

Hee Sook Lee-Niinioja

R E F L E C T I N G
S C A N D I N A V I A N D E S I G N



NOVEL&NOBLE COMMUNICATIONS
HELSINKI 2018

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To God who endowed the meaning of life; Parent who inspired it; Family who supported it.

FOREWORD

I have an exceptional reason for writing this book. First, as an international student, I became a pioneer in studying Scandinavian art and design from 1975 in Norway. Second, as a graphic designer, I had several opportunities to work at different places in Scandinavia. Third, as an artist, I travelled all around Scandinavia for my exhibitions. Fourth, as a correspondent for the Korean media, I got acquainted with Scandinavia. Fifth, my home is in Scandinavia due to a family. Sixth, as a member of the Finnish diplomatic corps, I extended my knowledge of Scandinavia to promote Finland abroad. Above all these, the critical motivation for this book lies in my conflicts against Scandinavian mentalities which also reflected in the design.

This book discusses of Scandinavian design - its origin, definition, function, and approach methods. It investigates how Scandinavian design could achieve a "Golden Age" in the 1950s-70s, still admired by the world. Moreover, this book underlines the unity and diversity of five Scandinavian (Nordic) countries through geography, history and culture, hoping to contribute to conflicted world religions and cultures.

This book is for education and research overall.

Hee Sook Lee-Niinioja, PhD

CONTENTS

1. SCANDINAVIA 8

SCANDINAVIAN DESIGN: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Ceramics/ Glass & Crystals/ Jewellery & metals/ Textiles

2. DENMARK 17

BACKGROUND

CONTINUITY FROM PAST AND CHALLENGE TO FUTURE

DANISH DESIGNERS

Kay Bojesen/ Kaare Klint/ Poul Henningsen/ Arne Jacobsen/ Finn Juhl/ Hans Wegner/
Henning Koppel/ Nanna Ditzel/ Verner Panton

3. FINLAND 29

BACKGROUND

CONTINUITY FROM PAST AND CHALLENGE TO FUTURE

FINNISH DESIGNERS

Alvar Aalto/ Kaj Franck/ Tapio Wirkkala/ Timo Sarpaneva/ Maija Isola/ Antti Nurmesniemi/
Vuokko Eskolin-Nurmesniemi/ Oiva Toikka/ Eero Aarnio/ Yrjö Kukkapuro/ Stefan Lindfors/
Harry Koskinen

4. ICELAND 43

BACKGROUND

CONTINUITY FROM PAST AND CHALLENGE TO FUTURE

ICELANDIC DESIGNERS

Gudjón Samuelsson/ Gunnar Magnusson

5. NORWAY 48

BACKGROUND

CONTINUITY FROM PAST AND CHALLENGE TO FUTURE

NORWEGIAN DESIGNERS

Gerhard Munthe/ Frida Hansen/ Gustav Gaudernack/ Arne Korsmo & Grete Prytz Kittelsen/
Willy Johansson/ Tias Eckhoff/ Peter Opsvik

6. SWEDEN 56

BACKGROUND

CONTINUITY FROM PAST AND CHALLENGE TO FUTURE

SWEDISH DESIGNERS

Carl Larsson & Karin Larsson/ Erik Gunnar Asplund/ Bruno Mathsson/ Sigvard Bernadotte/
Gunnar Cyrén/ Johan Hultdt & Jan Dranger/ Björn Dahlström

REFERENCE 65



S C A N D I N A V I A

SCANDINAVIA is a historical and geographical region centred on the Scandinavian Peninsula in Northern Europe. The term “Scandinavia¹” describes the three kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, but sometimes it extends to Finland and Iceland.



Dark: the three kingdoms of the strictest Scandinavia; Middle dark: the possible extended term; Light: the maximal extension of Scandinavia as synonymous to the Nordic countries.

In linguistics, Scandinavia contains the areas where Old Norse speaks and where the North Germanic language is now dominant. Although Finland is culturally related to the other Scandinavian countries, Finns form a distinct linguistic and ethnic group which speaks a Finno-Ugric language, part of the Indo-European family. As a Germanic root *Skadūn-awjō*, the earliest identified source for Scandinavia is Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (1C). During a period of Christianisation and state formation (10-13C), three consolidated kingdoms emerged: Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. They were united in the Kalmar Union (1397) by Queen Margrete I of Denmark, but later Sweden left the union under King Gustav Vasa (1523). The Protestant Reformation followed, and a union between Denmark and Norway lasted until 1814.

The name “Scandinavia” was introduced in the 18th century when the ideas of a common heritage developed to literary and linguistic Scandinavism. A unifying concept of this term established through poems, such as Hans Christian Andersen's "I am a Scandinavian" (1839). Andersen supported early political Scandinavism and wrote after a visit to Sweden:

All at once I understood how related the Swedes, the Danes and the Norwegians are, and with this feeling, I wrote the poem immediately after my return: We are one people, we are called Scandinavians!

¹ The term “the Nordic countries” is used unambiguously for Norway, Sweden, Denmark (including the Faroe Islands and Greenland), Finland (including Åland) and Iceland as one collective group.

SCANDINAVIAN DESIGN: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

The term “Scandinavian design” denotes a school of thought within the arts and crafts and their practical application. From its birth around 1920, the modern Scandinavian design has underpinned by Lutheranism, the state religion, which salvation can gain through honest work. This moral has formed the development of Scandinavian design, and designers have instigated a democratic approach for a social ideal and the quality of life.

As the populations are homogenous in ethnic and religious terms, Scandinavian legal systems come from the same origins, dominated by a mutual philosophy. For centuries, the five countries have fostered a regional affiliation based on cooperation as prosperous, modern, and democratic nation, although each has had its distinctive history, political aspirations and social concerns. The basic characteristic is pervasive practicality on the development of the modern design; thus the home has been the central force as a haven from a hostile climate and a structure for the family. This old culture of self-sufficiency is an economic necessity in rural communities.

Industrialisation came late to Scandinavia, letting the handicraft traditions remained. By blending the old craft skills to modern design practice, designers produced high-quality objects of “good design” as a sign of improving life. This idea has permeated social cultures such as “Skönhet åt Alla” (Beauty for All) and a catchphrase of the Swedish Society of Craft and Industrial Design, “Vackrare Vardagsvara”² (More Beautiful Everyday Objects). Design is an integral part of daily life and affects social change. Designers have sought inspiration as much from the delightful nature as from the cheerful home.

They created “Brukskunst” (Useful Art³) by combining artistic form and practical function, according to the basic principle of Modernism. In other words, they developed humanising products that put man first; then machine - functional yet aesthetic products within a humanist interpretation of the formal, technical and aesthetic Modernism.

The remote location and sparse population of Scandinavia have absorbed foreign influences with evaluation. The lack of the humanism by pure functional Bauhaus was touched by Scandinavian designers who softened forms and natural materials of Modernism. It was a balance of machine and humanism, beautiful form and practical simplicity. The underlying humanism embodies the belief in social democracy because good design is the birthright of all citizens.

² The idea enhances life, offers simplicity for comfort, and proves an ethical design approach to the environmental and social challenges of the future.

³ It is the thought and product making of objects to a need with artistic beauty. Brukskunst is a phenomenon and an inspiration for enriching daily life.

Today's design is meant for every man, for every day. Essentially timeless, it gratifies a multitude of personal tastes. It is totally contemporary, yet complements designs from the past. Because they have great respect for what is beautiful in nature, because they are deeply practical, the Scandinavian people want to surround themselves with objects that make sense to them, are handsome, and which they can afford to own.

Moreover, limited resources have created local origin, and respect for the economy has inherited along with traditional forms. As an artist is also a craftsman, the core of the Scandinavian design is the knowledge of how to work in harmony with the material. Scandinavian design has also been driven by the idea of inclusiveness of affordable, practical, beautiful objects for everyone, called "Hygge", a cosiness and comfort of pleasure, creating a sense of light through the dark winter, such as sherry in a beautiful glass.

The high level of Scandinavian design is the result of several factors: (1) versatility and achievement of artists and craftsmen as a whole, (2) cooperation of industry and support of arts, crafts and industrial design societies, (3) public's understanding and appreciation of quality workmanship and the sound design form of utilitarian objects, and (4) characteristics of the raw material.

The future of Scandinavian design expressed from a review of the decorative arts at the "Exposition Universelle" of 1900 in Paris. Scandinavian designs received praise: Gerhard Munthe's textile (Norway), Rörstrand ceramic (Sweden), and the Finnish pavilion by Herman Gesellius, Armas Lingren, and Eliel Saarinen (Finland). The designs embodied a revitalisation of the arts as well as the challenge of the coming decades, erecting a radical shift from rural isolation to a self-assertive international setting.

Munthe, a Norwegian painter, urged that tradition depends mainly on the developing power of the nation itself, defending the new role of tradition. His philosophy demanded an ethical basis for nationalism and interaction between the past and present; thus works of art and design would suffuse with the spirit of a people. Besides, the status of crafts enhanced by several societies formed during this century, and craftsmanship has remained an undercurrent of concern within the modern movement.

The underlying features of Scandinavian aesthetics were "good design" as responsibility. The design has an impact on the quality of life, and the arts can be a vehicle for social improvement. The roles of artists, designers, and craftsmen were regarded as one, combining the social mandate and the human aesthetic in the process of design. Many effects of this principle can trace in the 1920s: Kaare Klint's furniture studies or Alvar Aalto's function and aesthetics in design.

However, it was through exhibitions which Scandinavian design was first popularised such as "Design in Scandinavia" in the USA and Canada (1954-57). It was in the Milan Triennale (1951) that the whole Scandinavian countries returned to the mainstream after the war. Grand Prix gave

to Hans Wegner's furniture (Denmark), Tapio Wirkkala's glass (Finland), Kay Bojesen's silver (Denmark), and Dora Jung (Finland) and Julian Sveinsdottir (Iceland) for textiles.

