

# PROPHETS & PENITENTS

## CONFESSIONS OF A CHAIR

22-27 APRIL 2009, 11am-7pm

VENUE: ORATORIO DELLA PASSIONE, SANT'AMBROGIO

PIAZZA SANT'AMBROGIO, MILANO

PRESS PREVIEW: TUESDAY 21 APRIL, 5.30pm

OPENING & COCKTAIL: TUESDAY 21 APRIL, 7.30pm

WWW.PROPHETSANDPENITENTS.COM

**DAMn° has invited an eclectic mix of more than 30 designers to participate in the exhibition Prophets & Penitents: Confessions of a Chair at the Oratorio della Passione at Sant'Ambrogio - Milan's archetypal church - to express their personal confessions on chair prototyping, with many of the pieces seen in public for the first time.**

Konstantin Grcic, François Azambourg, Maarten Baas, Edward Barber & Jay Osgerby, Stéphane Barbier Bouvet, Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec, Bram Boo, Julien De Smedt, Ineke Hans, Jörg Hundertpfund, Dejana Kabiljo, Richard Hutten, Pierre Kracht, Kwanghoo Lee, Arik Levy, Piero Lissoni, Xavier Lust, Studio Makkink & Bey, Peter Marigold, Jason Miller, Bruno Munari, Heath Nash, Judith Seng, osko+deichmann, Jerszy Seymour Design Workshop, Ilkka Suppanen, Patricia Urquiola, Alex Valder, Marcel Wanders, Sylvain Willenz, Michael Young, 5.5 designers, Martí Guixé \*

AN INITIATIVE OF:

GALLERIA BLANCHAERT, [WWW.GALLERIBLANCHAERT.IT](http://WWW.GALLERIBLANCHAERT.IT)

DAMn° [WWW.DAMNMAGAZINE.NET](http://WWW.DAMNMAGAZINE.NET)

ELENA AGUDIO & ALEXANDRA WALDBURG-WOLFEGG

**Galleria Blankaert**

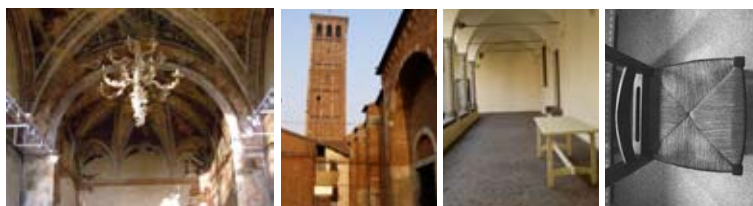
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A MAGAZINE ON CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

\* all prototypes subject to availability



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CONFESSIONS OF A CHAIR



A narrative on an almost sacral theme, for the designer the creation of a chair is like that of a string quartet to the composer: a unique reading of its creator's cerebral signature, revealing the *modus operandi* against the *zeitgeist*.

To celebrate the existence of this daily-life four-legged comfort-bringer, some 30 designers were invited to the Oratorio della Passione at Sant'Ambrogio – Milan's oldest church – to express their personal confessions on chair prototyping.

The exhibition reveals the invisible detours on the road to realisation. Those imperfect-perfect moments, where against all the clichés of digital 3D moulding, prototyping still continues to be regularly performed, in this instance, by the canonical elite and the choristers.

That the word 'prototype' is an elastic concept, we experienced upon receiving the first entries. Some chairs are a prototype in the true sense of the word: first experiments in the preliminary design process leading to mass-production. Others are rather one-off sculptures – intended or not – (nearly) finished pieces fated to stay a first prototype forever. But there's a place for everyone in the church: having different genders, we decided to give them different wings in the chapel.

