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## The Relief Chair and Fashioning Felt

At first glance I thought this chair was made from the rather hard and inhospitable charcoal-colored packing material that often surrounds new electronics inside shipping boxes. But upon closer inspection I discovered (to my delight) that the chair is made of felt.

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The [Relief Chair](#), by Brooklyn-based Mickus Projects, uses digital fabrication to craft a complete piece of furniture without the use of upholstery, foam, or toxic finishes. Instead, dense wool felt composes the seat and back, carved into gentle ridges that, as the name suggests, offer relief when you lean against them. The Relief Chair is part of a collection called solid/surface/series, which includes several other pieces of furniture experimenting with the same material.

The series is particularly interesting as an example of melding ancient techniques with modern technology. Felting is a simple handcraft that has been around for ages, achieved by tightening a loose wool knit through heat and humidity (ever thrown a wool sweater in a hot washer and dryer?).

As a material for products and furniture, felt is not particularly common, nor is it often considered a wonder-solution to the challenge of unsustainable upholstery and glue. But a new exhibition at the [Cooper Hewitt Design Museum](#) demonstrates there's plenty to know about felt, and good reason to consider its viability in modern product design.

[Fashioning Felt](#) opened last week and runs through September 7, 2009. Mickus Projects is just one of many designers showcased in the exhibition, including other Dwell favorites like Andrea Zittel, molo Design and [Nanimarquina](#). If you are in New York in the next few months, check it out.