Recognition at the Triennales could generate for exports as well. The products were aesthetical and functional but humanised as both art and craft. The 50s was a start for the Golden Age of Scandinavian design and continued with the "Finlandia" exhibition in Zurich (1961) and "the Arts of Denmark" in the USA (1960-61). However, by the mid-decade, the Scandinavian design was dissipating, and the international audience was searching for new developments in other creative centres. A new generation, facing to the new millennium, tried to contribute to the modern design in Scandinavia itself and outside.

Scandinavian design has fused the peasant and craft culture of the late 19th century within industrial efficiency and functionalism. DENMARK on the European continent has low-lying, fertile agricultural land for an effective industrial base. Due to its long, open coast toward England, the design has the English influence. NORWAY is split into small communities along the fjords and in the valleys, emerging varied local traditions and crafts. ICELAND has its isolated position out in the Atlantic with characteristics in epic poetry and literature than in design. FINLAND's location in a political and cultural cross between East and West resulted in independent design. SWEDEN as the largest in Scandinavia turned to the east (Russia, the Baltic States) and the south (Germany) being affected by it.

The five countries have not always kept a good relationship, but today's peaceful competition over design proceeds by sharp confrontation. Danish designers establish a tradition of quality, while Finnish star artists bring small objects to the realm of art. Icelandic designers are gaining a status for their cultural contributions, and Norwegians are securing an established position, being supported by the state. As a large group, Swedish designers succeed to satisfy the needs of society through design.



Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

CERAMICS

Before the 50s, ceramics were simple like porcelain. Now, the handcrafted shapes are popular with coarse grains and colourful glazes, indicating a new awareness of primitive clay handling. Moreover, new clay formulas can offer multiple possibilities for ornamental glazes.

Ceramic production began in 1722 in Denmark when the Delfts Porcelains was making blue-and-white faience after the Dutch style and method. The first pure porcelain was after the discovery of local kaolin on Bornholm Island. The Royal Copenhagen Porcelain was established in 1775 and won fame for “underlie” decoration. Consequently, the ceramic design no longer borrowed from Germany, and there was a break at the Royal Copenhagen Factory in the design of *Danica* dinner service (1789) as a gift to Catherine II of Russia who died before its accomplishment. It was an inspiration for returning to nature after a century’s negligence. *Flora Danica* was a step forward in ceramic design due to its graceful, delicate, and botanically authentic paintings.



Flora Danica dinner set 1789

In Sweden, a porcelain factory begun at Kungsholmen, Stockholm in 1759, but earlier, Rörstrand was operated by the government funds to manufacture pottery in the Delft manner in 1726. A century later, Gustavsberg ceramic works established in 1827, and both firms have flourished for excellence. Rörstrand set up Arabia, Finnish subsidiary factory whose ownership passed to Finns later. The first Norwegian ceramic firm, Herebøe, was begun near Fredrikshald in 1758. About 1880s in Porsgrunn, profitable employment needed due to the low activities of the shipyard. As English china clay and coal could import, the Porsgrund porcelain factory came into being. Norwegians re-interpreted over European influence of Art Nouveau, gaining prizes at the Milan Triennale (1954, 57, 60) by Tias Eckhoff’s perfect forms, artistic integrity, and simplicity in design for mass production.

ARABIA

As Finland’s oldest and largest ceramic manufacture, Arabia was established in Helsinki in 1873 as a subsidiary of the Swedish company Rörstrand for the Russian market. Hiring its first in-house designer in 1896, Thure Öberg, the factory won a gold medal for the fine wares at the “Exposition

Universelle et International” in Paris in 1900. Since then, Arabia has started to produce its designs for the USA market, such as *Capella* earthenware with printed ornaments of interlocking forms, and *Fennia* ware range (1912). Arabia separated from Rörstand, undergoing modernisation in 1916, and Greta-Lisa Jäderholm-Snellman designed a black porcelain covered jar (1930) with an undulating classical form. Her earthenware *Koti* dinner service was hand-painted with floral and countryside scenes, revealing Art Deco. Ekholm’s *Model AH* (1935) and *Sinivalko* service (1936) showed the international functionalism.



Birger Kaipiainen, *Paratiisi* (c1960)

Under his guidance, Arabia produced designs by Toini Muona, Aune Siimes, Michael Schiikin, Birger Kaipiainen, receiving acclaim as well as four awards at the “Exposition des Maitre de l’Art Independent” in Paris in 1937. Opening its museum, Arabia was the leading producer of ceramics in Europe. Another figure was Kaj Franck, who established the design-planning studio, creating the heat-resistant *Kilta* earthenware (1948). This inexpensive standard range can be purchased separately: multi-functional for tableware and cooking-serving. Ulla Procope designed a similar heatproof range, *Liekki* (Flame 1957) and *Ruska* service.

Around 1960, Birger Kaipiainen made a landmark tableware design, *Paratiisi* (Paradise) service with its colourful explosion of pansies, blackcurrants, plums, grapes and apples. Alongside mass production, Arabia has created “art ceramics” including Kaipiainen’s bead birds (the 1960s) and the *Pro Arte* collection (1987s). Recently, utilitarian and art pieces innovated by Stefan Lindfors and Harri Koskinen.

GLASS & CRYSTALS

Glassmaking, dated back to 500 BC in Persia and Egypt, travelled via Rome and Venice through central Europe. Glass was first made in 1556 when the Småland of southeast Sweden, where the cobalt crystal, the water, and fuel could provide for glass manufacture. Kosta in 1742 is the oldest surviving glassworks, and Orrefors in 1898, nearby, shares the prestige with Kosta.

Simon Gate, Edvard Hald, and Edvin Ollers began to make true originality, breaking from copying foreign designs since 1917. Sweden became the world’s leader through competitions, foresighted management, expert craftsmen, and distinguished artists. Swedish crystal means

quality, refinement, and expertise, because the atmosphere in Småland consists of a single country team production, although each firm has a character from the traditional forms to today's modern ones. Hadeland in Norway has the most exciting cobalt shades of a garnet red and warm brown. Riihimäki in Finland developed exquisite topaz and amethyst shades of nature's colours. Iittala turns out a white glass labelled "opaline", produced by Alvar Aalto and Timo Sarpaneva.

IITTALA

Iittala glasses reflected the beauty of Finnish nature bear traditional craftsmanship, superb design, and high quality. The clear and bright crystal derived from the purest and finest raw materials. As craftsmanship is the inspiration for the designers, Wirkkala ensured that the form and function would make what he had in mind by learning glass. Although P. M. Abrahamsson founded a glassworks in the village of Iittala, north of Helsinki in 1881, the present Iittala dates from the 1930s. Alvar Aalto drew the free lines of a famous vase, marking the start of original Finnish glass design (1937). The company employed Wirkkala (1940s), Timo Sarpaneva (50s), and Valto Kokko (60s) and Jorma Vennola (70s) to create a classic purity of line.

The Golden Age was during the 50 by Wirkkala, Sarpaneva, and Hongell who swept fame at fairs and exhibitions, notably the Milan Triennale. The Grand Prix and gold medals which gave to Wirkkala and Sarpaneva were the international breakthroughs of Finnish art glass, changing the traditional concept of household items to practical and imaginative table glass collections. Iittala crystal has not only a high reputation in design and craftsmanship but also the quality of the materials in manufacturing. During the 60s, the company introduced a new composition for i-glass which remains clear regardless of sunlight and machine washing.

ORREFORS

With a hallmark of purity and artistry, Orrefors began in 1726 with an iron foundry near the Orranäs Lake. When the iron production became less profitable by the end of the 19th century, the glasswork was replaced in 1898, making bottles, toothpaste jars and plain tableware. On a purchase by Johan Ekman, many talented artists such as Simon Gate (1916) and Edward Hald (1917) were hired to improve the craftsmanship. Engravers enjoyed a renaissance as "Swedish Grace" reflected the times through classical motifs.

At the "Exposition Universelle et Internationale" in Paris in 1925, Orrefors achieved a breakthrough. Simon Gate's tall masterpiece of *Paris Goblet* won a Grand Prix, while others had gold medals. In only nine years, the new and creative company acquired a world reputation for Swedish Crystal. Orrefors continued employing talented people. Vicke Lindstrand's first pieces showed a distinct character whether they were painted or engraved (1928). Nils Landberg, Sven Palmqvist, and Edvin Öhrström were preparing the elite group.



Simon Gate, *Thousand Windows* bowl (1932)

Eager experimentation and a search for new and better methods of expression resulted in new techniques: Lindstrand's exotic thick walled Graal, Öhrström's forceful Ariel, Palmqvist's colourful Ravenna, and Hald's Fish Graal and elegant Cut Graal. Orrefors was present at the New York World Fair in 1939, launching the concept of "Swedish Modern". Ingeborg Lundin became the first female designer (1947), giving the glass a new, exciting look. At the Milan Triennale, Landberg's *Tulip Glass*, Lundin's *Apple*, and Palmqvist's centrifuged *Fuga* bowl received critical acclaim as the 50s' graceful and ethereal glass. Orrefors hired gold and silversmith Gunnar Cyrén (1959) whose early pieces reflected the impulses of the 60s in *Pop Glass*. Today Orrefors' long and rich art glass is expanding of the well-known techniques of Graal, Ariel, and Ravenna glass.

JEWELLERY & METALS

Until the previous century, gold and silver have symbolised wealth, honour, and prestige, and gold and silversmiths were in forms and decorations, copied from Germany and other nations. Industrialisation late in the 19th century brought on a decline in taste and workmanship in the applied arts. Silver objects were overly decorated, wrongly proportioned, and shabbily machine-pressed.

An independent movement started in the first decade of the 1900s in Scandinavia, underlining new standards of proportion, form, and details. The jeweller's artistic level is progressing due to Georg Jensen, a Danish sculptor, who revitalised the goal toward the quality design of the precious metals. In contrast to sparkling gems set in gold, silver, or platinum, the success of Scandinavia jewellery found in elegantly simple designs, set with crystal, enamel, or semiprecious stones of local origin. Jewellery should not be costly for appreciation or treasure. As the design itself is a work of art, the excellence of modern jewellery should express craftsmanship, taste, and a sense of perfect form.