A few chair designs transcend the level of true prophecy, others cry out for mercy and penitence, but true to the embrace of our design faith we administer them all with absolution – albeit just for the passion of the ur-chair. \* (WB)

\* all prototypes subject to availability

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PROPHETS & PENITENTS  
Confessions of a Chair

AN INITIATIVE OF  
DAMn° magazine & Galleria Blanchaert, Elena Agudio & Alexandra Waldburg-Wolfegg

CURATORIAL CONCEPT  
Walter Bettens and Siegrid Demyttenaere, DAMn° magazine

ART DIRECTION & GRAPHIC DESIGN  
Siegrid Demyttenaere, DAMn° magazine  
A thank you to Martí Guixé for the gazette idea  
Web design by Ludwig Waldburg, [www.wolfei.com](http://www.wolfei.com)

SUB EDITOR  
Emma Firmin, DAMn° magazine

A big thanks to the people, products & place that have contributed to this exhibition.

## PARTICIPANTS

Konstantin Grcic, François Azambourg, Maarten Baas, Edward Barber & Jay Osgerby, Stéphane Barbier Bouvet, Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec, Bram Boo, Julien De Smedt, Ineke Hans, Jörg Hundertpfund, Dejana Kabiljo, Richard Hutten, Pierre Kracht, Kwanghoo Lee, Arik Levy, Piero Lissoni, Xavier Lust, Studio Makkink & Bey, Peter Marigold, Jason Miller, Bruno Munari, Heath Nash, Judith Seng, osko+deichmann, Jerszy Seymour Design Workshop, Ilkka Suppanen, Patricia Urquiola, Alex Valder, Marcel Wanders, Sylvain Willenz, Michael Young, 5.5 designers, Martí Guixé

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360° chair prototype, 2008, manufactured by Magis  
by *Konstantin Grcic (DE)*

As featured on the latest cover of DAMn°, Grcic's first wooden prototype of the 360° chair (size: 50 x 40 x 80cm, material: pine wood) dates from July 2008. The final production model of the 360° chair, launched by Magis during Salone 2009, is manufactured in steel and polyurethane foam.

[www.konstantin-grcic.com](http://www.konstantin-grcic.com)

[www.magisdesign.com](http://www.magisdesign.com)

Cover image DAMn°21 by *Konstantin Grcic*, March 2009

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PACK, prototype, 1999

by *François Azambourg (FR)*

Fifth research prototype. 185 g/sq.m polyester sailing canvas, structured by polyester string. Rigid dual-component PU foam. Button on the left.

Size: 72cm H x 41cm W x 48cm D; 2750g

Directions:

- 1- Turn Right activating button several times.
- 2- Shake the chair for 20 seconds.
- 3- Slowly turn the chair twice.
- 4- Hold the chair until inflating begins (about one minute).
- 6- After inflation, let rest for 10 minutes before use.

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SCULPT CHAIR prototype, 2008

by *Maarten Baas (NL/DE)*

The concept is based on miniature sketch models. The spontaneity, the roughness and the primal character of the models are transformed into real sized furniture.

[www.maartenbaas.com](http://www.maartenbaas.com)

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SATURN STOOL, prototype, 2008, manufactured by ClassiCon  
by *Edward Barber & Jay Osgerby (UK)*

The stool is made from three interlocking machined wooden arcs, joined centrally to a triangular wooden dished seat. The triangular structure is geometrically complex as each leg twists through 45 degrees from the floor to the seat as well as reducing in thickness, which gives a very strong tripod structure. The stool is lacquered with a black stain.

[www.barberosgerby.com](http://www.barberosgerby.com)  
[www.classicon.com](http://www.classicon.com)



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TOOLS CHAIRS, chainsaw prototype, 2006

by *Stéphane Barbier Bouvet (FR)*

The workshop brings the designer into a fascinating technical world, just like that of a manufacturer. Along with their curiosity and knowledge, the designer faces the tools, these human body extensions, that are just here, present and inert, ready to perform intelligent actions. Even if the essence of this form is still missing, we know that it has a precise goal, not coming from nature but from human intelligence. The tool questions, surprises; we want to capture it the proper way and perform the function assigned to it... The construction of the Tools Chair followed this principle. The designer, with the help of a precision tool, digs inside the bowels of a block in order to give a shape and a function. The chosen instrument is leaving its singularity inside the raw material - a strong line, a soft line, a warm tone, a cold tone. These are unpredictable characters due to the tools or by hand, some accidents that are the soul of the object.

[www.atelierbbb.com](http://www.atelierbbb.com)

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VEGETAL CHAIR, prototype, 2008, manufactured by Vitra  
*by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec (FR)*

The first test injections of the Vegetal chair for Vitra are wild rough pieces, which are far away from what you would expect of industrial tooling. They take place at the early stages of the adjustments for the final moulding parameters: after three years of development, a massive piece of stainless steel (a kind of cube, 15 tonnes) was put on the milling table, and stayed there for months, until it was cut in two parts, one is the front part of the mould, the other the back, and of course the outside shape of the chair lies in between these two elements. It's an emotional moment when what can only be imagined in drawings or prototypes is realised in the final material. These pieces express the chemical and physical process that takes place inside the mould, showing step by step the birth of the chair. It's why we have a special relationship with them.

[www.bouroullec.com](http://www.bouroullec.com)  
[www.vitra.com](http://www.vitra.com)

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CHAIR OVERDOSE, prototype, 2009

by *Bram Boo (BE)*

Just like saints, who are often represented with an aureole surrounding their heads, I was inspired to use function and especially an overdose of storage units to create a kind of aureole for everybody who is going to be seated in this chair!

[www.bramboo.be](http://www.bramboo.be)

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COLLAPSE, prototype MDF, 2009

by *Julien De Smedt (BE)*

To make yet another chair is just as irrelevant as to make yet another type font. There's so many of them that have proven to be readable. Do we need to re-think reading? Do we need to re-think sitting? We need to RE-think economy: economy of production, economy of waste, economy of transport, economy of space. We propose Collapse, a collapsible chair that folds into a wafer thin plate. Its mechanism is simple and robust, its design frank and timeless. It doesn't try to appear as something new or hopelessly claim another style but instead proposes an efficient and effortless way to store, ship and sit on a chair.

[www.jdsarchitects.com](http://www.jdsarchitects.com)

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NEO COUNTRY, prototype, 2007, manufactured by Cappellini  
by *Ineke Hans (NL)*

One of the models to feature in Hans' Neo Country collection for Cappellini, Country Rock reflects the designer's interest in material qualities, unusual material combinations, human proportions and habits. Neo Country embodies her longing for a vernacular, simple, no-nonsense and non-pretentious approach to design. The initial impression is of sober wooden furniture - apparently back to basics. However, at second sight the texture in the wood is not all it seems. Artificial & natural, traditional woodworking & 21st century technique, harmonised rather than opposed.

[www.inekehans.com](http://www.inekehans.com)

[www.cappellini.it](http://www.cappellini.it)

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NO TITLE, prototype, 2009

*by Jörg Hundertpfund (DE)*

This is a chair.

Obviously just another position to all the others.

Also a final point, as there is not much left to say with a chair.

