

# A t i m e l i n e furniture

[Habegger, Osman, 1989:1-20]

Furniture design and production have undergone more dramatic progress in the twentieth century than any other time in history. In the last 120 years, a truly modern idea of furniture has evolved. The acceptance of the machine as a positive and creative aesthetic force marked the beginning of the modern era. Resulting new techniques enabled creative designers to go beyond the imitation of historical forms.

During the first part of the twentieth century, innovative design experimentation had its roots in the concepts of mass production and adaptive reuse of existing materials. It is thus fundamentally ironic that many significant designs from this period were hand crafted.

Following World War II, new production techniques and industrial materials, such as aluminum alloys, curved plywood, and plastics, were adapted to domestic uses and became the standards. The principle of these materials were mobility / lightness.

<b>1870</b> <b>"CORBUSIER" DINING CHAIR</b> Oldest modern chair in production. Consists of only 5 elements of Carpathian beechwood, overlapped and joined with screws. 6,8 kilos.	<b>1904</b> <b>LARKIN SWIVEL-BASE DESK CHAIR</b> Frank Lloyd Wright's central-pedestal -base metal desk chair. Prototype for the task chair in office furniture industry.	<b>1927</b> <b>MR DINING CHAIR</b> Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's design represents the first resilient cantilevered steel-tube chair. Knoll introduced stainless steel versions of Rohe's furniture in 1947.
<b>1932</b> <b>PAIMIO (41) LOUNGE CHAIR</b> The arms and base of Alvar Aalto's chair are of laminated birchwood bent into a closed curved. This chair was designed for the Paimio Sanatorium in Finland.	<b>1940</b> <b>80 D DESK</b> Franco Albini achieved a lightness and simplicity for the desk function in his metal truss structure, which supports the glass top and the drawer unit.	<b>1954</b> <b>SOFA COMPACT</b> Charles and Ray Eames's application of human engineering is evident in the profile of this thin, high-back sofa. This design established the standard for the "modern" sofa.
<b>1969</b> <b>BOCCA (MARILYN) SOFA</b> This sofa design by Studio 65 is upholstered in the form of a pair of voluptuous lips (Marilyn Monroe's) and covered in red knitted textile. Injects a sense of humor.	<b>1974</b> <b>EKC 13 DINING CHAIR</b> Paul Kjaerholm's daring version of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Brno chair, in which the back and cantilevered seat structure form a rigid connecting element.	<b>1986</b> <b>TEA-FOR-TWO SIDE TABLE</b> A small table design by Francois Scali and Alain Domingo consists of a circular glass top laid in compression against thick and thin steel rods.

[Hagegger, Osman, 1989:15]



# Furniture design

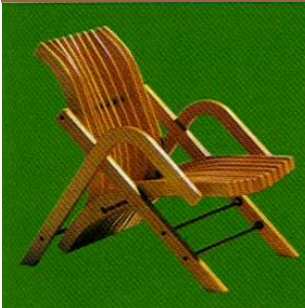
## AN INTRODUCTION - history



The twentieth century will undoubtedly go down in history as the century of design. It will not be forgotten that it was during these hundred turbulent years that this discipline took shape as a concept and became a reality crowned with success. It is a phenomenon that has gone through various phases over the course of its short but intense life, to the point that it now permeates our everyday life, as any man-made object has inevitably also been designed by somebody.

Design forms part of our culture and embraces all types of items. Designer goods cannot be understood if they are divorced from their economic, political, social, cultural or technological contexts. The roots of this discipline lie in the crafts industry and over time it has evolved into its present state.

In the early days pride of place went to the skill and dexterity of the first cabinetmakers, who gave form to wood, the noble material par excellence. With the passing of time, the work of these professionals has given way to that of designers seeking to find a balance between esthetics, functionality, creativity and the demands of the market, on the basis of technology advances and the latest revolutionary treatments of materials.



While it is true that furniture has been part of human life in many civilizations since time immemorial, it is not, however, vital to the human race, as proven by the fact that some cultures have dispensed with it altogether. The presence of pieces of furniture implies the abandonment of certain animal habits and postures and so represents a consolidation of cultural changes. The appearance of furniture is predetermined by a sedentary lifestyle, as opposed to a nomadic one, and an environment which taught how to use it.



The history of furniture can be said to begin in Egypt, the home of one of the most inspired of all ancient civilizations. The Egyptians found new possibilities for creation with stone and they will go down in the history not only for their well-known contribution to politics and philosophy but also for their legacy of thousands of objects, some of them functional but others solely made for the sake of their beauty. Egypt breath art, and this environment made it possible to unobtrusively come up with new formulas.

[Asensio, Montes, 2002:18]



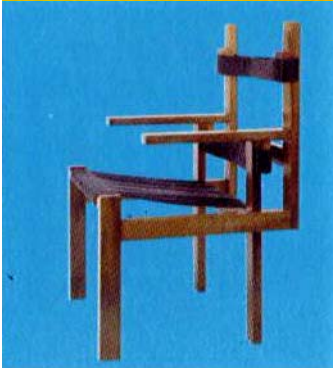
[Asensio, Montes, 2002:18]

The world of furniture can be approached from several angles – according to its functional or technical aspects, for example – making it possible to record the evolution and progress of a specific era and find out how and why certain materials were used at that particular time. The examination of furniture can give rise to a partial reconstruction of a particular period in order to discover the social class of the owner of a specific piece; just as in the cases of clothes, architecture and literature, the study of furniture can help to draw a fairly full picture of an entire historical age.

The history of furniture is undoubtedly distinguished by the changes it has undergone and by the fact it has been highly influenced, especially in the Middle Ages, by architecture: the two disciplines overlap and these days it is very unusual for them to be considered in total isolation from each other.

[Asensio, Montes, 2002:18]





[Asensio, Montes, 2002:26]

Wood was the ideal material for making furniture as it was so easy to handle. The problem was that Egypt lacked this material, as it could only boast palm trees, tamarinds, sycamores, willows and other species that were largely unsuitable for furniture. So, ebony had to be imported from Sudan and olive, fig, cedar and pine trees came from Syria and Phoenicia.

Modern furniture has inherited many features from Egyptian design, which was highly developed due to the richness of their civilization. The most common pieces in ancient Egypt were the chair and its various derivations; the table; the night-time and day-time beds - they distinguished between sleeping and resting; burial furniture and chests and their variants.

The Middle Ages used basically the same types of furniture as those of the latter years of Antiquity. Medieval kings and nobles were nomads and so their furniture frequently had to be transported from one place to another. So, two types of furniture emerged: large and heavy pieces that stayed in the castle and houses, and other lighter pieces that could be easily transported. An analysis of the furniture of the seventeenth century reveals more differences than affinities with respect to previous periods, even though at first sight there seems to be little change. This century is defined by its variety, the result of the conflict between exuberance and austerity. Another novelty of this period was the importation of furniture to India and neighboring countries. It also saw France emerge as the doyen of high-quality furniture: the Louis XIV style was dominated by Classical influences, with sideboards and console tables being the most outstanding pieces. In contrast, the Louis XV style, headed by the designers Meisssonier and Oppenordt, is remarkable for its Baroque and Rococo features, which gave way to Classicism once more in the Louis XVI style. English furniture made all the running in the eighteenth century. The outstanding designer was the Neoclassical architect Adam, who drew on Roman models to create simple and functional forms.

New approaches were pioneered by William Morris, who stripped away decorative features in favor of greater functionality and experimented with new materials like metal and plastics. It is undoubtedly true to say that, in many ways, furniture underwent a more radical transformation in the first half of the nineteenth century than in the previous three hundred years - a period of innovation only comparable to the one that has been experienced from 1945 to the present day.

Today's furniture is passing through a phase marked by a diversity of influences, by eclecticism and plurality. Everything, or almost everything, is permissible, although the designer, despite enjoying absolute freedom at the drawing board, is in reality often overruled by the norms established by the market, by practical considerations and by prevailing trends.