Georg Jensen, *Moonlight* brooch (c1900)

In the 30s, simplicity was so popular that ornamentation was considered nearly immoral. Functionalism was antagonistic to jewellery. However, Isolation during the First World War stimulated Jewellers' new impulses. Unadorned metal jewellery came into vogue, and simple stone settings of the naked form emphasised the movement of the hand. The 50s and early 60s brought a return of fancy in response to the time of gaiety and entertaining. Scandinavian jewellery reflects the currents of various periods, keeping the national characteristic.

TEXTILES

Hand-loomed, embroidery and weaving are the common traditions in Scandinavia for pastime during the isolated living of a long winter. Colour restraints have been characteristic of Scandinavian textiles, but recently designers have felt bored with machine goods. They experimented with simple hand weaving and declined to the natural colours of wool. As a result, the sensitivity of Scandinavian colour appeared in textile. Except for the formal dining sets, white tablecloths became almost extinct; new damask appeared in a variety of design and colour.



Marjatta Metsovaara, *Nili* (c1970)

Another phenomenon was a movement of recruiting new talent. The gap between the handloom and industrial production became closer when craftsmen began to work with mills for upholstery fabrics in furniture. Modern textiles reflect uniqueness of artistic design with handcraft tradition accommodated to mechanical methods. Craftsmen tend to back off from the technical perfection in industrial goods, re-exploring the oldest techniques and adapting them to new interpretations. They react against the multitudinous floral designs of the 40s, the overly geometric patterns of the 50s, and a response to new wall shapes and large window since the 60s. Today's textiles underline modified geometrics and abstracts in restraint of patterning and amplifying colour schemes to admit light and to look exciting. Tryggve Johansson, a Norwegian colour analyst, made a natural and sound colour system for designers and manufacturers.

D E N M A R K



THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK (Kongerike Danmark) locates in the most southern in Scandinavia with two offshore territories, the Faroe Islands (1948) and Greenland (1979) whose self-rule granted. Denmark herself covers an area of 43,000 km² and has a population of 5.5 million. 12% of the country is enclosed by forest, while meadow, heath, marshland, bogs, sand hills and lakes of 10%. Summer is warm, and winter is not so cold, caused by a temperate climate. Towards the end of the 10th century, Denmark was united into a single kingdom and has become independent as the oldest kingdom in Europe. The primary commodities are agricultural production, beer, medicines, furniture, shipping, and advanced metal industries. The capital is Copenhagen.

BACKGROUND

Denmark is bordered by Germany, the Baltic and the North Sea. The country consists of a large peninsula (Jutland), islands (Zealand/Funen/Vendsyssel-Thy/Lolland/Falster/Bornholm), and hundreds of minor archipelago. Surveys (2006-08) ranked Denmark as "the happiest place in the world," according to standards of health, welfare, and education. The word "Denmark" centred on the prefix "Dan" whether it means the Dani or a historical person Dan. It could mean "flat woodland". When the Roman Emperor Augustus went war against Denmark, the country was under the Swedish king Ypper. The Jutes from Denmark asked Dan, the king's son, for help. On victory, they made him king of the united land, naming it Denmark (Dania). The earliest record of the word "Denmark" was found on the two Jelling rune stones. In the Song of Roland (c. 1040-1115), the legendary hero Holger Danske appears as "Holger of Denmark".

People have inhabited Denmark since 12,500 BC and did agriculture from 3,900 BC. The Nordic Bronze Age (1,800-600 BC) marked by burial mounds, including the Sun Chariot. During the Pre-Roman Iron Age (500 BC-AD 1), native groups began migrating south. Both Roman and Celtic cultural influence reflected in the finding of the Gundestrup cauldron. The Danevirke defence structures built from the third century, and the construction efforts in 737 attributed to the emergence of a Danish king. The new runic alphabet used, and Ribe, the oldest town, was founded about 700.

During the 8th-11th centuries, the Danes were known as Vikings. They discovered and settled in Iceland (9C) and further in Greenland and Newfoundland. Utilising their skills in shipbuilding, they conquered parts of the British Isles (Danelaw/Ireland/Normandy) and France and excelled in trading from Greenland to Constantinople via Russian rivers. The Danes were Christianised by

Harald Blåtand (965) who expanded the defensive line of Danevirke to southern Sweden and won Norway.



Øresund Bridge in Denmark-Swede. Erøskøbing, a traditional Danish village, H C Andersen (1805-75)

The reign of Canute the Great represented the peak of the Danish Viking age. His empire included Denmark (1018), Norway (1028), and England (1035) and held a strong influence over the northeast coast of Germany. He canonised for his miracles (1101), and St Canute's Cathedral became one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in the Middle Ages. However, his death marked the end of the great Viking Age. Denmark and England divided, and ravages never happened to the rest of Europe. Denmark became a Christian country. Following the end of the 11th century, Denmark underwent a transition from weak regional chiefs to a powerful king. The first large churches built, and monastic order appeared. New laws made, and the famous Code of Jutland (1241) says: "that the king cannot rule without and beyond the law"; "and that all men are equal to the law". However, the kingdom was in decline because of internal strife and the rise of the German Hanseatic League. Margrethe I re-invigorated the kingdom, and Denmark/Norway/Sweden was in the union charter of Kalmar (1237).

The Protestant Reformation came to Scandinavia in the 1520s. Hans Tausen, a monk in the Order of St John's Hospitalers, proclaimed for Luther's reform in the Catholic Church. Denmark became Lutheran (1536). After the Napoleonic war, the Congress of Vienna demanded the dissolution of the Denmark-Norway (1814), and Norway entered a new union with Sweden until 1905. Denmark became a constitutional monarchy (1848) and ceded Schleswig and Holstein to Prussia, leaving deep marks on the Danish national identity (1864). Since then, Denmark has returned to its traditional policy of neutrality. Celebrating the shortest day corresponds roughly with Christmas (Jul) Eve. The Norse word "jól" indicates pre-Christian feasts of a season. The longest day celebration is Midsummer Day (sankthansaften: St. John's evening). Christianity continue them. The economy features free trade and a high living standard. Denmark has a GDP per capita higher than that of most European countries. Recognised religious societies and churches in 1682 are the Catholic Church, the Reformed Church, and the Jewish organisation. Hans Christian Andersen is world-known for his fairy tales. The philosopher Søren Kierkegaard and Carl Nielsen with his six symphonies gained international recognition.

CONTINUITY FROM PAST AND CHALLENGE TO FUTURE

Despite its small territory and population, Denmark has twice had a significant cultural impact on the world. A thousand years ago the Danish Vikings dominated a large part of Europe through pillaging, trading, and colonising expeditions. During the mid-20th century, Denmark achieved an aesthetic dominance when modern Danish design became an international phenomenon.

According to harsh Nordic conditions, the talent of borrowing functional and aesthetic paradigms from foreign sources and adapting them to something “Danish” with high craftsmanship was a key factor in the evolution of the Danish design. Danes developed an in-depth knowledge of local resources. Financial limitations are forced to underline utility and durability over surface embellishment, resulting in simplicity, honesty and respect for function as a characteristic of Danish design.

In Denmark, the furniture industry came around the 1920s at the time of fermentation between handicraft and industrialisation. The process was slow, gradual, and well-considered as reformism. Moreover, after the First World War, innovative trends manifested themselves in Europe politically, economically and culturally, and a new and better society was needed. However, agriculture and crafts were the leading economies, and old craft production kept longer than elsewhere in Europe. When industries were modernising after the Second World War, craft tradition and quality workmanship transferred to industrial products.

The evolution of design started in the late 18th century when process-making was transferring from an individual to group works. It gave rise to the new profession, and with the foundation of the Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Manufactory (1775), the first Danish designers entered the industry. Although the designers promoted the fashionable Rococo style, Neo-Classicism replaced with simplicity and utility at the beginning of the 19th century. In the 1820s, Gustav Friedrich Hetsch (1788-1864) introduced the Empire style to the Royal Copenhagen, stating:

The object of everything relating to interior design and architecture, large or small, must be that it answers its purpose and meets two main conditions: usability and suitability... beauty must always depend on the usefulness because without this no satisfaction can be gained for the eye or the spirit.

The approach to functional yet attractive objects for the user first became an essential hallmark of Danish design. The masterful handling of materials inherited to the next generations through family-run workshops or craftsmen guilds. Moreover, the high quality was the result of cooperation between designers and manufacturer. It was the pioneer individuals who set the artistic and ethical standards for the success of modern Danish design. Although Functionalism never recognised as a style of furniture in Denmark, it was decisive in response to the growing demands on democracy reflected in the function. “Function” was the motto. Each household

product should be aesthetically designed, despite its main concern of practicality. Form should match to function.

It was Kaare Klint who had an important impact on design through his anatomical research during the 1920s and 30s. He established a human-centred design concept which became the philosophical bedrock for Modernism, devising a measuring system based on human proportions and applying this data to the furniture design. He also examined historically successful furniture with modern interpretations on them, such as his *Safari* and *Beck* chairs (1933). His systematic method, respect for the tradition, strong ethics influenced the development of furniture.

It can say that Danish designers remained untouched by the puritan Bauhaus in contrast to the Swedish Modern Movement. Their work reflected the consensus that functionalism had always existed in the Danish design, and therefore, the design should be advanced by evolutionary than revolutionary means. At the end of the 30s, against Bauhaus, upholstered and comfortable chairs were shown at the exhibitions of the Cabinet Makers' Guild in Copenhagen. And the wish for low cost and practical tools permeated the landmark. Finn Juhl underlined individualism and artistic freedom with eloquence, elegance and courage in design, seen in his slender, light, and comfortable chairs. Besides the exhibitions, designers were able to promote their work through den Permanente, a cooperative association established (1931) by Kay Bojesen.