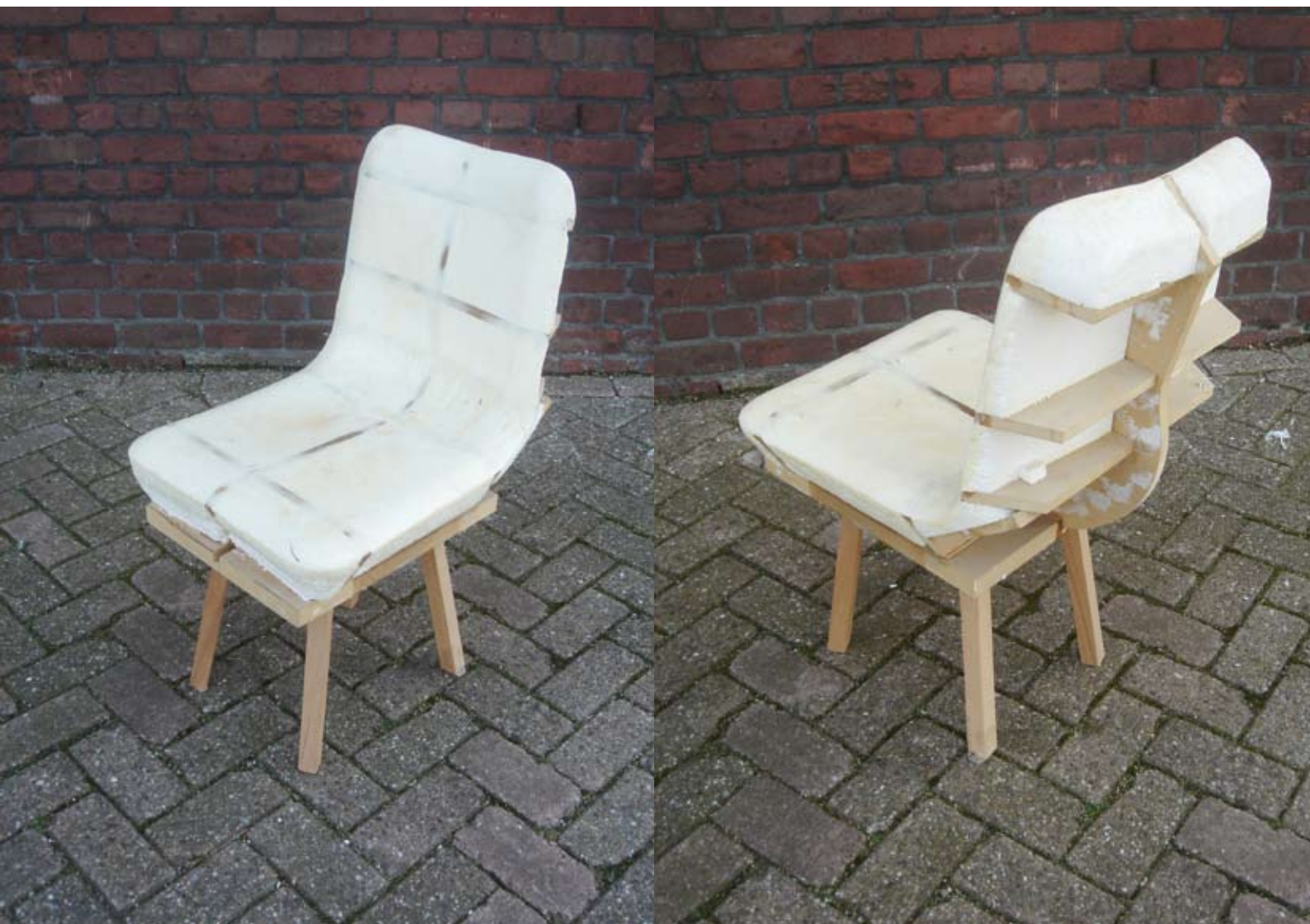
Material: coated polyurethane, size: 75 x 45cm approx..

*[www.hundertpfund.com](http://www.hundertpfund.com)*



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THIS CHAIR, prototype, 2004 for Lensvelt Office Furniture  
by *Richard Hutten (NL)*

In 1993 Hans Lensvelt approached me to design a 'No sign of design' (an adage from my early career) chair, with a wooden shell and a metal frame. For me, the best example of this typology was the Butterfly chair by Arne Jacobsen and I wanted to add something to his chair. Through the extreme bending of the wood, we could make the shell half as thick as the Jacobsen chair – halving the weight and amount of trees needed. During the process of making it, Hans and I were always referring to the chair as 'this' chair: 'This chair has to do this and this chair has to do that.' In the end we decided to call this chair This chair. Later on we also made a plastic version of This chair, which is called That chair. The prototype of This chair was only made to test the comfort, not the visual aspects. Good comfort, with good lower back support, was very important to me. Hans and I always took this testing very seriously, and there was always beer involved for the best results.

