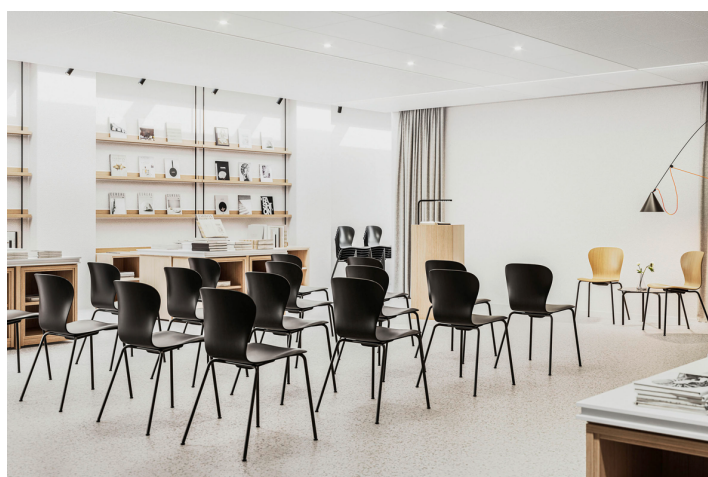


Press release
Frankenberg, October 2022

Thonetology: the new S 220 chair **Design: Sam Hecht and Kim Colin, Industrial Facility, 2022**

The work of Sam Hecht and Kim Colin, known together as Industrial Facility, is characterised by its precise form and aesthetics derived from functionality. The British-American design duo carefully considers an object's context and its relevance to modern life in their designs. Their new S 220 chair range reflects Thonet's formal, material and technical heritage with an ultra-modern take on the company's line of moulded plywood furniture: the design draws on the familiar lines of the iconic 214 bentwood chair and reinvents it as a stackable, material-efficient moulded plywood model that can be used anywhere. The ergonomic seat shell is fixed to a light tubular steel frame. The S 220 is also available with optional bentwood armrests in a colour similar to the shell and will be launched at the Orgatec office furniture trade show.



By designing a light, stackable chair with a moulded plywood seat shell and (optional) bentwood armrests on a tubular steel frame, Sam Hecht and Kim Colin (Industrial Facility) have created a new, modern interpretation of Thonet's deep-rooted design DNA. The S 220 chair – or the S 220 F with armrests – can be used anywhere, from private homes to the contract sector. Its design takes inspiration from the established shape of the iconic 214 bentwood chair and reimagines it using the latest material technology. “The 214 is a chair with bentwood lines that provides light, comfortable support. Its design combines organic with geometric shapes, wide shoulders with a slim waist,” explains designer Sam Hecht when describing the formal heritage behind the design of the S 220. He continues, “throughout history, Thonet was always at the forefront of material technology. It started with bentwood and continued with moulded plywood,” highlighting the renowned legacy that the S 220 brings up to date.

“The design pushes the limits of what is technically possible using the material of moulded plywood, which has always been a driver of innovation at Thonet,” says Creative Director Norbert Ruf. “The chair features an understated organic form as well as precise lines, and its moulded plywood shell delivers comfort and support.” The chair's elegant hourglass shape means that the seat shell has just the right amount of give. A smoothly rounded front edge perfectly embodies the harmonious interplay of material quality, aesthetics and functionality that is so characteristic of the S 220. This “waterfall edge”, as the designers call it, avoids pressure points, makes the chair more comfortable and picks up the radii of the tubular steel frame.

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“Our design creates an aesthetic conversation between the moulded plywood seat shell and the tubular steel chair legs,” adds Sam Hecht. “This lends the seat shell a lovely softness, making it not only pleasing to touch but also incredibly comfortable to sit on. In terms of the material, the S 220 represents a gentle transition from bentwood to moulded plywood and tubular steel, creating a new form that looks familiar yet modern. The chair succeeds in positioning moulded plywood in its rightful place today: it is materially efficient and has convincing design language that takes its cues from Thonet’s heritage yet is relevant today and for the future.”

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Thonet – future-oriented furniture design with a long tradition

The unique success story of Thonet began with the work of master carpenter Michael Thonet. Ever since he established his first workshop in Boppard on the River Rhine in 1819, the name Thonet has stood for high-quality, innovative and elegant furniture. The breakthrough came with the iconic chair No. 14, today known the world over as the Vienna Coffee House Chair: the pioneering technique of bending solid beechwood enabled the mass production of chairs for the first time. The second milestone in design history was the tubular steel furniture by the famous Bauhaus architects Mart Stam, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Marcel Breuer in the 1930s. During those pioneering years, Thonet was the world’s largest producer of these tubular steel furniture designs, which are today considered timeless.

For the company today, the continuous process of innovation is the top priority, together with a focus on tradition and fine craftsmanship. Thonet’s furniture designs originate both from its collaborations with renowned national and international creatives and from the in-house Thonet Design Team. Chief Executive Officer Brian Boyd and Creative Director Norbert Ruf manage the company from the corporate head office and production site in Frankenberg/Eder (Germany). Michael Thonet’s fifth- and sixth-generation descendants are actively involved with the company’s business as partners and sales representatives.