During the inter-war period, Denmark's long and proud heritage of cabinet-making was put to use with simplified but elegant solid wood furniture. As editor of *Kritisk Revy* (Critical Review), Poul Henningsen demanded a new industrial objectivity "to promote architecture in accordance with the best of social, economic and technological endeavours in modern culture". The journal criticised the inappropriate aesthetics of Neo-Classicism and the new Bauhaus, which had little to do with ordinary people. Instead, together with Børge Mogensen, he pleaded for a simple and friendly design for everyday use. Mogensen designed furniture, combined with different pieces to satisfy the consumer's requirements (1944). Hans Wegner perpetuated Klint's ideal furniture forms and produced modern vernacular types, *Peacock* and *Chinese* chairs (1947, 43). His unique success in furniture credited to the blending of craftsmanship and proportion, innovation and work ethics, and simplicity and balance.

By studying the essence of successful antecedents and adapting them to a modern idiom, Danish design became a less doctrinal and more accessible form of Modernism. After the post-war (50s-60s), soft-edged products of informality and domesticity preferred for smaller average households. With high-quality machined-aided craftsmanship, "good taste" of Danish modernism signified through exhibitions in the USA and the UK. "Design from Denmark" became sensational. One reason for this was due to the import of Philippine teak. The superior hardwood widely used by designers, such as Finn Juhl, Hans Wegner and Peter Hvidt, called "Teak Style", or Bojesen's double salad bowl and servers.

In 1951 Arne Jacobsen introduced the three-legged chair, *Ant*, which was simple, light yet robust suitable to factory canteens. The potential of moulded plywood was also executed in *Model No. 3107* chair (1955) from *Series 7* as the best-selling. As the first modern furniture, *Series 7* and *Ant* termed 'industrialised' chair in an international setting. He was the first Danish furniture designer in the contemporary world. In the late 50s, newly synthetic fibreglass was used in his sculptural *Scanen* (Swan) and *Egget* (Egg) chairs (1957) for the Copenhagen SAS Royal Hotel. A decade later, it was evolved by Verner Panton in *Phantasy Landscapes* of bold forms and brilliant colours.

The global recession of the early 70s coincided with a declining interest in Danish design. Leading firms reaffirmed their commitment to beautiful and highly rational products. The Danish Design Center was founded to enhance Danish design (1977). Niels Jørgen Haugesen designed *X-line* chair in a High Tech style. The following decade, Post-Modernism with a freedom of expression emerged such as *Bench for Two* (1989) by Nanna Ditzel. Niels Gammelgaard and Alfred Homann developed furniture, lighting and other products aesthetically, functionally, and commercially. However, in Denmark, Post-Modernism never gained a sound foothold.

The tradition of "good design" remains one of Denmark's greatest assets, caused by the cooperation between designers and industry: simplification of balancing form and function, truth to materials, deep respect for the task, and facilitating connections between the user, their tools for living, and the environment. Danish design principles reflect a continuous evolution in industry tool. New products share a quality with traditional ones as rational tools for beauty. Today, the industry has worries of natural resources, ecology, technological progress, social alteration, and consumer changes, innovating problem-solutions for simplicity, economy, and technology.

DANISH DESIGNERS

Kay Bojesen/ Kaare Klint/ Poul Henningsen/ Arne Jacobsen/ Finn Juhl/ Hans Wegner/ Henning Koppel/ Nanna Ditzel/ Verner Panton

Kay Bojesen (1886-1958) established his workshop in Copenhagen in 1913. His early work reflected the rich decorative influence of the Georg Jensen silversmith, but by 1931 he adopted a modern style of simple forms, undecorated surfaces, and suitability for mass production such as ceramics for Bing and Grøndahl factory. As a leading figure of Scandinavian modernism, he was the driving force behind the opening of "Den Permanente" in Copenhagen, a permanent display for the best contemporary Danish design (1931). Bojesen designed silver flatware and hollowware pieces including elegant *Grand Prix* cutlery (1938). Many of silver designs later transferred to stainless steel for mass production. He had a solo exhibition at the Danish Industry Museum in Copenhagen (1938) and the Milan Triennale (1940). During the next decades, he continued

metalware, receiving a Grand Prix at the IX Milan Triennale (1951). He was appointed silversmith to the King of Denmark with international acclaim including a gold medal at the Milan Triennale (1954) for wooden designs of characteristic monkey and puffin toys, and functional yet sculptural teak salad bowls.



Monkey 1951), Bear (1952), Elephant toy (1953)



Rocking chair (1936), Teak salad bowl (1949)

Kaare Klint (1888-1954) was an apprentice under his father who underlined studying earlier styles and traditional materials of the 19th historicism with the 20th-century expressionism. His furniture designs such as *Deck* chair (1933) were a rework of earlier types from a variety of influences including Scandinavian vernacularism, Shaker design, Regency furniture, and oriental cabinet-making. His models were remarkable for the quality of wood finishes and proportions. He established the Furniture Department at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen (1924) and undertook pioneering research into anthropometrics, the systematic collection and correlation of measurements of the human body to improve furniture for users' physical conditions. Klint insisted on combining the attributes related to traditional craftsmanship - attention to detail, in-depth knowledge of materials, and rational design principles. Like his father, stressing earlier styles' study, he encouraged his students to measure classic furniture including the English *Windsor* chair to understand the principles of proportion, construction and function. Klint's teaching laid the foundations for the renewal of Danish design after the Second World War, inspiring Hans Wegner and Børge Mogensen for "classic" modern design which was the rework of historical furniture.



Red chair (1927) or Barcelona chair for the 1929 *Exposicion Internacional de Barcelona*, Mahogany & leather armchair (1930), Safari chair (1933), Faaborg chair (1914)

Poul Henningsen (1894-1967) worked as a reviewer for the art journal *Vor Tid*, co-editor of the art periodical *Klingen*, a journalist for the newspapers *Politiken* and *Extra Bladet*. He experimented with different materials of copper and glass and designed several light fixtures such as a chandelier of the Carlsberg brewery (1919). He exhibited a spherical light fitting with reflective planar rings at the “Artists’ Autumn Exhibition” (1922) and devised the Copenhagen’s Slotsholm street light. As a social reformer, Henningsen wrote in *Politiken*: “The aim is, by working scientifically, to make lighting clearer, more economical, and more beautiful.” He developed a series of multi-shaded table and hanging lights to reduce the glare of the new electric bulb (1924). His first scientific lamp from *PH* series was awarded a gold medal at the “Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes” in Paris (1925). He also developed a system of alternately shaped and positioned shades. His logarithmic spiral configuration of the curved *PH* lamps is still prevalent. Henningsen denounced the artistic pretensions of Scandinavian design and urged for a pragmatic approach for good design. Unlike Modern Movement designers, he considered traditional forms and materials to be suitable for more democratic products.



PH table lamp (1927), *PH 5* Pendle lamp (1958), *PH Koglen* lamp (1957), *PH Snowball* lamp (1983)

Arne Jacobsen (1902-71) trained at the School of Applied Arts in Copenhagen and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. The combination of practical and artistic training enabled him to produce functional and aesthetical buildings, interiors, and products. Influenced by Modernists such as Le Corbusier and van der Rohe, he introduced Modernism to Denmark in *House of the Future* project,

and the *Rothenborg House* in Ørdrup (1930). Jacobsen and Erik Möller won the design competition (1936) of the Århus Town Hall, whose scheme was distinct by soft lines that revealed a humanistic Modernism with organic forms. He designed mass production furnitures such as *Ant* chairs (1952) and *Series 7* chairs (1955). The latter was the most successful seating programme: a standard single-form compound-moulded plywood seat with a wide range of attachment. For the SAS Air Terminal and Royal Hotel in Copenhagen (1960), Jacobsen made every detail from cutlery to furniture. *Egg* and *Swan* chairs (1958) were futuristic and aesthetic. For him, buildings and products should have a proportion: materials and colours compatible with achieving overall impression. He combined sculptural, organic forms with traditional Scandinavian design attributes of material and structural integrity to produce timeless, elegant, and functional designs. “Pastry usually tastes best when it looks nice... there’s nothing I mind if it looks nice.”



Egg chair (1957), Egg table (1952), Table lamp (1957)



Series 7 (1955), Swan chair (1958), Grand Prix chair (1957)

Finn Juhl (1913-89) was influenced steel and glass building by Swedish Modernism architect, Erick Gunnar Asplund. He worked at the Vilhelm Lauritzen’s office. His furniture showed at Cabinet Makers’ Guild in Copenhagen (1937). *Pelican* chair (1940) was different from the modern re-workings of traditional furniture promoted by Kaare Klint and signalled a new and significant direction towards more sculptural and abstract organic forms. Establishing his own office in 1945, Juhl designed solid wood furniture in a seductive form. He was awarded six gold medals at Milan Triennale and fourteen prizes by Cabinet Makers’ Guild. *No.45* (1945), *No. 48* (1948), and *Chieftain* (1949) chairs were distinct by excellent craftsmanship and highly expressive, flowing forms. He developed constructional techniques for teak, leading its use to Danish furniture, called “Teak

Style". Henri Sten Moller criticised him as "the out-and-out dandy". Juhl put forth significant influence on the next generation of Scandinavian designers with his bold sculptural forms and ultra-refined detailing.



No. 45 chair (1945), No. 48 chair (1948), Desk (1948)



Table lamp (1963), Chieftain chair (1949), Sofa (1941)

Hans Wegner (1914-2007) grew up with craftsmanship and materials. He practised under Möller for the design of Århus Town Hall (1940). For this project, Wegner epitomised design approach, describing his simple chair as "stripping the old chair of their austere style and letting them appear in their pure construction." He designed a range of good yet inexpensive furniture for the small post-war apartments. By the 50s, Wegner became a leading designer internationally for balanced, crafted, solid wood furniture. He explained,

as simple and genuine as possible, to show what we could create with our hands, to try to make wood come alive, to give it spirit and vitality, and to get things to be so natural that they could only have been made by us.