# DESIGN **MODERN** DESIGN DESIGN DESIGN

Design came into being to take advantage of technological developments - a role it still performs, although it is far from the only one - and it grew into the esthetic revelation of the twentieth century by becoming a part of everyday life. Design is here to stay, whether we like it or not. It is indispensable for most of us, as we have to deal with it day after day. We are surrounded by "designs"; they are the mirror of our age and are constantly on show. From the ballpoint pen with which we fill in a crossword to our toothbrush, the bed we sleep in, the clothes we wear or the shelter where we wait for our bus - everything has been passed through the filter of design and its influence is widespread and varied, embracing all types of objects and products. It enshrouds everything; it enshrouds us. Design has often been defined as the

[Asensio, Montes, 2002:10]

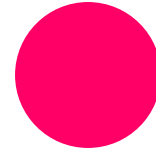


Conception and elaboration of all the objects created by human beings, as a tool to improve our quality of life. It could be said that design is what makes it possible to create "something" that covers a need nobody had thought of before. In fact, most design is based on common sense and the remainder - a very small part - is devoted to esthetics and appearance, although for many people these factors undoubtedly become the main and most interesting features. Although it may seem otherwise, design is not a new discipline; design permeates everyday in live, it is within reach of everybody and it has accompanied human beings since time immemorial. However, it is true that the origins of design, as we understand it today, lie in the Industrial Revolution and the appearance of mechanized production. Whereas objects and furniture were once totally handmade and the responsibility of a single creator, the emergence of new industrial processes and the ensuing division of labor gave design a whole new dimension. At first design was considered just one of the many interrelated aspects of mechanical production. It had no industrial, theoretical or philosophical basis and had little impact on either the industrial process or on society as a whole. Modern design emerged thanks to the reforming designers of the nineteenth century, particularly William Morris, who tried to unite theory and practice. His ideas did not immediately bear fruit as he continued using craft techniques; despite this, the reforming ideas were fundamental to the development of this modern movement. "Modern" design did not take root until the early twentieth century, as a result of the efforts of men like Walter Gropius - the founder of the Bauhaus in 1919 - who used the latest means of production to integrate theory and practice in design. Modern design had to unite intellectual, commercial, esthetic and practical interests through artistic endeavor and the exploitation of technology.

[Asensio, Montes, 2002:10]



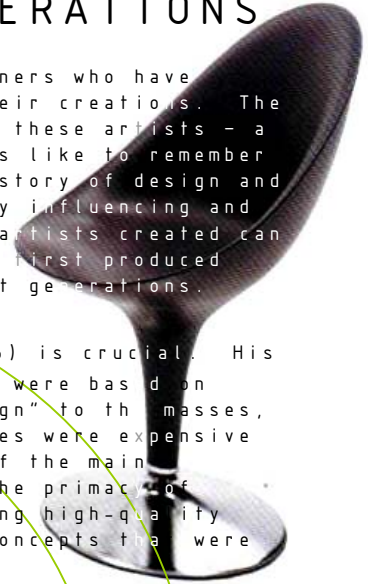
# DESIGNERS



## MODELS FOR SUBSEQUENT GENERATIONS

[Asensio, Montes, 2002:50]

From Alvar Aalto to Philippe Starck, there are many designers who have presented their own personal vision of reality through their creations. The main purpose of this book is not to cover the work of all these artists – a titanic task doomed to failure – but we would nevertheless like to remember some of the figures who have earned their place in the history of design and have helped to make today's design scene so distinctive by influencing and inspiring contemporary designers. The pieces that these artists created can be considered "modern classics", as years after they were first produced they remain unsurpassed and serve as models for subsequent generations.



The contribution of **William Morris** (1834 – 1896) is crucial. His reforming ideas, in both the social and artistic spheres, were based on those of Ruskin. One of his aims was to bring "good design" to the masses, but his rejection of mass production meant that his pieces were expensive and only accessible to a wealthy elite. Morris was one of the main champions of the Arts and Crafts movement; he advocated the primacy of utility, simplicity and suitability over luxury. Producing high-quality pieces and the idea of design as a democratic tool were concepts that were fundamental to the emergence of the modern movement.

Meanwhile, in Barcelona, **Antoni Gaudi** (1852-1926) was introducing his revolutionary ideas. This unclassifiable Catalan architect espoused a distinctive view of reality that bore fruit in work that has survived until today. His deep respect for nature and his boundless imagination still inspire artists in every field and he is widely admired. Gaudi was a prolific artist who did not confine himself to architecture: his projects were all-embracing and his designs for furniture, which were never mass-produced, are worthy of mention, being not only singularly expressive and beautiful but also comfortable and ergonomic.

**Frank Lloyd Wright** (1867-1959) is an outstanding figure. His roots also lie in the Arts and Crafts movement but he later broke away to explore other styles. A deep respect for nature and a belief in human values are the distinguishing features of this precursor of organic design, who tried to symbolize the essence of Nature and Man. This humanist's work still exerts a strong influence.

**Walter Gropius** (1883-1969) preached the unity of the arts and was the director of the Bauhaus from its creation in 1919 until 1928. His designs reflect the move towards industrial



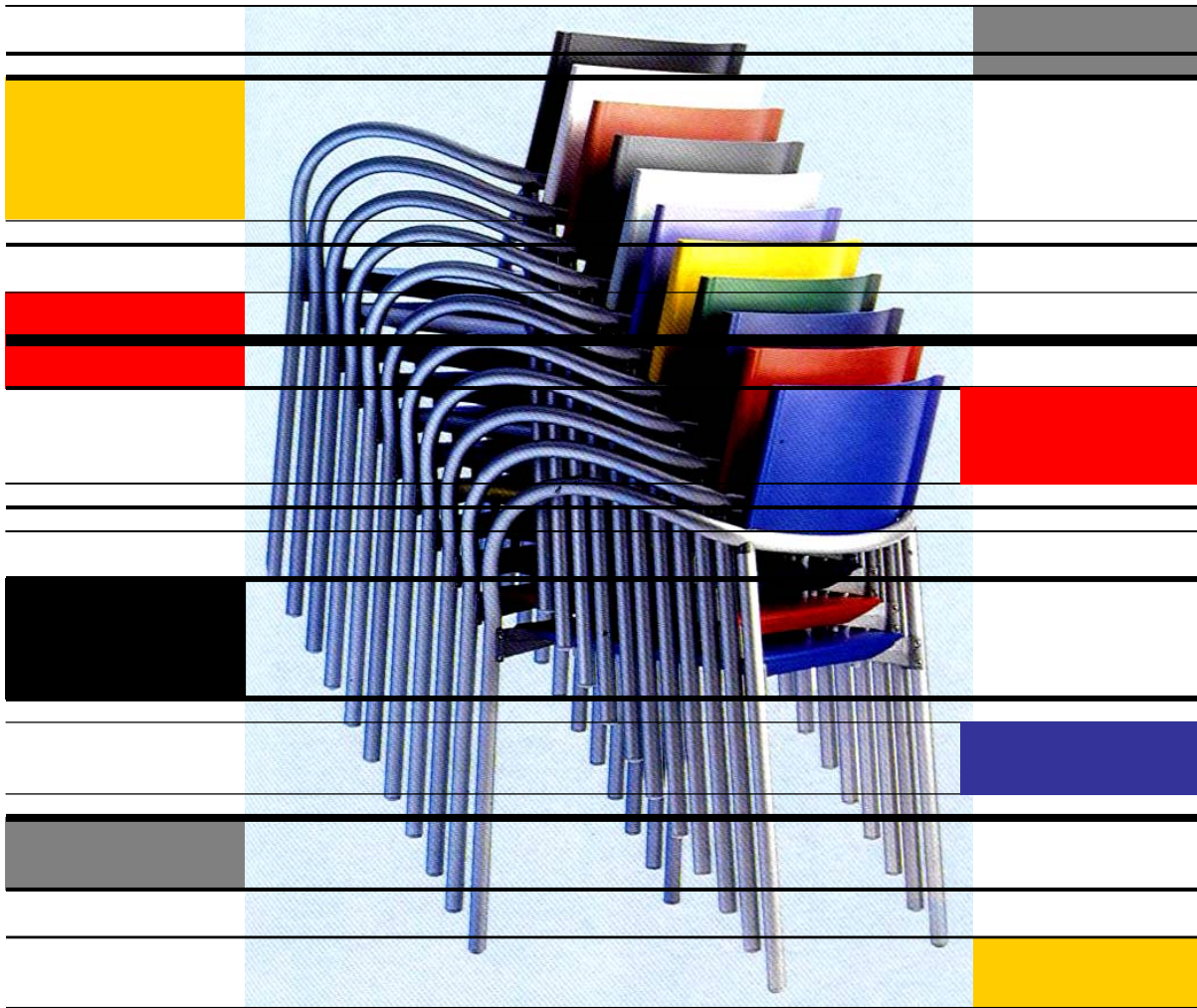
■ Modigliani "Tete" by Volakis



modernity. His work is a clear expression of the modern movement, in that it accepted the need for standardization in design.

Another of the most important exponents of modern design is undoubtedly **Ludwig Mies van der Rohe** (1886-1969). His work, inspired by Neo-classical architecture, presaged rationalist and functional design and remained influential throughout the twentieth century.

The same is true of **Le Corbusier** (1887-1965), who will go down in history as both one of the most outstanding architects and one of the most innovative designers. His early projects were marked by the premises of the



international style - a term applied to the work of artists in the modern movement who combined functionality and technology with a formal geometric language to create a modern esthetic - but over time he renounced the formalism of this style to take on a freer, more expressive language.

**Gerrit Thomas Rietveld** (1888-1964) was a standard bearer for Neoplasticism and a formal geometric language, which he applied to his highly personal designs and, over the course of time, turned into his trademark. Many of his objects manifest a return to elemental wooden structures, in response to the economic recession of the 1930's. He was an innovative pioneer and his designs are still highly relevant today.



**Alvar Aalto** (1898-1976) is another of Scandinavia's most important designers. His concepts are characterized by his use of organic forms. He was profoundly convinced that design should not only acknowledge functional demands but should also open up other needs on the part of the user; the best way to do this being through the use of natural materials like wood, which Aalto learnt how to mold at will and with consummate mastery.

The husband-and-wife team of **Charles Eames** (1907-1978) and **Ray Eames** (1912-1988) was celebrated for its excellent innovations and exquisite designs. Their contribution in this field is beyond dispute, and their pieces are still as attractive, functional and efficient as when they were first created. They are the outstanding exponents of organic design and two of the most important designers of the twentieth century; they proved that design not only endows objects with formal beauty but also helps improve the quality of life of the people who use them.

**Eero Saarinen** (1910-1961) introduced daring and revolutionary creations into the world of design. A rationalist convinced in the concept of progress, this pioneer of organic design created some of the twentieth century's most important pieces and heralded a new direction in furniture design. If he achieved the total organic unity of materials, function and structure, this was due to technological limitations of his day.

Another outstanding Italian is **Alessandro Mendini** (1931). Unlike many of his Compatriots, he set out to promote "banal" design, in order to fill the intellectual and cultural vacuum he found in industrialized society. His pieces transmit a sophisticated sense of humor, as well as the idea that innovative design could not continue in the same way until then. Mendini's creations are permeated with exuberance, an explosion of colour and daring forms, reflecting his emphasis on design for design's sake. Nobody has contributed more to the anti-design debate; he is highly provocative and one of the propagators of Postmodernism.



**Philippe Starck** (1949) is one of today's most prolific designers. He made his name in the 1980's; his early work was sumptuous, extravagant, audacious, witty, innovative and bursting with imagination. The so-called enfant terrible of French design is responsible for some of the pieces with the greatest character and personality to have emerged in the last few years. Whereas in the 1980's he reveled in exaggeration, he has now toned down to concentrate on more long-lasting products that will pass the test of time.

**It is clear that design was born with the twentieth century, and that it has brought new challenges into our day-to-day**

**existence. The idea of "less is more" that governed minimalism is still relevant, but it is losing ground against new ways of understanding design.**



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[Rowlands – Eileen Gray, 2002]

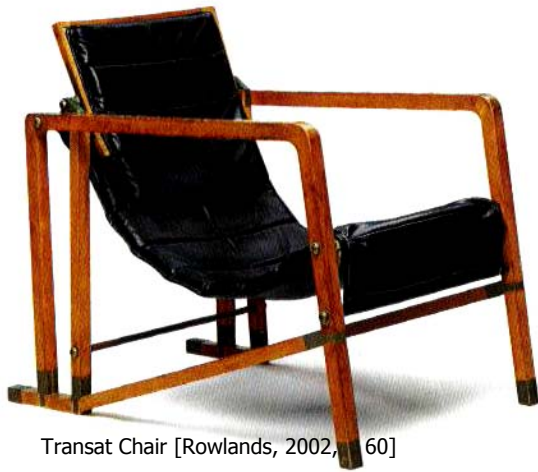
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Transat Chair [Rowlands, 2002: 60]

She was someone who had a gift. She had this incredibly free, very playful way of using materials, of mixing the poorest, the most modernist ones, but using them in masterpieces.

Gray undertook her first architectural project – her own shop, on the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. As a woman in interior design, which was then much a man's world, she shrewdly named it Jean Désert. The store was drop-dead elegant, from its stark, clean-lined, black and white façade to its contents of furniture, lacquerwork, screens, and carpets. Whoever turned up, there's no evidence that the remarkably unsnobbish Gray was impressed. Indeed, it seems safe to say Gray had a ..... [Rowlands, 2002:7]

### love/hate relationship with her clients.

She was never interested in doing one-offs for rich people, yet custom pieces were exactly what her clientele was after.

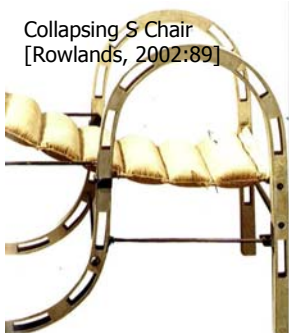


Nonconformist Chair [Rowlands, 2002:72]

Bibedum Chair [Rowlands, 2002:74]



Transat Chair [Rowlands, 2002:60]



Collapsing S Chair [Rowlands, 2002:89]

An itinerary of its almost shockingly imaginative furniture – much of it made from industrial materials – might run for pages. Almost every piece did something. Things folded, fanned out, collapsed. A dining banquette on metal U-shaped supports could fold up for storage or transform into an occasional table. A smaller, metal-framed table had a reversible surface; on one side, it was made of zinc, on the other, of cork, a material Gray favored. [Rowlands, 2002:20]



Although Gray hugely admired Le Corbusier, their philosophies had fundamental differences, ones that would become more apparent as Gray continued her architectural work. Ultimately, she rejected his famous dictum that a house should be a "machine for living". Instead, she seemed to call for a less coldly intellectual approach, writing that a house should be "a man's shell, his extension, his growth, his spiritual glow..."

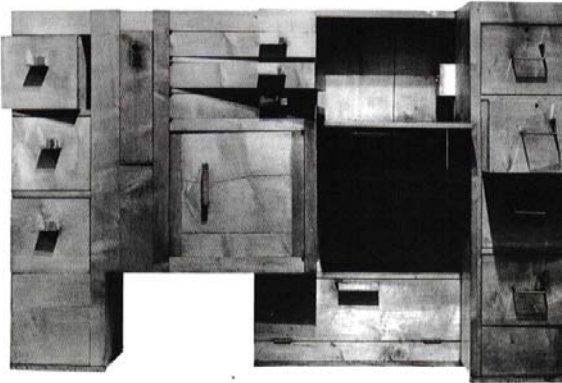
[Rowlands, 2002:15]



Preliminary sketches for Transat Chair [Rowlands, 2002:60]

The well-known design - Gray's S-shaped chaise longue - could be collapsed backward to half its size. Metal chairs metamorphosed into stepladders.

