

JOSEF HOFFMANN
(1870-1956)

CHAIR
(c. 1905)

Satin solid beech, leather & metal.

CM	IN
H. 98	H. 38.5
L. 44.5	W. 17.5
P. 49	D. 19.25

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(1870-1956)

Josef Hoffmann was born in 1870, in Moravia. Passionate about architecture, he entered the technical school in Brno in 1887, where he encountered Adolf Loos (1870-1933). He continued his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, specializing in architecture. In 1894, he studied under Otto Wagner, who exerted a major influence on him. That same year, he joined the *Siebener-Club* (Club of Seven), whose members included Gustav Klimt, Koloman Moser, Max Kurzweil, Leo Kainradl, Josef Maria Olbrich and Joseph Urban. In 1897, he joined the Vienna Secession and, together with Olbrich, helped create its emblematic building, conceived as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*; a total work of art.

He continued to develop architectural and interior design projects, including the decoration of the Apollo department store in Vienna and the construction of a building for industrialist Paul Wittgenstein, who would become his loyal patron. For the 1900 Paris World's Fair, Hoffmann designed the spaces dedicated to the Secession, which were presented at the Grand Palais.

His early artists' houses, particularly those built on the Hohe Warte in Vienna for Koloman Moser and Carl Moll, as well as the Henneberg House, reflect his desire to create a unified relationship between architecture, furniture and garden design.

In 1903, Josef Hoffmann founded the *Wiener Werkstätte* (WW) with the financial support of Fritz Waerndorfer, his patron. Koloman Moser served as its artistic director. Their aim was to design complete interiors, from the smallest objects, such as dessert forks, to furniture. Production relied on various workshops specializing in metalwork, enamel, leatherwork, bookbinding, carpentry, and painting.

Between 1904 and 1905, Hoffmann was commissioned to design the luxurious Purkersdorf Sanatorium, near Vienna. Created in collaboration with Koloman Moser, this landmark building is celebrated for its restrained architectural language. The Chair, c. 1905, was designed for the sanatorium's dining room and is listed as number 322 in the 1906 Kohn company catalogue.

The piece features remarkable technical details. Its rear legs are rectangular in cross-section, while the backrest has a circular cross-section. To reinforce the chair's stability, Hoffmann introduced spherical elements at the junctions between the seat rails and the legs. Many other models followed, including the seating designed for the Fledermaus cabaret in 1907, listed as number 728 F in the Kohn catalogue.

In Belgium, Josef Hoffmann was commissioned by Adolphe Stoclet to build a palace on the outskirts of Brussels (1905-1911), a true synthesis of the arts. The frieze in the dining room was designed by Gustav Klimt.

In 1912, as a founding member of the Vienna Werkbund, Hoffmann designed the Austrian Pavilion for the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne, in 1914. This period was marked by significant changes within the *Wiener Werkstätte*: financier Fritz Waerndorfer faced liquidation and left Vienna for the United States. Otto and Mäda Primavesi then became patrons of the *Wiener Werkstätte,* while Dagobert Peche took over as its artistic director in 1915.

In 1925, for the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris, Hoffmann designed the Austrian Pavilion. The city of Vienna also commissioned him to design numerous residential complexes.

Over the years, he gradually moved toward the International Style, influenced by Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus. The *Wiener Werkstätte* declared bankruptcy in 1932, and Hoffmann resigned from the *Werkbund*. Nevertheless, he continued to design decorative objects. In 1950, he received a major Austrian national award. He celebrated its 85th birthday at the Stoclet Palace in Brussels, before dying in Vienna on May 7, 1956.











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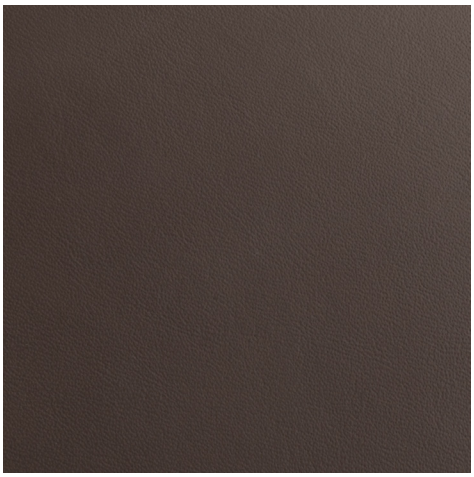
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LEATHER



Dark brown leather

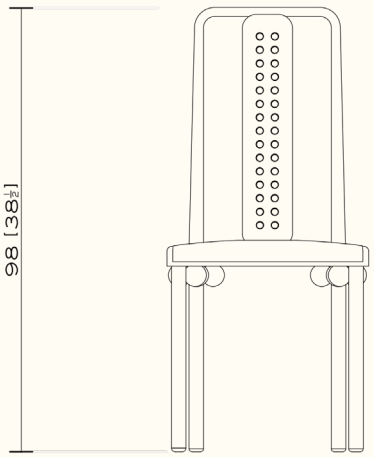
WOOD

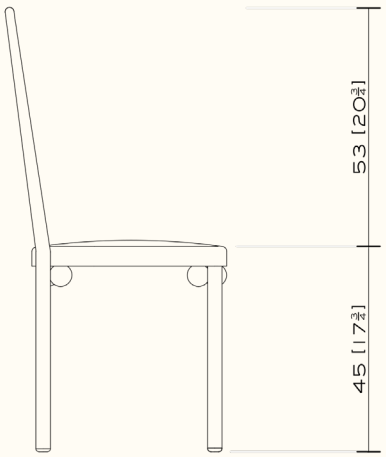


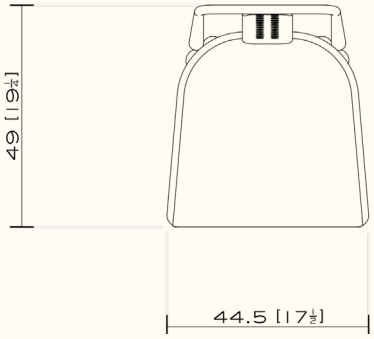
Varnished satin solid beech

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Wood: Solid beech
Finish: Smooth with satin finish

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

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