Organic designs of *Chinese* (1943), *Peacock* (1947), *Y* (1950), and *Valet* (1953) chairs underlined the importance of the physical, psychological and emotional connections between users and their tools for living. By simplifying and purifying form and construction, Wegner created everlasting beautiful modern workings of traditional furniture with the honesty of material. He won many awards including the first Lunning Prize (1951). As a gifted designer and master craftsman, Wegner made Danish design world famous.

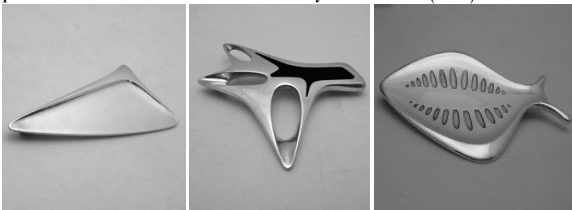


Peacock chair (1947), Valet chair (1953), Chinese chair (1943), Y-chair (1950)

Henning Koppel (1918-80) associated with George Jensen, and his sculptural silverware attracted international attention. Inspired by the contemporary sculptures of Arp and Brancusi, Koppel designed biomorphic silver jewellery such as *Model no. 89* bracelet (1946), futuristic and functional as wearable sculpture. Despite his craft tradition, *No. 978* wine pitcher (1948) and a fish dish (1954) revealed the modern and universal language of organic form against historicism. Koppel introduced an artistic design to Jensen's flatware collection with *Caravel* cutlery (1957), but during the 70s, his work became geometric and less sculptural. He was awarded three gold medals at Milan Triennale (1951, 54, 57), and the Lunning Prize (1953). His masterful understanding of the fundamental nature of materials enabled him to produce exquisite metalware for sculptural plasticity and sensuous form. His designs epitomised the "New Look" of post-war Scandinavian design with polished reflective surfaces and asymmetrical lines.



Pitcher (1952) became famous under the name "the pregnant duck". "Pitcher" in 1965 breathes pure silver pitcher. Model no. 11 Caravel silver cutlery and flatware (1957)



Sterling Silver brooches (c1945)

Nanna Ditzel (1923-2005), with her husband, Jörgen Ditzel, exhibited living room furniture at Cabinet Makers' Guild (1944), and their table with a removable tray design received attention. Focusing on small living spaces, Ditzel explored the idea of kitchen units as room dividers and designed a range of children's plywood furniture (1952). The couple wrote a book, *Danish Chairs* (1954) and awarded the Lunning Prize (1956). They made a range of wicker furniture, the egg-shaped hanging chair, and solid-wood children's furniture. Particularly, Ditzel was keen on playground environments and jewellery with semi-precious stones of agates and tourmalines for Georg Jensen. After her husband's death, she founded a workshop In Copenhagen (1986). Driven by natural curiosity and change, Ditzel continued innovative craft-based designs. The Japanese inspired butterfly-like *Bench for Two - No. 2600* (1989) possesses a sense of lightness, texture, motion and beauty.



Egg swing chair (1957), Bench for Two Model no. 2600 and table Model no. 2601 (1989), Toadstool (1962) today Trip Trap



Brooch, Silver cufflinks no.747, Design no 141A (c1960)

Verner Panton (1926-98) was an innovator shown in *Collapsible House* (1955), *Cardboard House* (1957), and *Plastic House* (1960). The 50s was full of creative exploration and playful experimentation for him. His first major commission was an inn from Holsten, where he made an overall red interior including ice cream form of *Cone chair* (1958). This unusual seating made him more international. Panton continued to amaze the public at the Købestævnet Trade Fair. The world was upside down with carpeted ceiling and inverted furniture; thus everyone can see the person in front of him. He redesigned the Astoria Restaurant in Trondheim (1960) with the unseal form and bright colours. Panton explored the first-single-form plastic chair, and this revolutionary *Panton chair* produced from cold-pressed fibreglass re-enforced polyester, reputed at the Cologne

Furniture Fair (1968). His imagination sustained in psychedelic *Phantasy Landscapes* of sculptural shapes with saturated colours at the “Visiona 0” in Cologne (1968). A comment was: “Every room had its own sounds and odours so that the sensations from nearly all the human senses added spice to the unique perception of space... You went through the exhibition and forgot time and place.” He designed the complete 1-2-3 seating system with 20 models of four varied heights for resting-dining-working (1973), and amorphous cut-out shapes of art chair series, made up of 16 single plywood chairs (1981). Unlike other Danish designers, Panton was revolutionary than evolutionary in design. His innovative, bold designs reflected his optimism in the future. Panton refused the Danish tradition of refining existing furniture and using natural materials. Simultaneously, he held to the Scandinavian belief that design should be first and foremost durable, unified, and integrated.



Panton chair (1960), Globe lamp (1969), Cone chair (1958), Cone table (1960)



Wire cone K2 chair (1960), Wire chair (1971)



F I N L A N D



THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND (Suomen Tasavalta) is bordered by Sweden to the west, Russia to the east, and Norway to the north. The Åland Islands, off the south-west coast, are the autonomy of Finland. The country has a population of over 5 million spread over 338,145 km². Known as a land of forests, myriad lakes and islands, the climate is marked by cold winters and warm summers. In the far north beyond the Arctic Circle, white summer nights and polar winter night take place for a few months. Finnish belongs to the Finno-Ugric linguistic family. The official languages are Finnish and Swedish (6%) as part of Sweden until 1809. Another minority is Lapp. The country's capital is Helsinki.

BACKGROUND

After Independence in 1917, Finland has ranked as one of the most stable countries in the world, according to social, economic, political, and military indicators. Finland has seen excellent international results in high-technology manufacturing, public education, the rate of gross domestic product growth, and the protection of civil liberties. The name Suomi (Finland) could be the proto-Baltic word *zeme, meaning "land". The name derives from suomaa (fen land) or suoniemi (fen cape). Finland was settled at the latest around 8,500 BC during the Stone Age. The earliest people were hunter-gatherers, and even with the introduction of agriculture, hunting and fishing continued. The Bronze Age (1,500-500 BC) and Iron Age (500 BC-AD 1,200) characterised by contacts with other cultures in the Fennoscandian and Baltic regions.

The first verifiable written documents appeared in the 12th century. Due to the Swedish rule in the next century, Swedish became the dominant language for nobility, administration, and education, while Finnish was for the peasantry, clergy and local courts. During the Reformation, Finns converted to Lutheranism, and the Royal Academy of Turku established in 1640. Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire (1809-1917), and the Finnish language gained recognition. A National Romanticism grew, producing a national epic, the Kalevala (1835), and equal status of Finnish and Swedish (1892). On December 6, 1917, Finland declared its independence, becoming a republic. During World War II, Finland fought the Soviet Union (1939-40, 1941-44) and ceded most of the Finnish Karelian areas. However, trade with Western Europe helped Finland to transform itself from agriculture to industry, and economic growth was rapid in the post-war era to be one of the most extensive welfare states.



Eduskunta - the Parliament of Finland in Helsinki, a lakeside smoke sauna ("savusauna") in Kannonkoski, The composer Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Finland is democratic with a semi-presidential parliamentary system. The President is the head of state and is responsible for foreign policy in cooperation with the cabinet. As a free-market economy, the largest sector is service, then manufacturing and refining. The industries are electronics, machinery, metal products, forest industry, and chemicals. Finland has thousands of lakes and islands -187,888 lakes (larger than 500 m²) and 179,584 islands. The landscape is flat with few hills, covered mostly by forests with the little arable land. It is regarded as the home of Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus), living in the northern Lapland. Above the Arctic Circle, there is a polar night, a period when the sun does not rise for days or weeks, or even months. In the heart of summer, the sun does not completely set for 73 consecutive days.

One of the most traditional cultures is cottage life by a lake, often combined with sauna. Many Finns emotionally connect to the countryside in nature. Their mentality characterises by less small talking, more honest, and straightforward in communication. After the Protestant Reformation, Mikael Agricola translated the New Testament into Finnish (160). In the 19th century, a national romantic movement began, encouraging Elias Lönnrot to collect Finnish and Karelian folk poetry. Most Finns are Lutherans, but the Orthodox Church is constitutional. Finns have contributed significantly to handicrafts, design and architecture. Eliel Saarinen and Alvar Aalto were internationally known.

Traditional Karelian melodies and lyrics influenced much of the music as the purest expression of the Finnish myths and beliefs. During the spread of nationalism, Jean Sibelius composed not only the symphony Kullervo but also Finlandia (1899) which helped to gain independence. He remains one of the most popular national figures.

CONTINUITY FROM PAST AND CHALLENGE TO FUTURE

Finns have developed an extraordinary relationship with nature, called "Soul of the North", and this has proven in their design approach of material and organic form. They are renowned for stoicism, toughness, tenacity, calmness and an inner resolution, reflected in a notion of "Sisu". Its meaning is "must be done will be done whatever it takes". Their taciturnity and emotion are offset by design as a means of artistic creativity, derived from the tradition. When the country

became autonomy of Russia (1809), Finns were searching out their roots, and the nationalism appeared in Elias Lönnrot's Finnish epic poem of the *Kalevala* (Land of Heroes 1835). In fact, before the First World War, Finnish design was influenced by European Art Nouveau. Gustaf Sterngell and Sigurd Frosterus began to strip National Romantic architecture and furniture.

Sterngell wrote in 1901: "A chair is beautiful when it completely fulfils its function. No decorations are necessary, if it is comfortable to sit in, that is enough... If it is rightly built, then it is beautiful." As Romanticism was part of Art Nouveau between the late 19th and early 20th, the synthesis of the national and international became a basis of Finnish design. When Finland won its independence in 1917, there was a need for public buildings. Functionalism arrived, and its philosophy of utility and simplicity was in harmony with the cultural heritage, giving birth to the characteristics of modern Finnish design.

