

MID-CENTURY FURNITURE DESIGN AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DESIGN OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Regina RAYCHEVA

University of Forestry, Sofia, Faculty of Forest Industry
10, Kliment Ochridski Blvd., Sofia 1797, Bulgaria
Cell: +359 899864347, E-mail: rexi@abv.bg

Abstract:

In design history there have been recurrent ideas and styles in the past. In this paper, such a style is considered and researched by means of selecting and comparing pieces of seating furniture from the 50s and 60s and their counterparts from the 21st C. In this way the author establishes the influential role of mid-century design for contemporary design development. The definitions and meanings of used terms, such as "classic", "vintage", or "retro", are considered. Factors for the emergence of the phenomenon are established and presented, such as: the periodic change of fashions in furniture industry, continuity with modern movement, re-editions of classical designs in compliance with technological advance, the search for simplicity and minimalism, expressive forms, and structure. On the basis of the research, an overall estimation is given to the phenomenon as a re-evaluation of modern classic and a major origin of 21st development in design.

Key words: design classics; antique; vintage; retro; mid-century design; designer-led companies.

INTRODUCTION

The first two decades of the 21st C manifest a steady interest to the design of the 1950s and 1960s period. Integrated with achievements of technology and innovative materials, these designs undergo further evolution. The existing literature offers professional reviews on fashion and analysis in the form of commercial and journalist commentary on annual furniture fairs. They, however, do not further research the link with the 20th C design, only pointing out basic trends in colour, materials and style for the general public. The paper discloses the genesis of this phenomenon and presents a more specific research of the visual features, morphology, structure and overall silhouette of the selected pieces from the said periods, giving conclusions, important for a long-term trend analysis.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the present research was to follow the impact of mid-century design of the 20th C on furniture designed in the first two decades of the 21st C. The author's major interest lies in the developed types, imagery, morphology, specific shape, materials, and function. The aim is, by researching different cases of individual designers and designer-led companies, to prove the validity of the said period for today's creativity. Also, an objective was set up to look at factors for this phenomenon, and as a conclusion, to establish an evaluation of its significance and general characteristics.

METHODS

The methods used are researching published information about major furniture exhibitions, selection of examples, analysis and comparison in chronologic order, case study. The works of designers that are particularly influential or much re-edited are considered, as well as companies that manufacture them. The case of two designer-led companies that promote furniture classics are considered. Re-edited or similar works are compared to their protagonists. Visual information is organized in tables, where the following information is gathered: name and picture of the product, the author, year of manufacture, and a short description and morphology features are systematized. Important trends are outlined and final conclusions are drawn.

EXPOSÉ DEFINITIONS

A need arises to clarify the meaning of three terms: vintage, antique and retro. The term 'vintage' seems to be more of a journalistic or vendors' label than a specific term of art history. It relies heavily on the 'colour' or 'aroma' of the adjective itself, bringing the high-class idea of vintage wine to the realm of furniture styles. The original meaning of 'vintage' as a noun is: "A. the year or place in which wine, especially wine of high quality, was produced; and B. the time that something of quality was produced. As an adjective, the same word has similar meanings: A. 1. Relating to or denoting wine of high quality; and B. 2. Denoting something from the past of high quality, especially something representing the best of its kind" (www.bing.com). Abbas, A (2012) is of the opinion that "vintage furniture" means "old, but not yet antique

(...), used to describe a piece between 30 to 100 years old". An official Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition for it is: "the term vintage relates primarily to wine and is an altered form of the French word *vendage*, meaning "the grapes picked during a season." One of its secondary definitions is "a period of origin or manufacture" (e.g., a vintage 1960-s Mercedes) or "length of existence: age." (www.apartmenttherapy.com) A much more helpful explanation notes that "an item described as 'vintage' should speak of the era in which it was produced." (www.apartmenttherapy.com) A definition of 'antique' is given by the same author as follows: "According to Merriam Webster, an antique is "a relic or object (...) made at an earlier period and according to various customs laws at least 100 years ago." Ruby Lane, an online marketplace of antique and collectible shops (www.rubylane.com) offers a similar definition, explaining, "Most authorities consider the actual definition of the term 'antique' to mean an age of at least 100 years."