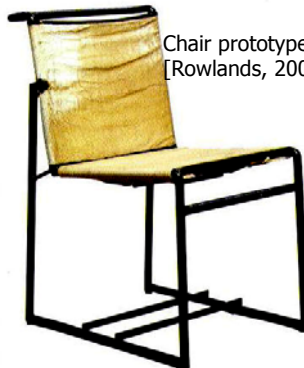
Architect's cabinet [Rowlands, 2002:58]



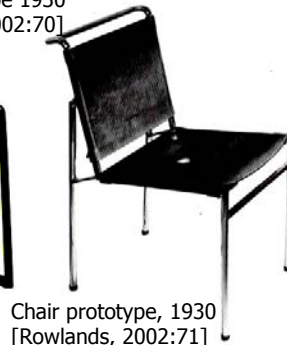
Abstract rug [Rowlands, 2002:52]



Nonconformist Chair prototype, 1926 [Rowlands, 2002:70]



Chair prototype 1930 [Rowlands, 2002:70]



Chair prototype, 1930 [Rowlands, 2002:71]



Chair prototype 1925 [Rowlands, 2002:71]



In his artistic evolution Rietveld always evinced a special quality: at every moment of his career he was an **INNOVATOR** [Baroni, 1978]

**Gerrit Thomas**

**RIETVELD FURNITURE**



Unlike many other architects of his generation who thought of architecture as a cubic box, Rietveld employed the method of starting his constructions from the interior and working outward, as if to exemplify a Freudian complex. [Baroni, 1978]

**Gerrit Thomas**

**RIETVELD FURNITURE**



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[Rowlands – Jean Prouvé, 2002]

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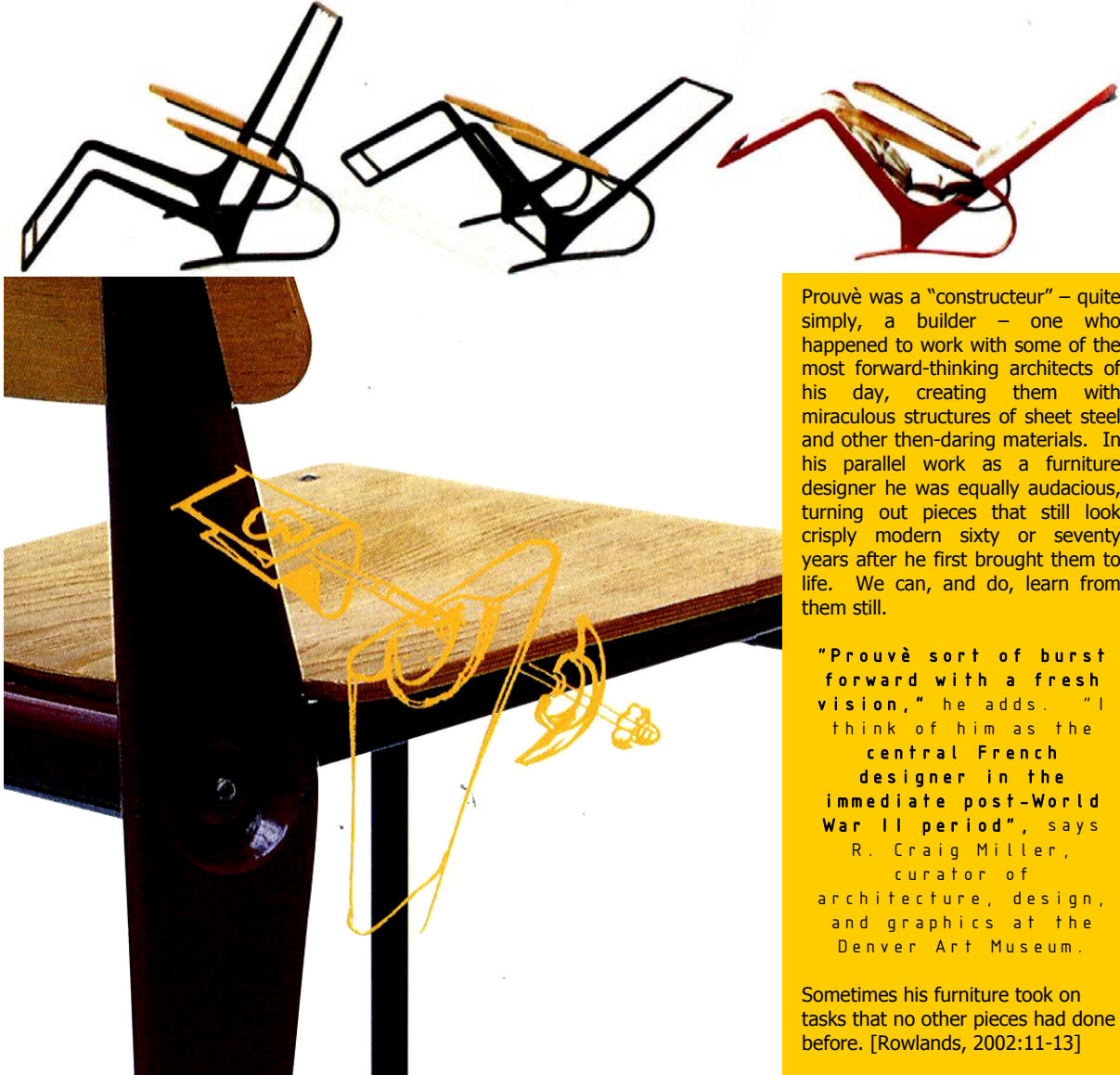
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# "He combines the soul of an engineer with that of an architect", Le Corbusier once said of Jean Prouvè.

Reclining Metal Armchair [Rowlands, 2002:7]



Prouvè was a "constructeur" – quite simply, a builder – one who happened to work with some of the most forward-thinking architects of his day, creating them with miraculous structures of sheet steel and other then-daring materials. In his parallel work as a furniture designer he was equally audacious, turning out pieces that still look crisply modern sixty or seventy years after he first brought them to life. We can, and do, learn from them still.

"Prouvè sort of burst forward with a fresh vision," he adds. "I think of him as the central French designer in the immediate post-World War II period", says R. Craig Miller, curator of architecture, design, and graphics at the Denver Art Museum.

Sometimes his furniture took on tasks that no other pieces had done before. [Rowlands, 2002:11-13]

By 1924, he was developing his first prototypes of furniture, including adjustable armchairs and folding chairs. "I couldn't be satisfied with arched steel tubing," Prouvè stated, referring to the preferred material of such Modernists as Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Marcel Breuer. "It was sheet steel that inspired me – folded, pressed, ribbed, then soldered." Phillip Jousse, a longtime dealer in Prouvè's furniture, believes he also liked folded steel because of its greater strength. If style wasn't Prouvè's first concern, it was certainly a by-product. "There's a Prouvè style, even if he didn't want one," Jousse contends.



Left: Antony Chair [Rowlands, 2002:45] Middle: Collapsible Chair [Rowlands, 2002:37]







Even his grander furniture, such as the regal, angular 1950 Prèsidence desk, is deeply utilitarian.

The goal of most of these pieces is mass manufacture, easy living, ingenious practically.

Even when designing prefabricated buildings, Prouvè followed the protocol he used for furniture: he'd sketch, make prototypes, then modify his designs - all before drawing actual plans. Sometimes this process was

Prouvè distinguished himself from fellow designers such as Le Corbusier by wanting even insisting, on keeping the craftsmanlike quality of his work apparent. His furniture, while factory made, often had visible hesitations and reworkings. It reminds you that, in a sense, Prouvè was making it up as he went along. Although both he and Le Corbusier thought that mass manufacturing was the ideal, Prouvè's work - intentionally, you sense - never entirely looked the part. While Le Corbusier was enamored of his vision, contemplating the beauty of skyscrapers and futuristic cityscapes, Prouvè remained firmly planted on the earth. No matter what new or experimental techniques he brought to his furniture, you can always see the human hand at work.



[Rowlands, 2002:14]

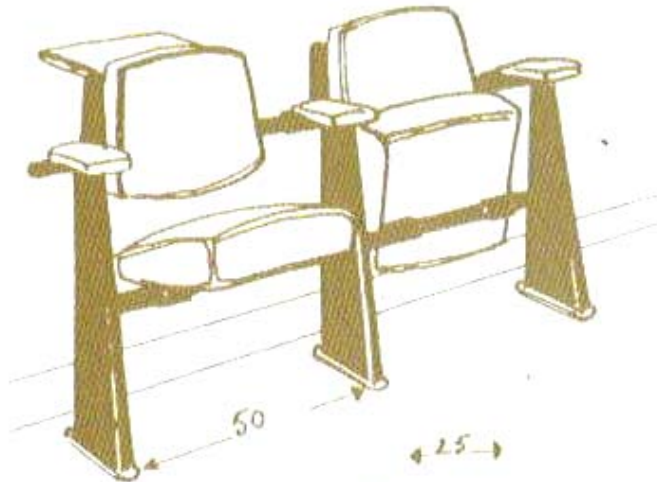
abbreviated, with prototypes being modified even as they were being made.



Collapsible Chair, 1947 [Rowlands, 2002:37]

Top left: Wood tafel, 1951 [Rowlands, 2002:67]  
Top right: Table detail, 1950 [Rowlands, 2002:65]  
Middle: Kangaroo Visitor Armchair Prototype 1958 [Rowlands, 2002:35]



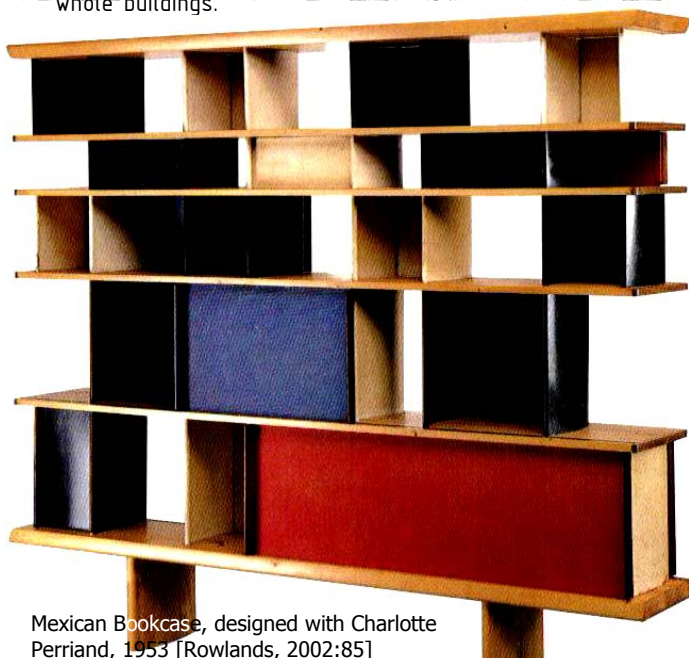


Amphitheatre Banquette, 1956 [Rowlands, 2002:51]



Granipoli Table, 1939 [Rowlands, 2002:77]

Some of Prouvè's earliest architectural projects were revolutionary, including a bus station designed in 1933 to be built in the La Villette section of Paris. Although this project was never built, it was nonetheless historic: it was the first building designed entirely of folded sheet metal. According to Prouvè's daughter, Catherine, Prouvè came to designing buildings in increments, beginning with the fanciful elevator cages he'd come up with in the 1920's. "He started little by little. He never did anything until he had mastered things. He made lots of construction elements; then, little by little, he came to whole buildings."



Mexican Bookcase, designed with Charlotte Perriand, 1953 [Rowlands, 2002:85]

"The problems to be solved (in the making of furniture) are just as complex as those to be solved in large construction projects," Prouvè observed. Both his buildings and furniture evidenced brilliant solutions.



A man who loved the ingenuity of the modern age, Prouvè adored both planes and cars. Conference tables, balanced on what he called "airplane wing" bases, look poised for take off.



"I couldn't be satisfied with arched steel tubing, it was sheet steel that inspired me – folded, pressed, ribbed, then soldered." Prouvè stated.



Shifting façade of the Mozart Square Apartment House, 1953. p. 84.

"What is material thinking?" Prouvè would ask himself as he sat down to design. He encourage his workers in a similar approach. "He taught me to feel materials," Antti Lovag, a Hungarian born architect and former employee has written. "One day he gave me an awning to design and I tried (but unsuccessfully). Then he appeared with a piece of sheet metal and said to me, 'Touch that. See how it reacts to different maneuvers. Then draw it.'" [Rowlands, 2002:15]



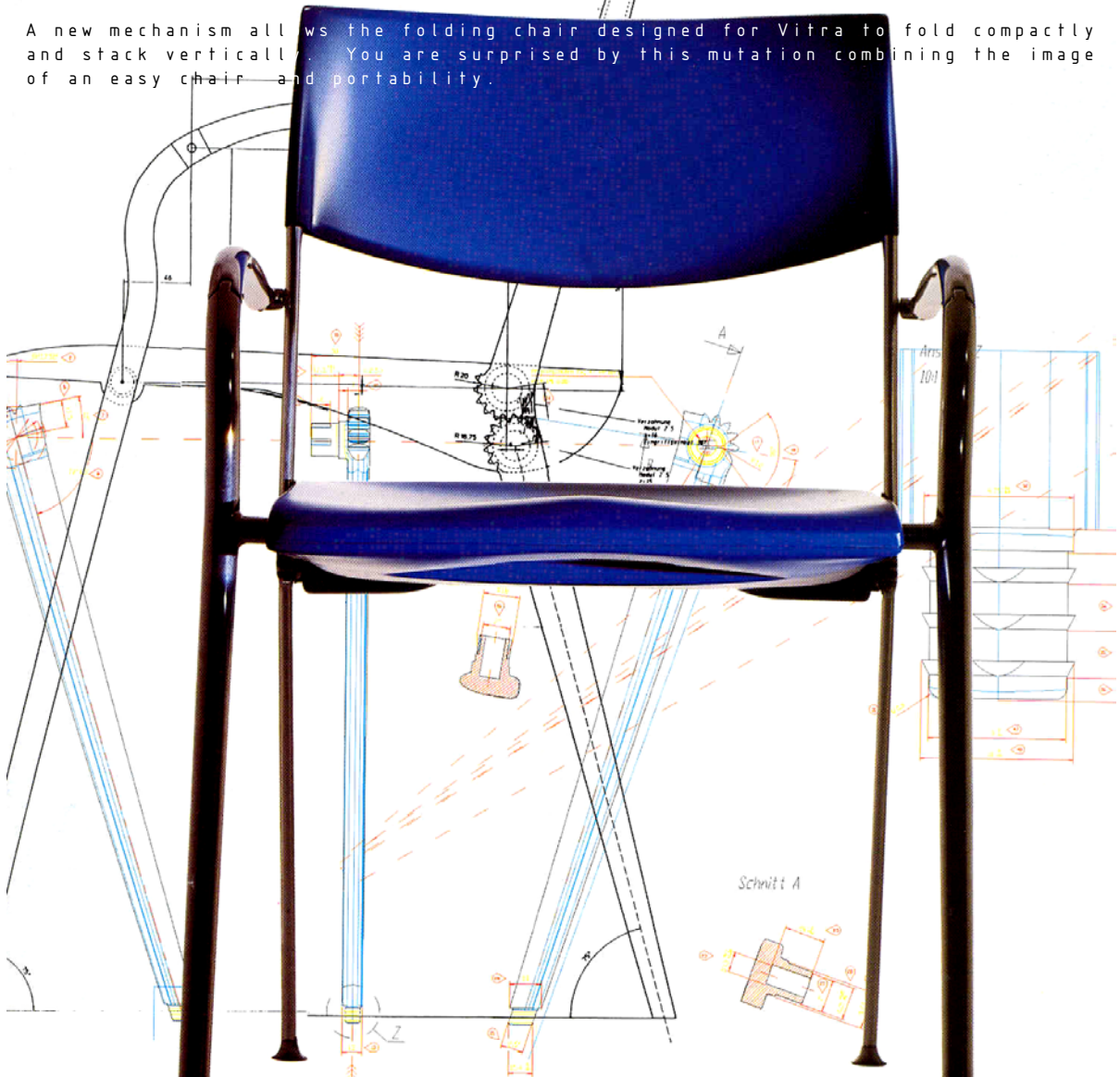


# VITRA

[Domus No 813-814:60]

## Santachair - a folding chair for Vitra

A new mechanism allows the folding chair designed for Vitra to fold compactly and stack vertically. You are surprised by this mutation combining the image of an easy chair and portability.



