

The Supreme Craftsmanship of Hans J. Wegner

Works from the Oda Collection



織田コレクション

ハンス・ウェグナー展 至高のクラフツマンシップ

Press Release



Photo: Poul Petersen/Ritzau Scanpix.

Icons of Danish Design Brought Together in an Exhibition of Historic Scale

Hans J. Wegner (1914–2007) is regarded not only as a central figure in Danish mid-century design, but also as one of the foremost names in 20th-century furniture design overall. His landmark works *The Chair* (1949) and *Y-Chair* (1950) are widely recognized and admired. Combining extraordinary skill as a cabinetmaker with profound insight into materials, Wegner produced more than 500 chairs over the course of his career.

This exhibition was organized in cooperation with Higashikawa-cho, Hokkaido, home to the collection of Oda Noritsugu, an internationally esteemed chair researcher and collector of modern furniture with a focus on Scandinavia. It brings together approximately 160 chairs along with other furniture in the largest Wegner retrospective ever held in Japan. What defines the lasting appeal of Wegner, a master of design whose work continues to be cherished today? With exhibition design by internationally renowned architect Tane Tsuyoshi (Atelier Tsuyoshi Tane Architects), the exhibition explores Wegner's achievements and design philosophy through an extensive selection of works and related materials.

Who Was Hans J. Wegner?

Hans Jørgensen Wegner was born in 1914 in Tønder, a town on the border between Denmark and Germany. He earned his certification as a cabinetmaker at the age of eighteen and began working as a designer around 1938. In 1940, he joined the architectural project for Aarhus City Hall, led by Arne Jacobsen and Erik Møller, designing the furniture for the building. Wegner went on to collaborate with a number of furniture manufacturers, including Johannes Hansen, producing many iconic chairs during the mid-century years. His highly original designs, grounded in a deep understanding of materials and craftsmanship, continue to be celebrated internationally today.

Hans Wegner Exhibition: Four Highlights

Highlight 1: Wegner's largest retrospective ever held in Japan

Highlight 2: Reproduction of the rarely seen *First Chair* on view

Highlight 3: Behind the scenes of his Wegner's iconic chairs, exploring his philosophy through the production process

Highlight 4: An area where visitors can sit in chairs, experiencing designs that unite beauty with uncompromising functionality

Highlight 1: Wegner's Largest Retrospective Ever Held in Japan

Oda Noritsugu's Wegner collection represents the core of Mr. Oda's more than half a century of research and collecting, and is distinguished by its world-class scope and quality. Among its most notable works are early models such as the original version of The Chair, featuring rattan wrapped around the crest rail, which has become a symbol of the Oda Collection. This exhibition presents The Chair, including such rare versions, along with approximately 160 systematically collected chairs and other furnishings. Dividing Wegner's career into three periods, the exhibition retraces his 92-year life while shedding light on the distinctive character of his various collaborations with furniture manufacturers. It offers a rare opportunity to see an extraordinary range of his timeless works all together in the spacious setting of Hikarie Hall.

The Chair

When it was first released in 1949 under the name *Round Chair*, *The Chair* attracted little attention. The following year, however, after being featured in an American magazine, it rapidly drew acclaim for its simple yet refined design and came to be known as *The Chair*, reflecting the view that it was the ideal chair. In 1960, John F. Kennedy, who suffered from back pain, chose to sit in it for lengthy televised presidential debates, firmly establishing its place as a modern classic.

The chair does not exist.

The good chair is a task one is never done with.

—Hans J. Wegner



(Left) Poster "The Chair" PP Møbler after 1993, Oda collection
(Right) Hans J. Wegner, The Chair JH503, 1949, Oda collection



Highlight 2: Reproduction of the Rarely Seen First Chair on View

Wegner's First Chair (1931), made when he was seventeen years old and known today only through photographs, has been newly reconstructed for this exhibition and will be shown to the public for the first time. Produced while he was still an apprentice cabinetmaker, the work clearly reflects the influence of the Art Deco style that flourished between the wars, and its lucid structure already hints at his emerging talent. Also on view is Second Chair, a reproduction of an early example from 1938 of which only three were originally made. This exhibition offers an unprecedented opportunity to see these two ambitious works from Wegner's youth up close.



