



# Once Upon a Chair

*Design Beyond the Icon*



*Once Upon a Chair* is an international, up-to-the minute, survey of contemporary furniture design. The book captures the *zeitgeist* of this rigorous industry by examining current trends and presenting pioneering examples by the world's most influential designers and emerging talents. The collected works indicate a recognisable shift towards progressive and responsible designs that make a social impact, and towards the revival of artisanal craft. It further explores how designers are focusing more on process-driven and storytelling concepts, as well as how they are continuing to flirt with material and technological experimentation.



## POSTFOSSIL

Anna Blattert & Daniel Gafner

Thomas Walde

2009

2009

### 1 Sabooh & Mitsu Lamps

### 2 Charcoal Pile Table

Material: Oak wood, porcelain, gold  
Photography: Miriam Graf  
Producer: Postfossil

Material: Oiled oak, glass  
Photography: Miriam Graf  
Producer: Postfossil

The lamps Sabooh and Mitsu demonstrate that energy-saving LED technology can, and should, be used in the home. Based on oriental lanterns, their translucent porcelain shades give a warm, diffuse light. The golden decoration on the inner shade serves as a reflector, as well as a conductor from cable to bulb. By lightly pulling the hanging cable, the shade can be swung through 360°.

Oiled oak pieces ranged in a circle and "wood-welded" are held together without glue to form the base of this table. Its shape is reminiscent of the conically stacked wood piles used in charcoal burning. The work takes as its central theme this energy source, a precursor of fossil fuel, and is meant to stimulate thought about future sources of energy.



**POSTFOSSIL**  
 Claudia Heiniger

2009  
**1 Bivano Seat for Two**  
 Material: Wood, elastic, wool felt  
 Photography: Miriam Graf  
 Producer: Postfossil

A space-saving couch, the frame of which consists of multilayer boards cut from a single panel during production. The printed felt belts stand in symbolically for the cushioning that is completely absent in *Bivano*.

Florian Hauswirth

2009  
**2 Loppa Lamp**  
 Material: Paper, natural glue  
 Photography: Miriam Graf  
 Producer: Postfossil

This lamp wraps its bulb the way an envelope encloses a letter. The paper it is made from is created into a robust structure with the flaps folded upwards, one side moistened before both are joined. These connecting ribs give the filigree lampshade its stability. Its energy-saving bulb, which will soon become the lighting standard, generates less heat while the piece's flat shape enables easy transport.

2009  
**5 JWC (Just Wood Chair)**  
 Material: 100% beechwood  
 Photography: Miriam Graf  
 Producer: Postfossil

This chair is constructed from unglued wood, its joints connected via a new wood-joining technique called "rotation dowel welding." The heat generated by placing the dowels releases adhesives present in the wood - lignin and hemicellulose - forming

a substantial welded bond in seconds. The design was produced in collaboration with Sebastian Kraft of the Biel School for Wood Technology (BFH - AHB).

2009  
**3 Plymet Stool / Side Table**  
 Material: Anodised aluminium  
 Photography: Miriam Graf  
 Producer: Postfossil

A stool or side table that folds into shape from a flat form.

This fireside companion set comprises a bellows and a firewood basket. A bellows is not only a beautiful object with a homely character, but also a reflection of the energy needed to kindle a fire. Bellows have been fading into obscurity, either due to modern heating technology or because there are quicker methods of ignition today (such as firelighters). But firelighters are often unhealthy and environmentally unfriendly. This design is intended to breathe new life into the bellows while saving resources.

Christine Birkhoven

2009  
**4 Souffleur Ramon Fireside Set**  
 Material: Wood, leather, stainless steel  
 Photography: Miriam Graf  
 Producer: Postfossil



# Once Upon a Chair

*Design Beyond the Icon*



Today's design is being re-evaluated. In four comprehensive chapters, *Once Upon a Chair* shows how contemporary design is increasingly leaving behind the age of so-called iconic design and progressing into conscious, democratic and sustainable design. Where there used to be design that at times lacked idealism and ethics, design is increasingly addressing new questions: How can our world be organised in a sustainable way? Designers are assigning function to the products' immaterial level by inventing process-driven and storytelling concepts. Innovative design is complex and not easy to achieve. Yet, the greater an object's quality, the more aesthetic it becomes. Moving from rational function to romantic function, designers are collaborating with artisans to revive the tradition of craft, and to elevate it to new levels of luxury. It's all about context and *Once Upon a Chair* not only shows where contemporary innovative furniture and object design is grounded but also where it is going.

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