

# 25 Case Study: The Chair

Friday, April 9, 2021 3:19 PM

## Today

Finish Aesthetics Game critique

Sketching: Material Expression

Chairs. Thonet to Eames

Final Report: Due in 2x size post on last day of class, Weds April 28. IF you want more feedback, post the 'What' info Weds April 21, and do your 2 critiques Sunday April 25. That way the early folks will get some feedback. We will also be doing in-class presentations starting Friday April 23, and a virtual public showing during our final exam slot,

**Tuesday** May 4

1:30 – 4 pm

## Sketching

# 5.5 MATERIAL EXPRESSION



## 5.5.1 Glossy and Matt

A glossy versus matt appearance of an object is mainly suggested by two characteristics. First, a difference in contrast can be seen. Glossy objects have a bigger contrast, while matt objects largely lack highlights. Moreover, on a flat glossy surface a gradient from full colour towards white can be seen.

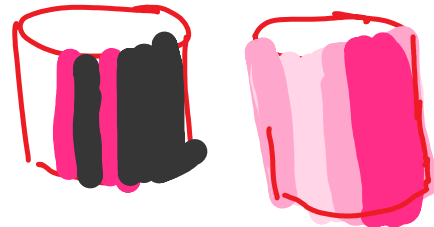
② The second characteristic has to do with reflections and cast shadow. Reflections dominate on a glossy surface. These reflections always appear mainly in the colour of the glossy material. There is little or no cast shadow on a glossy surface. A matt material displays hardly any reflections, but mainly cast shadow.

In a drawing in which the product material is expressed, it will be effective to exaggerate these characteristics.

Here you see the different marker strategies between glossy and matt material expression.



## Case Study: The Chair



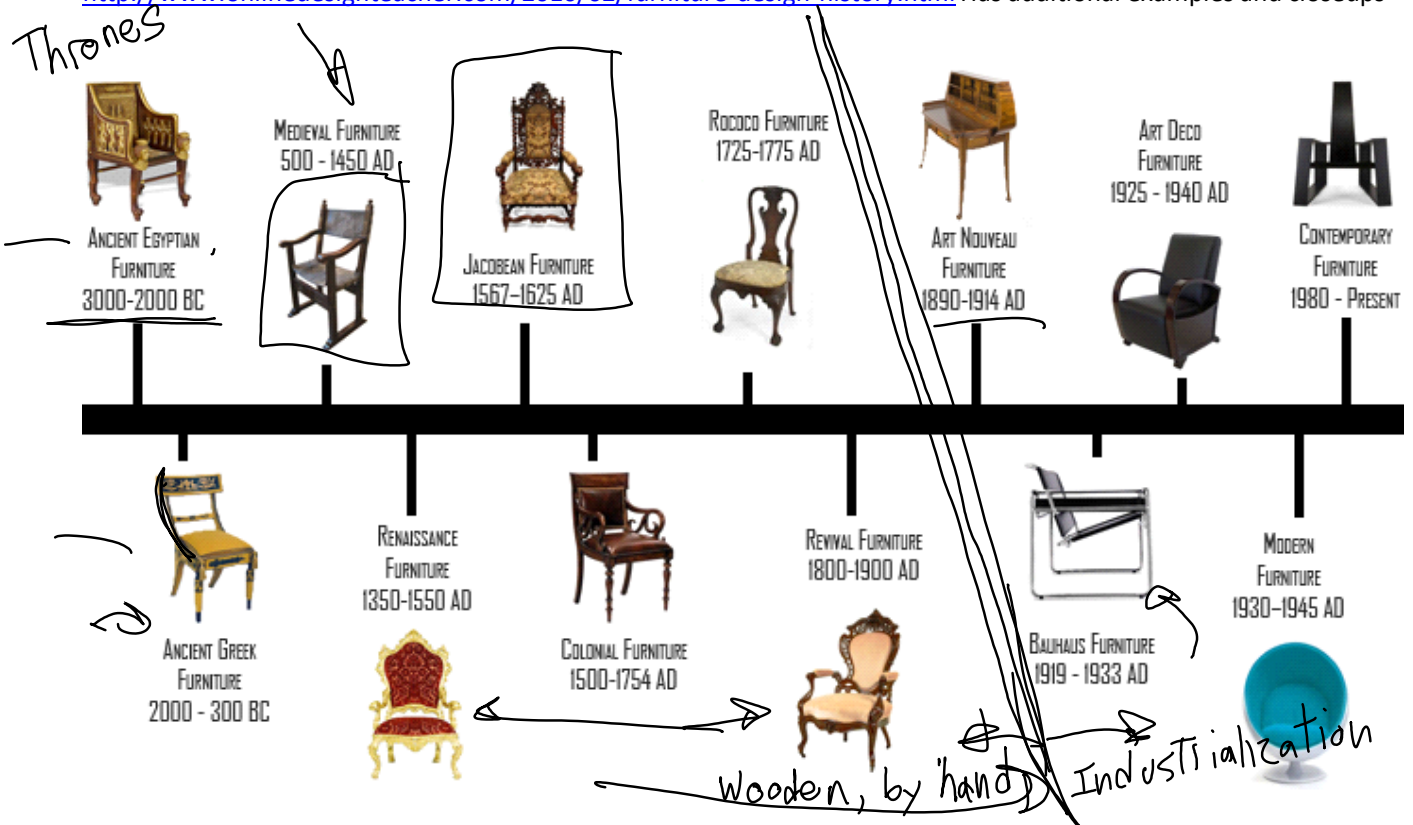
### Sources:

Rybczynski, Witold. *Now I Sit Me Down: From Klismos to Plastic Chair: A Natural History*. First Edition. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016.

Cranz, Galen. *The Chair: Rethinking Culture, Body, and Design*. Illustrated edition. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000.

### Design Movements in Furniture

<http://www.onlinedesignteacher.com/2016/02/furniture-design-history.html> Has additional examples and closeups



What are the elements that define each one? Visual, materials, fabrication techniques, philosophy?

<http://www.connectedlines.com/styleguide/index.htm> has details of pre-1920 styles. Chippendale etc. Not the same categories as above.

<http://www.furniturestyles.net/> Another timeline with examples. More text, not so many images.

Prehistoric

Ancient Egyptian

Ancient Greek

Medieval

Renaissance

Jacobean <http://www.furniturestyles.net/european/english/jacobean.html>

Colonial

Rococco

Revival

Arts and Crafts

Art Nouveau

Bauhaus

Arts and Crafts  
 Art Nouveau  
 Bauhaus  
 Art Deco  
 Modern  
 Contemporary

## Modern Chairs

20th Century +

<http://www.design-museum.de/en/collection/100-masterpieces.html> Vitra Design Museum site. Basel, Germany. Southwest, near Switzerland. Focuses on furniture and lighting, and some other industrial design collections.

[https://collection.design-museum.de/#/en/content/100376267/objects?\\_k=wq94c5](https://collection.design-museum.de/#/en/content/100376267/objects?_k=wq94c5)

Stop me when you see a chair you recognize or are interested in.

Modern design is a bit personality driven. The Design Encyclopedia is nothing more than a list of designers and who they worked for/with. (Byars, Mel. *The Design Encyclopedia*. Laurence King Publishing, 2004.)

OK, fine, so let's look at specific designers.

Let's start with industrialization of chairs. Prior to 19th century, chairs were carved from solid wood pieces, by hand.

1836 Michael Thonet. From Czeck Republic. Large beechwood forests. Developed lamination process for making bentwood chairs. Boiled strips of wood with glue, put in molds, etc. A type of early plywood.



## Michael Thonet

Austrian-German cabinet maker

Michael Thonet was a German-Austrian cabinet maker, known for the invention of bentwood furniture. [Wikipedia](#)

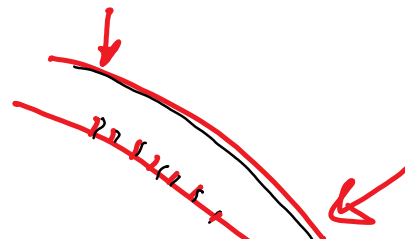
**Born:** July 2, 1796, [Boppard, Germany](#)

**Died:** March 3, 1871, [Vienna, Austria](#)

Later (1856) he also figured out how to bend solid wood sticks. Cut reliefs on inside of curve, steamed and molded. 1859 Konsumstuhl, Consumer's chair, #14