Although Finnish industrial art was affected by Modern Movement prevailing in Sweden in 1920s, social reform begun with the aim of comfortable domesticity. Reinterpreting the puritan Bauhaus, Alvar Aalto incorporated organic forms and natural material in human-oriented designs. He hoped to enhance physical and psychological relations between products and users. His *Savoy* vase (1936) was inspired from the undulating shape of Finnish lakes. By abstracting the essence of nature through humanising designs, he established one of the Scandinavian philosophical design approaches. Art glass activity was rich in Nuutajärvi, Karhula-littala and Riihimäki work in the 30s. Henry Ericsson won the first prize in a competition held by Riihimäki and a Grand Prix at the Barcelona World Exhibition (1929). This activity was continued by Arttu Brummer who laid the foundation for individuality in Finnish design. As editor of the Italian *Domus* magazine, he wrote in 1931 against economic depression,

In our times and especially under the circumstances in which we now live, the artist has become an individual who in a way exists outside society. Nobody really needs him and in vain he raises his voice to demand support and protection from the state.

It was after the Second World War that demand for beauty fulfilled, and national self-confidence was achieved by design. Designers such as Tapio Wirkkala and Timo Sarpaneva forged a distinct design language to a new aesthetic expression. Finnish design gained international recognition by beautiful organic forms and materials. To Wirkkala's sculptural glassware, awarded at Milan Triennales (1951, 54), a comment was "mixture of primitive daring and incredible elegance". Apart from the pure Bauhaus functionalism, Finnish design projected the spirit of the age as a breakthrough in the 50s.

It was partly due to Finnish industry's using talented artists who knew material and individuality. Already, in the 20s and 30s, glass and ceramic workshops gave artists a free hand. Finnish design has followed the principle of cooperation between craftsmen, designer, and

manufacturer to raise a higher quality. Moreover, the well-known designer, Kaj Franck, believed in simplicity and pure line which stood out from other countries: Aalto's plywood chair made of pale birch of "elsewhere as raw material for furniture". In planning, an entity has played an important role, exemplified in Eliel Saarinen design from each product to the smallest detail.

The handling of sensitive material and the promotion of organic forms remained under the Golden Age in the 60s and early 70s. Designers experimented with new techniques and explored bold colours and iconoclastic shapes, seen in Oiva Toikka's glassware, Vuokko Nurmesniemi's textiles, and Eero Aarnio's furniture. During the global oil-crisis, a rational approach focused on ergonomics, safety and social inclusiveness. Yrjö Kukkapuro's *Fysio* chair (1978) was one of the first office chairs, based on anthropometric data. In the following decades, there prevailed Post-Modernism, which led to several organic products such as Stefan Lindfors' insect-like *Scaragoo* lamp (1987). Since then, Finland has enjoyed a design-driven economic boom as a result of innovative solutions and the excellent manufacturing in contrast to other Scandinavian neighbours.

Today, companies such as Arabia and Iittala are proud of linking with the great designers of the past, and at the same time associating with the best upcoming designers from Finland and abroad. It can say that Finns visualise their deep-rooted connection with nature which supplies their designs with a sublime transcendence over pure function, delighting the hand and the eye. By combining knowledge of craft traditions with empathy for materials and concern of function, Finnish designers continue to create high profiled products.

Finnish design can identify by simplicity and straightforwardness. Simplicity is the beauty of a form, grasping delicate shades of human problems. The long struggle for survival has refused all physical and mental surfaces and economy. Another characteristic of Finnish design is pure joy in expression. Crafts are restrained but decorated effectively, and design is strictly functional. As tradition is permitted when it meets current needs, some designers are seeking the roots of Finnish form in heritage with a new light.

A feature of the current Finnish design has an extensive and well-planned environment, aesthetically for anyone, extended to specific areas - children's toys, aids for old people and handicap, and the proper working by climate. "Design-intensive" philosophy is based on a high standard of the design according to human awareness.

FINNISH DESIGNERS

Alvar Aalto/ Kaj Franck/ Tapio Wirkkala/ Timo Sarpaneva/ Maija Isola/ Antti Nurmesniemi/ Vuokko Eskolin-Nurmesniemi/ Oiva Toikka/ Eero Aarnio/ Yrjö Kukkapuro/ Stefan Lindfors/ Harry Koskinen

Alvar Aalto (1898-1976) is Finland's most celebrated architect-designer and one of the pioneers of organic Modernism. His architectural work brought him international recognition through the first functional Turun Sanomat Building (1927). In furniture, he experimented with laminated wood,

veneer bonding and the limits of moulding plywood, such as *No. 41* and cantilevered *No. 31* chairs (1932). The human-oriented innovative designs signalled plywood as a new material, connecting vertical and horizontal elements, attachable legs under the seat: *L-leg* (1933), *Y-leg* (1947) and *Fan-leg* (1954). Aalto's *Savoy* glass vase was designed for a competition by Karhula-Iittala for the Finnish contemporary work at the "Exposition Universelle et International" in Paris (1937). He designed a joyful object with various sizes - the largest standing on the floor; the shallowest for a tray, naming "the Leather Breeches of an Eskimo Woman". A curving, asymmetrical and freely flowing form rebelled against dominant traditional design in symmetry. He let the vases grow as organic shapes, depicting the shorelines of Finnish lakes and the contours of the terrain. This originality of the vase made Aalto again internationally known as a glass designer. Aalto refused severe geometric forms and human-made materials such as tubular metal due to their inappropriateness to the human condition. His work was recognised in the UK/USA during the 30s-40s as one of the organic Modernists. Opposing the extreme Modern Movement which alienates aesthetic and rational design, Aalto claimed, "The best standardisation committee in the world is nature herself, but in nature, standardisation occurs mainly in connection with the smallest possible unit, cells. The result is millions of flexible combinations in which one never encounters the stereotyped." Inspired by the relationship between humankind and nature, his holistic and human design became an essential philosophy in Scandinavian design.



Model No. 41 lounge chair with laminated birch (1931-32), Stool 60 (1933)



Aalto's sketches for Karhula-Iittala's competition, Savoy vase (1936)

Kaj Franck (1911-89) worked as an illustrator, interior and textile designer. During his military service, he understood underprivileged society. Working for Arabia (1945), he designed everyday

modern crockery and kitchenware for multipurpose in geometric. In an article (1949), Franck wrote,

New conditions of life and a new lifestyle have forced us to modernise home fittings... You can hardly see any change in the everyday porcelain ware... There is no need for compromising on the need for appropriate utility items. Durable, solid, waterproof, easy to wash... our times will build its design idiom on the conditions of life and forms which belong to us.

Franck realised the ideals in glazed-faience *Kilta* range (1952) not being a traditional dinner set but individual pieces. Moreover, he designed limited *Lumipallo* (Snowball) series of pressed glassware (1954), *Kartio* range of jugs and drinking glasses. Frank also moved to Nuutajärvi (1950) for better experiments, establishing studio glass. He recruited Italian Murano glassblowers, and some of his designs bore the Venetian influence. Various styles of his blown art glass were rustic with bubbles and colour bands. One of the last projects was redesigning *Kilta* range, resulting *Teema* range of 19 pieces in geometric forms (1980). He said that “the only possible way to solve the problems of utility ware was to be radical and social”. His career reflects the unique working practice of Scandinavian designer who designs functional goods for mass production along with exclusive limited art pieces.



Kremlin Bells decanter, model no. 1500 (1958), Kartio glassware range (1958)



Teema range (1980)

Tapio Wirkkala (1915-85) shared the first prize with Kaj Franck in a glassware competition held by Iittala (1947). His blown-glass *kantarelli* vases, inspired by chanterelle mushroom, captured the organic fluid abstraction to post-war Scandinavian design. Its series established an international reputation. Wirkkala’s work evoked a strong sense of national identity through traditional

materials, handcraft, and seductive forms found in nature. As a versatile designer, his output ranged from everyday objects to art pieces. He took a workman approach to design, “get away from the drawing board, to see just how a product is made and get to know the people who will help make it... get real contact with the joy”. He had empathy for his materials besides his virtuous technique.

All materials have their own unwritten laws. This is forgotten far too often. You should never be violent with the material you’re working on, and the designer should aim at being in harmony with his material.

Wirkkala pioneered an expressive language of organic form that was a modern but timeless beauty. He won many awards - the Lunning Prize (1951), the Golden Obelisk, Domus Italia (1963), the Prince Eugen Medal (1980). Besides *Ultima Thule* range (1968), he designed jewellery, the package of Finlandia vodka bottle, etc. “No one has ever invented new forms. It’s only a question of how line and shape are used.” His form-giving skills created objects of extraordinary originality, imbued with intelligence, simplicity, tactility and beauty, underlying humanist ethos.



Kantarelli (1947), Tapio glassware range (1954)



Ultima Thule glassware range (1968)

Timo Sarpaneva (1926-2006) won second prize in a glass competition held by Riihimäki (1949). Although he received a silver medal at the IX Milan Triennale (1951) for textile, his glassware brought him the highest acclaim. One of his first technical innovations at Iittala was a steam blowing method such as the *Kajakki* (1953), *Maailmankaunein* (1954) and *Linnunsilta* (1953) vessels, as well as for colour tinted thin glass plates known as *Aquarelles*. These were sculptural

and creative in Finnish design. Moreover, he introduced i-Glass to bridge the gap between art and utility glassware. The industrial line had 17 items, available in several colours to combine. The 50s and 60s saw a dynamic synergy at Iittala with Sarpaneva and Wirkkala. One of Sarpaneva's most influential designs was the *Finlandia* series of vases (1964), using slab moulds, carved in Alder wood, charred by the red-hot glass. In 1992 Leena Kattunen wrote on "Make Glass Not War" at the Finnish Glass Museum: "Sarpaneva has liberated himself from the strict discipline of design and progressed to self-awareness." This technique reappeared in *Festivo* candleholders (1966) with metal moulds. *Finlandia* and *Festivo* heralded the fashion for frosted glass. Sarpaneva applied a unique technique to each range such as *Archipelago* (1978), *Claritas* (1984), and *Marcel* (1990). Many of his designs are round-square forms, notably *Claritas*, while *Lasiäika* sculpture was in open and expressive forms. He was made an Honorary Royal Designer for Industry in London (1963) and received a State Award from the Finnish government (1985). Through mastery of materials and artistic sensibility, his work evokes the spiritual essence and beauty of nature, influencing Finnish glass design.



