

The Asymmetric Chaise

by Harry Bertoia

Perspective and Context

Created during the same period and in the same style as his iconic 1952 *Diamond*, *Bird* and side chairs and bar stool, Harry Bertoia's *Asymmetric Chaise* is considered a masterpiece of mid-century experimental American furniture. The Knoll Museum exhibit, *Harry Bertoia, Perspective and Context*, features the *Asymmetric Chaise* alongside several other works of furniture and sculpture Bertoia conceived only miles away in his small workshop in Bally, Pennsylvania.

Bertoia's works, as he has said, are studies in space, form and metal which often play with the evocation or the reality of motion, sound or color. His wire furniture designs are also studies in function, formed by the conversations he envisioned between the object and its user. How long would one sit? Would one favor support or freedom of movement? These questions formed the foundation of his design method, a process his wife Brigitta aptly dubbed "intuitive engineering."

Shaped by these discourses, all of the works exhibited bear a distinct imprint of Bertoia's method, and the *Asymmetric Chaise* is no exception.

Extraordinary in its complexity and refinement, the *Chaise* suggests motion without actually moving, its curves appearing to accommodate an invisible guest who alternately melts into them languorously and shifts between them restlessly.

The *Asymmetric Chaise* is certainly among the most evolved products of Bertoia's "urge for good design."



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