

Douglas Snelling

Designer (1916 - 1985) Functional Products

1952 Chest of drawers and two dining chairs

St Peters, Sydney, manufactured Australia 1947-1986

This design allows the chair to be lightweight because of the materials used. It is also quite versatile/functional in the everyday home due to its simple colour scheme and timeless fashioning.

Most notable is the supportive and strong Saran webbing. This webbing gives with weight and evenly distributes the tension over the whole surface area and creates support without an upholstered or solid surface for the seat and backrest. The negative spaces within the webbing allow the slim timber frame and its details to be seen through the supportive surface.

The elegant, organic, curved side that softens the frame of the chair also creates different pitched angles for the webbing, which adds to the comfort or supportive nature of the seat and backrest. This clearly illustrates that the ergonomics of a seated human were taken into consideration during the design process.

The legs of the chairs are splayed with tapered tips, this is repeated on the drawers legs. The tapered tips are quite elegant and lift focus from the ground.

The chest contains simple flat-faced angled drawers equal in size and symmetrical in setting. The most distinguishing feature is that these drawers have no set handles; the angle of the drawer front surface creates a small area where the hand can comfortably pull the drawer out from the chest. The single ply case of the chest that houses the drawers doesn't disturb the focus of the light coloured timber.

The design of the chest of drawers is very simple and bears no carving or ornamentation. The grain of the wood is the decorative element and the shadows that form under each drawer create interest.

Read through the above analysis and respond to the following

The text suggests that these chairs would have been very versatile in the everyday home. Can you see or think of reasons why this might have been so? Do you agree with this assessment?

Comment on the visual style of the chair in relation to the seating comfort. (form/function)

References have been made to the construction and technologies employed to create this chair design. Match these references with your own observations

Explore or challenge the idea that the webbing is the focal point or feature of the design



Grant Featherston

Designer (Australia 1922-1955)

1954 Eleanor E1 Elastic Suspension chair

The petal-like unfolding of the armrests and moulded back of this design takes the concept of a chair to a different level. The chair blends the formal dining seat and lounge chair together in a stylish and inviting manner. The gentleness of the contours and elegance of this design are quite feminine.

The designer has taken into consideration that the user will not always want to sit at a rigid formal right angle. This chair allows the user freedom to lounge comfortably and splay arms casually or change the seating angle

The organic curves of this chair are supportive and strong but still are able to slightly flex under weight. Moulded plywood creates the shell and is lightly padded and upholstered in a navy cotton fabric. The loose lumbar and seat cushions are covered in similar material and are viewed as a part of the chair rather than accessories.

Angled deeply splayed legs support the moulded shell and tapered to the ground. The legs meet the base of the chair with a softly curved, horizontal support that mimics the curve of the backrest.

Read through the above analysis and respond to the following

Discuss the design of the chair in relation to its comfort and versatility. Many references have been made to these aspects in the text.

The opening sentence of the analysis states the “this design takes the concept of a chair to a different level”. What do you think this means? Do you agree?

The description alludes to the chair design as having many feminine qualities. Discuss this idea with someone else. What might this mean? Do you agree?