As we can see, the term 'vintage' versus 'antique' differs by its age; but 'retro' vs. 'vintage' might have an overlap of meaning, although higher quality prevails in 'vintage'. In this paper, by 'classic', the author denotes established designers of the pre- and the post-war period of the 20th C. As we can see, the definition of 'antique' already covers some of these designers, but it is not acceptable to use the term 'antique' or 'retro' for such a revolutionary innovative period. We could only use the term 'classic', which denotes high-value in itself.

Charlotte and Peter Fiell (1991), in their book *Modern Furniture Classics*, point out, that there are two main currents in design: the functionalist, rational, industrial design, and the anti-rationalism, a current concerned with aesthetics and style. They say: "... although certain furniture pieces are closely related with their time, still one can talk of classics; in this case this is the precursor furniture, or the one better known than the others. These pieces, known as classic, harmoniously unite the objectives of design with those of style; and their non-aging aesthetic or functional qualities, strongly express the spirit of their time. Furniture of the post-war period undoubtedly carries the mark of modernism, an avant-garde movement born in the first half of the century." (Fiell, C. and P.1991) The "non-aging" quality as well as the "mark of modernism" brings us to the next question: continuity.

CONTINUITY

Continuity to the Modern Movement from the 1920-s and 1930-s was an important feature of the 1950-s design. In the post-war period, companies such as Cassina and Knoll Int., realized the potential of works by great architects and designers of the Modern movement, still not very well known to that time. To make their work popular for the wider public was the commercial aspect; the other aspect was to engage the authors themselves, who were active and working. The evolution of mid-century design was a direct consequence of accepting, continuing, and further developing the ideas of the modern movement. This in turn brought about the emergence of the style, typical for the mid-century. It was, on the one hand, a 'softer' version of the modern movement by adopting natural, organic forms. A new aspect was the attitude towards tradition: by interpreting the vernacular craft tradition of the 19th C., modern design acquired a 'human' face and turned to wood and wood products. Incorporating new knowledge of the dawn of ergonomic research from the 1940-s, designers changed considerably seating furniture: lower seats, backrests strongly inclined to give an overall relaxed silhouette. The technological innovations of the time (bent plywood, fiberglass, plastics) further encouraged the trend. The above-mentioned materials actually made possible the organic design of the 50s. The post-war period was a new beginning for countries such as Italy, Great Britain, the United States (see below the case of Knoll Int.), the Scandinavian countries (especially Denmark), and as such had a strong potential. In Italy the *ricostruzione* period laid the foundations of what is known as the style 'made in Italy', by witnessing the emergence of a number of furniture companies that have become leaders of the sector.

The Cassina company was founded by Cesare Cassina in Milan in 1927. Together with his brother in 1935 he renamed the company to become Figli di Amedeo Cassina; "before the Second World War Cassina made only customized furniture for particular clients". (Conran Design Directory 1985) "During Italy's post-war *ricostruzione* the firm pioneered a more progressive approach to design, hiring Franco Albini, Gio Ponti, Vico Magistretti, Mario Bellini and many other leading Italian furniture designers to contribute to its catalogue. But in the mid-sixties the firm returned to its origins in reproduction furniture with the "I Maestri" series of classics by Le Corbusier, Gerrit Rietveld and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Cassina's reputation is nevertheless as one of Italy's most forward-thinking furniture companies." (Conran Design Directory 1985) In an article on the 90th Anniversary of the company, Mun-Delsalle, says: "Going through the pages of its catalogue is like perusing the history books of 20th-century design. Cassina came of age during Italy's post-war renaissance in the 1950s, launching industrial design during the country's economic boom by shifting from handcraftsmanship to serial production". (Mun-Delsalle 2018).

