

Domus Magazine Profiles Knoll Designer Jonathan Olivares

Olivares Aluminum Chair Showcased



Jonathan Olivares, designer of the Olivares Aluminum chair for Knoll, is profiled in the September 2012 issue of Domus magazine, the publication that offers an international review of architecture and design. The piece praises the Olivares Aluminum Chair, which debuted at NeoCon 2012 in Chicago.

Alexandra Lange, Domus writer and design critic, calls the chair "a colorful, technically advanced, indoor/outdoor stackable seat the world might actually need." "Furniture is interesting only insofar as it relates to the world around it. Too many chairs live and die as jpegs," says Olivares.

Olivares, who sat in and examined over 100 chairs while writing the book, *A Taxonomy on Office Chairs*, was "freed from the anxiety of influence by hands on knowledge," notes Lange.

At its narrowest, the Olivares Aluminum Chair is just three millimeters. At just 14.75 pounds, it is "light enough to move [and] heavy enough not to blow around." The chair's back and seat are one solid piece. "The legs have extruded nylon rails, the same as those on skateboards, [to] keep the chairs from scratching when stacked. They are also 100 per cent recyclable," Lange writes.

Commenting on his design process, Olivares said: "Craft can be made by machines or by hand, it's just about updating the technique."

During development, Olivares had trouble connecting the seat frame at the corners. The aluminum cast supplier Leggett & Platt suggested casting the whole chair — frame, seat and back. "You usually think of aluminum casting as like bone; you don't think of it as skin," said Olivares.

"The chair is a refinement of that experiment," writes Lange. "Back and seat have become one solid piece; the legs are extruded aluminum rectangles."

Olivares commented: "Design is about searching for something we don't know. If someone said to me, make me a steel tube chair or a fiberglass chair, I would say no, because there is going to be no updating of the craft."

Commenting on the chair, Benjamin Pardo, Knoll design director said, "In some of the early feedback, before anyone said anything they smiled — It's approachable."

Pardo continued: "I work with people like Richard Sapper and Cini Boeri and they are my tie back to Marco Zanuso and a whole lot of people I could never meet. Then you work with guys in the middle. Then you say, 'Who am I investing in? Who do I want to make bets on for the future?' It's very rare to meet a young designer who is articulate and intelligent."

<https://news.millerknoll.com/2012-08-09-Domus-Magazine-Profiles-Knoll-Designer-Jonathan-Olivares>