



[Domus No 819-820,1999:75]

100 CLASSICAL SEATS

[www.design-museum.de]

Dimensions of Design - 100 Classical Seats

An exhibition of miniatures by the Vitra Design Museum

No piece of furniture has attracted the attention of designers, architects and artists alike as has the chair. The chair is closely related to the shape of the human body, it is the depiction of our body and has arms, legs, feet and a back. The chair has assumed a key role in the history of design – as an experimental object, as the motor driving new developments forwards and as an icon. It has long since advanced from being an everyday utilitarian object to attain the status of an artistic event.

In the exhibition Dimensions of Design, 100 miniatures of classical seats convey the significance of design and the role it plays in the industrial production process. These classical chairs, exact 1:6 replicas of the originals, are presented on plinths in an elegant installation. The exhibition is accompanied by 40 wall-mounted panels comprising photographs, original drawings and time-lines. An integral component of the exhibition is a booklet which guides the observer through the world of chairs and provides detailed descriptions of each exhibit.

The transport and installation costs of the exhibition Dimensions of Design have been kept comparatively low, to enable smaller museums, galleries and design centers to afford it. We are particularly pleased that, in cooperation with the Goethe Institute, the exhibition will tour Latin America, Asia and Africa.



Dimensions of Design - Chairs that have taken their place in history

Since 1992, the chair miniatures produced by the Vitra Design Museum have earned a deserved reputation as high-quality, true-to-scale collectors' items. The Miniatures Collection, which is meant for sales purposes, meanwhile comprises more than 80 models; by contrast, 100 prototypes of classical seats dating from between approx. 1800 and 1990 have been developed for the exhibition.

In the exhibition, viewers attention is directed towards the perfectly crafted true-to-scale character of the miniatures. It is visually easy to grasp a chair as a miniature, its proportions stand out even more distinctly than in the original object. The concentrated, clearly-defined world of the miniatures helps viewers find their bearings in the manifold styles of contemporary design. Chairs provide us with information on social connections, on the age in which they were created as well as on those manners of sitting which are considered exemplary. In our exhibition, the chairs are considered not as isolated phenomena but are placed firmly in their cultural and historical context. Reproduced documents from the archive of the Vitra Design Museum illustrate the path of development of the seats from the first draft via production to their actual use.

Dimensions of Design - 100 Classical Seats
Exhibition objects



100 miniature chairs - exact 1:6 scale replicas of the originals.

Installation

Each object has been positioned on a pyramid-shaped plinth and positioned inside a Plexiglas cube using a magnet. The size of the cube is 25 x 25 x 25 cm. Each plinth is made of white varnished fiberglass, is 127 cm high and has a base of 40 x 40 cm.

Educational aspects

The history of furniture design from 1800 to 1990 is presented in terms of nine groups. Each group is described in an introductory text. Furthermore, faithful reproductions of drawings, photographs and catalogues are exhibited. A time-line provides background information on social, political, economic and artistic developments during each epoch. A color-coding system ensures easy orientation in the exhibition.

Exhibition area

Depending on the layout, the exhibition takes up an area of 140 to 400sq. m. Various layouts are possible, ensuring the exhibition can be adapted to the size and dimensions of the respective venue. The exhibition can be laid out as a square (e.g. consisting of 10 x 10 units) or as a room divider in one long row or according to groups.

Wall area

Wall panels, reproductions of original documents, and time-lines are all presented in flat aluminum frames. For the documentation, which can be subdivided into nine groups, approx. 35 running meters of wall space are required.

Transport

The exhibition has been specially designed to ensure a low transport volume and easy handling. The exhibition is packed into thirteen crates: eight for the plinths, four crates for the Plexiglas cubes including the exhibits, and one crate for the framed documentation. The transport volume amounts to approx. 20 cubic meters.

Insurance

The exhibition is insured by the Vitra Design Museum wall to wall. Insurance costs are included in the acceptance fee.

Mounting and dismantling

The complete installation is delivered together with the exhibition. If lighting, wall and spatial conditions have been well prepared, the exhibition can be assembled in as little as one and a half days.

Exhibition catalogue

The booklet Dimensions of Design - 100 classical Seats, 250 pages, 12 x 17 cm. contains detailed descriptions of each individual miniature. The catalogue includes descriptions of the history of the design and reception of the chairs, the production process and details of each particular construction. The booklet is available at present in German, English and Spanish.

