

Furniture Design History



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- Duration: 1.45 min

Age of the oak

- Furniture made during the reigns of the British Tudor monarchs (Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, et al.) is commonly referred to as belonging to the Age of Oak, since oak was the predominant species used for most pieces.
- As with all period styles, there is no clear beginning and end, but over a period of 160 years from around 1500 broad characteristics can be seen.



Video Traditional English oak furniture

- Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgKrZwyeWtg>
- Short description: Tudor Oak Furniture has a core team of experienced, knowledgeable and passionate people, who take inspiration from history and believe that good design and high quality of craftsmanship should and can complement modern living..
- Duration: 2 min

Age of the oak

- The term “Age of Walnut” is not so much descriptive of any particular style of furniture as it is a means of dating furniture — roughly from 1600 to 1730.
- One reason for the gradual introduction of walnut may have been improvements in sawing.
- While planks could only with difficulty be sawn thinner than an inch, it was natural to construct furniture using them as such, and to employ carving as the easiest form of decoration.



Age of Mahogany and Satinwood

- The Age of Mahogany dominated much of the middle part of the 18th century.
- The beginning of this period saw a sudden simplification of style into a less ornamented and more severely elegant aesthetic
- Emphasis was henceforth on simple, flowing lines. Later examples became more heavily carved, fretted, and typically replete with what is perhaps the most characteristic element of this whole period: the cabriole leg



Video mahogany furniture

- Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9BsHXcnHSY>
- Short description: Mahogany furniture manufacturer in Mandaue City, Philippines, right next to Cebu City, Cebu. Large showroom was well worth the visit. The factory is at the same location. Beds, bed frames, couches, love seats, chairs, storage, cabinets, tables and more.
- Duration: 5.50 min

The 17th century

- The early Jacobean period, starting around 1603, when James I came to the throne, represents a gradual change from Age of Oak Elizabethan exuberance to a less ornamented, quieter style.
- Table legs, for example became straighter and lost the large “melon” turnings that were typical of earlier pieces.
- Spiral-turned legs are also typical of this period — something that remained popular in gate leg tables for centuries.
- Overall profiles became lower and more rectangular



The 18th century

- To understand the term “18th-century furniture,” it will be most instructive to refer to the following terms, all of which may also be defined as 18th century:
- William and Mary, Queen Anne, Georgian, Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Sheraton, Adam, Regency, Federal, and the French periods of the several Louis, Directoire, and Empire.



The 19th century

- The 19th century is marked by the Industrial Revolution, which caused profound changes in society.
- With increasing working populations in cities, with the rise of a new class of wealthy (but not necessarily informed) furniture buyers, together with the arrival of mass-production and the consequent demise of the individual craftsman-designer, the gradual progression of furniture styles that had characterized previous centuries was replaced by a riot of often poorly imitated styles.



Video collection of 16,17,18 century furniture

- Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19y7TRnqQIY>
- Short description: In the heart of the Périgord Noir, close to the famous Lascaux Cave, come and discover a unique collection of period pottery and furniture, a wealth of veritable chefs-d'œuvre from the different regions of France.
- Duration: 2.33 min

The 20th century

- The term "20th Century" is only very generally useful, since it includes so many distinct styles more usefully understood on their own.
- It can be taken to refer to anything produced after the 19th century, and by and large as representing relatively contemporary furniture as opposed to period furniture.



The early 20th century furniture

- 20th century design is a particularly interesting era, for it marks a great turning point in the history of design.
- You have probably heard of Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, Art Deco, Bauhaus and Modernism and maybe even of the Glasgow style, Secession and Liberty style.
- Unless you take the time to study them, it's easy to get confused.