The American firm Knoll Int. is an overseas example of a company that pioneered the production of modern furniture in the USA and the world in the 1940s due to America's stronger economy and huge market. The company aimed at filling in a niche for modern furniture in the USA, needed for the buildings of

the international style in the 1950s. Started by the German Hans Knoll in 1938, the company began by trying to manufacture simple but modern design from softwood and “discarded army webbing or parachute cloth” from the wartime period (Larrabee and Vignelli 1985). Hans Knoll, a charismatic and persuasive personality, had a gift to win contracts and find the right people for his business. With the help of architect and spouse Florence Knoll, Hans Knoll turned to contracting interior assignments for different company offices, and started production of classical furniture pieces, such as the Barcelona chair by Mies van der Rohe. Having studied at Cranbrook Academy with Saarinen and Eames, Florence Knoll asked them to create designs for Knoll Int.; these later became icons of design history. Eero Saarinen, Charles Eames, Harry Bertoia, etc., were the authors of some of the most famous pieces of the firm, such as the “Tulip Series”, The “Womb” Chair by Saarinen, the “Diamond Chair” by Bertoia, etc. The company is true to its historic legacy and is editing these classic mid-century designs to the present day, as we can see at international furniture fairs.

CRITICISM: THE RADICAL MOVEMENTS IN THE 70S AND 80S

After the design boom of the 60s and 70s, radical movements (Alchimia in Italy) and post-modernism appeared in Europe and the USA, questioning Bauhaus postulates of ‘Good design’. The period covered the 1980s, only to slowly die out in the 1990s, when design, after temporary fashions of exuberant and curving shapes, turned back to rationalism and minimalism. One such critical operation in the 1970s was re-design. It appeared in Mendini’s terminology and work, as re-dressing famous models from the design classic in a paradoxical way. “With the collection *Irony of the Great Works*, Alchimia group moves away from the area defined by professional orthodoxy”. (Sato, K. (1988). By ironizing the design classics, though, the radical movement only admitted their special position in design history, and, ironically, contributed to their recognition.

RE-EDITIONS

Many a company today practices re-editing of well-known design works. This is done with the aim to update the original design and make it commercially available and profit from their iconic silhouettes. In fact all of the ‘original’ firms that started the production of design classics have effected subtle transformations by changing the materials and technologies. An example is the LC Grand Confort armchair by Le Corbusier, Charlotte Perriand and Pierre Jeanneret. Originally, the upholstery filling of the seat and back cushions was made of down and feathers. Later foam materials are used by Cassina after 1965, thus changing the soft wrinkled cushions into tight geometrical shapes.

SIMPLICITY AND MINIMALISM

Furniture of the 1950-s is laconic and monumental, perhaps due to a strong link with modern abstract sculpture and painting. Many of these works give the impression of a line, drawn in a single gesture. Furniture classics (Jacobsen’s “Egg” and “Swan” Chair) are an example: morphologically they feature a one-piece shell on a single leg. They demonstrate a clearly defined supporting structure (a ‘trumpet’ base) and supported ‘cup’ made of fiberglass, injection-moulded, rotation moulded plastics, etc. Colombo’s “Elda” chair, followed by Karim Rashid’s “Kite” falls into this family. Monumentality is manifested by Charles Eames’ furniture, influenced by modern sculpture (Henry Moore’s ‘Reclining figures’), e.g. in order to conceive the “La Chaise” chair with its lying silhouette pierced by a hole in the middle. Peter Dunas (1996) is of the opinion that “Charles and Ray Eames imagined that a flowing sculpture by the influential French-American sculptor Gaston Lachaise (1882-1935) would blend in well with their chair, hence the name.”(Dunas et al. 1996)

EXPRESSIVE SILHOUETTES

Examples of the ‘organic design era’ have that quality, it comes from following nature and explains their names: “Swan”, “Egg”, “Aunt”, “Womb”, “Tulip”. Nature is also present in anthropomorphic designs, such as the “DS-151 Recliner” by Jane Worthington for De Sede, closely resembling a person lying back, hands behind the head. Of all the 1950s organic examples, the “Tulip” series by Saarinen seems to have spawned most “successors”: it is enough to look at “Ero/s/” by Philippe Starck, “Tulip” by Paulin and “Rosa” by Merki Jr., etc. The very idea of cup-like transparent shell was much employed: Phillip Starck won Good Design Award 2008 with one of his chairs (“Mr. Impossible” for Kartell) with a similar design.