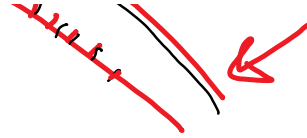
Still found in cafes around the world







Still found in cafes  
around the world

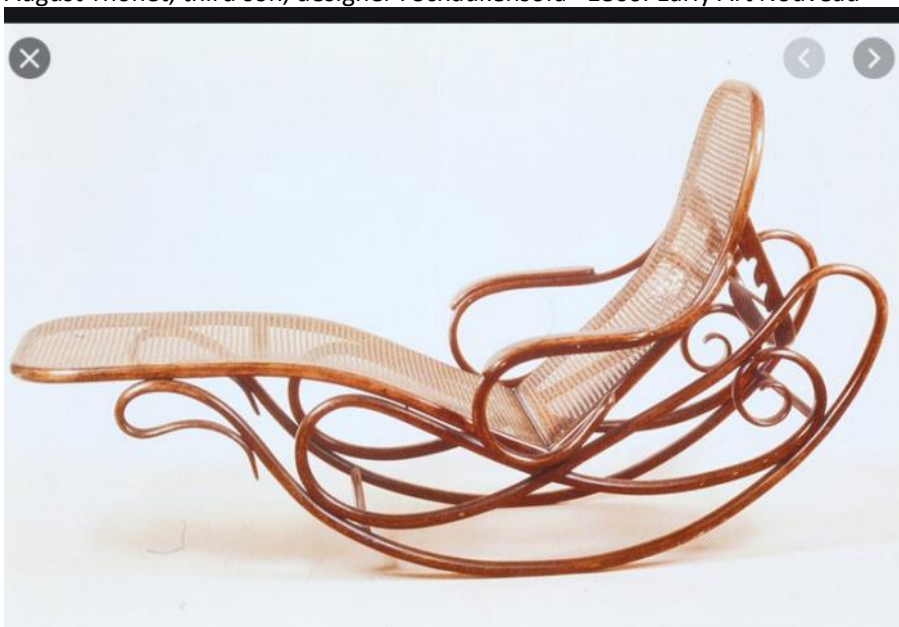


The original No.14 chair is made up of six pieces of wood, ten screws and two nuts. It was the first piece of furniture designed to be shipped in parts to save space during transportation and came with simple instructions to put it together. Flatpack! The No.14 could have been a source of inspiration for IKEA, the biggest manufacturer of ready-to-assemble furniture today.

From <<https://designmuseum.org/discover>>

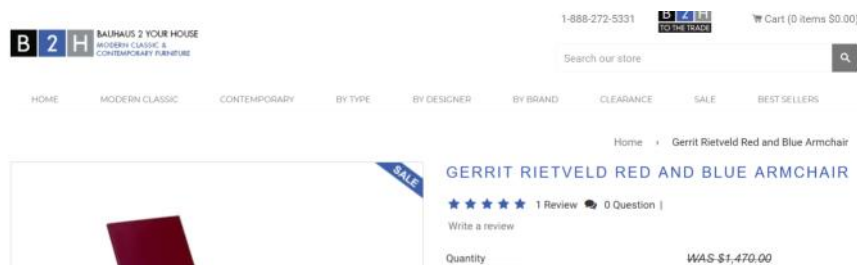


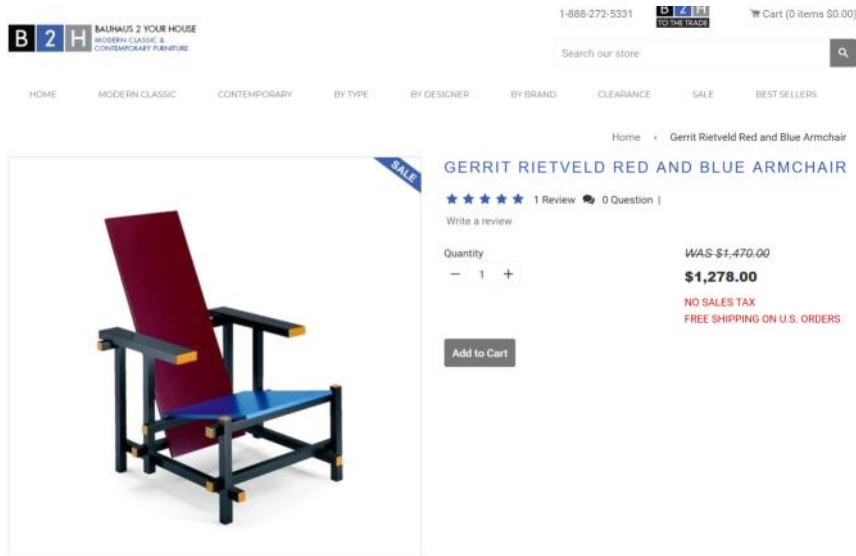
August Thonet, third son, designer : Schaukensofa ~1860. Early Art Nouveau



Thonet company, 200 years old, is still big in furniture today: <http://en.thonet.de/startseite.html>. Pioneered mass manufacturing and mass marketing.

