



Innovation in Chair design



1 New materials and new technologies have often started small revolutions in the field of design. Designers experiment and explore the possibilities of their use and based on them conceive new products. During the process, designers often use, according to the limitations or shortcomings, and create new paradigms of everyday life by skillfully bringing together the qualities of each product. Other designers go a step further to innovate and conceptualize. In their own small workshops – laboratories, designers often develop new technologies that become indispensable for the realization of their ideas.

2 In principle, new technologies are first applied and developed for significant “fields of life”, as i.e., weapons and war equipment, and later on for the production of furniture and other user products. However, Michael Thonet improved the technology of massive wood bending for the production of furniture in the mid 19th century. His other technological innovation applied to the same series was the connecting of separate parts with the help of screws that enabled a great serial production that would have not been able without the division of labor, and the warehouse storing and transport of the pieces of each chair.

3 This revolution in the organization of production preceded the more famous one by Henry Ford for more than 50 years. The limitations of the technology of bending, in other words, the impossibility to get smaller bending radiuses, determined the new bending form of the backs and seats of chairs. There were no formalistic details and ornaments common in furniture at that time.



A NEW MATERIAL PARADIGM IN TECHNOLOGY

4 After studying at the Bauhaus, Marcel Breuer was appointed to a teaching position as head of the school's carpentry workshop. He was impressed by the possibility of bending tubular steel thanks to a technology used in the production of bicycles. In 1925 Breuer created the famous chair B3, known as Wassily for his colleague professor Wassily Kandinsky and started a revolution similar to Thonet's one, although the use of technology was far from ideal.

5 The great number of elements and length of the tubular steel presented a big problem while manufacturing the chair. However, Breuer didn't mind the formal understatement nor the inconsistency. The aim was to present the spirit of a time, create a machine for sitting, announce a new time. The chairs B6 and B35 are examples of a more rational use of the same technology, distinguished for its balance and visual unity. For a final reduction of the construction, competition was necessary.

Vocabulary:

606 Universal Shelving System

Bending: Flexión o curvado

Massive wood: Madera maciza

Shortcomings: Defectos

Skilfully: Hábilmente, con destreza

Develop: Desarrollar

Screws: Tornillos

Bending radiuses: radios de curvatura

Warehouse storing: Almacenamiento

Furniture: Muebles