

DESIGN HERO

Poul Kjaerholm

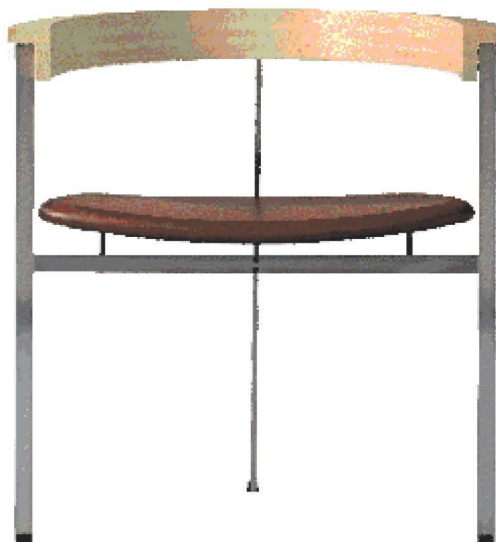
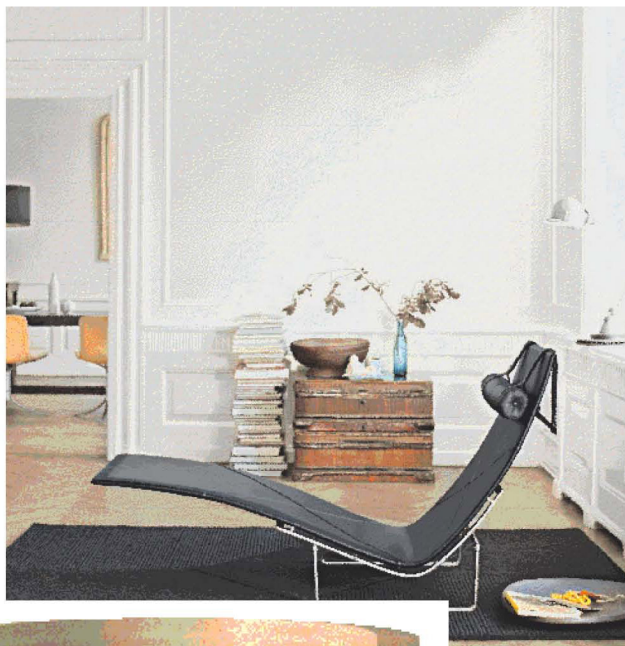
Danish designers may be famous for working with wood, but Poul went against the grain

Who was he? Like many Danish designers, Poul Kjaerholm (1929-1980) was trained as a cabinet-maker. When he graduated in the 1950s, the big trend was for shapely wood furniture, but Poul had different tastes: he liked sturdy materials such as marble, canvas, woven cane and stainless steel – the last of which he considered just as beautiful and natural as timber. His pared-down style was underscored by his method of naming his designs – just his initials and a category number – and by his unswerving commitment to functionality.

What makes him a design hero? For Poul, furniture design represented an interaction between objects and architecture; he always considered how his pieces would work in a space. Thus his chairs look supremely elegant from every angle, while their expansive lines reveal how comfortable they are to sit on. Hard materials such as steel

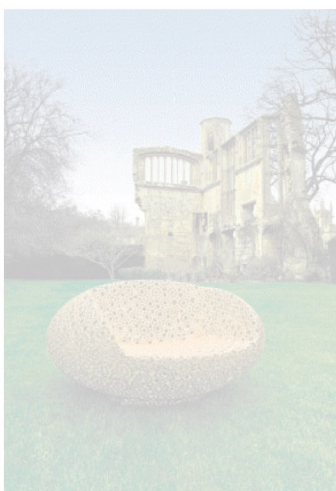
take on a surprising softness and fluidity: moulded and polished into slender, branch-like forms, this metal was the framework for many of his designs, including the famous 'PK22' chair (1956) and 'PK61' table (1956), whose Mondrian-esque steel base is emphasised beneath a clear glass top. 'Steel's constructive potential is not the only thing that interests me; the refraction of light on its surface is an important part of my artistic work,' Poul explained. The 'PK22', with its wafer-thin silhouette, earned him the prestigious Lunning Prize, which is often referred to as the Nobel Prize for Scandinavian design.

Where can I buy his work? Fritz Hansen manufactures the majority of Poul's designs, which are available at Skandium (skandium.com); several others are made by Kjaerholm Production – run by Poul's son, Thomas – and can be ordered at Sigmar (sigmarlondon.com).



'PK24' chaise longue by Poul Kjaerholm for Fritz Hansen, from £8,493, Skandium (skandium.com). 'PK11' chair by Kjaerholm Production, £2,640, Sigmar (sigmarlondon.com)

Don't miss! The Royal Horticultural Society Show Tatton Park, which takes place in the picturesque surroundings of a Georgian stately home in Cheshire, features three restaurants by Fortnum & Mason this year. After admiring the floral displays, head to The Brasserie for a classic afternoon tea. July 21-25 (rhs.org.uk/tattonpark).



Magic castle

This surreal 'Pouring Jug' installation by Belgian-Dutch duo Studio Job (far left) is the star attraction at Sotheby's selling exhibition at Sudeley Castle this summer, held with London's Carpenters Workshop Gallery. In startling contrast to the castle's gothic architecture, one-off modern designs will be showcased in its grounds: expect works by Marcel Wanders ('Bon Bon Gold' chair, left), Jurgen Bey and Marc Quinn. You may not be buying – prices start at a cool £10,000 – but it will sure make a memorable day trip. Until August 1 (sudeleycastle.co.uk).