

Citizen

Developed by Vitra in Switzerland

Design: Konstantin Grcic, 2020

Together with the Swiss furniture company Vitra, Konstantin Grcic has developed a product whose unconventional construction enables a surprising new way of sitting: the Citizen lounge chair.

Citizen is a reinterpretation of the lounge chair. Its design language incorporates elements of classic tubular steel furniture. But with its slim silhouette, which affords a clear view of all components, Citizen presents a deliberate alternative to conventional lounge chairs with voluptuous upholstery. It is not so much designed to look prestigious and imposing as to express a new understanding of comfort.

Citizen draws on the lineage of iconic designs whose novel construction gives users a seating experience that is both dynamic and relaxing at the same time – such as the traditional rocking chair or the B.K.F Chair (1938), also known as Butterfly Chair or Hardoy Chair by Grupo Austral, whose sack-like canvas or leather seat is suspended from a simple metal frame. A further reference is the swivel chair Karuselli (1965) by the Finnish designer Yrjö Kukkapuro, which features the clever solution of a seat shell hung from the base frame to allow new types of movement.

The seat of the Citizen chair is suspended on three cables affixed to a steel frame to facilitate a swinging movement in all directions. The semicircular contour of the fixed backrest ergonomically envelops the upper body, preventing the sitter from slouching down in the armchair. And the cantilever structural frame of Citizen is mounted on a swivel base for additional flexibility.

‘Citizen combines familiar elements with an entirely new type of construction, which we developed together over many years. For me it was a very enriching experience to devote so much time and attention to the development of a single idea’, says Konstantin Grcic.

Although Citizen was primarily developed for private interiors, it has affinities with a number of other designs created by Konstantin Grcic and Vitra to address the needs of new working environments: Stool Tool (2018) is both a seat and table; the height-adjustable Hack desk (2016) can be easily folded up and also functions as a sofa; while the office chairs Rookie (2018) and Allstar (2014) counter the appearance of a technical office chair.

Citizen is available in two versions – as Citizen Highback it has the typical commanding presence of a lounge chair and in the Citizen Lowback version it can be arranged in groups for seating in public lounges and lobbies. The upholstery covers are selected from a wide range of fabrics. An identical material is used for the seat and back, while the neck pillow may be chosen in a different colour.