

TITLE:
ARCHETYPES IN FURNITURE HISTORY (in Bulgarian language)

AUTHORS:
Regina RAYCHEVA

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For orders, please contact the author at the following address: rexi@abv.bg



SHORT PRESENTATION:

The author of this book is assistant professor at the University of Sofia, in Bulgaria, she teaches Furniture Design and Interior Architecture. Dr. Raycheva, who is an architect, offers us the results of over 25 years of research and teaching, of continuous investigations in the forever expanding domain of furniture history, taking us through the labyrinth of five millenia of human civilization. It is indeed a scientific book, useful not only for the most reputed professionals, designers, scientists of the field, researchers of material environment, restorers, historians, but also for young beginners facing the challenge of identifying and valueing the very roots of contemporary furniture design: students, postgraduates, young designers or commentators of the human habitat.

According to Dr. Raycheva "In furniture history a phenomenon exists similar to the evolution of species in time – one or more types vanish, but others reappear with a different detail and form; varying some features...or giving the origin of hybrids that inherit qualities of their predecessors". The author, when approaching the milestones of furniture history, wisely sets the tasks of her investigation. After a vast bibliographical research, a comfortable foundation was built up for the configuration of the pioneering "archetype" concept, which was tested and validated through the six chapters that form the backbone of the book, regarding furniture for: Sitting, Storage, Displaying, Writing, Dining, Lying and Reclining. The author explains that the archetype concept applies to most furniture types, having the potential to express an object of material culture, a basic form/function/construction principle, a symbol of spiritual nature with ceremonial connotations. Archetypes emerge and re-emerge after a shorter or longer lapse of time, they never become obsolete, not even in the contemporary world.

A major part of the book is dedicated to furniture for the seated position. The ways people adopted various sitting postures are part of a cultural history, from the times of the ancient Egyptian scribes seated on the floor or on a raised platform to the extravaganza of the unconventional modern sitting postures. During the travel through the ages of [a sitting] mankind, we are given the opportunity to understand the strength and significance of the archetype concept when visualizing folding chairs, three-legged chairs so dear to all parts of the world, the ubiquitous four-legged seats, the modern cantilever, pedestal and office chairs and finally thrones, the supreme prestige of the everyday posture.

The second half of the book is dedicated to other basic aspects of the historical panorama of furniture archetypes: storage furniture, from chests to various tall cases, stands and displays, writing tables, dining tables, beds couches, daybeds and the chaise-longue.

There are nine well designed Tables illustrated time-form-style charts resuming the time travels through the generic furniture landscape, for the synoptic perception of the use, abuse, alteration, transformation and adaptation of the given archetype.

The book is able to stimulate any reader, because it opens wide perspectives for future research, it generates an appetite for improved knowledge and expertise. It is a meaningful research, centered on an original concept which confers logic order to the historical panorama of furniture and connects important human achievements through many centuries, from ancient to contemporary times. Indeed the creative potential of the archetype attracts designers to create innovative furniture, new versions of the ancient archetypes.

Dr. Marina Cionca, Professor
Faculty of Wood Engineering, Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania