

Organic Design



Background

- n Compatible furniture for International Style architecture
- n As International Style spread, traditional furniture was unsuitable
- n Architects believed in “total design”.

Characteristics

- n Elegant simplicity of line
- n Curved, flowing, and graceful lines
- n Ingenious use of modern materials
- n Designed for mass production
- n Moulding of materials



Main Designers

- n Alvar Aalto
- n Arne Jacobsen
- n Eero Saarinen
- n Charles & Ray Eames



Other Designers

- n George Nelson
- n Harry Bertolia
- n Osvaldo Borsani
- n Carlo Molino
- n Gio Ponti
- n Marco Zanuso
- n Sori Yangi

Alvar Aalto (1898 - 1976)

- n Finnish architect.
- n Furniture showed clear functionalism.
- n Use of timber added grace and warmth.



Alvar Aalto

Having turned to laminated wood and plywood as his materials of choice in 1929, the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, produced graceful chairs of moulded plywood that have been popular for decades. The Paimio chair was designed as part of the design scheme for the Paimio Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Denmark, with Aalto designing not only the building and interiors, but the furniture as well.

The chair is made of a laminated birch frame and plywood, and is a result of Aalto's experiments in veneer bonding and the limits of moulding plywood.



Paimio Chair, 1931

Alvar Aalto

Aalto was noted for his use of natural materials, (especially wood) and irregular forms. He strongly believed that design should be humanising and he rejected man-made materials such as tubular metal in furniture, because, for him, they were unsatisfactory to the human condition. Aalto's pioneering organic designs not only provided a new vocabulary of form, they also eloquently represented, to the general public, the acceptable face of Modernism.



N66 Chair & N60 Stool, 1933

Alvar Aalto

This popular laminated birch frame stool is still being manufactured, and is sold internationally by Ikea.



N60 Stool, 1933

Alvar Aalto

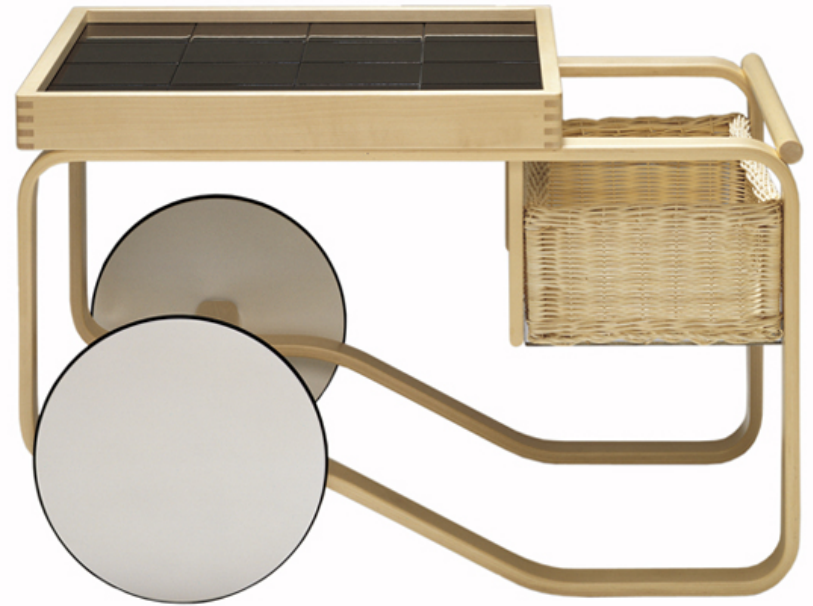
Designs like this webbed chair signalled to the international avant-garde a new trend in materials towards plywood and established Aalto as one of the pre-eminent designers of the 20th century.



Webbed chair 1936

Alvar Aalto

Aalto believed that one of his most important contributions to furniture design was his solving of the age-old problem of connecting vertical and horizontal elements, using moulded ply, as can be seen here in his 1936 tea trolley cart.



N900 Tea Trolley Cart, 1936

Alvar Aalto

Aalto's designs are notably characterised by the use of organic forms, for example his famous Savoy vase of 1937. Originally entitled "Eskimo Woman's Leather Trousers", the vase is said to have been inspired by the fjord shorelines of his native Finland. Other theories of its inspiration include his childhood memories of his mother's skirt.

Aalto was a designer who combined in his furnishings a clear functionalism with uncommon grace and warmth.