Table 2

Jacobsen's Egg Chair and its influence.

Picture (source)				
Product Name	The Egg Chair	DS-151 Recliner	Boson	Evolution
Year of Design, Manufacturer, Country	1960 Fritz Hansen, Denmark	2002 De Sede, Switzerland	2005 Artifort, The Netherlands	2007 Zanotta, Italy
Author Name, Picture of Author	Aarne Jacobsen 	Jane Worthington 	Patrick Norqvist 	Ora-Itto 
Functional Type, Morphology of Design, Structure, Material, Visual Features	The Egg Chair features memorable design, inspired by natural shapes. Emerging in the 1960's, it has spawned many more types of chairs. (chairinstitute.com) This model sets up a type of a monolithic fiberglass/plastic shell for a lounge chair that cradles the sitter, on top of a single pedestal leg. The overall shape is open at the top, to give the sitter the freedom of vision and movement, as well as to provide the two characteristic "wings" on top for headrests. An important feature, much repeated, is the inward-curving transition from the flaring upper part to the armrests and the seat.	The reclining human silhouette is translated into a form which represents the visual epitome of relaxation. (https://www.desede.ch) It looks as though the Egg chair was stretched to achieve recliner proportions. What is most obvious is the top contour of the back with the unmistakable corner "wings", i.e. the headrests. Historically, the top of the back is a familiar outline, as we know it in English "wing" chairs; therefore the "two-horned high backs" have remained a feature of modern lounge chairs, elegantly interpreted right up to our days.	"Sitting in the Boson means having a lesson in physics, for the Boson is named after the "Higgs Boson" – a subatomic particle that makes other particles acquire mass." (www.artifort.com) A design with a strong iconic shape, "Lounge chair with outer seat shell in glass-reinforced polyester and inner shell in polyurethane with fabric upholstery, supported on a polished aluminum swiveling pedestal base" (Fietz, C and P 2007). This lounge continues the monumental shape of recliners, so fashionable after the year 2000.	"[...] sober and futuristic lines, a universal and timeless style able to weather time whilst remaining elegant. (...) Its ergonomics ideally support the body. The headrest can be enhanced with an integrated sound system and become a source of relaxation and added entertainment. The interior gel is wrapped in leather, and the exterior is fiberglass. The base is made of polished steel like a mirror in order to better fade away." (www.zanotta.com) A daring slit divides the seat from the backrest, providing the "hole" in the monolithic mass.

MORPHOLOGY/STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

If we look at the overall build of the examples from the tables, we may classify them into three major groups according to the number of constituent parts for the seat/back:

- A mono-shell with a single, sculptural plastic-molded cup-like shell, open or closed at the top (here belong the "Egg" chair, the "Ovalia Egg Chair", the "Tulip" series, etc.). This type uses molded plastic shells;
- Pieces with two-part structure, or separate back and seat (of different material – bent plywood shells, molded plastic shells.) This is a much-exploited solution. Here we can include the models of Eames (LCW etc.: two bentwood shells on different supporting structures of metal, bent wood, steel rods etc.); "Orange Chair" by Olsen, "Orange Slice Chair" by Paulin, etc. This type is extremely used today;
- Finally, three and more shells can make a specific structure, such as the Lounge Chair by the Eameses, the Tre Pezzi by Albini/Helg and the Corona Chair by Jorgensen.

On the other hand, function development have encouraged further search for comfort; this is also caused by changes in dwellings: the living room became a place, where not only TV is watched by all the inhabitants, but also individuals use smaller devices: mobile phones, tablets, laptops (Tasheva S, Vodenova P Angelova D 2019). This brought about the emergence of the so-called *relax*, principally a lounge with (sometimes) additional functions: listening to music, massaging, Internet browsing, work on the laptop.

MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE

In the book "The Chair in the Beginning of the 21st C", (Angelova 2015) the following technologies are included: gas assist molding, 3D printing, injection molding, rotational molding, etc. The examples we have researched also use glass-reinforced polyester molded shells, injection-molded polycarbonate as well as carbon-fiber composites. "With the recent ascendancy of computer-aided design and rapid prototyping, designers can quite literally give substance to their dreams in a matter of hours. In fact, rapid prototyping machines that use laser stereolithography have in recent years become the high-tech "Easy Bake Oven" toys for the design industry". (Fiell C and P 2007).

Angelova (2015) considers contemporary materials as well; to traditional wood, bent plywood, plastics and metals, today new materials, such as carbon fibers, felt, tubular knitted textile, 3D textiles, laser-cut textiles, concrete etc. are used. The Vortice Lounge chair by Giovanni Pagnotta presents an interesting carbon fiber example, manifesting a complex shape with reduced thickness, due to the exceptional strength qualities of carbon fibers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the review made on the impact of mid-century design on today's designers in the presented tables, we can point out the following results:

1. By perpetuating 50s and 60s design, *continuity* with the modern movement is achieved. Having in mind the fact that their original manufacturers never, or only temporarily stopped producing them, we can understand why we can see these originals on practically every large furniture commercial show in these days. Therefore, not only the public, but professionals have these classics literally before their eyes;
2. Re-design rather means re-edition today, and is a common procedure of rejuvenating the design for today's technological requirements;

2. Simplicity and minimalism is an important characteristic, thus achieving iconic quality. The laconic silhouettes gave the 1950s production archetypal quality, providing a source for a number of versions;
3. Belief in and positive attitude towards technology, science, the new materials (plastics) and the first euphoria of the space age are kept even today. We can talk of 'a second technological revolution', bringing new technologies (3D printing, digital design and manufacturing) and materials (carbon fibres, polycarbonate) to interest;
5. Craft tradition and handmade quality of objects as a high value were also one direction of research of the post-war period, but today, designs of the 'Danish' era have been reinterpreted with new materials and newer approach to minimalism;
6. Expressive and memorable silhouettes make furniture and also the age they were manufactured in recognizable. Today, this line of development has evolved into even greater complexity, with the works of some designers that use CAD-CAM technologies or 3D printing to this effect and create designs unthinkable in the previous century.

Table 3

Impact of the "Tulip Series" by Saarinen

Picture (source)				
Product Name	Tulip Series, 1957	Eero/s/	Little Tulip	Rosa Armchair
Year of Design, Manufacturer, country	1957 Knoll Int., USA	2001 Kartell, Italy	1965 Artifort, The Netherlands	2012 Studio KLM, Switzerland
Author Name	Eero Saarinen	Philippe Starck	Pierre Paulin	Kurt Merki Jr.
Picture of Author				
Functional Type, Morphology of Design, Structure, Material, Visual Features	The Tulip Series of chairs introduced a clearly divided structure of the shell of seat/backrest and a pedestal leg, strongly symbolizing a flower cup on its leg. Substituting the four-leg structure with a single 'trumpet'-shaped leg, or pedestal, it set the iconic example of a host of new chairs of the 20 th and 21 st C. With the Pedestal Collection, Eero Saarinen resolved the 'ugly, confusing, unrefined world' underneath tables and chairs. (www.knoll.com)	Eero/S is a chair on a single pedestal base that continues the Tulip tradition. "The quality and richness of its component materials, both for the body and the base, make it particularly elegant and sophisticated". (www.kartell.com) Philip Starck exploits the perfect surface, transparency and elegance of polycarbonate as well rich colours. Sophisticated and sleek, this design is worthy of the technological revolution taking place at the beginning of the 21 st C in materials and furniture design.	"Elegance through and through. The Little Tulip is a real Artifort classic that was released in 1965, and remains a timeless chair to this day". (www.artifort.com) Part of the Tulip family of chairs by Artifort, it brings the characteristic 1960s laconic expression typical of Pierre Paulin. Its iconic elegance is yet another proof of the vitality of the "flower concept": the petals and the stem are there, the organic formula started by Saarinen. Ever since the beginning of the 21 st C, with the intensified interest towards the 1960s, this chair has an unmistakably modern flair.	The designer states that: "The driving force behind a real impact in life, and indeed beyond, is a clear sense of purpose." (www.kurtmerkijr.com) His chair has acoustic purpose, surrounding the sitter with sound absorbing foam, and turning in 360° round. The flower-on-leg formula applied, this chair brings graphic innovation with its concentric circles. Although the "flower theme" seems to be the leading one in this product, in functioning, it is closer to the "capsule" concept of Aarnio's large Globe chair.

