



The History of Furniture: Twenty-Five Centuries of Style and Design in the Western Tradition

John Morley

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"The entire story of furniture is presented as it never has been before. Written with great verve and in a highly accessible style, *The History of Furniture* conveys a vast knowledge of history and design with stunning intellectual clarity. In surveying the development of furniture from antiquity to the present day, John Morley focuses on the Western traditions, but he includes the outside influences of China and Japan, India, Egypt, and Africa. His bravura analysis reveals connections between pieces of furniture, such as the direct line from antiquity to a neoclassical French commode, a Biedermeier dressing table, and a twentieth-century bois clair cocktail cabinet.

The story is shaped by a conflict between "classical" and "anti-classical," order and fantasy, and includes the wild extravagances of exotic styles. We see how the simple challenge of making a chair to sit on could generate a huge variety of forms, depending not only on changing fashion in interiors, as well as motifs, ornaments, and ideas from the worlds of politics, religion, architecture, and the fine arts. Works by famous designers-Boulle, Chippendale, Riesener, Makintosh, Eames-appear clearly in the context of the stylish ideals of their times, and nearly 700 illustrations are closely integrated into the text.

The result is not only an essential reference tool for everyone concerned with collecting, selling, or studying furniture and the decorative arts but also a tour de force of scholarship that will enthrall anyone with the least interest in the traditions of Western culture."

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