Hans J. Wegner, The First Chair (reproduction model), 1931, Oda collection (Reproduction: Takumi Kohgei)



Hans J. Wegner, The Second Chair (reproduction model), 1938, Oda collection (Reproduction: Takumi Kohgei)

Highlight 3: Behind the Scenes of Wegner's Iconic Chairs, Exploring His Philosophy Through the Production Process

Wegner's chairs are marked by simple yet refined design and enduring functionality. What, then, makes them so timeless? This exhibition explores the background and key design elements of each chair through related materials, including more than 20 full-scale drawings and working models.* It also features rare interview footage of Wegner himself, along with a special interview with Oda Noritsugu, who met him eight times, shedding light on Wegner's philosophy and the appeal of his chairs. In addition, visitors are sure to be charmed by remarkable 1/5-scale models of Wegner's designs by furniture modeler Hamada Yoshikazu.

*Models in the process of production

Wegner is one of the few designers capable of drawing an entire chair on a single sheet of paper and including every necessary detail so that the chair can be built directly from the drawing.

—Ejnar Pedersen (founder of PP Møbler)



Hans J. Wegner, Peacock Chair JH550, 1947, Oda collection, photo by Kentauros Yasunaga

Y-Chair

Y-Chair (CH24) was developed from one of Wegner's early landmark designs, China Chair. It exemplifies his process of revisiting and scrutinizing completed designs to evolve them into new and even more refined forms. Each component combines exceptional craftsmanship with advanced manufacturing techniques, achieving both efficiency and consistency in production. Today, Y-Chair remains Wegner's best-selling design.

A piece of furniture must never have a back.

It must cohere: One shouldn't be able to tell where it begins and where it ends.

You experience furniture from every angle and it must stand up to being seen from all slides.

—Hans J. Wegner

(Left)Y-Chair CH24 Drawing (copy) 1950, Oda collection
(Right)Hans J. Wegner, Y-Chair CH24, 1950, Oda collection,
photo by Kentauros Yasunaga

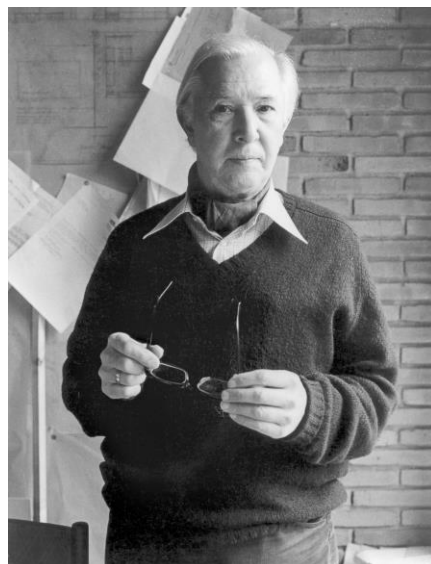


Highlight 4: An Area Where Visitors Can Sit in Chairs, Experiencing Designs that Balance Beauty and Functionality

During his lifetime, Wegner expressed his wish for people to experience his design principles and ideas by sitting in his chairs, which he considered the truest reflection of his vision. The exhibition features a special area where visitors can sit in current models produced by PP Møbler and Carl Hansen & Søn, both of which continue to manufacture his designs. Visitors are invited to experience these chairs firsthand with their eyes, hands, and entire bodies.

These are not works of art,
they are everyday craft objects.
So please, touch them with your hands.
Sit in them. Look closely.
Follow the curves with your fingers,
examine the joints,
and feel the flow of each one.

