



20th Century

**Furniture Designers
and Architects**

**Gerrit Rietveld
(1888-1964) Dutch**

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Dutch

- Gerrit Rietveld was born 1888 in the Netherlands. His father was a joiner and cabinetmaker.
- He left school aged 12 to work as an apprentice in his father's workshop.
- From 1904 to 1908 he took classes studied the art of drawing and ornamentation.
- In 1906 he attended lectures by the architect P. J. C. Klarhamer and later started to work for him.
- Klarhamer shared a workshop with Bart van der Leck, one of the founding members of the "De Stijl"
- Klarhamer and van der Leck introduced him to the new trends in architecture and the applied arts at that time.



The High Chair

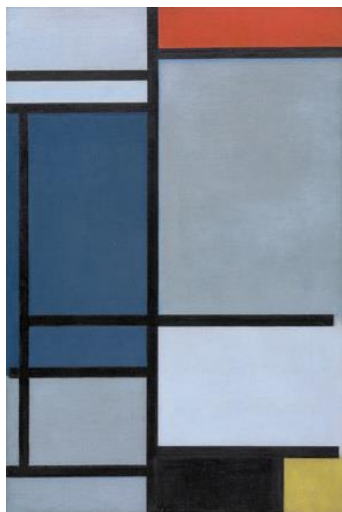
- In 1917 after opening his own workshop he was commissioned by one of his first clients H.G.J Schelling, a railway engineer for the Dutch railway, to design and build a Childs high chair and several other pieces of children's furniture.
- The high chair was his first piece to be published in the "De Stijl" journal in 1922.
- The De Stijl journal was initially founded by Theo van Doesburg in 1917.
- Other contributors to its founding were Piet Mondrian, Bart van der Leek, J.J.P Oud, and Vilmos Huszar.



The High Chair on Display at the [V & A Museum](#)

De Stijl journal

- They had a mandate outlining the principles of what they stood for.
- *Ultimate simplicity and abstraction, both in architecture and painting, by using only straight horizontal and vertical lines and rectangular forms. Furthermore, formal vocabulary is limited to the primary colours, red, blue and yellow, and the three primary values of black, white and grey. Work must avoid symmetry. Aesthetic balance is attained by opposition. (White, 2003)*
- Rietveld through his association with van Leck was introduced to Doesburg and joined the De Stijl movement in 1918.



Mondrian 1921



Bart Van Der Leck 1920

Gerrit Rietveld

- The Red Blue chair (1917-1918) is probably one of the most recognized pieces from the Modern Movement of De Stijl Design.
- He did not design it to be these colours... added the colours after joining the movement.
- It was not comfortable but the techniques and modular approach meant that it could be mass produced.
- The red back piece acts as the spine of the chair and all the "limbs" are connected, the sloping back blue seat and the black arms and legs.
- Each piece of the chair is either square or rectangular section, and this is highlighted by the use of yellow on the piece ends.



The Schroder House

- A widow Truss Schroder commissioned him to design a house for her and her children.
- In 1957 he then moved in to the Schroder house with Truss Schroder.



- The Schroder House



Gerrit Thomas Rietveld



The Sideboard 1919



Zig Zag Chair 1934



The Berlin Chair 1923

Recap

- **Rietveld** studied architecture but was primarily a furniture designer and Cabinet-maker.
- He designed furniture that fitted into the new architecture.
- He used the cheap simple modular approach.
- He was influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright and a Dutch group called De Stijl, using the theory of using only Primary Colours and the Neutrals.
- Rietveld viewed aesthetics over functionalism. (In other words it was very uncomfortable, but looked good!)
- His design concepts were influenced by geometry.
- <http://www.archdaily.com/99698/ad-classics-rietveld-schroder-house-gerrit-rietveld>