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Unit 2 Design movements in furniture

- You may at times be wondering which movement preceded which and which ideas characterized each particular movement.
- For greater clarity and so that you can better appreciate the many designers' works featured in the module please see the image



Arts and Crafts Movement 1850 - 1915

- The Arts and Crafts movement was a British and American aesthetic movement occurring in the last years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century. Inspired by the writings of John Ruskin, it was at its height between approximately 1880 and 1910.
- It was a reformist movement that influenced architecture, decorative arts, cabinet making, crafts, and even garden designs.
- Its best-known practitioners were William Morris, Charles Robert Ashbee, T. J. Cobden Sanderson and Walter Crane



Art Nouveau 1880 – 1910

- Art Nouveau (French for 'new art') is an international style of art, architecture and design that was most popular at the beginning of the 20th century (1880-1914) and is characterized by highly-stylized, flowing, curvilinear designs often incorporating floral motifs.
- Dynamic, undulating, and flowing, curved 'whiplash' lines characterized much of Art Nouveau.
- Another feature is the use of hyperbolas and parabolas. Conventional mouldings seem to spring to life and 'grow' into plant-derived forms.



Video Art nouveau furniture

- Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3zIlubmw_s
- Short description: the most famous artists are Louis Majorelle, Emile Gallé, Victor Horta, Alfons Mucha, Hector Guimard this is available in Nancy (musée de l'école de Nancy) in Paris (Musée des arts décoratifs, Musée d'Orsay, Musée Carnavalet
- Duration: 17.07 min

Modernism 1880 – 1940

- Modernist architects and designers believed that new technology rendered old styles of building obsolete.
- Just as cars had replaced the horse, so modernist design should reject the old styles and structures inherited from Ancient Greece or from the Middle Ages.
- Following this machine aesthetic, modernist designers rejected decorative motifs in design, preferring to emphasize the materials used and pure geometrical forms



Futurism 1910 – 1945

- Futurism was the first movement in the history of art and design to be engineered and managed like a business.
- It embraced technological progress and celebrated the potential and dynamism of the modern age.
- It was an extremely forward thinking movement



Art Deco 1910 – 1940

- Art Deco was a popular design movement from 1920 until 1939, affecting the decorative arts such as architecture, interior design, and industrial design, as well as the visual arts such as fashion, painting, the graphic arts, and film.
- This movement was, in a sense, a fusion of many different styles and movements of the early 20th century, including Constructivism, Cubism, Modernism, Bauhaus, Art Nouveau, and Futurism.
- Its popularity peaked during the Roaring Twenties.



Video Art Deco furniture

- Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHsajqogmNI>
- Short description: art deco this and that wonder if those items but there is a style of furniture made in america primarily during shop furniture, decor at great prices on chairish. Art deco furniture history & style achieving the parisian art emily henderson. The art deco movement arose in the early 20 th century following 1925.
- Duration: 1 min

Bauhaus 1920 – 1934

- Bauhaus is the common term for the Staatliches Bauhaus, an art and architecture school in Germany that operated from 1919 to 1933, and for the approach to design that it publicized and taught.
- The most natural meaning for its name (related to the German verb for "build") is Architecture House.



The history of Bauhaus

- Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZXOgqXlyUI>
- Short description: Bauhaus is a school of design established by Walter Gropius in Weimar in 1919, best known for its designs of objects based on Functionalism and simplicity that combined crafts and the fine Arts.
- Duration: 13 min

Surrealism 1925 – 1930

- Surrealism is a cultural movement that began in the mid-1920s, and is best known for the visual artworks and writings of the group members.
- The group aimed to revolutionize human experience, including its personal, cultural, social, and political aspects, by freeing people from what they saw as false logic, and restrictive customs and structures.

Salvador Dali



Streamlining 1930 – 1950

- Also known as Streamline Moderne, Streamlining was a later branch of Art Deco.
- Its architectural style emphasized curving forms, long horizontal lines, and sometimes nautical elements (such as railings and porthole windows). It reached its height in 1937.



Organic Design 1930 – 1960

- Organic Design is a philosophy of architecture which promotes harmony between human habitation and the natural world through the design approaches of buildings, furnishings, and products; which are sympathetic to their surroundings.
- Forms from nature influence products.
- The term "Organic Architecture" was coined by the famous architect, Frank Lloyd Wright (1868-1959).



Pop Art 1958 – 1972

- Pop art is one of the major art movements of the twentieth century. The movement was characterized by themes and techniques drawn from popular mass culture, such as advertising and comic books.
- Predominately a movement of the art world, Pop Art quickly began to influence the furniture, graphic design and products of the time.
- The designs were bright, vibrant and full of character.