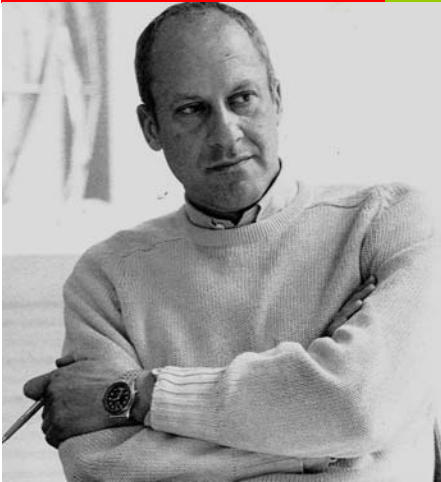
One morning Denis Santachiara set off for Basle, after carefully slipping his prototype chair into a leather portfolio. Awaiting him there in Switzerland were the assembled staff for Vitra for a practical and concise demonstration of his latest invention: a folding chair that can be closed no larger than a shopping bag. From the deck-chair to the Modern chair, Modernity has always been married to transformation and movement; in a marriage that prompted Loos to say: "the only modern furniture is furniture that can be moved". One finds oneself wondering why the idea of convertible and portable furniture should be so appealing. The focus would need to be shifted to the space around the object rather than to the object itself, and to the human use to which it is put, in accordance with the laws of proxemics. An object can be situated at the center of the possible transformations of space and of its social use formed by reciprocal positions. Therefore, Santachiara takes up the most classic tradition of design to develop a new mechanism for a folding seat. [Domus 813-814:60]



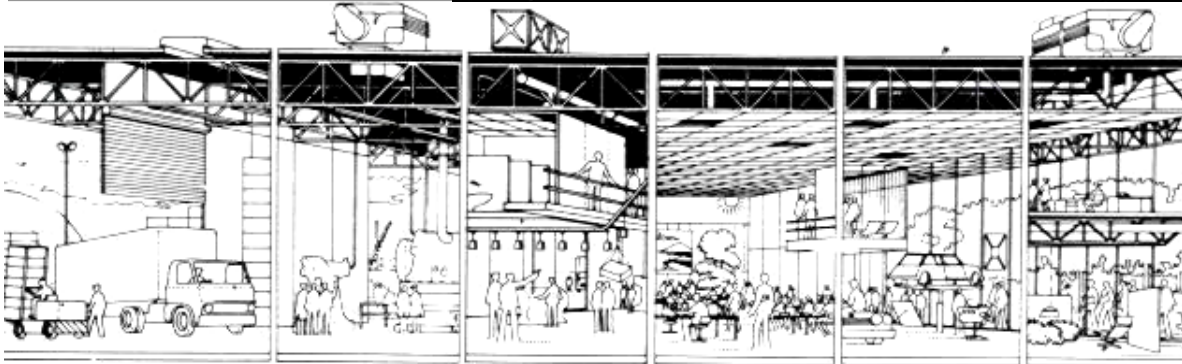
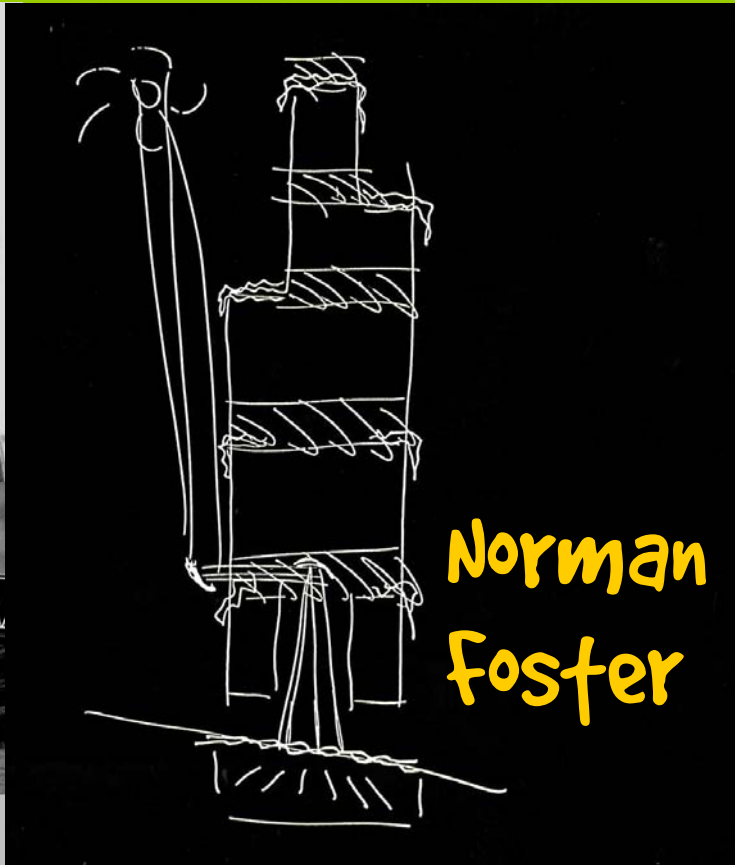
# NORMAN FOSTER SERVICED SHED

"A bicycle shed is a building, Lincoln Cathedral is a work of architecture." The idea of a serviced shed – a lightweight kit of parts turned to respond to growth and change. The systems approach is based on the **integration of structure and services and the swift assembly of prefabricated components**. It offered clear attractions to hard-pressed industrial clients. Far from being one of the client's imperatives, "**aesthetic considerations**" emerge as a delightfully unexpected bonus. The Olsen Centre, Computer Technology building, IBM's Advance Head Office, are all examples of 'serviced sheds' which have **acquired the status of architecture**.

The significance lies as much in **their flexibility in use as in the beauty of their materials or the speed and economy of their construction**.  
[Foster, 1984: ]



Sainsbury Centre from the south showing top lighting from strips of glazed panels.







5 000-square-metre space houses the brand's six different labels, plus eyewear and timepiece collections. Miyake chose architect Frank O Gehry because "he is someone whose work creates movement, light and energy." This emporium housing offices, a showroom and retail spaces showing all Miyake's innovative collections. This three-storey interior has been designed to function as a "laboratory and atelier – a place to showcase creativity and art." All fixtures are easily moveable, allowing spaces to evolve and constantly been injected. [Sorrell, 2002:36-37]

[Sorrell, 2002:36-37]

# a yen for design

issey miyake's retail space was sculpted by none other than frank o gehry



On the ground floor, a glass-floor "island" allows shoppers glimpses of the showroom in the basement. Double-height stainless-steel "stair walls" direct and streamline the flow of visitors.

The beige and burgundy paint that covered the original metalwork inside was stripped, "revealing the original, hyper-industrial silvery blue-grey", which has been sealed with a clear coating.

[Sorrell, 2002:36-37]





# FRANK GEHRY VITRA DESIGN MUSEUM

"Balancing Tools" [Boissière, Filler, 1990:57]

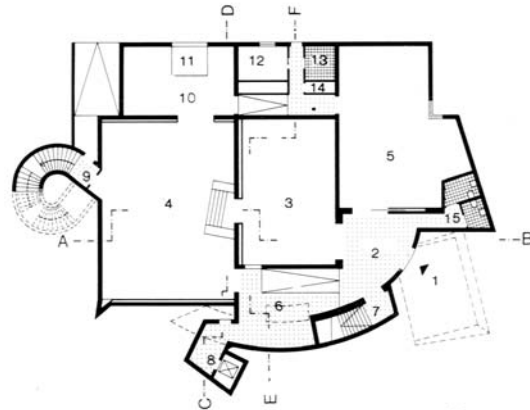


Fig. 18 - Ground floor plan of Vitra Museum.

The idea of the **Vitra Design Museum** grew out of a furniture producer's wish to find and document the roots and history of his craft. Rolf Fehlbaum, director of the Vitra Furniture business, embarked upon his search in the early eighties.

The collector's passion was linked to the insight **that examining the past could give new impetus to the furniture of tomorrow.**

The Vitra Museum first opened its doors in November 1989. It includes now almost **all important periods and styles of international furniture design.**

In contrast to other museums, in which furniture design is only one subject among many, the Vitra Design Museum focuses principally upon **its historical and future development.**

The main aim for the museum is to make it an "anti-élite" institution which appeals to the layman and awareness of a designed environment.

Vitra Design Museum exhibitions concentrate on presenting objects occupying keys positions in the development of **industrial** furniture design because of their material, construction, function, and form.