Savoy Vase, 1937

Arne Jacobsen (1902-71)

- n Denmark's leading International architect.
- n Inspired by Le Corbusier.
- n Introduced modernist designs to Denmark.
- n "Total design" - most of his furniture was designed as part of complete design package for buildings.



Arne Jacobsen

The famous Egg chair and the Swan chair were developed for the lobby and reception areas at the Royal Hotel in Copenhagen designed by Arne Jacobsen in the late 50s.



SAS Royal Hotel Copenhagen, 1956

Arne Jacobsen

Jacobsen designed not only the building, its exterior and furniture, but also the light fixtures, carpets, cutlery, door handles, clocks, lamps and even the ceramic ashtrays which were retailed as souvenirs in the gift shop – effecting a meticulously detailed and refined unity of design.



SAS Royal Hotel Copenhagen, 1956-60

Arne Jacobsen

The Swan Chair is one of Jacobsen's most famous designs and like many other of his furniture designs, it stands as an organic symbol, expressed by forms suggestive of a bird with outswept wings. Either fabric or leather covered, the Swan Chair is foam-upholstered, has a moulded fibreglass seat shell on a swiveling cast aluminium base.



Swan Chair, 1956

Arne Jacobsen

The Swan series is still being manufactured today, and is a popular choice with designers worldwide.



Swan Sofa and Chair, 1956

Arne Jacobsen

The Egg chair is also an organic symbol of an enveloping oval shell and is manufactured with the same structural elements as the Swan chair, but has a loose cushion as well.



The Egg Chair, 1957

Arne Jacobsen

The famous Ant chair by Arne Jacobsen. The organic symbolism is expressed in the form of the cutout shape of an insect on slender metal legs. This chair has a markedly organic profile, the minimal construction of its three thin projecting legs and its light, scrolled plywood shell, allows it to be moved about easily and to be stacked. Originally produced in a black finish, the chair has since been offered in a large range of bright colours and wood veneers as well as with coloured epoxy legs. It was the first Danish chair designed for large-scale factory production and one of the most commercially successful of Jacobsen's designs.



The Ant Chair (Model 3100) 1951

Arne Jacobsen

Model 3107 also known as the "Butterfly" chair, was originally launched in beech, teak veneer, black and white. The moulded plywood seat rests on a bent tubular steel base. "3107" has become the most important success in Danish furniture history – manufactured in more than 5 million copies.



The Butterfly Chair (Model 3107), 1952

Arne Jacobse

The Oxford chair was originally designed for St Catherine College in Oxford (hence the name of the chair) and is a part of a range comprising many different varieties, with or without arms, castors and glides, etc. This high-back version is padded and covered in black leather.



The Oxford Chair, 1965

Arne Jacobsen

The "Cylindra" line represents the broadest and most commercially successful application of the formalist principles for home consumption, a triumph of neo-functionalism for the mass market. The series was based on the form of the cylinder and included an extensive range of table and cookware, from saucepans and coffeepots to tea strainers and ice tongs.



Tea Service "Cylindra", 1967

Eero Saarinen (1910 - 61)

- n Finnish - American architect.
- n Revolutionary pedestal bases
- n Elegant use of moulded plastic and plywood



Eero Saarinen

The Womb Chair had its origins in a collaboration between Saarinen and Charles Eames in the design of a series of chairs for the 1940 "Organic Design in Home Furnishings" competition held at the MOMA in NY. The womb chair has a single-form compound-moulded plywood seat shell that advanced the notion of continuous contact and support for the human body.



Womb Chair, 1948

Eero Saarinen

The grasshopper chair reflects the same notion of continuous contact and Saarinen has used moulded ply for the supports.



Grasshopper Chair, 1948

Eero Saarinen

In 1956 Saarinen designed an entire range of pedestal furniture in moulded plastic and metal. Saarinen's stated objective was to clean up "the slum of legs" in domestic interiors. One of the most enduring pieces from this series was the Tulip chair.

The white chair, in silhouette resembling a wineglass, has a loose cushion seat in bright fabrics. The organic aura of this pedestal chair resembles much of the early 1960's moulded concrete architecture and plastic futuristic designs.



Tulip Chair - "Pedestal" Collection, 1956

Eero Saarinen

The tables in the collection, range in size from side tables to conference tables, and have tops of either marble or wood. They, like many other well-designed modern pieces, have been copied extensively by mass manufacturers. Eero Saarinen promoted a humanised form of Modernism, and in so doing was one of the most important pioneers of Organic Design.



“Pedestal” Collection, 1956

Charles and Ray Eames

- n American husband & wife design team.
- n Strong use of moulded materials, especially plywood.
- n Popularised the construction of well-designed mass-produced housing and furniture.



Charles and Ray Eames

Charles and Ray Eames achieved their monumental success by approaching each project the same way: Does it interest and intrigue us? Can we make it better? Will we have "serious fun" doing it? Early in their design collaboration, the Eames concentrated on moulded plywood forms, such as in this chair of 1946.



Moulded Plywood Chair, 1946

Charles and Ray Eames

They soon became interested in introducing other materials, such as metal tubing, and the Eames legend began.

The Eames pursued their goal of creating an artistically valid design that could also be produced by modern mass-production techniques. Designs using moulded plywood mounted on a tubular metal frames became the prototype for much mass-production furniture of the 1950s and '60s.



Moulded Plywood Low Table, 1946

Charles and Ray Eames

The Eames-designed single shell chairs were a breakthrough in the commercial use of fibreglass-reinforced plastic for seating. The single sculptured chair combined thoughtful engineering with a clean, simple aesthetic. The current model is exactly the same as the original, except that it has been updated to a more environmentally friendly high-impact plastic material. The chairs were an immediate hit when they were designed, and they remain so today.



The Eames Plastic Chair, 1950

Charles and Ray Eames



This 2.2 metre long table is nicknamed the "surfboard table". Long and low, the Eames elliptical table serves as a dramatic centerpiece in a living room, sitting area, or study. Charles and Ray Eames spent many years experimenting with wire mesh and rods, work that yielded a number of breakthrough products-including the wire base for this table, as well as wire mesh chairs, a sofa, and a folding table.

Eames Elliptical Table, 1951

Charles and Ray Eames

The Eames wire chairs were a breakthrough in the use of a "new" material for seating. A carefully considered design allowed them to be strong, yet lightweight. Their sculptured look and functionality made them an instant classic.

The wire mesh chair was designed for the consumer who wanted quality design at a reasonable price. Once in production, it began to be used in offices, hotels and restaurants. The chair has cross weaving only where it is necessary for strength making it lightweight.



Eames Wire Chair, 1951

Charles and Ray Eames

This is the *Rod Dining Armchair*, constructed of a fibreglass seat shell and a metal rod base. The Eames used the rod base in many of their designs and contemporary designers such as Phillippe Starck, have taken this element as a basis for their current designs.



Rod Dining Armchair, 1953

Charles and Ray Eames

No other chair is so widely admired--and so widely copied. This chair and ottoman has remained contemporary for almost 60 years. This masculine lounge chair illustrates beautifully the merging of office and home design in the late 1950s. The essential supported softness and reclining swivel are married with a dark leather finish, reminiscent of the boardroom. This chair sits alone as a design classic, but is also indicative of the increased crossover between work and leisure.



Eames Lounge chair & Ottoman, 1956

Charles and Ray Eames

Introduced in 1958, the Aluminium group chairs feature an elegant and innovative combination of metal and fabric. The Eames' design integrates a light aluminium frame and base with a slim, continuous fabric piece slung between the frame's side ribs. This design creates a "sitting pocket" that combines appropriate firmness with flexibility. The chair responds to each person's shape with remarkably comfortable results.



Eames Armchair & Ottoman, 1958

Charles and Ray Eames

Later the Eameses expanded upon this design concept, adding plush, individually upholstered cushions to the seat and back to create soft pad group chairs. Based on the same light frame, these chairs add another dimension to the original design. While their "feel" is different, they're equally comfortable.



Eames Aluminium & Soft Pad Chair, 1958

Charles and Ray Eames

The first Eames executive chairs graced the lobby of the Time-Life Building in New York City.

A design critic once said that this extraordinary couple "just wanted to make the world a better place." That they did. They also made it a more graceful place, creating enduring furniture of unpretentious elegance.



Eames Executive Chair, 1970s



All of the furniture by these major designers share several elements:

- n elegant simplicity of line,
- n comfort,
- n the ingenious use of materials,
- n the capability of mass manufacture,
- n and wide public acceptance.



The End

Thank you