Minimalism 1967 – 1978

- Minimalism describes movements in various forms of art and design where the work is stripped down to its most fundamental features.
- Minimalists design has been highly influenced by Japanese traditional design and architecture
- The movement was developed in New York and encouraged geometric forms, extreme simplicity and the use of light.



Postmodernism 1978 – Present

- Postmodernism is a movement of ideas arising from, but also critical of modernism.
- The movement began with architecture, as a reaction against the blandness and hostility of the Modernist movement.
- Postmodernists made a return to decoration and “interest” in products and buildings, the style was at times extremely abstract, yet remained functional, as shown by the work of Ettore Sottsass.



Memphis 1981-1988

- Memphis was a Milan-based collective of furniture and product designers whose work dominated the design scene of the early 1980's.
- Its bold designs drew on influences from existing and past design movements.
- Memphis could be considered a branch of Postmodernism, but with much clearer definition of the movement's ideals compared to the often-obscure ideal of Postmodernists.



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Learning Unit 3 Renown furniture designers

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Video History of furniture design

- Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXDAWSZnpvI>
- Short description: Throughout history, furniture has helped people sit, rest, work, play, organize their possessions and partition space. Furniture includes all the conceivable variations of freestanding objects made to meet these functional needs as civilizations have developed. This RedVector course, Furniture Design: Historical Overview discusses the different types of furniture, its uses, and the techniques used in the making of furniture from early society to present.
- Duration: 5.34 min

Unit 3 World renown furniture designers

- Born Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, Le Corbusier was the pioneer of modern architecture.
- His experiments with furniture began in 1928 (working with Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand), and found form in 1929 with the "Grand Confort."
- Later known as the "Le Corbusier Collection" this chair solidified his legend in seating almost as strongly as in buildings.
- The LC4, a chaise lounge, is perhaps the most recognizable piece.



Charles & Ray Eames (Charles, 1907-1978; Ray, 1912-1988)

- **Years Active (as a duo):**1940s to 1970s
- America's quintessential husband and wife (not brothers!) creative team worked in just about every medium imaginable.
- They, more than any other designer, helped shape California and American Modernism in the early 1950s/
- They are perhaps most well known for the Eames Lounge (670) and Ottoman (671), and their molded fiberglass lounge chairs.



Eero Saarinen (1910-1961)

- Born In: Kirkkonummi, Finland
- Years Active: 1940 to 1961
- Eero Saarinen was a Finnish born American architect. His most iconic design is probably the St Louis Arch, but there's a great good chance you've sat in one of his classic executive chairs or ate dinner off of the tulip table that he designed for Knoll in the early 50's



Video Eero Saarinen designer

- Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJE2zpyX3i0>
- Short description: Explore the life of Eero Saarinen (1910-1961), whose visionary buildings include National Historic Landmarks such as St. Louis' iconic Gateway Arch and the General Motors Technical Center in Michigan. Travel with his son, director of photography Eric Saarinen, as he visits the sites of his father's work on a cathartic journey, showcasing the architect's body of timeless work for the first time.
- Duration: 2.22 min

Jean Prouvé (1901-1984)

- Born In: Nancy, France
- Years Active: 1923 to 1984
- Jean Prouvé was a self taught architect and designer. Working primarily in steel, his designs are highly sought after on the contemporary auction market.
- Recently (as documented in this great post on Mondo Blog) dealers and scavengers alike have been traveling to the far reaches of ex-French colonies in search of his wares.