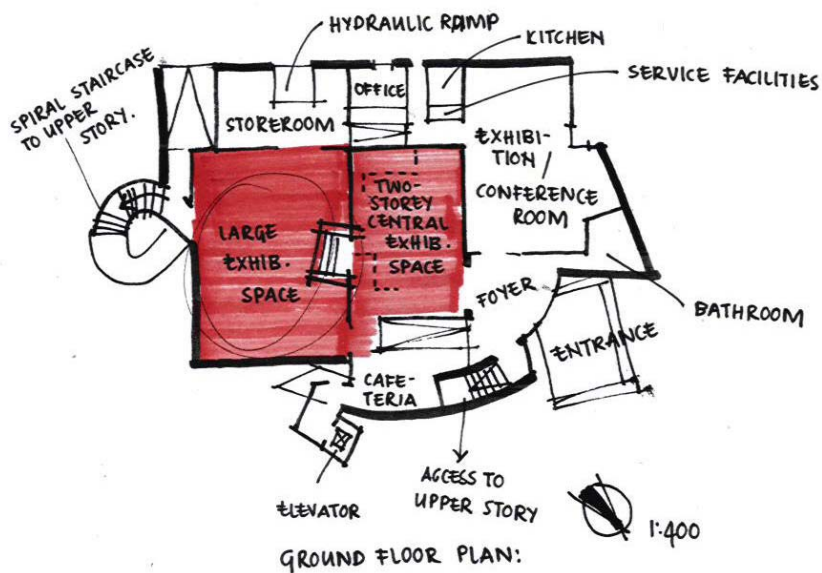
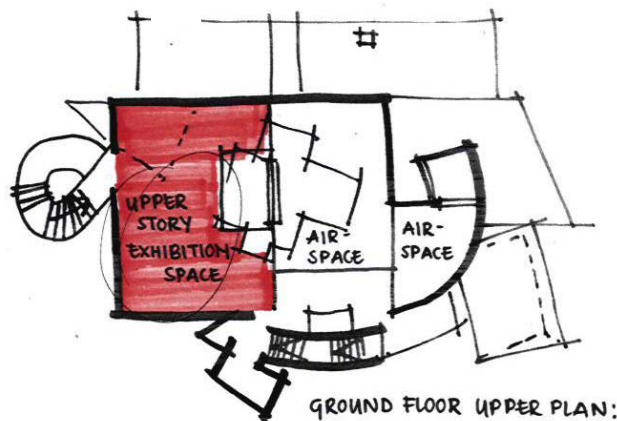
[Boissière, Filler, 1990:6]



"Well-tempered Chair" on foreground – Arad [Boissière, Filler, 1990:85]

**Interplay of vertical and horizontal openings**, formed contrapuntally of spatial and light volumes. Upper space gives an **unrestricted view** into rooms below. Cross of light is an integral part of interplay of forms – concludes the building made up of **space and light.**

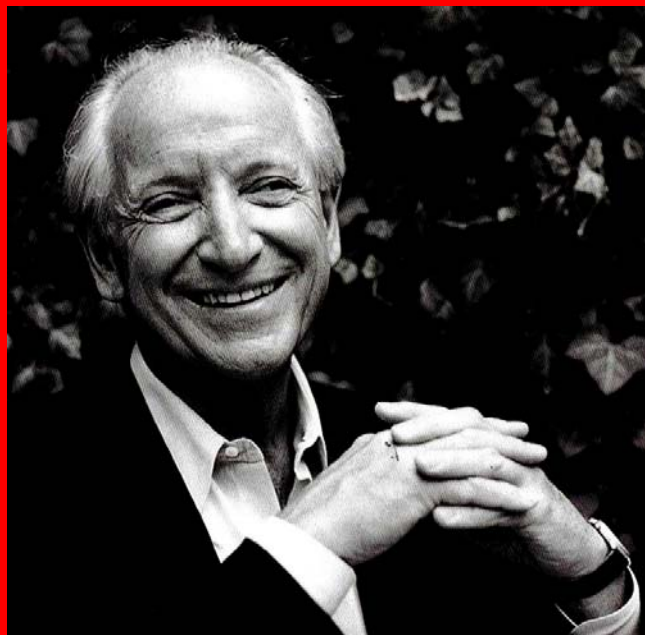




Ground floor and upper floor plan of Vitra Design Museum and Furniture Production Unit.



m i c h a e l   g r a v e s  
m i c h a e l   g r a v e s  
m i c h a e l   g r a v e s



[Iovine, 2002]

m i c h a e l   g r a v e s  
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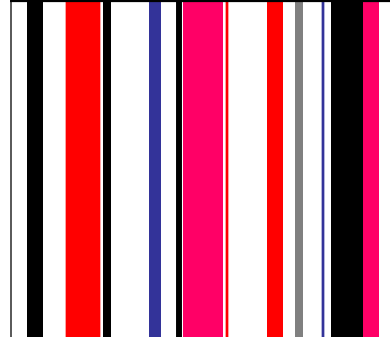
Michael Graves, architect, artist, product designer, and enigma. Though he may have been dismissed as a Postmodern has-been by the architectural elite, he is a household name. Indeed, he is the first modern architect to get the full celebrity treatment (Frank Lloyd Wright behaved like a rock star, but Graves was voted GQ Man of the Year in 1999). This broad appeal has rendered him something of a curiosity within the architectural profession.



[Iovine, 2002:7]

## designer as a populist

designer as a populist



The man himself is a bit a mystery as well. Few architects pay closer attention to domestic issues, whether designing objects for the home or collecting with meticulous connoisseurship for his own. He has achieved the dream of every architect – **the chance to place his stamp on just about everything in sight.**

**“I guess I just don’t take life that seriously.”**



Tea kettle for Alessi, 1985 [Iovine, 2002:46]

Left: Denver Central Library, Colorado, 1990-91. Below: Ikon fruit bowl for wachtersbacher keramick, 1991 [Iovine, 2002:31]





The sterling silver tea service – a squat fluted body with blue Bakelite balls for feet – that he designed in 1982 is most often cited as the fork in the road for Graves. After that, he would never again be known as primarily an architect. By 1994, there were six people in his office working exclusively on products.

"I grew up in architecture school in the 1950's, when our heroes were Saarinen, who did a lot of furniture, and Charles Eames, who was making movies, furniture, everything. He was really King of the Hill."

After receiving his master's, Graves spent a year in the office of George Nelson, the furniture designer and creative director for Herman Miller who was also a photographer, graphic designer, and editor. Graves didn't hesitate when he was approached by Alberto Alessi. **Even Alessi was surprised when Graves's \$25,000 tea service began to sell.** [Iovine, 2002:15]



Pepper mill, salt shaker for Alessi, 1987 [Iovine, 2002:49]

Alessi quickly commissioned Graves to do more. **“All my designers have at least a few failures, but not Michael.”**



Finestra Chair for Vecta Al, 1989 [Iovine, 2002:28]

[Iovine, 2002:16]

Graves's love of colour sets him apart from other architects of his generation, who tend to treat timidly beyond a spectrum ranging from silver to white and black. He applies colour with bold conviction. The combination of rust-toned terra-cottas, mustardy ochres, and cerulean blues have become part of the architect's signature.

**In his buildings, colour allows the architecture to emerge from the landscape as if it were actually part of it.** [Iovine, 2002:19]



Armchairs for the Dorsey Collection, 1990 [Iovine, 2002:38]





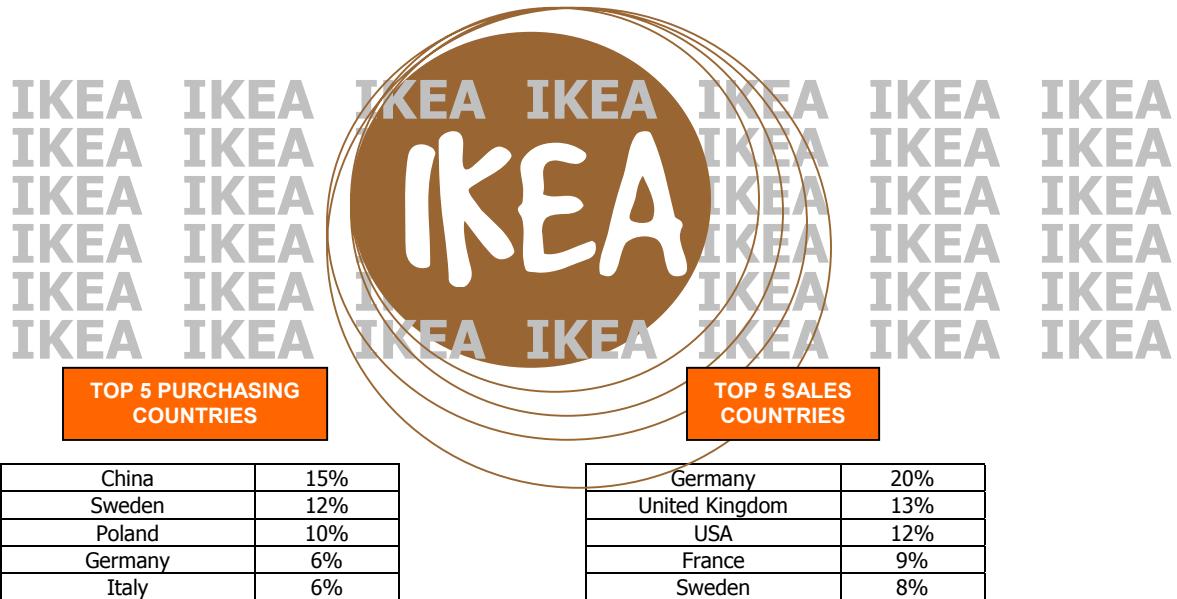


Fig. 19 – Top five purchasing and sales countries in the world (IKEA).