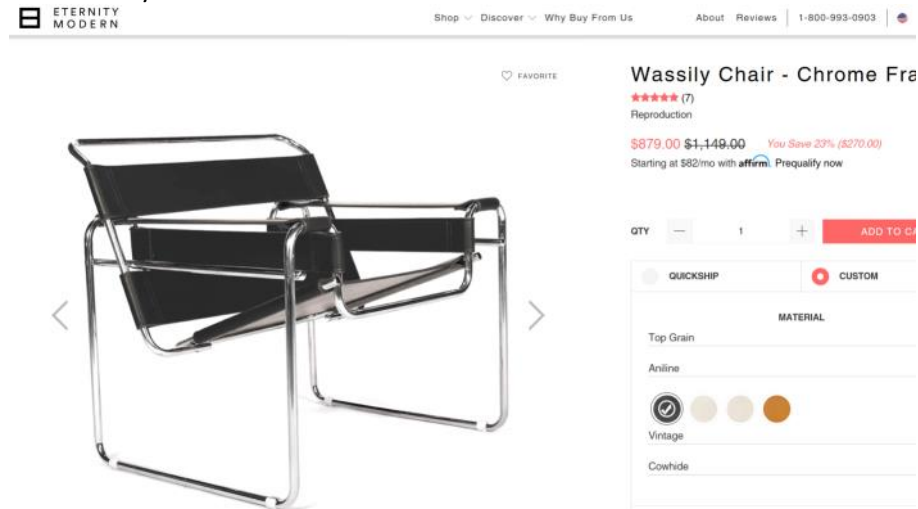
**This allowed independent chair designers to begin to work in late 19th century;** neither cabinetmakers nor manufacturers





Dutch designer Gerrit Rietveld chair. Designed 1918 as work of art. Not very comfortable. Yes, part of De Stijl (Mondrian)

Then, Bauhaus: Gropius' protégé Marcel Breuer graduated 1925, immediately became furniture design teacher and built Wassily chair:

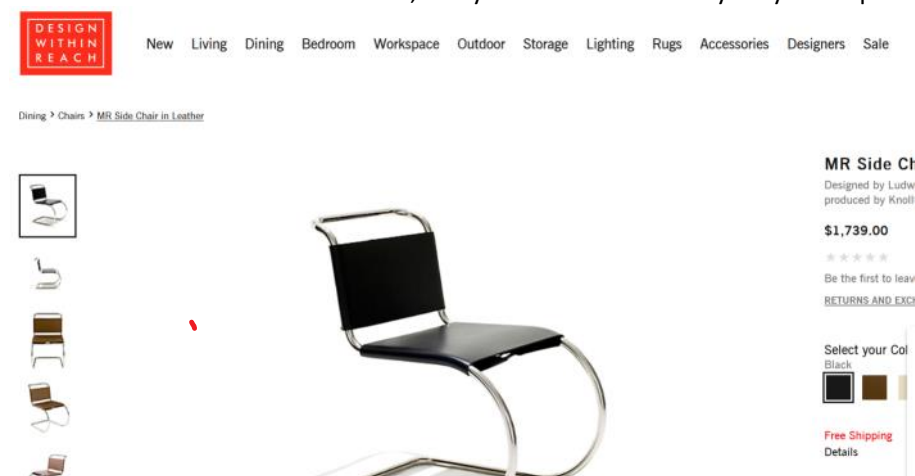


"This was the first technical innovation in furniture making since Thonet invented bentwood 65 years earlier" *Now I sit me down, pg 121.*

This chair had huge impact. Bauhaus was big in architecture, and now had a model in furniture.

My parents bought one. Was uncomfortable, and they quickly sold it. It's still iconic, and available.

Tube steel furniture was a short fad, <10 years. Reminded everybody of hospitals and dentists. Still, some designs lasted:



Dining > Chairs > MR Side Chair in Leather



+3 MORE



### MR Side Ch

Designed by Ludwig  
produced by Knoll

**\$1,739.00**

★★★★★

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MR10 by Mies van der Rohe. 1927. Expensive to manufacture, and easy to tip forward. Still Bauhaus, but looks Art Deco. Both were between WW I and II.



~~\$219.00~~

**See Price in Cart**

**Breuer Chair Company Cesca Cane Dining Chair in Chrome and Honey Oak**

★★★★★ 2

Designed with a mid-century aesthetic for a retro elegance, this handsome arm chair is a great way to complete the decor of your home. The chair is crafted from sturdy beechwood with a honey oak finish and a chromed steel frame.

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**+ Add to Cart**

Marcel Breuer again. 1928 or so.