

# THE CHAIRMEN

A CHAIR - RAISING EXPERIENCE

## The White Plastic Chair: A Very Relaxed History

### (thoughts and observations for the Chairmen Show)



The humble chair may appear to be nothing more than a place to sit down, but it might surprise you to know there is a lot more going on under your bottom. Like many things, the chair is a lot more complicated once you start to examine it.

Let's take a brief look at the history of the chair.

Chairs have been around for about ten thousand years. Before they were invented—no one ever sat down. People at this time in history were either sleeping, building pyramids, or running for their lives. But then one day a man invented a chair.

“What is it?” The people asked.

“A chair,” the man replied.

“What do you do with it?” They asked him fearfully.

“Watch,” he said. And he sat down in the chair.

The people were blown away. They were so impressed they made the man their leader. And people came from all over the world to see the amazing sight of the man sitting in the chair. And people built an elaborate stone building around the man seated in the chair and they called the building a ‘Cathedral’—from the Greek word for ‘chair’. Soon the idea spread and before long there were Cathedrals all over the world and they all had men sitting on chairs in them. You can't stop a great idea once it gets rolling.

But you don't have to go to a Cathedral to see a chair. Most people these days even have chairs in their homes. Some chairs are even like members of the family—and well they should be because chairs are *ANTHROPOMORPHIC*—that is—they have human qualities. That's right—just like you, a chair has feet, legs, arms, a back and a seat!

If you put a clock on a chair it would even have a face and hands.

Almost human!



I am the chair

Far from just a simple place to sit—a chair is a culturally loaded icon. Would it surprise you to know that a chair's real function has nothing to do with sitting? That's right—its actual function is to **denote social ranking**. That's what a chair really does for you and for others. Maybe you have a job. Look around you now—who has the nicest chair in the workplace? The boss! Lucky boss! Who gets the sort of broken chair with that no one else wants? The new guy—or gal. They'll have live with it for now.



The boss's chair?



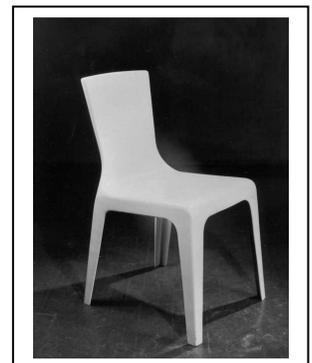
The new gal's chair?

And look at the guys in the mail room—they don't even get chairs—they have to work standing up. They have a long way to go.

But now with the invention of the one piece injection molded plastic chair (invented in Canada in the 1940's –

Yay!)—at last everyone has a place to sit. There are plastic chairs on every continent of the Earth—including Antarctica! In fact—there are now more plastic chairs on Earth than there are people. Are we expecting someone?

Perhaps the aliens. Wouldn't that be fun? The aliens could come over for a



The very first white plastic chair

visit and we could ask them to sit down. And they would say “Sitting? What’s that?” And we would show them. And they would be blown away. And they might take some chairs back with them when they left and then there would be chairs through out the Universe. And that would be great.

We here at the Chairmen encourage you to begin to look at the world around you in a new way. Try to begin to see the world around you as a big...board of directors. And what that board of directors needs is a chair—and that chair is you. Be the chair! Be the best chair you can be!

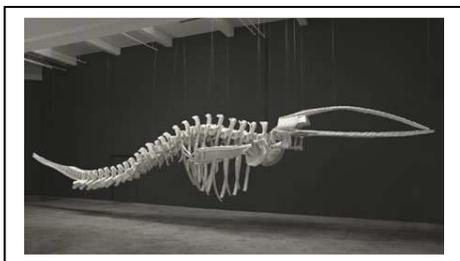
Until it’s someone else’s turn to be the chair. Then let them have a turn. Don’t hog the chair.

(Unless of course you are playing musical chairs. Then that’s the whole point!)

The Chairmen look at chairs and try to see something else. When you can do something unusual with an ordinary object people are fascinated. Here are a few pictures of things people have done with plastic chairs that noone thought of before. What can you think of to do with a plastic chair?



Rocking Chair by Rebecca Ahlstedt



Whale Skeleton by Brian Jungen  
using only white plastic chairs

So take a few minutes out of your day to see the Chairmen in their live show. Pull up a chair.

And watch as we bring to life these interesting cultural objects.

The Chair is here to stay—and stay and stay and stay.