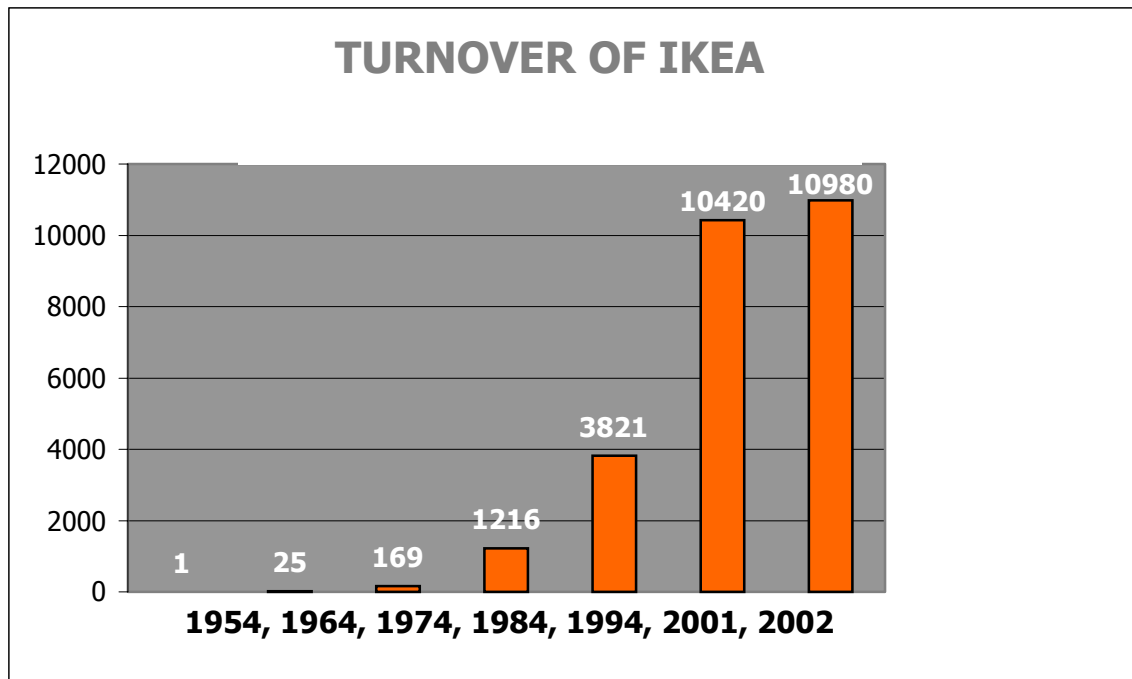


Fig. 20 – The turnover for the financial year 2002 was 11 billion Euro.

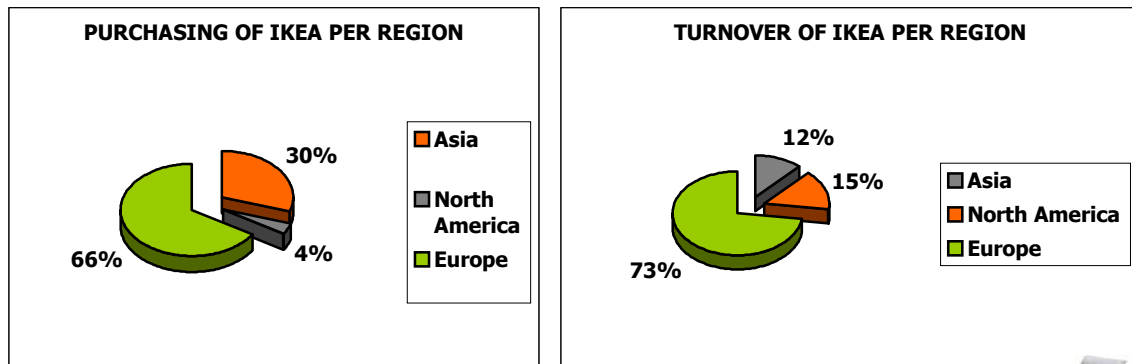


Fig. 21 – Top five purchasing and sales countries in the world (IKEA).



# how the ikea group works

**how the IKEA Group works**

Work at IKEA is organised in order to match the needs of the customers to the potential of the suppliers in the best possible way.

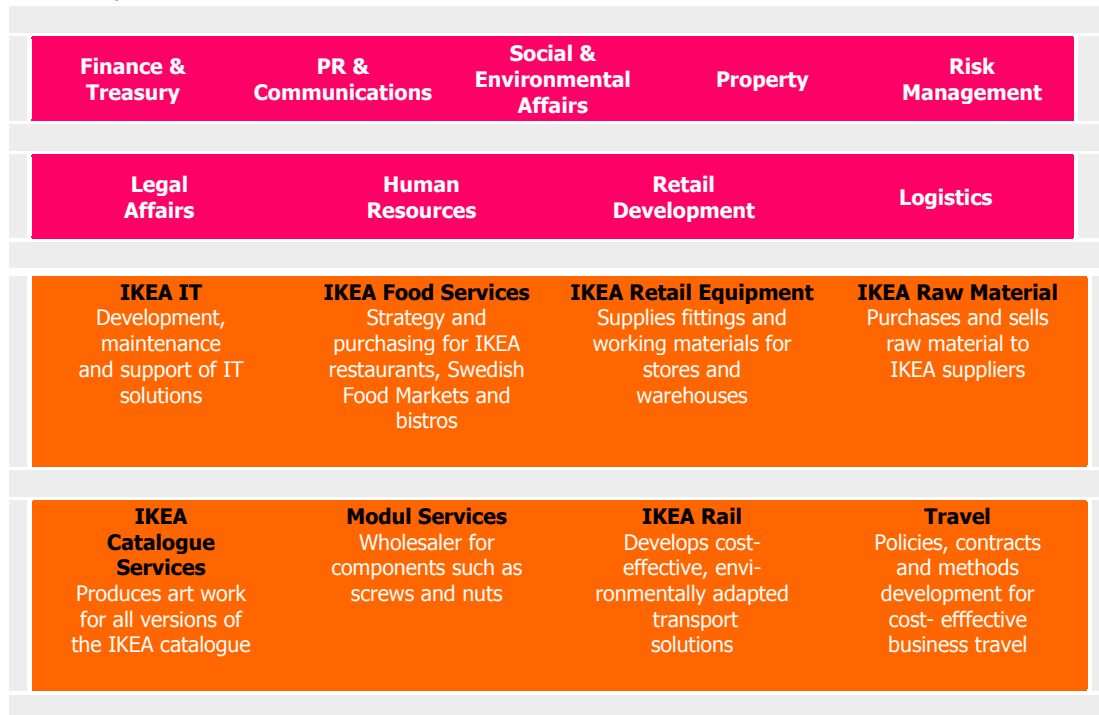
IKEA co-workers all over the world contribute to this collective effort by their individual involvement in the process from development and production to sales.

[www.ikea.co.uk]



## Group Support Functions

Work within the IKEA Group is supported by a total of nine units in Holland (IKEA Services B. V.) and Sweden (IKEA Services AB)



## Experts and economies of scale

Decentralisation is the maxim at IKEA, but to fully exploit economies of scale, experts in central positions deal with certain key areas – from the food in the store restaurants to the production of IKEA catalogues. In this way these experts too can play their part in keeping IKEA prices low.

[www.ikea.co.uk]