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PRETTYPRETTY Rosina, prototype, 2009

by *Dejana Kabiljo (AT/HR)*

Pretty heads to sit on explore the nicely regulated erotic allure that surrounds us, tracing out the customary grammar of desire. 'You don't just fall out of the shower looking like that, pale champagne streaks in ash blonde hair reflect the flattering look of soft shading. Hair falls freely in a deep tumble of waves, pale blonde tendrils... Dizzying swirls of colour.' These beauties, angelic and gracious, radiate self-assurance, yet: 'what shall we do with all this useless beauty? \*

(\*D P MacManus)

Materials: horsehair on water resistant MDF, steel construction.

[www.kabiljo.com](http://www.kabiljo.com)

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LOUIS CARBON, prototype, 2008

*by Pierre Kracht (DE)*

A structure, a sculpture,  
a shadow of its former self,  
a cloud, a cover, perforated skin, a net, a string, no  
contend left.

A prototype and archetype, to gain insight.  
A memory. Big nothing.

*[www.PierreKracht.de](http://www.PierreKracht.de)*

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CHATON SIÈGE, prototype, 2009

by *Lachaert & d'Hanis (BE)*

The stool has the form of a chaton with its stone, traditionally used for mounting diamonds and other precious stones. Enlarging this typical jeweller's object arouses the fantasy, playing a game with expectations, with proportions. Deviating from the familiar measure of things, breaking all the rules. The Chaton Siège is for use outdoors; a jewel, a precious ornament in the landscape.

*[www.lachaert.com](http://www.lachaert.com)*



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PAPER CHAIR, one-off, 2008

by *Kwanghoo Lee (ROK)*

This is an experiment in the study for raw materials. Focusing on the possibilities of introducing new shapes and seeing the other side, the original role of the material is shifted.

Size: 28.5cm W x 50cm H x 28.5cm D

[www.kwangholee.com](http://www.kwangholee.com)

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IDENTITY DISORDER, one-off, 2009

*by Arik Levy (IL)*

A chair that becomes a lamp that becomes a chair that becomes a lamp... once the chair is connected and lit, is it more of a chair or more of a lamp? And when suspended what is it then?

Social stereotypes are similar to product typologies: I feel that the gap between them is the place where the real issues are raised. Pretty or not.

*[www.ariklevy.fr](http://www.ariklevy.fr)*



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LIZZ, prototype, 2007, manufactured by Kartell

*by Piero Lissoni (IT)*

Chair in batch-dyed thermoplastic technopolymer; manufactured in one single piece using gas-blowing technology. It has a squared contour, a wide seat and a low, roomy backrest. Stable, shockproof and scratch resistant. It comes in a wide range of colours in a glossy finish. The name of the project was inspired by Liz Taylor, the modified name Lizz an echo of the chair's play with traditional proportions.

*[www.lissoniassociati.it](http://www.lissoniassociati.it)*

*[www.kartell.it](http://www.kartell.it)*

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ARCHIDUCHAISE, prototype, 2007-2009, manufactured by Xavier Lust Studio  
*by Xavier Lust (BE)*

Defying metal's heaviness, Lust transforms it into light and fluid self-standing structures using a peculiar and very personal process. He calls it (de)formation and it consists of folding metallic surfaces into volumes of elegant and sober lines. With contrasting cultural references that span history, the Archiduchaise can in turn recall a graceful 17th century dress or a contemporary sculpture. The arrogant and cold beauty of its large polished skirt seems to demand respect and invites one to keep a distance.

Prototype of a limited edition of 18 pieces (realised 2007 – 09), manufactured by Xavier Lust Studio in mirror-polished aluminium.



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PIXELATED CHAIR, artist proof, 2009

by *Studio Makkink&Bey (NL)*

*Commissioned by La Galerie de Pierre Bergé & Associés*

Pixelated Chair with pillow (edition of 3+1). Dutch trees and sheep make a collection of furniture that changes the Gallery into a temporary test house. Slats, felt, a sewing machine and capable hands have worked together and shared knowledge to compose a temporary apartment. The Pixelated Chairs are constructed out of short white wooden slats of 44 x 18mm, that have been stapled together in the shape of classic armchairs. The seating is assembled of felt blocks with a sewed in wood pattern, and filled with wool.