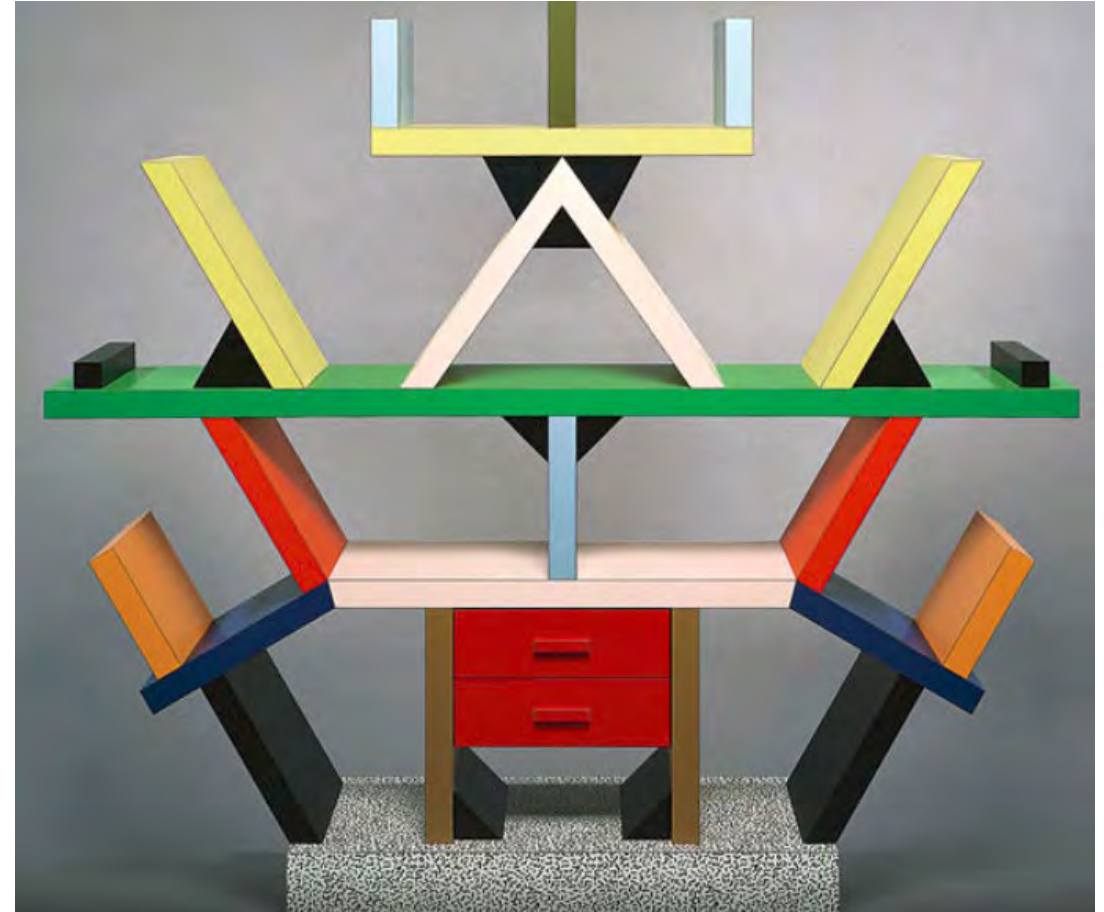
Paul McCobb (1917-1969)

- Born In: Medford, Massachusetts
- Years Active: 1945 to 1969
- Paul McCobb was a self trained American modernist.
- He was active until his death in 1969. His Planner Group line, was among the best selling contemporary furniture lines of the mid century period.
- Launched in 1949 by Winchendon Furniture Company this line was in production for 14 years.



Ettore Sottsass (1917-2007)

- Born In: Innsbruck, Austria
- Years Active: 1947 to 2007
- Ettore Sottsass was a late 20th century Italian Designer.
- He favored the bold colours of Pop Art and dramatic forms of Art Deco and helped define Post-Modernism when he founded the Memphis Group in 1981



Video Ettore Sottsass documentary

- Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBuXEZXseEA>
- Short description: He's known as the godfather of 'Italian Cool' and has been credited with helping create the bright-pop 1980s aesthetic. But despite fame in Italy and a huge impact on the design world Ettore Sottsass is far from a household name. Now, on the centenary of his birth an exhibition's opened in New York reflecting the breadth and depth of his work. Jade Barker has the story.
- Duration: 4.03 min

Florence Knoll Bassett (1917-)

- Born In: Saginaw, Michigan
- Years Active: 1943 to 1965
- Though her case pieces and sofas are ubiquitous, Florence Knoll Bassett famously did not consider herself a furniture designer.



The Jens Risom

- Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcsbU532VFw>
- Short description: Jens Risom meets with Design Within Reach. A rare opportunity to explore the life and work of a living legend of modern design, this video interview offers a snapshot into the humor, dedication and extraordinary career of Jens Risom. A meeting with Hans Knoll led to the creation of the Risom Chair, which “was a new way of designing furniture,” in Risom’s words. Design Within Reach has been thrilled and honored to collaborate with one of the original innovators of midcentury modernism
- Duration: 4.43 min

Jens Risom (1916-)

- Born In: Copenhagen, Denmark
- Years Active: 1939 to present
- A Danish born and trained designer, Jens Risom was one of the first to fuse Scandinavian and American styles. In 1941, after moving to New York, Risom helped Hans Knoll launch his furniture company. He designed 15 of the 20 pieces in Knoll's inaugural "600" line. He continued designing through the 50's and 60's under his own company Jens Risom Designs



3.9. Edward Wormley (1907-1995)

- Born In: Rochelle, Illinois
- Years Active: 1928-1960s
- After being hired at the end of the depression by American furniture manufacturer Dunbar, Edward Wormley helped make the manufacturer the producer of some of the most classic American design pieces of the 20th Century.
- Eschewing the boldness of most other modernists, Wormley chose instead to take his cues from classic and historical designs and manufacturing processes, and simplify and update them.



Milo Baughmann (1923-2003)

- Born In: Goodland, Kansas Years Active: 1947 to 2003
- One of the most prolific designers of American Modernism the list of companies he designed for beginning in the mid 40's until his death in 2003 seems endless: Calif-Asia, Mode Furniture, Glenn of California, The Inco Company, Pacific Iron, Murray Furniture of Winchendon, Arch Gordon, Design Institute America, Woodard, George Kovacs, Directional, and Henredon.
- His most well known work was done for Thayer Coggin and Drexel where he produced seating and case pieces that have influenced nearly every modernist designer that came after him.



Charlotte Perriand (1903-1999)

- Born In: Paris, France, Years Active: 1920s to 1960s
- After initially being denied a job at Le Corbussier's studio, a persistent Charlotte Perriand continued developing her own work until she was eventually hired in 1927.
- Charlotte Perriand got her start co-designing 3 chairs with Le Corbousier, and Pierre Jeanneret (one for sleeping, one for conversation, and one for sleeping) for Corbusier's studio in 1928.
- She went on to further develop a populist and egalitarian philosophy of furniture design and became one of France's most prolific and collected furniture designers of the 20th century.



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969)

- **Born In:** Aachen, Kingdom of Prussia, German Empire
- **Years Active:** 1908 to 1969
- Mies (as he is often referred to) was a German-American most known for his minimalist architectural achievements. He also designed two of the most iconic (and widely copied) seating pieces of the 20th Century, the Barcelona Chair and the Brno Chair.



George Nelson (1908-1986)

- **Born In:** Hartford, Connecticut
- **Years Active:** 1936-1986
- Despite having no experience designing furniture George Nelson was hired as the Director of Design at Herman Miller Inc in 1945. He continued at the helm until 1972.
- In his nearly 30 year tenure he was responsible for bringing Ray and Charles Eames, Harry Bertoia, Donald Knorr, and Isamu Noguchi as well as his own designs into the Herman Miller fold thus catapulting them to the forefront of American modernism.



Harry Bertoia (1915-1978)

- **Born In:** San Lorenzo, Italy
- **Years Active:** 1939 to 1978
- In 1930, when Harry Bertoia was 15, he left his native Italy to visit his older brother in Detroit and never left.
- Seven years later found him studying design at the Cranbrook Academy of Art studying with Ray and Charles Eames.
- In 1950, after moving to Pennsylvania to open his own studio- he designed his iconic wire frame Bertoia Collection for Knoll. In his own words, "If you look at these chairs, they are mainly made of air, like sculpture. Space passes right through them."



Marcel Breuer (1902-1981)

- Born In: Pecs, Hungary
- Years Active: 1920s to 1981
- Marcel Breuer, a Hungarian born architect and designer, made his mark on modernist furniture design while teaching at the Bauhaus in the 1920's. Inspired by the handlebars of his Adler bicycle his experiments with tubular steel led to the design of the Wassily chair- one of the most ubiquitous pieces to come out of the Bauhaus.



Issamu Noguchi (1904-1988)

- **Born In:** Los Angeles, California
- **Years Active:** 1922 to 1988
- Noguchi was an American born Japanese landscape architect, sculptor and furniture designer. When he was brought in to design for Herman Miller by George Nelson in 1947, he produced some of the most recognizable designs of the burgeoning American Modernism movement including the Noguchi coffee table (which has spawned a tumblr).



Sam Maloof (1916-2009)

- **Born In:** Chino, California
- **Years Active:** 1945 to 2009
- Sam Maloof, a California-born mid-century craftsman, always described himself as a woodworker, but his sensibility as a designer will be forever recognizable as his own. Steeped in tradition and comfort his rocking chairs have been owned by presidents, collected by museums, and coveted by collectors for decades.



George Nakashima (1905-1990)

- Born In: Spokane, Washington
- Years Active: 1930s to 1980s
- George Nakashima, a Japanese-American architect, woodworker and furniture designer infused American Modernism with Japanese craftsmanship to develop a unique style of furniture that he produced by hand until his death in 1990. His style most notably makes use of unique slabs of trees with unfinished, natural edges.



Alvar Aalto (1898-1976)

- **Born In:** Kuortane, Finland
- **Years Active:** 1920s to 1970s.
- Working primarily in his native Finland, Aalto helped define Scandinavian modernism. In the early 1930's he developed a process for bending plywood that forever revolutionized furniture production and greatly influenced American designers such as Charles and Ray Eames.



Gaetano Pesce (1939-)

- **Born In:** La Spezia, Italy
- **Years Active:** 1959 to Present
- An Italian designer whose pieces for B&B Italian and Cassina in the 70's and 80's helped push the envelope of Italian post-modernism to the forefront of contemporary design.



Hans Wegner (1914-2007)

- **Born In:** Tønder, Denmark
- **Years Active:** 1927 to 1985
- Perhaps best known for his chairs, Hans Wegner is one of the most prolific designers of the Danish mid-century modern period. his Papa Bear chair is one of the most iconic pieces from the 1950's Danish school and continues to fetch high prices at auction houses the world over.



Poul Kjærholm (1929-1980)

- **Born In:** Øster Vrå, Denmark
- **Years Active:** 1948 to 1980
- Kjaerholm was another heavy hitter of the Danish Mid Century period. His work for E. Kold Christensen (later produced by Fritz Hansesn) is some of the most sought after on the contemporary market.



Arne Jacobsen (1902-1971)

- **Born In:** Copenhagen, Denmark
- **Years Active:** 1924 to 1971
- Arne Jacobsen was another influential Danish architect who made an impact on the mid century furniture movement through his minimalist functional chair designs.
- His Swan and Egg chairs are among the most recognizable pieces from this period.



Borge Mogensen (1914-1972)

- **Born In:** Aalborg, Denmark
- **Years Active:** 1930s to 1960s
- After working under Danish master Kaare Klint in the late 1930's Mogensen went on to manage the design studio for FDB (the Danish Design Co-Operative) before establishing his own studio in 1950.
- by clean lines and simple production methods, Mogensen's pieces are quintessential examples of the design principles popular with Danish modernist.



Greta Grossman (1906-1999)

- **Born In:** Helsingborg, Sweden
- **Years active:** 1920s to 1960s
- After cutting her teeth in the burgeoning Scandinavian modernist scene in her native Sweden, Greta Grossman moved to Los Angeles in 1940.
- It was here that she made her biggest impact in furniture design helping to shape California modernism. Her lamps for Barker Brothers (later Ralph O. Smith) are perhaps her most well known pieces.



Video Greta Grossmann

- Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G297AB7vmWE>
- Short description: An opportunity to explore the life and work of a legend of modern design, this video interview offers a snapshot the life of Greta Grossmann
- Duration: 4.03 min