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During their university years, architects acquire a wide range of skills apart from learning to design buildings. Some of these include creative problem solving, project management, high attention to detail, coordinating teams and accurately responding to consumer needs. Therefore, a degree often provides the necessary tools to design at any scale – from urban to product design – and to explore other creative fields, such as art, photography, journalism or industrial design. Of the many possibilities that open up, it is especially common for many to make the leap towards furniture design, particularly chair design, instead of following the traditional route.

In fact, if we look into famous architects from past eras like Frank Gehry, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier and Eero Saarinen, they have all designed iconic chairs. Looking into the 21st century, the pattern remains as strong; while some contemporary architects also design buildings in parallel, many are solely dedicated to furniture and chair design – some switched paths after graduating, others made the jump after years of conventional architecture jobs.

Ma Yansong: Gu Chair (2018) by Sawaya & Moroni

As founder of [MAD Architects](#), Ma Yansong is globally known for his futuristic, technologically advanced designs. Recently, he has also delved into product design with pieces like the [Gu Chair](#), a contemporary interpretation of the traditional wooden armchair. Evoking a futuristic style, the chair is formed by joints that create a network of sinuous forms seamlessly connected like a skeletal structure.



William Sawaya: Maxima Chair (2002) by Sawaya & Moroni

Even though Lebanese-born William Sawaya graduated as an architect, he quickly began experimenting in the field of industrial design, resulting in furniture manufacturer [Sawaya & Moroni](#). Known for his unique and innovative pieces, Sawaya designed the [Maxima Chair](#), a contemporary model that evokes audacity, comfort, and flexibility with its folded polyurethane shell.



Daniel Libeskind: Torq Chair (2010) by Sawaya & Moroni

In recent years, Polish-American architect [Daniel Libeskind](#) has veered towards product design. Among all his works, the [Torq Chair](#) is a dynamic ensemble created from simple geometries in a complex relationship, offering a contemporary artistic expression by combining a linear tubular steel construction with the volumetric opacity of the seat and backrest.

