



Furniture for You!

Design your own chair inspired
by Eileen Gray's work.

Bard
Graduate
Center

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We use chairs for all sorts of activities. Have you ever taken a good look at the chairs you sit in? The shapes, textures, and materials of our chairs tell us a lot about how we use them.

MATERIALS

- Scissors
- Glue, glue sticks, or tape
- Structural materials, like: cardboard from food boxes, paper towel tubes, etc.; modeling clay ([make your own!](#)); string or ribbon; popsicle sticks, toothpicks, or twigs; or pipe cleaners
- Decorative materials, like: colored paper; tissue paper; paint; feathers; fabric scraps; or other found materials

GET INSPIRED!

Each of the chairs Eileen Gray designed was distinct and unique - just like people. In fact, she designed many of her chairs for specific people or activities. Look at Gray's *Bibendum Chair* and *Nonconformist Armchair* on the next page. Think about the following questions or discuss them with a friend or family member:

- What shapes, colors, and textures do you see? Which parts look hard? soft? strong? comfortable?
- If these chairs could talk, what would they say? If they could walk, how would they move?
- Imagine sitting in these chairs. Can you position your body as you think you'd sit in them? How do you imagine that would feel? What kinds of activities might you do in them?



Eileen Gray. *Fauteuil non conformist* (Nonconformist armchair), 1926–29. Painted tubular steel, plywood, upholstery removed. Collection Gilles Peyroulet, Paris.



Eileen Gray. *Bibendum chair*, ca. 1927–29. Wood, tubular steel, canvas. Collection Jacques De Vos, Paris. Photograph: Studio SLB-CH BARAJA.

BUILD A CHAIR FOR YOUR FAVORITE ACTIVITY

- Discuss with your partner or grown-up: What is one of your favorite things to do? What kinds of tools do you use for that activity? How do you sit or move when you're doing it?

- *For example, I love to knit. The tools I use are yarn, knitting needles, and the pattern. When I knit, sometimes I like to sit cross-legged.*

- Keeping these things in mind, use your building materials to create a basic shape for your chair. Think about how your body moves and how the chair would need to be shaped to help you do it. For instance, if you love to swim, how could a chair help you with your strokes or kicks? What materials would it need to be made from? Be creative!

- *For example, I used a toilet paper roll as the bones of my chair, and I added playdough cushions to make it cozy. The arms are low so I can sit comfortably, and I added a basket for my yarn (a bottle cap), a pocket for my pattern, and a tall container for my needles (toothpicks) - all within easy reach! Added bonus: my yarn threads under the arm of the chair so it doesn't fall when I put my project down!*

- Use your decorative materials to add shape, color, texture, and personality to your chair. How would you want to feel when you're in it? Add details that would make it ideal for you!

- *I dyed my playdough with food coloring to add bright, sunny colors to give my knitting space a cheery feeling.*

- Snap a photo of your finished sculpture and email it to public.programs@bgc.bard.edu!



Images: Olivia Kalin

This Kids & Families activity was written by Olivia Kalin (Lead Gallery Educator) with assistance from Carla Repice (Senior Manager of Education, Engagement, and Interpretation).

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