Accompanying products

The Miniatures Collection as well as publications and other articles for your museum shop can be acquired at reasonable conditions. We should be pleased to provide you with a separate offer.
[www.design-museum.de]

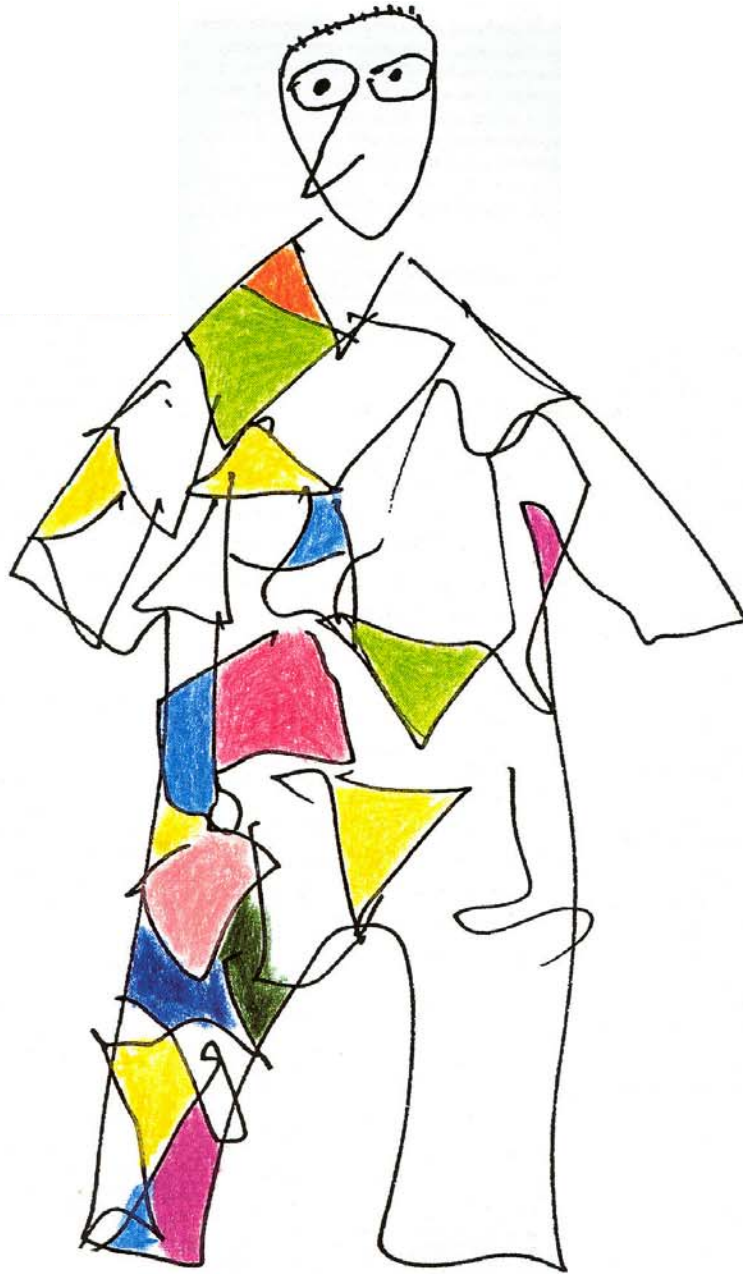


"What we need today is to replace the aesthetic objects with the semantic objects, this will result in replacing the simply beautiful with the good. We must start again from scratch so that these objects and machines serve us, in order for us to live better."

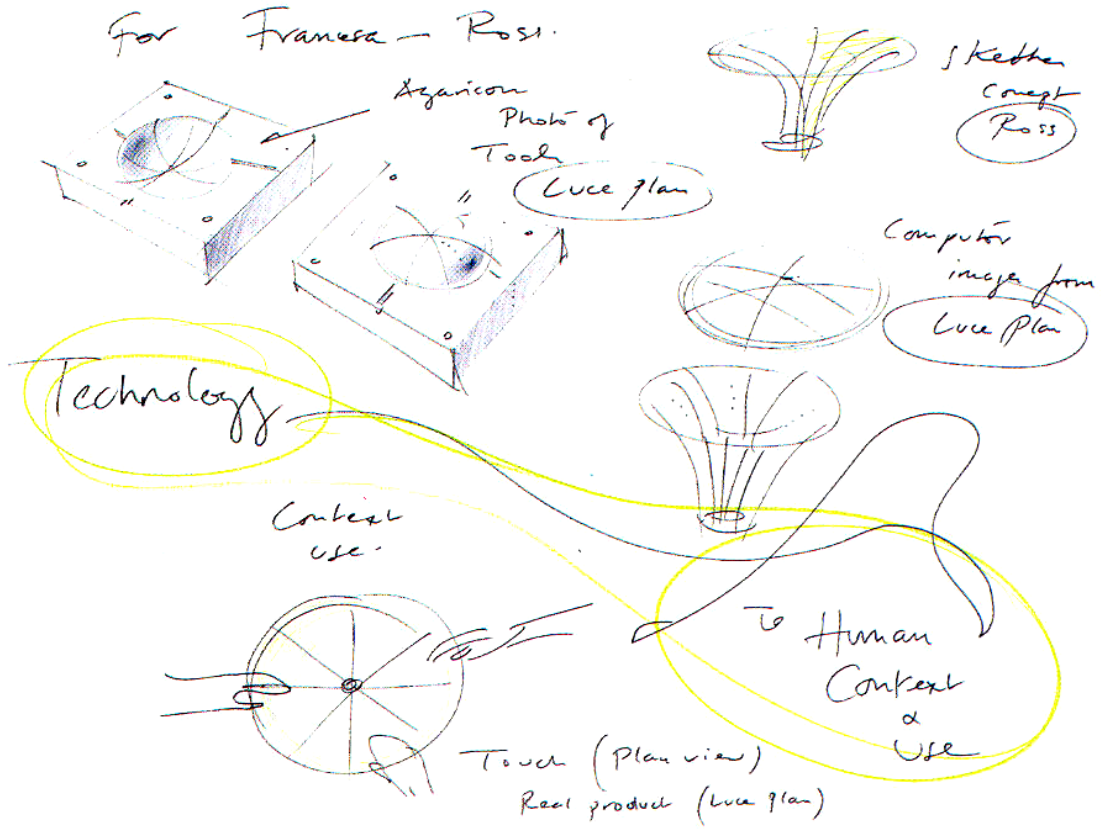
Philippe Starck (An-Ray Designs)

[www.anray-designs.com]





SANDRO VESTITO DA
ARLECCHINO *Am*
18-6-96



A hundred years – A hundred chairs

[www.design-museum.de]

The Vitra Design Museum has one of the biggest and most important collections of modern furniture design, with a catalogue of over 3,000 works. The exhibition A hundred years - A hundred chairs provides us with the opportunity to contemplate the museum's most beautiful pieces. The aim of this exhibition is to offer a view of the different periods of industrial furniture design in this century. It all began in the latter half of the 19th century with curved wooden furniture which lent itself to mass-production. Design played a significant role in cultural development at the beginning of the century. Gerrit Rietveld designed furniture with simple lines, while Marcel Breuer created the first tubular steel chairs. This lightness in shape was subsequently a source of inspiration for Alvar Aalto, who was the first to use plywood, and for Jean Prouvé, who started to use techniques and materials which had previously only been used by the aeronautical industry.

Following the Second World War, American designers began to collaborate closely with industry. Designers like Charles Eames, Eero Saarinen and Harry Bertoia came up with designs which would be used for the mass production of furniture for American homes. Design became a key element of daily life. At that time in Europe, furniture design was developing mainly in Italy and Scandinavia. Nonetheless, the objective was still the same as that in America, namely to make designer goods more accessible to the general public.

Hans Wegner and Arne Jacobsen were forerunners in Scandinavian countries in creating wooden furniture, while the Italians turned their attention to more novel materials like plastic. The considerable malleability of these materials, together with the development of new types of foam, gave rise to a wealth of creative fantasy in the sixties. At that time, Pop Art provided a source of inspiration and designers played on form and colour. The main representatives of this trend were Verner Panton and Joe Colombo. Later, in the seventies, designs became even more radical, leading to the emergence of opposition to the rules of Modernism. Groups of designers like Memphis or Archizoom emphasised the amusing and playful nature of forms rather than functionality.

The eighties were marked by a search for both, individualism and pluralism, giving rise to a variety of previously unheard of styles. Philippe Starck, Ron Arad and Gaetano Pesce are leading representatives of this trend. A search for simple but innovative shapes and materials has characterised the present decade, the last of this century. Frank Gehry and Jasper Morrison are two key figures of this period. Nevertheless, fantasy remains an indispensable criterion in the conception of forms. The work of Ron Arad and Marc Newson, both concerned with functionality and mass-production, bears witness to this fact. Drawings, sketches and documents belonging to the Vitra Design Museum accompany the chairs on display. Visitors are given precise details of the pieces on show, which are exhibited in specially designed interiors evoking the historical context in which they were created. Six films reveal the manufacturing process of some of the chairs, giving the spectator general insight into different production techniques.

