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SERENITY NOW: Council's Mute chair is designed to inspire tranquility and calm



Independent Council

Building on the country's modernist heritage, a new furniture company establishes a high point in American design

San Francisco furniture company Council is focused on the future, but takes its inspiration from mid-century American design companies. "After World War II there was a lot of creative design coming out of the States," says 39-year-old owner Derek Chen. "We want to be a company along the lines of Knoll and Herman Miller in the '50s and '60s."

Chen, who launched Council's inaugural collection at this year's International Contemporary Furniture Fair, is a designer by passion, an electrical engineer by training and a businessman by practice. "I grew up among a few pieces of Le Corbusier and Saarinen furniture," he says. "But I also had a dad who didn't like the coffee table options out there and made his own. I started building furniture as a teenager just because I thought that's what everyone did." After graduating, Chen became the chief technology officer at a dot-com startup. When the tech bubble burst, "I found myself back in my garage making stuff," says Chen, who also produces home accessories under the

SLEEK WILLIES: (Clockwise from top) Peel seat by Khodi Feiz, Section bench by Derek Chen, Geo low table by Arik Levy

