

ICONIC DESIGN STUDY



The Ball Chair

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Design Studies

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BACKGROUND

The Ball Chair was designed in 1963 by Eero Aarnio. The chair can be found in the collections of design museums around the world and it has starred in several movies, music videos and magazine covers (Ball Chair). Eero Aarnio has always been fascinated by new materials and round shapes - one of his favorite materials is fiberglass, which gives the chair a free, elastic shape. The round shell of the Ball Chair is simple yet ingenious and has often been referred to as a “room in a room” (Finnish Design Shop).

Fiberglass shell, aluminum foot, polyurethane foam cushions, upholstered with Kvadrat fabric. There are 15 color options to choose from (Ball Chair).



CONTEXT

Historical

The Ball Chair was invented in 1963, in the midst of many historical events. During this Post war time period the design style “Good Form” grew popular and you can see many aspects of it in the Ball Chair design.

Characteristics that you see in the chair that true to are “Good Form” are functionality, simple forms, utility, durability, timelessness, order, clarity, solid workmanship, suitable materials, finished details, and technology (Milton).

Social

Aarnio first designed the Ball Chair with the intention of being able to fit his whole family in the chair, so they could sit and bond together. Today, you can find much of Aarnio’s design work in multiple museums nationwide where his chair is a conversational piece for museum goers. The chair has also made many appearances in different movies, music videos, and magazine covers. Not only that but for centuries this Ball Chair has been a conversational piece in people’s homes and is great for social events or for escaping people as the chair has been referred to as a “room in a room” (Ball Chair).

CONTEXT

Technological

The Ball Chair was a true “Good Form” design style as it reflected advances in technology, transportation, communication, materials, manufacturing processes, and even space travel, inspired designers to experiment in the creation of new products and systems (Milton). As the chair came out around the time people were first being sent to space, Aarnio was praised for his space-aged design and aesthetics. When beginning his design process Aarnio familiarized himself with the new material, fiberglass. After facing design problems, he came up with the solution to add a round pipe ring right behind the opening of the shell and laminate it with more fiberglass.

The final touches of the chair include an aluminum foot to make the chair very sturdy and sleek looking and polyurethane foam cushions which was a very popular material at the time and created for a more comfortable chair with a pop of color (Ball Chair).



DESIGN LANGUAGE

Form

Color: Classic color includes white shell with red interior. However, there are 15 different interior color options.

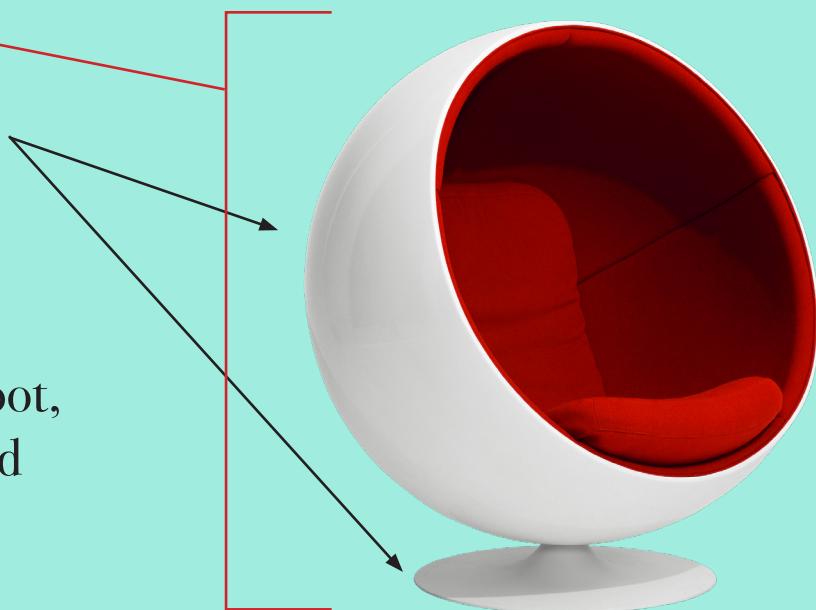
Dimensions: 110 cm width x 97 cm depth x 120 cm height

Shape: Globe shape chair on top of flat round foot

Materials: Fibreglass shell, aluminum foot, polyurethane foam cushions, upholstered with Kvadrat fabric

Function

This is a very functional chair as it serves its primary purpose of being able to seat people comfortably, but also does so in a way that may shield them from what's around them. “Sitting inside lies one's own inner world and thoughts, a cocoon's nest shielding from the outside noise” (Ball Chair).



CONCLUSION

This Ball Chair is a very iconic piece in design history as it was a very futuristic and “Good Form” piece. When first looking at the design I instantly correlate it to the popular look of the 1960’s and after learning more about the chair it is safe to say that this Ball Chair design was instrumental in creating the “60’s look” everyone knows today. Eero Aarnio created a masterpiece that will be shown and learned about in different museums and media in the years to come.



REFERENCES

Ball Chair. Retrieved from <https://www.aarniooriginals.com/products/ball-chair>

Finnish Design Shop. Eero Aarnio Originals Ball Chair Black. Retrieved from <https://www.finnishdesignshop.com/furniture-chairs-armchairs-ball-chair-p-155-30.html>

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