

Press Release
Milan/Frankenberg, April 2014

A successful tubular steel classic with a new look: S 533 with black lace leather

Design: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1927

A new look for an iconic chair: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's cantilever chair S 533 now becomes an inherent part of the Thonet collection in fine version with black lace leather. The company thus continues the successful special edition of the S 533 with lace buffalo hide, which was published in the Thonet Collect series in January 2014 and sold out a few days after its presentation. The famous architect and Bauhaus teacher Ludwig Mies van der Rohe designed the chair in 1927 following the motto "less is more". With this design, he influenced one of the most important design innovations of the 20th century: the chair without back legs, better known as the "cantilever".

The economical use of materials, the functional design and harmonious form characterize the S 533 and make it a timeless piece of furniture.

The cantilever chair owes its special seating comfort to its constant elastic flexing. This effect results from the fact that Mies van der Rohe conceived the front of the tubular steel frame as a large arch made of spring hardened tubular steel, allowing the S 533 to adjust to the free movement of its users due to its flexing power, making additional upholstery unnecessary.

The birth of the cantilever chair

As the director of the Werkbund exhibit "The Dwelling" in Stuttgart, which became famous in 1927 as the Weissenhof Estate, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe learned of the experiment of his Dutch colleague Mart Stam. In 1926, Stam had presented his groundbreaking design of a cantilever chair without back legs, which was based on two cubes stacked on top of each other. Mies van der Rohe is said to have replaced the cubes in his cantilever design with a generous arch, which allowed the edgy chair model to become flexible. Mart Stam's prototype was made of gas pipes and hence was static – it didn't flex. Bends had to be constructed with inserted "elbow joints". Mies van der Rohe, however, used the cold bent tubular steel technique, which allowed for the preservation of the flexible properties of the material. Stam's model as well as Mies van der Rohe's chair were presented in the Stuttgart Weissenhof Estate in 1927. Since 1932, the S 533 has been a constant element in Thonet's program, at first under the name model no. MR 533, today under the name S 533.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

Born 1886 in Aachen, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe joined the architectural office of Peter Behrens at the age of 22, where he met Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier. Soon, he became a protagonist of the innovative glass and skeleton constructions of his time – his design of a glass façade high-rise building at the Bahnhof Friedrichstraße in Berlin was decisive. Starting in 1925 he was responsible for the artistic direction of the Deutscher Werkbund, which resulted in the creation of the Weissenhof Estate in Stuttgart in 1927 within the framework of the Werkbund exhibit "The Dwelling". In 1930, Walter Gropius appointed Mies van der Rohe to the position of director of the Bauhaus in Dessau, which he had to close down on 10 August 1933 under pressure from the Nazi party. Mies van der Rohe emigrated to the USA. In 1938 he followed an invitation to move to Chicago, where he became the director of the architecture department at Armour Institute, the later Illinois Institute of

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Technology. This step would be decisive in his career and life – he became one of the most influential architects in the world. His steel skeleton buildings with large-scale plate-glass windows such as the Seagram Building in New York (1958) and the National Gallery in Berlin (1968) are landmarks of modern architecture. His furniture designs became famous, as well; they were all side products of his architectural commissions – among them were the Barcelona Chair and the Brno cantilever chair. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe died in 1969 in Chicago.



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