Finlandia vase series (c1964-70), Enamelled cast-iron casserole with teak handle (1960), *Festivo* candlestick (1966), *Claritas* vase (1984)

Maija Isola (1927-2001) was the principal designer for the Printex textile firm under the artistic directorship of Armi Ratia. Isola designed numerous printed textiles for the interior. From 1951, she also created for Marimekko, Printex's sister company, founded to promote Printex textiles in fashion and interior design. Her bold abstract patterns transformed the inexpensive cotton to elegant yet avant-garde textiles. Marimekko dress and furnishing fabrics, as well as Printex textiles, were included in the "Design in Scandinavia" that toured USA and Canada (1954-57). Her work was also in the "Forms Scandinavia" in Paris and displayed at the Brussels' World Fair (1958). Isola's earliest designs were inspired by the African art, executed in bright colour crayons and hand-painted stripes. She was producing floral motifs (the mid-50s), Slovakian folk art (late 50s), Karelian peasant motifs (late 60s-early 70s). In the mid-60s, she produced the most famous range of large-scale geometric patterns in strong flat colours. The bold designs such as *Kaivo* (1964), *Melooni* (1963), and *Cock and Hen* (1965) reflected contemporary artistic trends, influenced by

Colour Field. Her fabrics had a strong graphic quality, epitomising Marimekko textiles and a new direction in Finnish design. She received ID Prizes (1965, 68).



Unikko (1960), Silkkikuikka (1961), Kaivo (1964), Lokki (1961)

Antti Nurmesniemi (1927-2003) practised under Viljo Revell and Keijo Petäjä, a new rational architecture firm that reflected the influence of the Modern Movement. Nurmesniemi designed interiors and furniture including his horseshoe-shaped *Sauna* stool for the Palace Hotel (1952). Establishing his firm (1956), he developed enamelled coffee pot as an icon of Modernism, due to its contemporary industrial aesthetic that predicted the colourful nature of Scandinavian design in the 60s. About his *Antti* and *Yleispuhelin* telephones (1984), he claims,

An object should not be designed simply to fulfil a purpose, but for the user... A simply designed object is wrong, if its use is complicated... A designed object does not need to reflect the times. It is much better if it offers a hint of the future.

Nurmesniemi awarded a Lunning Prize (1959) for refined and distinctive design derived from his systemising modern European forms with Scandinavian craftsmanship. Like Aalto, he guided by the concept of shared responsibility in society and promoted a humanistic approach to Modernism in practical beauty and utility.



Sauna stool (1951-52), Antti coffee pot (1957), Triennale chair (1960) for a gold medal at the 1960 XII Milan Triennale



Model no. 001 chaise lounge for Vuokko (1968)

Vuokko Eskolin-Nurmesniemi (1930-) worked at Marimekko as art director. During the post-war, women's dresses were made of dark and drab coloured textiles for "make do and mend". Marimekko was using printed textiles for clothing, and Vuokko created the first line of youthful and funny garments. Already in the 50s, she was a forerunner of a liberated, simplified and personal style of dress. "I was a child of nature back then, only 21 when I joined Marimekko. My textiles were full of colour: yellows, oranges, pinks..." Her textiles, *Tibet* and *Ram*, were patterned with large geometric motifs, often a third colour as a key feature of Marimekko. Her dress was as radical as well. Targeting universal appeal, she liberated women with loose clothes with zipper, press-button and Velcro tape. She calls herself a designer of everyday wear. "I am a functionalist. A garment must be simple and functional, but never dull." Her breaking designs acclaimed at the first Marimekko show in Stockholm (1957), and her bright colours appreciated in the USA. *Jokapoika* shirt with small, colourful piccolo stripes is still fashionable. Her clothes and textiles relied on structural essentialism. Vuokko founded her own company, Vuokko (1964). She received many awards - the Lunning Prize (1964), the Finnish State Design Prize (1969), the Prince Eugene Medal (1986), and the Kaj Franck Prize (1997). She was made an Honorary Royal Designer in London (1988). Vuokko created trends as a characteristic of Finnish design.



Indus fabric (1956), Jokapoika piccolo shirt (1957), Pyorre design (1964)

Oiva Toikka (1931-) designed a huge free-blown *Kurkkupurkki* (pickle jar) glass - bright colours, bold forms, and abstract pictures from folk art and contemporary design at Nuutajärvi, Toikka. He produced *Lollipop Isle* glass sculptures (1969) which revealed the joyful, free Pop aesthetic of the time, enhancing the confidence of Finnish glass. Toikka stated,

The 60s was in a way a wonderful time, because one was still carried along by the idea that Finnish was good. It was also a happy time that people still had faith in glass and design generally... it was fun... the sky was the limit as far as the appreciation of all the applied arts was concerned.

Toikka also produced industrial goods such as *Kastehelmi* (Dewdrop) glassware (1964) which became one of Nutajärvi's best-selling. The range, embellished with concentric circles of pearl-like beads, included plates, bowls and candlesticks with colours or without. Toikka's *Pioni* (Peony) tableware explored the potential of moulded glass - the smallest size with a budding peony, the middle with an opening flower, and the largest with a blossomed one. Every piece exudes humanity and warmth as a product of the heart. He produced an annual miniature glass wall of *Vuosikuutiöt* (Year Cube 1977). Often disregarding function in favour of fantastic form, Toikka's playful, individualistic and inventive designs own a poetic quality. He received many awards - the Lunning Prize (1970) and the Prop Finlandia Medal (1980). His famous birds recollect "Nature is an unending source of inspiration for me - and glass, as a natural material, is its best interpreter". He blurred the boundaries of art and design through glassware.



Kastehelmi glassware range (1964), 2011 *Vuosikuutiöt*



Ruby (2003), Scarlet Tanager (2004), Red Ibis Bird (2005)

Eero Aarnio (1932-) designed furniture with natural materials using traditional craft such as *Jattujakkare* wicker stool (1958), following the earlier Finish designers. His philosophy was "Design means constant renewal, realignment, growth." He began experiments with bold and exciting forms with fibreglass. His best-known series are *Ball* or *Globe* chair (1962) and rocking *Pastilli* chair (1967) for which he received an America Industrial Designer Award (1968). Although these iconoclastic seating solutions captured the spirit of the 60s, Aarnio did not embrace the Pop culture. He designed toy-like yet adult-sized *Pony* seat (1973), made of upholstered moulded foam.

He believes: “A chair is a chair, is a chair, is a chair... but a seat does not necessarily have to be a chair. It can be anything as long as it is ergonomically correct”. This Pop design could either be sat on sideways or rode to a fantasy limited by one’s imagination. During the 90s, he produced fibreglass tables, *Copacabana* (1991) and *Screw* (1992).



Globe (1962), Pastilli (1967), Adelta chair (2002), Tupla Kupla lamp (2003)

Yrjö Kukkapuro (1933-) designed chairs with a moulded plywood seat and tubular metal frames (1961). “I was already dreaming of making fibreglass chairs, but the dream was little short of utopia in the Finland of those days.” This simple technique, a heated steel form is dipped into the powdered plastic to form a layer of melted material. His fibreglass and leather *Karuselli* (Carousel 1965) chair was an innovative single-form seat which embodied Kukkapuro’s belief that “a chair could also be a reflection of the human form as softly shaped as people are. And if at all possible, just as beautiful.” *Karuselli* was featured on the cover of *Domus* magazine (1966), testifying to the importance of design and the influence of Finnish design. His other moulded plastic is *Saturnus* tables (1987). By the oil crisis of the mid-70s, the plastics era replaced by ergonomics and ecology; thus Kukkapuro examined different human sizes to generate the anthropometric data for a form-pressed plywood office chair. *Fysio* chair (1978) was the first ergonomic office chair. Of his *Experiment* chairs (1983), he states that “Post-Modernism has once again put us in touch with the vital element that the French call ‘joie de vivre’”. Kukkapuro’s work is Finnish, being distinct by sharp graphic outlines, technical innovation, high-quality materials and construction.

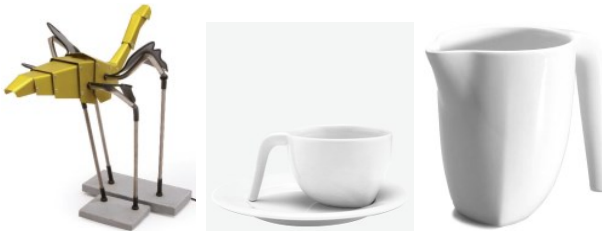


Karusell (1964), Saturnus table for Karusell (1965)



Remmi series - lounge chair, a footstool, coffee table (c1970)

Stefan Lindfors (1962-) as a student, received a silver medal at the Milan Triennale (1986) and designed insect-like *Scaragoo* halogen table lamp (1988), made of aluminium, steel, plastic and concrete. This lamp activated by touch became one of the best known Post-Modern Scandinavian designs, leading him to be renowned as a protagonist of avant-garde between the late 80s and early 90s. His subversive design blurred the boundary between functional objects and works of art. He designed the Marimekko shop in Helsinki (1990), receiving the highest Nordic cultural accolade – the Väinö Tanner (Trailblazer) Award (1992). He made sculptural works such as *Winged Victory* for the Swedish Pavilion at the Atlanta Olympic and *Freedom of Speech* at the Finnish Embassy in Washington (1996). He started *Ego* range of ceramics for Arabia and the first collection of Hackman tools, winning a Design Plus Award (1999) and a Good Design Award (2000). By bringing an artistic sensibility to the design of functional objects, his work is peculiar but distinct Scandinavian in character.



