



RICHARD LAMPERT

Egon Eiermann

„And now draw a chair...“, Egon Eiermann is said to have stoically given his students this assignment. At least that is one of the numerous anecdotes regarding Egon Eiermann's interaction with his students. However, this was apparently a task that accompanied him permanently: when Egon Eiermann designed a new building, he would design a chair especially for it – and quite often the entire interior – from the door handle and the furniture to the light fixtures. And whether this story of the students' assignment be true or not, there is much in this quote that characterises Egon Eiermann as a person and a designer across disciplines and decades. Born in 1904 near Potsdam, he was not only one of the most significant German architects of the 20th century, but he also made a name for himself on the international stage with his ranges of furniture. Eiermann consistently implemented his idea of functionalism; he represented objectivity and lightness; his focus was always on aesthetics, never on cosiness. Always on the agenda: concrete, glass and steel.

1904
born near
Potsdam

1947 – 1970
Professor at the
TH Karlsruhe

The name „Eiermann“ was also well-known among architecture students. His lectures were considered an institution, attended by students from other universities and faculties. From 1947 to 1970, Egon Eiermann was a professor at the Technical University of Karlsruhe – at the same time, he planned numerous buildings that would shape architectural history and he designed furniture that is now considered iconic. Eiermann called his students „children“ and, like his own teacher Hans Poelzig – whose masterclass Eiermann attended – he did not want any „pupils“. Egon Eiermann strove to encourage his students to define their own viewpoint as architects. Hence, he lectured on what interested him at the time letting his „children“ participate in his everyday life as a designer, including visits to his building sites. Contemporary relevance, which was so important to him, extended throughout his creative process, as did the concept of the perfect chair.

1922 – 1927
Architectural studies at
TH Berlin-Charlottenbur

From 1922 to 1927, Egon Eiermann studied architecture at the Technical University of Berlin-Charlottenburg and, as from 1955, he was a member of the Berlin Academy of Arts. He already implemented many of his architectural designs at the beginning of the 1950s, such as the headquarters of Verseidag in Krefeld, the CIBA in Wehr/Baden or a weaving mill in Blumberg. With the German Pavilion designed by him and Sepp Ruf in 1958 for the World Expo in Brussels, an architecture was created that was regarded as an expression of

democracy after years of war in Germany. It was also a compass for modern ingenious building. The layering of the outer wall was an unprecedented expression of transparency. What Eiermann started in Brussels he continued, for example, in the German Embassy in Washington, for the IBM building in Stuttgart-Vaihingen, the Hochtief high-rise in Frankfurt, the House of Representatives in Bonn and in one of his last designs, the striking Olivetti company headquarters in Frankfurt – thereby constantly evolving his concept of architecture. Other legendary buildings designed by Eiermann are the Matthäus Kirche in Pforzheim and the redesigned Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis Kirche in Berlin, which is considered his most significant work. For the Matthäus Kirche, he combined concrete and thick glass for the first time in a German religious building.

Egon Eiermann was a modern-thinking original, an ingenious pragmatist who was capable of working skillfully within the existing constraints in order to create architectural art or iconic industrial design. However different the conditions might have been, Egon Eiermann consistently implemented his two essential principles in every single one of his architectural projects and furniture designs. He was a master at isolating the individual components of his architecture and furniture and giving them space in order to ultimately arrive at a careful selection to be combined into a whole, using his fine sense for sophisticated design: the components remain visible and preserve their identity, while only as a whole combining to form a design that is as perfect aesthetically as it is functionally. In addition, he was capable of working within the existing constraints and realising great things with the available means. When raw materials such as steel and concrete were in short supply, especially in the post-war period, Eiermann used clay, for example – which he clad with upright positioned, burnt bricks. He succeeded in creating technically correct and durable architecture using simple resources. A way of thinking and working that made Egon Eiermann unique – and that explains his fame and international success. A way of thinking and working that gave rise to architecture and furniture design that is still relevant today because of its aesthetics and functionality. His work appears neither foreign nor outdated. Egon Eiermann, who died in Baden-Baden in 1970, not only left behind architecture that shaped the style of an entire generation, but also numerous pieces of iconic furniture, such as the "Eiermann 1 Table Frame", consisting of a pared down tubular steel frame, which was initially firmly welded together, and a separate tabletop. Eiermann designed this furniture for himself in 1953. Due to its ingenuity and resulting popularity among his students, for example, the table frame was consequently produced in a limited edition and the entire university was equipped with it. After the frame had been out of production for decades, we obtained the exclusive manufacturing rights from the Eiermann family and included the original design in our collection at the end of the 1990s with the name "Eiermann 1 Table Frame". Today, this legendary piece of furniture is distributed internationally and has been adapted to modern lifestyles in keeping with Eiermann's spirit and without compromising its original design. For Eiermann, the present with its demands and considerations always served as the framework for his designs: when living conditions change, a piece of furniture should reflect this. This is what we have implemented; we have carefully developed the original Eiermann 1 table frame over the decades and have complemented it with product modifications. Other pieces of furniture, such as the „Eiermann Shelf", which was created in 1932 for the highly acclaimed Berlin exhibition „The Growing House" and is still one of the archetypes of shelf construction, as well as the E10 armchair made of rattan and the matching E14 rattan stool are Eiermann design icons that have significantly shaped the Richard Lampert collection.



1953
Design of table frame
Eiermann 1
See product →



1949
Design of Rattan chair E10 and
Rattan stool E14
See product →