*[www.jurgenbey.nl](http://www.jurgenbey.nl)*

*Photo by Alain Speltdoorn*

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STUDIO CHAIR, one-off, 2009

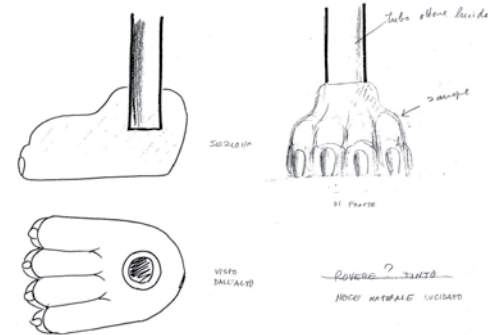
by *Peter Marigold* (UK)

This is my studio chair. We have very bad security in our studio so this one I can lock with security screws at night. It also has a small shelf just under the seat where I can put a hot water bottle - our studio is unheated but my chair never suffers.

*[www.petermarigold.com](http://www.petermarigold.com)*

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STRUTTURA TUBO OTTONE  
SEDILE DAMASCO O VELLUTO ROSSO  
ZAMPE LEGNO VERNIC NERO  
UNGHIE D'ORATE



MUNARI  
1937 - 1988  
(1945)

MUNARIA, prototype, 1988

by *Bruno Munari (IT)*

This chair has never been manufactured and only one prototype exists, with just three small drawings of the chair and details of the feet. The bent tubular frame is in polished brass, and the feet, or better still, the paws, are in polished walnut with gilded nails.

Date of project: 1945



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THE WOOLLY CHAIR, prototype, 2009

