

# GUBI

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Originally designed for his own home as a lounge chair he could also use for meditation, the MR01 Initial Chair by woodworker Mathias Steen Rasmussen unites traditional craftsmanship with original ideas in a simple form that is at once familiar and yet strikingly modern. Having served his apprenticeship making the designs of the great Danish masters with his own hands, he has focused on hand-crafting unique pieces and limited runs until now. This is the first of his own works to be translated for production. The name 'MR01 Initial' pays homage to the Danish master's practice of naming their designs with their own initials followed by a number and, in a subtle play on words, also references the fact this chair represents Rasmussen's debut production piece. The collaboration – the first between GUBI and Rasmussen – underlines GUBI's commitment to supporting emerging designer-makers and investing in both established and innovative craft skills, as well as the beginning of what promises to be a long and fruitful partnership.

A new typology in the GUBI Collection, this pared back version of a familiar minimalist Danish form has been reimagined by a bright new talent on the design scene. Much like the Danish masters, Rasmussen thinks with his hands – drawing sketches and building prototypes. The idea for this chair began with its seat, which extends into the back leg, providing support for the backrest. Its low-slung, gentle incline is designed to give the sitter a sense of floating, while still feeling connected to the ground, promoting a contemplative sense of calm. The repeating lines of the identical wooden cross bars and the rope seat and backrest cast geometric shadows and intersect each other when viewed from different angles, almost creating optical illusions.

The open triangle profile of the frame – made from walnut or FSC-certified oak – is constructed without a single screw, relying instead on artisanal cabinet-making techniques such as finger joints and wedged mortise and tenon joints. This approach makes its construction and materiality entirely visible, lending the piece a sense of honesty and highlighting the craftsmanship involved. Rasmussen's deep understanding of the characteristics and potential of wood can be seen in the way the visible end-grain and

directional grain of the wood are utilized to emphasize the geometry of the form. Because the wedged tenon joints go right through the frame, there is no left or right side before the chair is assembled, and four out its five cross bars are identical, simplifying construction and reducing waste. The chair will acquire a pleasing patina as it ages, giving it a sustainability that the designer was keen to cultivate.

The addition of rope is characteristic of Rasmussen, who often pairs complementary organic materials with wood, creating an aesthetic dialogue and co-relation between the two. In this case, the seat and backrest are hand-woven from 90 meters of rope, using a method he developed himself, which locks the rope into the frame. The natural linen cord follows the same curves as the frame, fastening in place simply by running through four holes, in a manner that is rustic and yet elegant and understated. The rope has been specially made by skilled craftspeople in Italy, who usually specialize in high-performance marine and yachting ropes. Its 'anti-deformation' core will prevent stretching and it can be replaced or re-woven should this become necessary over time, extending the chair's longevity. The rope adds a lightness and transparency, both literally and visually, that elevates the chair's classic shape, making it feel fresh and relevant.

Like many of the Danish masters before him, Rasmussen measured his own body to optimize the MR01 Initial Chair's dimensions. Its considered ergonomic design – with a bouclé-covered lumbar pillow for added comfort – supports various sitting positions from cross-legged to legs extended to the front, left or right. As well as lending lightness, the rope construction allows air to pass through the frame, for a cool and comfortable sitting experience on warmer days. The addition of a blanket or sheepskin makes it a cozy option for winter too. The MR01 Initial Chair works alone or in pairs within domestic interiors and in rows or clusters within hospitality settings. Its light weight – facilitating easy movement, flexibility of function and small footprint suit today's urban lifestyles.



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