ARNE JACOBSEN
THE TONGUE
We fell truly, madly, deeply in love with this chair

We admit it. We just fell in love. When the opportunity arose to take Arne Jacobsen’s Tongue chair under our wing at HOWE, we couldn’t resist. Does it sound crazy? That’s fine. We’re happy to say that we’re more than a little mad about this delightful chair.
A lost classic returns

You see, the cutely named Tongue is a Danish design classic that went missing. Designed right after the Ant chair in 1955, the Tongue was always one of Arne Jacobsen’s favourites but never really found a home.

Now the Tongue is back.
A visionary designer

Arne Jacobsen (1902-1971) is one of the best known designers of the 20th century. An extraordinary man of immense vision, Arne Jacobsen occupies the pinnacle of modern Danish design. His work epitomises Danish modernism and is held permanently by museums, prized by collectors, and employed throughout the world in home, work and educational environments.
Arne Jacobsen’s childhood

Arne Jacobsen was born in Copenhagen in 1902. He was an only child in a family where the father was a wholesaler and the mother was one of the first women in Denmark to be trained in banking. The family home was a true Victorian styled home which probably led a young Arne Jacobsen to paint the walls in his room white as a contrast to the lavishly decorated interior.
A natural talent for painting

At the age of 11 Arne Jacobsen was sent away to a boarding school. Here he met Flemming and Mogens Lassen - two brothers who also became pioneers within Danish architecture.

In school Arne Jacobsen showed an enormous talent for painting and naturally he decided to become a painter. But both his father and Flemming Lassen believed he could make excellence use of his talent for painting as an architect thus urging him to prepare to study architecture. As you know, Arne Jacobsen agreed.
The escape

Arne Jacobsen belonged to a Jewish family which meant that when the persecutions of the Jews began during the Second World War, Arne Jacobsen was forced to flee to Sweden. In late September 1943, Arne Jacobsen and his friend Poul Henningsen rowed to Sweden together with their wives.

It was difficult for Arne Jacobsen to leave his office so suddenly and before his departure he also arranged for the office to continue work with a small staff. Before fleeing to Sweden Arne and his wife had started a production of printed textiles - this was to prove their most important income during the two-year period.
Jacobsen’s most famous legacy

The productivity of Arne Jacobsen in the 1950s was overwhelming. The high point of his architectural oeuvre in this period includes the Søholm houses and Munkegård School. It was also in this period Arne Jacobsen designed his famous chairs beginning with the Ant in 1952. It was later the chair designs that earned him an international reputation as a furniture designer.
Holistic thinking

As an architect and designer of rare talent, Arne Jacobsen was famous for an ability to work at many different scales at the same time. This is clearly seen in one of his most famous achievements: the SAS Royal Hotel in Copenhagen (1960). Here, he was not only the architect of the building but designed everything from the furniture, right down to the cutlery in the restaurant.
Arne Jacobsen’s fascination

“It is not one specific aspect of building that captivates me most; I am equally interested each time I am faced with a new task.

That business of relaxation, which is so terribly modern today, is all good and well, but my work interests me so much, and is so varied, that many times it seems relaxing when I go from one aspect to another.”

Arne Jacobsen’s holistic way of thinking is also epitomised in his design of Munkegård School in Denmark. For this project, Arne Jacobsen not only designed the innovative building. He also designed the teachers’ desk, the speakers, the curtains as well as the tables and chairs for the classrooms – some chairs created in three different sizes allowing the children to grow with the furniture. It was also for Munkegård School that Arne Jacobsen designed the Tongue chair.
Sculptural simplicity

The Tongue chair is classic Arne Jacobsen. It has the immediately recognisable characteristics of the organic wave-form in the seat; complemented with highly sculptural, splayed legs.

With a keen sense of proportion, passion for detail and the masterful use of organic lines and sculptural elements, Arne Jacobsen’s designs have achieved iconic status. The Tongue now joins this legacy of renowned Jacobsen chairs that include the Egg, Swan, Ant and the Seven Series.
The history of the Tongue

The Tongue is Arne Jacobsen's second completed chair design - coming right after the Ant chair. Designed in 1955 for Munkegård School in Denmark, the Tongue was later placed in the rooms at the SAS Royal Hotel in Copenhagen, where it was also modified for use as a bar stool. Yet it wasn't available internationally until the 1980s and even then only for a short while.
HOWE craftsmanship

Now returned to its proper place in Arne Jacobsen’s legacy, the Tongue has been restored by HOWE.

The design obviously wouldn’t be changed. The chair’s aesthetics are exactly as Jacobsen specified. Yet there was an opportunity to apply HOWE engineering expertise and modern construction techniques for additional strength; keeping that lovely curved sculptural form perfectly in place.
The Tongue captured our hearts. We hope that our efforts help you fall for its charms too.
The Tongue is manufactured by HOWE a/s, having the rights to sell and otherwise distribute the Tongue chair globally.

www.howe.com

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