

Chapter 2

Craftsmanship

The period from the 1930s to the 1990s, when Hans J. Wegner was active, was a time when modernist furniture design became both increasingly democratized and firmly established, echoing the ideal of “more aesthetically pleasing everyday objects” championed by art historian Gregor Paulsson. Seeking to reconcile the pursuit of beauty with the demands of mass production and affordability, Wegner found his answer in craftsmanship.

This section examines what craftsmanship means in Wegner’s work by showcasing the manufacturing processes of PP Møbler and Carl Hansen & Søn, two companies that continue to produce many of his chairs today.

Wegner not only drew his own plans and made one-fifth-scale models, but also maintained constant dialogue with the craftspeople throughout the subsequent manufacturing process. Through this communication, he developed designs by leveraging his understanding of each manufacturer’s strengths and, at times, contributed to technical development. His approach reveals a pragmatic side: while pursuing rational and refined design based on the principle of reinterpreting and improving existing forms, he remained attentive to people’s needs and did not hesitate to incorporate machine processing when necessary.