

60s Design Essay.

The 1960s was a major decade for different, funky, and cool inventions, such as a paper chair, Tupperware, mini skirts, mini cars, even mini bikes. Chairs were a key design with different colours, shapes, textures, and patterns. Many chairs that were designed in the 60s we still use today in clubs, bars, offices, and in our homes. The two, very different but very smart chairs that I will discuss in this essay are The Blow chair and The Elda Armchair. I will also include the Space Race, talk about plastic, and give my own personal opinion.

The Blow chair was designed by Jonathan De Pas, Donato D'Urbino, Paolo Lamazzi and Carlo Scolari in 1967. It was made from transparent PVC plastic and manufactured by Zanotta, Nova in Italy. The Blow chair is inflatable and compact, ideal for; camping, trips, child's bedroom, or outside on a sunny day, they are very useful. This very cool chair came in many different colours and patterns, and was very popular, even today.

Some of the Blow chairs were shaped like beanbag chairs with a hole cut out of the middle for you to sit on. Others were shaped like a proper chair and had a drink or an ashtray holder in the armrest. Not the best idea for safety, if it got burnt it would melt or burst. As you can see in the picture The Blow chair was a more fun, cool chair compared to the next chair. If you have ever sat on a Blow chair you will find that it is quite unsteady, you could easily fall off it, but once you have found a comfy spot you won't move for hours. The Blow chair marketing was targeted more towards the younger generation, but even though it was more for young people the older generation seemed to like it just as much.

The designers of the chair based it on an inflatable dinghy, they wondered what it would be like to half the dinghy and from that they got the Blow chair. If you can imagine an inflatable dinghy and the Blow chair then you can see how the idea came about. It is a very simple idea. The Blow chair had a back and a base. The back is semi circular shape that fits the shape of your back perfectly and is attached to the base with strong glue for plastic. The base is shaped like a beanbag chair but instead of being filled with polystyrene balls, it is filled with air. The base of the chair has an extra cushion in the middle of the base to provide extra comfort

The Italian designer Joe Colombo made the Elda Armchair in 1963. This particular designer was obsessed with plastic; every single chair that he designed had to have plastic in it somewhere. Joe Colombo introduced plastic to many different designers to plastic, which is why it is so popular today.

So of course The Elda armchair is made from plastic and leather. The Elda has more; style, it looked smart. Designed more for an office, a house and maybe a club. The chair was designed with style and class, so with that and the fact that it looks very comfortable this chair was a huge hit. With its square shape but rounded, broad shoulders, and easy to clean it was every womans dream chair. The only disadvantages about this chair is the lack of colour, The Elda Armchair only came in two different colours, which was black and white. This chair was not targeted to the young generation this was targeted to the more classic, wealthier public. In my opinion that may have put people off and gone for something more hip or modern, I think only having it in black or white it makes it more elegant. In terms of comfort this chair does not look as comfortable as the Blow Chair, but still looks fairly comfy. The Elda armchair looks more secure, with a high back, and a firm base in the centre. The chair is more solid, stronger back and a hard circular base; it is padded with cushions, and leather, which makes it look very inviting.

I believe that the Space Race had some sort of impact on the design of these two chairs. Russia and the United States were having a race to get to the moon first; the Americans were beating the Soviets. From that moment on everything was made to look Spacey from materials, cars, and furniture. If you look at these chairs closely you can see they have a Spacey look about them. During this period of time there was a big craze about Space. There was popular television programmes and films, like Star Trek, Dr Who, the 2001 A- Space Odyssey, and Barbarella. Not every person had a television in those days, a television was a luxury, and so people used to crowd round to other peoples houses to watch the live screening of "The Moon Landing". The Americans land on the moon. Neil Armstrong was the first man on the moon. The Space Race and Science fiction promised an easier future with more

leisure and less hard work. I think that the Space Race had a big impact on the designers at that period of time.

Some people think an object is made of just one type of plastic, but actually it could be made of many different types of plastic. Plastic is a very easy material to work with as it can be moulded in many different ways by the use of heat and pressure. Plastic is normally associated as a cheap material, not in the case for the Blow chair or the Elda armchair. Plastic can sometimes make items look tacky, but both designers manage to over step that obstacle and used it in moderation. Over the last 30 years plastic has been on a high demand, the production increasing every year. The demand for plastic over these years have made plastic one of the most popular materials ever made. Plastic is used in a wide range from household items, cosmetics, packaging, and for a healthy future because some plastics can be recycled. Plastic is more popular than Aluminium and Steel, which shows how popular it is because we use Aluminium and steel frequently.

In my opinion both chairs are very smart and I like them both very much but because I have a Blow chair and it takes a lot of space I prefer the Elda armchair. I would never buy the Elda armchair unless I was a rich businesswoman and had parties at my house, and also unless I had other classy furniture to go with it. The Blow chair I would buy, (well have already bought) because of it is simple, handy and ideal for a teenagers bedroom. The reason I dont have it out in my room anymore is because it takes up to much space, and didnt go with the colour of my room.

Doing a survey on an age group of 11-12 the majority preferred the Blow chair and then a survey with a age group 13-14, of a class of 15, 66% of the class preferred the Joe Colombo Elda armchair. I was quite surprised at this as I thought the would all prefer the Blow chair. In asking an older male and female their opinions differ. The gentleman would have the Elda armchair in his home because he said, "It looks more inviting, to relax, and watch television in it. It would also go with the rest of his materials and furniture". This gentleman also said that he liked the Blow Chair, he would take that chair on an outing like I explained earlier in the essay, to go camping, or to a concert. The female said she liked the Elda armchair because "The Blow chair looked cheap and nasty", because of the type of plastic, which is

PVC. That is a danger for all designers need to watch out for, using too much plastic can make it look tacky, better to use as less as possible when it comes to making furniture items. Asking a age group of 15-16 they all preferred the Blow chair because it looked young, fresh and funky. They also said that the Elda armchair appeared to look uncomfortable, which greatly differs from the other opinion that I have received.

In conclusion both chairs were very successful but the Blow chair was more successful than the Elda armchair. The Blow chair sparked off many later, and popular designs. The designs that followed after the Blow chair was lilt, inflatable sledges, inflatable beds, even an inflatable house. All in all both chairs are very smart, casual and popular. Both chairs had a major effect on the designs in the 1960s and still are to today.