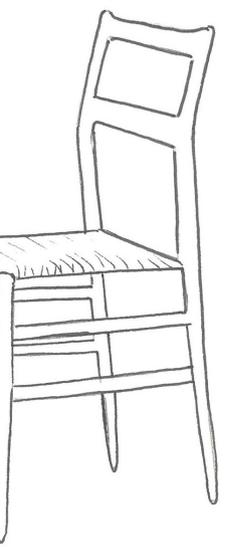


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