—Hans J. Wegner



Hans J. Wegner 1990 ©Carl Hansen & Søn

Circle Chair

Creating a circular chair had long been one of Wegner's cherished ambitions. Working closely with craftsman Ejnar Pedersen, founder of PP Møbler and one of his trusted collaborators, he developed a method of slicing solid wood into eleven layers, applying adhesive, and molding them into a large circular frame. The result was Circle Chair (PP130), completed when Wegner was 72. This singular, iconic design emerged from his dialogue with skilled craftsmen and his enduring spirit of experimentation.



Hans J. Wegner, Circle Chair PP130, 1986, Oda collection, photo by Kentauros Yasunaga

Peter's Chair

Wegner designed this chair and table set when he became godfather to the first son of his close friend Børge Mogensen. The boy, Peter Mogensen, was named after Wegner's father. The set uses a knock-down structure that can be assembled and disassembled by hand without nails or screws, making it easy to store and transport. Rounded corners reflect consideration for young children. More than 80 years on, it is still produced and remains a quiet bestseller.



Hans J. Wegner, Peter's Chair / Peter's Table, 1944, Oda collection, photo by Kentauros Yasunaga

Oda Noritsugu

Born in Kochi Prefecture in 1946. Professor Emeritus at Tokai University and chair researcher. Mr. Oda began collecting chairs while working in the Advertising Department of the department store Takashimaya. For more than half a century, he has studied and collected modern furniture, particularly Scandinavian design of the 20th century, guided by the principle of using chairs in daily life. In 1994, he relocated to Hokkaido together with his collection. He received the Danish Furniture Prize in 1997. In 2015, in recognition of his sustained research on Wegner, international public outreach, and major contribution to the contemporary reassessment of Wegner, he was unanimously awarded the inaugural Hans J. Wegner Award.



The Oda Collection

The Oda Collection consists of outstanding 20th-century furniture and everyday objects collected internationally and studied by chair researcher Oda Noritsugu. Centered on Scandinavian design, it comprises more than 8,000 items, including chairs, tables, lighting, tableware, cutlery, and toys. Systematically assembled along with approximately 20,000 related materials such as books, photographs, and drawings, it is a priceless collection without parallel anywhere in the world. Today, the approximately 1,350 chairs forming its core have been made public property by Higashikawa-cho, Hokkaido, and registered as cultural assets. Through exhibitions and lectures, the collection offers insights into the joy of living beautifully and mindfully.

The Supreme Craftmanship of Hans J. Wegner: Works from the Oda Collection

Period | Tue. December 2, 2025 - Sun. January 18, 2026
Closed on December 9, January 1

Opening Hours | 10:00 - 19:00 (Last Admission: 18:30)
* 10:00-18:00 on 12/31 (Last Admission: 17:30)

Venue | Hikarie Hall (Shibuya Hikarie 9F)
2-21-1, Shibuya, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo

Organizer | The Bunkamura Museum of Art
Special Cooperation | Cultural Exchange Department, Higashikawa, Hokkaido,
Oda Collection Organization, Asahikawa Furniture Industry Cooperative
Academic Support | Noritsugu Oda (Professor Emeritus at Tokai University)
Exhibition Design | Tsuyoshi Tane (ATTA)
Cooperation | Hans J. Wegner design studio ApS, PP Møbler, Carl Hansen & Søn, Katolec
Corporation Fine Arts Transportation
Support | Royal Danish Embassy, Japan, J-WAVE

Admission (tax included)

2,300 yen (Adults), 1,500 yen (College & High school students), 700yen (Junior high school & Elementary school students)

* For student tickets, please present your student ID upon entry. (Excluding elementary school students)

*Visitors who are elementary school students or younger will be admitted for free.

* Present your disability certificate to receive half-price admission for yourself and one accompanying person. Please purchase tickets at the ticket counter on the day of your visit. (Adults: 1,150 yen, College & High School Students: 750 yen, Junior high school & Elementary school students: 350 yen)

Inquiries

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Exhibition HP |

https://www.bunkamura.co.jp/museum/exhibition/25_wegner/



Press Contact

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