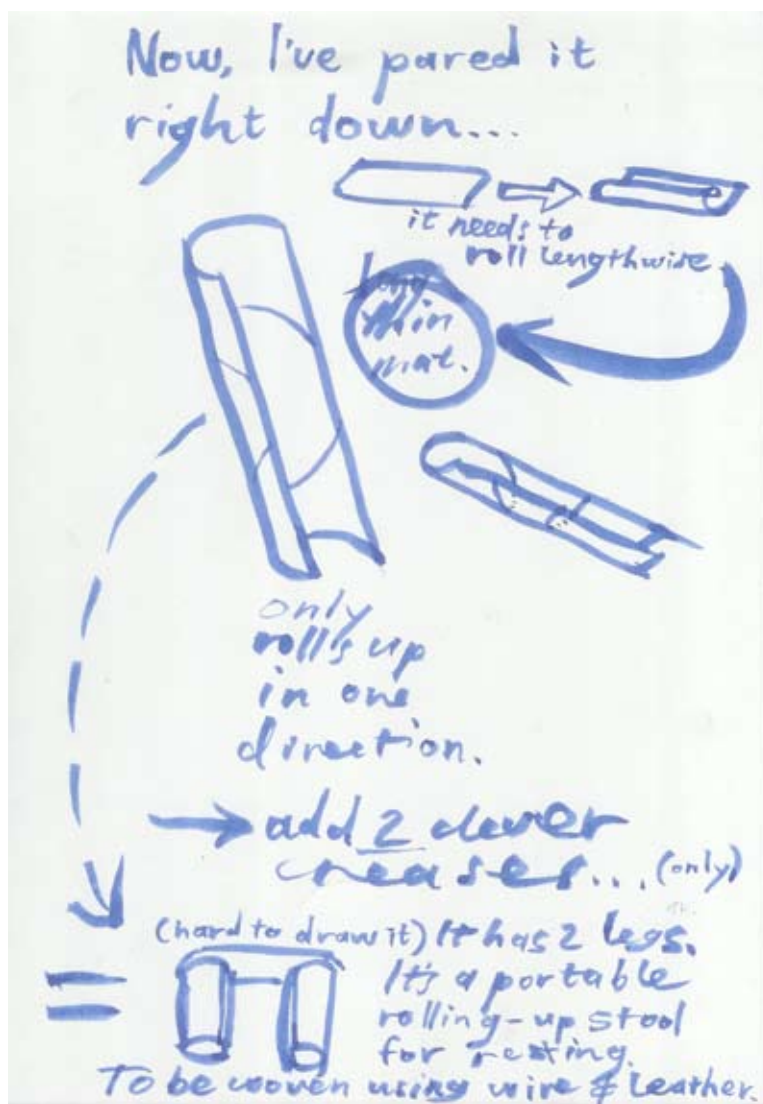
*by Jason Miller (USA)*

The Woolly chair is a chair made almost entirely of animal hair. The chair's structure is industrial wool felt, which has been folded and sewn. The back and the arms remain flexible and conform to the sitter. The outer cover is a bison hide. Like a bear rug or a Native American robe, a whole, tanned hide is used as is. It's a decadent chair.

[www.millerstudio.us](http://www.millerstudio.us)

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ROLL-UP - prototype 2009  
by Heath Nash (SA)

For a while I have been imagining an Africa that was allowed to develop its own unique design needs, technologies and directions; separate to tastes and history from European colonialism. It's just a trick really – to try and imagine-design the sorts of objects that could have evolved (and still can) from a simple woven grass mat, given the simplest needs and the setting of South Africa as a beginning point for this hypothetical imaginary world.

The Roll-Up is my first object in this exploration of an imagined culture in the impossible past and hopefully into the exciting future...

[www.heathnash.com](http://www.heathnash.com)

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STRAW CHAIR prototype, 2009

by *osko+deichmann*, *Blasius Osko (DE)* + *Oliver Deichmann (DE)*

The bent tube is the symbol for modernity in furniture design. Until today this Holy Grail remained untouched. Now, for the 90th anniversary of the Bauhaus, the Straw Chair brings the first innovation into tubular steel furniture for over 80 years: the kinked tube. Some might call it blasphemy, we call it reformation.

[www.oskodeichmann.com](http://www.oskodeichmann.com)



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TRIFT prototype, 2009

*by Judith Seng (DE)*

Trift explores the ideal of perfect surfaces by destructing them within the same object. Destruction or perfection - both require equivalent effort. Merging the two conflicting aspects, Trift approaches this ambivalence as an aesthetic reflection.

*[www.judithseng.de](http://www.judithseng.de)*

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AMATEUR EAMES, one-off, 2009/1916, CABARET VOLTAIRE

*by Jerszy Seymour Design Workshop (UK/DE)*

Eames Chair copy with intervention by amateur, meaning lover, appassionato and non-professional as a way of being.

*[www.jerszyseymour.com](http://www.jerszyseymour.com)*

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JIM CHAIR, prototype, 2009, manufactured by Vivero  
by *Ilkka Suppanen (FI)*

The prototype originates from a project for Vivero, a small Finnish furniture manufacturer with very limited resources but a brave mind. The idea is to make a relaxed armchair - comfort with minimum investment and rational production. The chair is an intentional compromise between comfort, feeling safe, and alternative seating positions, rationality and production. Its asymmetric geometry allows for both relaxed cooing and stool-like alertness, with a single moulded piece cut in various sections to create seat, backrest and neck support to save on costs. Angular planes, composed by u-shaped units, create the shape. The angles of the chair follow the line of the body, trying to achieve even support of the different parts.



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READY VICO, one-off, 2005

*by Patricia Urquiola (IT)*

It is a tribute to Vico Magistretti and to the Selene chair that I have always loved. And to the amusing seat covers that taxi drivers around the world use as a healthy add-on to their seats. The result is a marriage of two fetishes, which match perfectly together. It's love at first sight.

[www.patriciaurquiola.com](http://www.patriciaurquiola.com)

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HOEKKERLE AND BAENKKLE, prototype, 2007

*by Alex Valder (DE)*

A single and a double stool made of maple with colourful Abet Laminati seating.