A hundred years – A hundred chairs

An exhibition by the Vitra Design Museum

Exhibition design

Dieter Thiel

Number of works

- 100 chairs dating from 1899 to 1999
- 48 explanatory panels (70cm x 100cm)
- one model of the Vitra Design Museum
- one photograph of the Vitra Design Museum (70cm x 100cm)

Media

7 film installations including A/V hard- and software

Installation:

All plinth for TV and presentation platforms provided.

Space requirements

600-800 m²

Transport Volume

Approx. 4 containers

Contact for scheduling information:

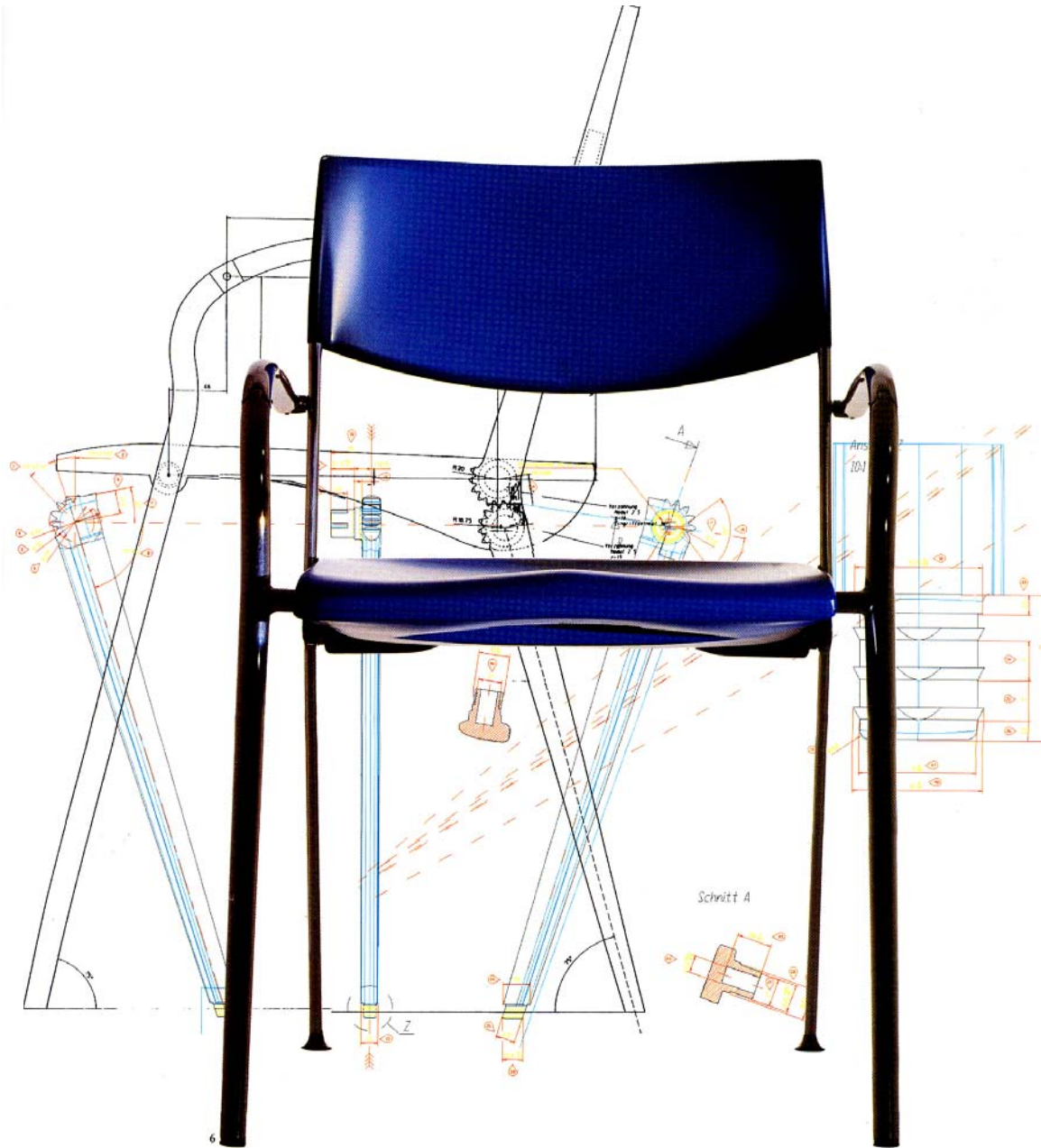
Reiner Packeiser
Head of the Exhibition Department
Vitra Design Museum
phone: +49 (0)7621 702 37 29
fax: +49 (0)7621 702 47 29
reiner.packaiser@design-museum.de

[www.design-museum.de]





[Domus 813-814, 1999:45]



[Domus No 813-814, 1999:65]

Continue:
07designInfluences-3
pages 76-84