of 'Gute Form'. International style, the graphics and typography movement led by Zurich-based Josef Müller-Brockmann and Basel's Armin Hofmann, took Gute Form to the page, combining asymmetry, grids and sans serifs to incite simplicity and objectivity. Closely following came Adrian Futiger's 1954 typeface Univers, one of the first to possess the uniformity of a font 'family' of different weights, and in 1957 Max Miedinger and Eduard Hoffmann created Helvetica, its celebrity far obscuring their own. Indeed in the 1960s, USM's innovative threaded ball, which allowed customers to assemble modular metal tubes and plates into everything from credenzas to planters, became a celebrity in its own right, playing a starring role in the company's advertising.

Innovation was also essential to the narrative of a new era in design and tech companies, including 1980s newcomers Logitech and Swatch. The latter circumvented its un-Swiss low-cost production by celebrating the watches' fully automated assembly and ultrasonic welding and aping tradition by putting the mechanics on display in 1985's transparent Jelly Fish model. Just as in the 1920s and 30s, technical innovation drove much of the furniture of this period. Self-taught designer Hannes Wettstein used welding robots from the car industry to create the 5kg stackable Juliette chair for Baleri; Studio Neue Werkstatt took production into its own workshop for bent sheet metal products like its Penguin Lamp; Kurt Thut overhauled the production of family business Möriken for the accordion-like Scissor bed; and the Freitag brothers built an accessories empire from recycled truck tarpaulins, initially assembling their trademark bags themselves.

Entrepreneurial spirit is also rife today – largely for survival in a local climate of conservative and luxury-focused brands. For example, one of the country's most internationally recognised studios, Lausanne-based Big Game, whose clients include Karimoku New Standard, Alessi, Hay's Ikea collaboration, Magis and Nespresso and whose iconic Bold Chair is housed in MoMA's permanent collection, recently established a Hong Kong-based start-up specialising in airline accessories with a local micro-ecosystems expert. 'It's an industry where people get really complacent and go with existing solutions,' explains Big Game co-founder Augustin Scott de Martinville. 'But if you take on designers from the beginning you can offer passengers something better to look at and more comfortable to use.'

But for less established studios, especially those working in furniture,

"The Swiss-German half of the country has fewer designers, but they have the companies"

ABOVE i-art developed an interactive yurt for the British Pavilion for Expo 2017 Astana

TOP Glasses by Zurich brand Sol Sol Ito feature easily replaceable parts

OPPOSITE Hans Coray debuted the aluminium shell seat in his Landi chair (1939)