*[www.archimedes-solutions.com](http://www.archimedes-solutions.com)*

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MANNEQUIN, prototype, 2006, manufactured by Moooi  
*by Marcel Wanders (NL)*

Mannequin is a concept from Wanders where you have the freedom to change the cover of your seat yourself. Ideal for restaurants and commercial projects and the home, Wanders has designed three brand new fabrics for the model. How will you dress your mannequin?

Material: polyester and cotton fabric, powder-coated steel frame; indoor use only.  
Safely stackable up to six seaters!

[www.marcelwanders.com](http://www.marcelwanders.com)

[www.moooi.com](http://www.moooi.com)

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CANDY LOW CHAIR, prototype, 2009

by *Sylvain Willenz (BE)*

The Candy Collection exploits the potential of steel reinforcement bars for concrete structures. Thanks to a simple industrial coating process normally used in the marine industry, the unattractive steel bars are given a new and seductive identity. A high gloss polyester coating, applied to the textured bars gives off a multitude of bright reflections. This is the prototype in its final stage, just before it goes to be painted. The seat of the chair is made from a single laser-cut flat sheet of steel. Then the sheet goes into a folding process, lifted up in two parts, which make up the backrest. The joint is welded and cleaned. At the painting factory it is dipped in acid to take off any impurities. Then it goes into an oven, up to 350°C, and finally is electrostatically spray-painted. Quite a conventional painting process, except for the temperature and the high resistance, high gloss material used.

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CARBON COEN, prototype, 2009, manufactured by DD-3  
by *Michael Young (UK/HK)*

In its original format, the slender structure of the wooden Coen chair was constructed by a series of technically challenging engineering manoeuvres. Its popularity was inspiring enough to make more advanced studies to create it in carbon fibre, of which the prototype is shown here. This special edition series was launched in mid-April during one of Asia's leading contemporary art fairs, ART HK 09, where design editions company DD-3 produced an exhibition of Young's most recent explorations of materials and technology.

*[www.michael-young.com](http://www.michael-young.com)  
[info@dd3.com](mailto:info@dd3.com)*

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MILLE PIEDS, one-off, 2003

by 5.5 designers (FR)

This chair is a unique piece; it was born during the first Furniture Hospital in Nîmes, France, for the Réanim project with Secours Populaire Français. The aim was to collect old abandoned furniture and give it a second chance by using all different kinds of treatment. 5.5 designers decided to commercialise a range of treatments to give everyone the possibility to cure broken furniture: crutches, seat prostheses, suture kits and graft kits. Mille Pieds chair is the beginning of this reflection: to cure broken chairs with a systematic method. This model was made using six different chair profiles and two green 'splints' as a frame.

[www.cinqcinqdesigners.com](http://www.cinqcinqdesigners.com)

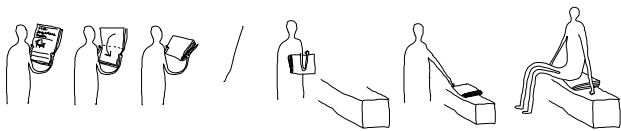
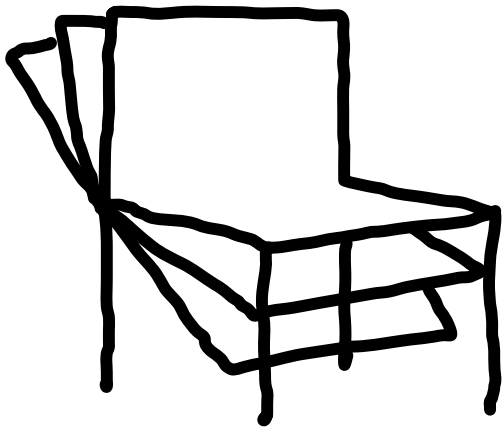


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*seat  
anywhere  
chair*

---



SEAT ANYWHERE CHAIR, 2009

by Martí Guixé (ES)

[www.guixe.com](http://www.guixe.com)