Table 4

Lounge Chair by the Eameses and impact on other versions

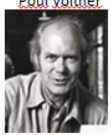
Picture (source)			
Product Name	Lounge Chair	Tre Pezzi	Corona Chair
Year of Design, Manufacturer, country	1956 Hermann Miller, USA	1959 Cassina, Italy	1961 Eric Jorgensen, from 1961, Denmark
Author Name	Charles and Ray Eames	Franco Albini with Franca Helg	Poul Volther
Picture of Author			
Functional Type, Morphology of Design, Structure, Material, Visual Features	Starting with the idea to interpret an English club chair, Charles and Ray Eames created an icon in 1956 and "set new standards: it is not only lighter, more elegant and more modern than the conventionally ponderous club chair – it is also more comfortable. Thanks to these qualities, the Lounge Chair (...) has attained the status of a classic in the history of modern furniture". (www.vitra.com) What is amazing is that the original drawback, namely the difficulty of making of a single shell for the seat and back, brought about its decomposition into three separate elements, plus the two armrests. This, as well as the ingenious single pedestal solution, turned out to be the seminal feature, with more 'decomposed' designs following in the years to come.	"In 1952, together with Franca Helg, his regular partner from that year on, Franco Albini designed the Tre Pezzi armchair, an ultra-modern reinterpretation of the classic bergère. The deep seat, the back support ring that traces a perfect semi-circle and the oval headrest, all have their own clean and distinct sharp geometric shape. Large, padded and embracing, they combine simplicity of form with a feeling of absolute comfort". (www.cassina.com) Once more do we see the three-division principle; this time 'part 2' is integrated with both armrests. Legs are in harmony with the largely inclined backrest.	"Originally designed by Danish furniture designer Poul M. Volther in 1961, the Corona Chair was first launched in 1964. It is the now iconic Corona Chair for which he has become best known. Its distinctive design, consisting of a series of elliptical cushions separated by open spaces, is said to have been designed not just for aesthetic purposes, but also in order to economise on materials after the Second World War". (iconicinteriors.com) Here we can see further division of the backrest/seat into even more parts: four separate cushions, thus providing a design theme for this memorable piece.

Table 5

LCW Chair by the Eameses

Product Picture		
Product Name	LCW (Lounge Chair Wood)	Kareames Chair
Author Name Picture of author(s)	Charles and Ray Eames 	Karim Rashid 
Year of Design Manufacturer, country	1946 Evans Plywood Division, CA, USA	2002 Magis, Italy
Functional Type, Morphology of Design, Structure, Material, Visual Features	"Years of designs and prototypes were finally developed and refined in 1946 to give four choices of adult chairs ready for the general market. This is a lounge chair version with more laid-back sitting position (LCW). After forty one years, in 1994, Herman Miller re-issued the DCW chair and to this day is back amongst the most popular of Eames chair designs". (eames.com) The LCW chair is a design classic with bent plywood back and seat and support structure. The silhouette of divided seat and back is a design icon of the 20th C and today is repeated in numerous dining chairs exhibited at the last editions of the greatest European furniture fairs at Cologne and Milan.	"The influence of Charles and Ray Eames and their plywood chair lounge chair is clearly followed in Karim Rashid's 'Kareames' Chair for Magis" (Bhaskaran, L 2006) As the name of this model suggests, as it is a combination of the names of both designers, this polycarbonate remake of the LCW chair by Charles and Ray Eames combines the plywood styles of the 1950s with the polycarbonate of the 21st C. It shows at least one thing: the design of the 1950s is making a comeback, but made of new materials, not available at the times of the original. But isn't it that in the same manner Phillip Starck's Louis Ghost made its royal appearance in transparent polycarbonate for Kartell.

