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THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE



New Nordic

Tomorrow's Scandinavia.

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Let's talk about 'it': that quiet, confident ability of making perfection appear entirely effortless. Unsurprisingly, every designer the world-over spends inordinate amounts of time and energy trying to achieve that feeling of 'it', the self-assuredness of an object appearing as though it was always meant to be just so, revelling in its singular and unaffected timelessness.

And over the past decade or so, the design history of Scandinavia has captured the world's attention for precisely this reason. Touted as the enduring aesthetic, or the perfect synthesis of form meeting function, the Scandinavian design tradition is undoubtedly one of honesty and sublimity. It comes as no shock, then, that



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the Finns have a word for 'it' – *muutos*: 'new perspective'. Taking its cues from this singular and perfectly honed word, Scandinavian design house MUUTO has taken it upon itself to reimagine the parameters and perspectives of the region's design thinking. Founded by Kristian Byrge and Peter Bonnen, MUUTO maintains the stance that timelessness in design need not shirk the concept of change and innovation.

After all, within this past decade when Scandinavian design took over the world – proliferating an entirely new conception of living well through design – it became apparent that through appealing to the late majority we quickly found ourselves faced with the constant reinterpretation of existing designs and a pervading sense of *ennui*. We began to worry: is this the end of cultural history? And while I'm normally not one to back the naysayers, it's not a dumb question.

Sometimes, the bizarre Groundhog Day approach of the design world feels like a never-ending concatenation of *déjà vu*. Nothing old, nothing new, been there, done that, continuing all the while to wear the t-shirt with neither compunction nor irony.

It begs the question, then, whether it is possible to innovate without destroying tradition. Perhaps I'm being a little hyperbolic, but it really isn't too flippant a thought. And it's a question

which lies at the core of MUUTO's orientation to contemporary design. Having tired of the overabundance that ended up cheapening the Scandinavian design tradition, MUUTO engaged an impressive lineup of architects, designers and fine artists from the Nordic countries to disrupt and reimagine the accepted concepts of Scandinavian design history. The brand has now ushered in, in their own words, "a great new era of Scandinavian design" that covers accessories, lighting and furniture now vaunted as the benchmark for quality and functionality.

Seeking to expand the heritage of Nordic design, MUUTO continues to innovate with unflagging aplomb. Forward-looking materials, techniques, creative thinking and specialist craftsmanship all combine with its ongoing commitment to a non-nonsense, fresh perspective on the history and future of Scandinavian design and aesthetics. And never, it would seem, has this come at a more timely point for the design lovers amongst us. After all, Christen Grosen, Design Director at MUUTO, wisely reminds me that "today, the boundary between private and professional lives is slowly dissolving – workplaces, restaurants and other public spaces are becoming less formal and we do not enjoy everything too sterile and rigid." Recalling for us that, while the conditions of our daily lives continue to change, perhaps then the design traditions that facilitate these changes should evolve, too?





'To MUUTO good design starts with the person. MUUTO handpicks the brightest design talent in Scandinavia and gives them the freedom to express their individual story by encouraging experimentation. The result is a new and unique take on common everyday objects. Some want to alter the world, others find passion in colour and shape or draw deeply from personal experience. How do they see a chair, vase, lamp or any other everyday product?'

**– Kristian Byrge
Design Director MUUTO.**



“I am very aware of how much power aesthetics has in a room,” says Christen. “For example, the difference between a table being square versus round – it changes the dynamics of a meeting. You change your daily life by moving around and it shows what a huge influence your décor has. It creates renewed energy and, derived from that, a sense of happiness.”

Celebrating this keen understanding of the future of Scandinavian design, Living Edge – MUUTO’s suppliers in Australia – hosted a private event at the Sydney Opera House’s Utzon Room to welcome the brand’s CEO, Anders Cleeman, and Sales Director, Christian Ernemann, to Australia where it seems that Scandinavian design has left an indelible mark on our national psyche. Showcasing an impressive host of designs by an equally impressive list of names, pieces from MUUTO’s latest collections beautifully offset Sydney’s harbour views. And in Living Edge’s own words, “The brand strives to expand on the strong Scandinavian design tradition but always approaches it with a new and original perspective.” After all, whoever said that beauty couldn’t be an everyday affair?

MUUTO is available throughout Australia thanks to Living Edge.

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