

ELIEL SAARINEN
(1873-1950)

ARMCHAIR
(c. 1907-1908)

Varnished solid oak.

CM	IN
H. 82	H. 32.25
L. 62	W. 24.5
P. 56.75	D. 22.25

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(1873-1950)

Eliel Saarinen was born on August 20, 1873, in Rantasalmi, in Finland. He studied painting at the University of Helsinki, followed by architecture at the Helsinki Polytechnic School Institute.

In 1896, he founded an architectural practice with Herman Gesellius (1874-1916) and Armas Lindgren (1874-1929). At the 1900 Paris World's Fair, the trio received acclaim for their Finnish Pavilion, which combined traditional wooden architecture, British Neo-Gothic style, and Jugendstil. The facade of the Pohjola Insurance Company building in Helsinki (1901) and the Suur-Merijoki manor near Viborg (1902-1903), exemplify this new aesthetic and a holistic approach that extended to furniture, textiles and other decorative elements. This style, known as Finnish Romanticism, is also evident in the National Museum of Finland in Helsinki (1902), as well as in the studios and residences the trio designed for themselves at Hvitträsk that same year. Helsinki Central Station, built between 1910 and 1914, also reflects this period, with its textured stone façades crowned by bear statues.

The Armchair, c. 1907–1908, designed for the offices of the Finnish railway administration, reflects Saarinen's pursuit of an authentic, expressive form. Its backrest, with its clean lines, combines formal sensitivity with practical considerations. Saarinen would gradually move away from this rustic aesthetic toward a simpler, more "mineral" vocabulary.

Between 1910 and 1915, Saarinen developed several urban planning proposals in Europe, notably for Budapest, Tallinn, and Canberra. In 1913, he won first prize in a competition for his master plan for Reval, Estonia. He also proposed a development plan for Greater Helsinki, Munkkiniemi-Haaga (1910-15), a new district intended to accommodate 170,000 inhabitants. In 1922, his second-place finish in the international competition for the Chicago Tribune headquarters, a design that received the support of Louis Sullivan, marked a turning point in his life. The following year, he moved to the American Midwest with his wife, Loja, and their two children, Eva-Lisa et Eero. In 1925, philanthropist George Gough Booth commissioned him to design the campus of the Cranbrook educational community, in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Built between 1924 and 1930, the complex included numerous buildings and represented an educational innovation comparable to the Bauhaus. Saarinen served as president of the academy from 1932 to 1946. Its graduates included his son Eero Saarinen, Florence Knoll and Charles Eames. His wife, Loja Saarinen, headed the textile department from 1929 to 1942. Designed in the late 1920s and located in the heart of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, their private Art Deco residence was conceived by Eliel and adorned with sumptuous textiles created by Loja.

Eliel Saarinen's career continued with projects such as the Tabernacle Church in Columbus (1939-1942), Indiana, where the Scandinavian appreciation for brickwork is combined with a sense of "cool rationality". In 1947, he received the AIA Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architects in recognition of his lifetime achievements. Among his major works is the General Motors Technical Center in Warren, Michigan. Initiated by Eliel in 1948, the project was completed by his son Eero following his father's death.

Eliel Saarinen died on July 1, 1950, in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan and was buried in Kirkkonummi, in Finland.











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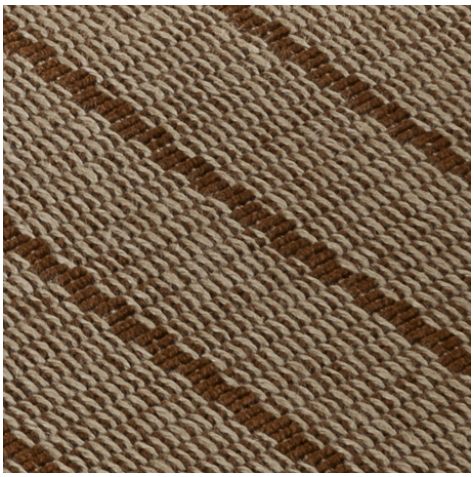
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UPHOLSTERY



Loja Brown

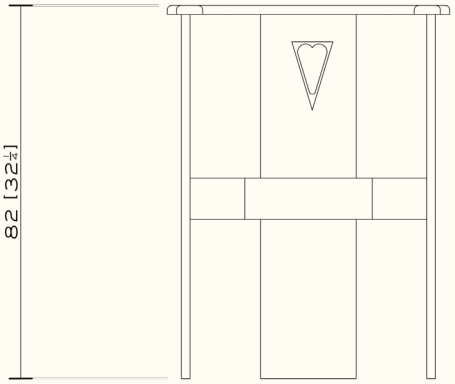
WOOD

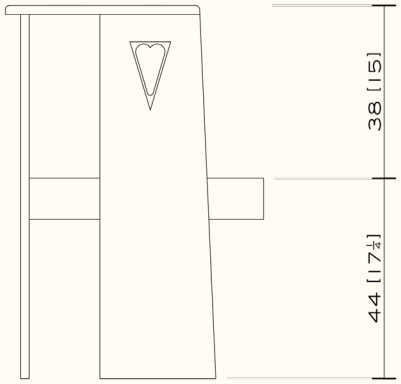


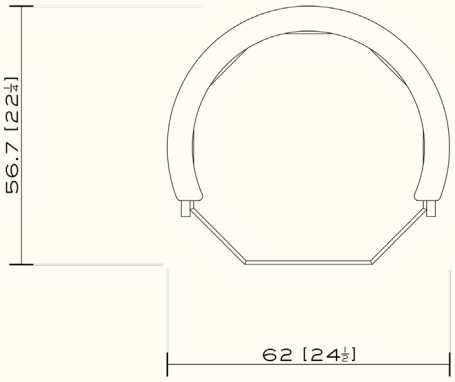
Smooth oak with satin varnish

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Wood: Solid oak.
Finish: Smooth with satin varnish
Cushion available upon request (COM fabric: 1m)

Reproduction of a piece from the Musée d'Orsay's collections.
Limited edition of 100.

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enquiries@ecart.paris www.ecart.paris +33 1 43 54 43 94