CONCLUSIONS

The phenomenon of re-editing of famous creators, such as Jacobsen, Eames, Wegner, gave rise to a strong trend of 'classic design' in the first two decades of the 21st C. Due to commercial reeditions of mid-century design of various manufacturers with special interest (Vitra) or the activity of designer manufacturing companies, such as Cassina, Zanotta, Fritz Hansen, Knoll Int., a line of manufacturing policy is continued that started from their beginning. Although it may look similar to the revival movements of the 19th C, today this cyclic fashion means positioning the mid-century design in the 21st C and interpreting it with new technology and materials. It is a sign of re-evaluation of mid-century modern classic as a foundation and a source for new ideas, thus proving its archetypal significance.

Table 6

Three-legged Chair by Hans Wegner

Product Picture			
Product Name	Three-legged plywood Chair	Orange Lounge Chair	Orange Slice Lounge Chair
Author Name picture	Hans Wegner 	Hans Olsen 	Pierre Paulin 
Year of Design Manufacturer, country	1963 Vitra, Weil am Rhein, from 1997	1955 Warm Nordic, Denmark	1960 Artifort, The Netherlands
Functional Type, Morphology of Design, Structure, Material, Visual Features	"Wegner has explored the use of plywood in chair design on only a few occasions, most notably with this design. While his three-legged chair displays a masterful handling of the medium, Wegner prefers to concentrate his efforts on solid-wood constructions". (Ejell, C & P 2000) The shape of this armchair is a reduction of the three-part chairs. The ample seat width and concave shape, allows for a more comfortable position and even integrates the armrests. The three-legged support structure is a virtuoso solution. Today we can see many versions with two plywood shells, mirrored in shape, all on different supporting structure.	Hans Olsen, a Danish furniture designer famous for his experiments with bent, laminated wood, developed a distinctive style by combining classic references and organic lines with a touch of humour. (www.finnishdesignshop.com) The Orange Lounge Chair is designed 8 years before the Three-legged plywood Chair by Wegner. This Chair has more versions, seen in this years' Salone del Mobile in Milan, where the seat and back almost mirror each other in shape.	"In 1952, designer Pierre Paulin became acquainted with the technique of bending plywood. This technique was the basis of the F437. Soon the armchair got the nickname Orange Slice. The armchair is an acclaimed Artifort classic that has been released since 1960, and continues to be popular". (www.artifort.com) Although the legs are 1950s style, the mirroring bent plywood shells of the back and the seat keep the idea of Olsen and Wegner; and are still a very exploited dining chair idea.

Table 7

The impact of Elda Chair

Product Picture		
Product Name	Elda	Kite
Author Name, picture	Joe Colombo 	Karim Rashid 
Year of Design Manufacturer, country	1963 Comfort, Italy	2005 Label, Denmark
Functional Type, Morphology of Design, Structure, Material, Visual Features	"The Elda was the first large armchair to utilise a self-supporting fibreglass frame. Its seven sausage-like cushions, rotating base and generous proportions provide a great deal of comfort." (Fiell, C and P 2000) The flaring back is a continued feature in many modern chairs, where the surrounding of the sitter is searched. In fact such chairs strongly remind us of the beach chairs at the North Sea coast of Germany.	The Kite chair is designed as an outdoor piece of furniture. UV stable, with built-in aluminum tubes for drainage; it is a very lightweight chair, excellent for pools. This plastic chair is made by rotation molding. The common features with Elda are the great size, the flaring backrest, the typical division between the backrest and the armrests, the conical pedestal and overall silhouette.

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