Scaragoo table lamp (1987-88), Ego (1998)

Harry Koskinen (1970-) during his study, collaborated with Iittala for a wedding's present project. He became fascinated by the process of the molten glass which enabled him a cast glass lamp. His *Block Lamp* was put into production with success, winning placement at the Nuutajärvi glassworks and later Iittala. Koskinen has created several innovative designs: *Atlas* candle holder (1996) which when inverted transforms into a vase, *Klubi* range of drinking glasses (1998) which he puts it "good glass mass", and *Relations* storm candleholder (1999) as the largest glass made at Iittala. Koskinen also designed simple and functional stainless steel utensils for outdoor cooking

(2000), reflecting his childhood in the countryside: “a belief and courage to rely on the fundamental things in life”. His *Air* storage containers (2001) are practical and beautiful. Koskinen’s work embodies the critical values in the Finnish design of innovation, function, simplicity, and artistry.



Block lamp (1996), Lantern candleholder (1999), Relations storm candleholder (1999), Stainless steel pot for home chefs (2002)



I C E L A N D



THE REPUBLIC OF ICELAND (Lýðveldið Ísland) is situated on the most northern in Scandinavia, comprising the island of Iceland and its outlying islets. It is the least populous of the Nordic countries and the second smallest with a population of 316,000 and an area of 103,000 km². The island has volcanoes, notably Hekla. There are many geysers including Great Geysir. With the availability of geothermal power and hydroelectricity from the waterfall, most residents have hot water and home heat cheaply. The winters are mild and windy; the summers are with damp and coolness. The country's capital is Reykjavík.

BACKGROUND

Iceland is a country in northern Europe, comprising the island of Iceland and its outlying islets in the North Atlantic Ocean. It is the least populous of the Nordic countries and the second smallest with a population. Located on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, Iceland is volcanically and geologically active. The interior consists of a plateau of sand fields, mountains and glaciers, while many big glacial rivers flow to the sea through the lowlands. Warmed by the Gulf Stream, Iceland has a temperate climate and provides a habitable environment and nature. Once being a part of the Norwegian and later the Danish monarchies (1262-1918), Iceland has seen economic reforms, free trade and diversification from fishing to services, finance, and various industries in the 20th century.

The first people thought to have inhabited Iceland were Irish monks or hermits in the eighth century but left with the arrival of Norsemen around 870-930. The first known permanent settler was Ingólfur Arnarson in Reykjavík (874). Ingólfur followed by other emigrants, largely Norsemen and their Irish slaves. By 930, the most arable lands had claimed, and the Althing, a legislative and judiciary parliament, was founded as the political hub. Christianity adopted in 1000.



Eyjafjallajökull glacier, the Althing in Reykjavík, Ingólfur Arnarson in Reykjavík (874), painted by Johan Peter Raadsig

The internal struggles and civil strife brought the country under the Norwegian crown, and its possession passed to Denmark-Norway in the late 14th century. Infertile soil, volcanic eruptions, and an unforgiving climate made for a harsh life. The Black Death (1402-04, 1494-05) killed each time half the population. From the middle of the 16th century, King Christian III of Denmark began to impose Lutheranism and trade restrictions on Iceland, while pirates from England and Spain raided its coasts. Again, a smallpox epidemic and the Laki volcano (1783) ensued famine. In 1814, following the Napoleonic Wars, Denmark-Norway was broken up, but Iceland remained a Danish dependency. An independence movement arose under the leadership of Jón Sigurðsson, inspired by the National Romanticism in Europe.

Denmark granted Iceland home rule (1874). The Act of Union recognised Iceland as a sovereign state under the Danish king (1918). Iceland became finally independent from Denmark on June 17, 1944. Iceland is a democratic republic. The new parliament, called “Alþingi” (English: Althing), was founded as an advisory body to the Danish king (1845). The president is a ceremonial office that serves as a head of state. In 1980, Icelanders elected Vigdís Finnbogadóttir as the world's first directly elected female president. Icelandic culture has its roots in Norse traditions, and Icelanders place importance on independence and self-sufficiency. In literature, the best-known classical works are the sagas, epics of blood feud, such as Njáls saga. Iceland has produced great writers. Halldór Laxness received the Nobel Prize for literature (1955).

CONTINUITY FROM PAST AND CHALLENGE TO FUTURE

The environment for survival has played in forming a distinct Icelandic culture. Except for a few natural resources, Iceland has always relied on foreign goods which impacted on its society. As the political consensus has endorsed democratic conservatism and social inclusiveness, Icelandic designers focused on objects of functionalism. The country remained decentralised without large urban settlements, but by the late 19th century, it was transforming itself from self-sufficient farmers to city-dwellers. Nationalistic sentiments began to galvanise the idea of cultural identity through design, while other Scandinavian neighbours were re-awakening in heritage.

In 1883 several craftsmen joined at an exhibition to encourage aesthetic and functional design. Although National Romanticism inspired them, they did not share the same nostalgia as other Scandinavians, instead emerged from their dark ages. Many challenged to the industrial progress, but the changing social and economic conditions prevented the major influences in design until a later date. From 1900 to 1930, Icelandic designers such as Guðjón Samuelsson employed traditional craft skills in furniture, made of imported wood. It was an interpretation of Viking arts and crafts, a simple and austere rendition of National Classicism. Iceland was still suffering from stereotyped foreigners who believed that Iceland had a primitive and untouched culture. It was the inter-war years that a true Icelandic identity appeared in design when the first generation of

the designer, Jonas Solmundsson returned from his study abroad and introduced Modern Movement. As Modernism coincided with Iceland's final struggle for independence, design became a powerful symbol of nationalism. As an alternative to no available local materials, cement, brick, wood, and corrugated iron were imported from 1900. However, concrete treated in an unpainted, cubic and elemental way at the Einar Jonsson Museum (1923). After the First World War, Icelandic crafts and design became notable. Gudmundur Einarsson after his studies in Copenhagen and Munich set up the first ceramic workshop in Iceland (1927).

The School of Applied Arts was founded (1939) to improve arts and social environments, as well as the economic depression which prevented Icelanders to study abroad. The school formulated design theory and practised under the leadership of Ludvig Gudmundsson. During the 50s, a new generation studied abroad, especially in Denmark and Sweden where the applied arts were flourishing. The new influence began in Icelandic furniture design. For example, Sveinn Kjarval followed the Danish design tradition of underlining practical and technical knowledge. His turf farmhouse reflected a mixture of Icelandic architectural tradition with a classic Scandinavian look.

As the country has little money for import, small factories were set up for different types of products in Iceland, producing robust and purposeful simplicity such as Helgi Hallgrímsson's upholster rocking chair (1968), Gunnar Magnússon's *Apollo* chair (1967), and Einar Þorsteinn Asgeirsson's *Bucky* chair (1980). These reveal the tendency in Icelandic design to take existing forms and adapt them to something new. The wool industry was the most crucial heritage between the 10th and 13th centuries. However, recent efforts have directed toward tapestry and textile weaving for the garment industry. Younger designers began to work with printed textiles in limited studio production. Asgerdur Buadóttir acquired reputation at the Nordic Textile Triennale.

Metalwork has an honoured tradition as well. The survival of craft is due to the woman's national costume, decorated with silver and gold filigree ornaments. Metal smiths have transferred from traditional forms and techniques to sculptural or abstract ones. The work of Jens Guðjónsson reflects the master of materials and technique. Today, Iceland has its first studio glass artist, Sigrun Ólöf Einaradóttir, indicating an essential aspect of craft and design. Young, creative designers are using the country's nature and heritage to establish international contacts through cooperation with manufacturers. After its independence from Denmark (1944), an Icelandic identity became apparent in the design, particularly in graphic design. However, famed as a book nation, the quality of words was more counted than the beauty of primitive typography. In the 90s, graphic designers perpetuated this rough-and-ready approach through simple forms and bold colours. Because of their passion for the basic design and the limited materials, designers did not aspire to the refined products, unlike other Scandinavians.

Nevertheless, keeping up a tradition of individualism, Icelandic designers have been searching overseas manufactures receptive to their idiosyncratic product solutions which are original in form, function or material. The charm of contemporary Icelandic design is in contrast by faith in modern technology and an ancient association with nature, mirroring the unique geographical differences of this small yet dynamic land.

ICELANDIC DESIGNERS

Gudjón Samuelsson/ Gunnar Magnusson

Gudjón Samuelsson (1887-1950), the most excellent protagonist of Modernism in Iceland, studied at Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen under Martin Nyrop, a leading figure behind the National Romanticism in Denmark. On his return to Iceland, he was appointed the first national architect (1919) and designed several important public buildings with reinforced concrete - an imported material from the 1900s due to the lack of local one. His buildings constructed in a modern style, known as *Steinsteypuklasski* (Concrete Classicism). His projects include the Landsbankinn (National Bank 1924) and the Lánsspítalinn (National Hospital 1930) where he designed site-specific furniture of white painted pine chair (1930). This design epitomised his synthesis of Neo-Classical forms with Modern Movement functionalism. In the mid-30s, he also designed furniture for the Parliament building and austere forms of his chairs enlivened by the vernacular detailing of traditional Icelandic woodwork. The rationalism of his designs treated as a distinctive national interpretation of Modern Movement. Inspired by the functionalist approach to design, Samuelsson pioneered a modern identity for Icelandic design that adopted both national vernacularism and Scandinavian Classicism.



The Halgrímas church design in Reykjavík (1937)

Gunnar Magnusson (1933-) designed furniture for several Danish manufactures such as upholstered pine *Inka* (Inca) chair - a squared form proposed both directness and purposefulness common to Icelandic design. By using geometric shapes, his model predicted the trend towards more rational forms that appeared in Scandinavia during the 70s. Magnusson received many awards for beds and

tables (1962) while he was a student and won the fourth prize in the Daily Mirror's first "International Furniture Design Competition" for geometric forms of bedroom furniture. Magnusson returned to Reykjavik and designed moulded plywood *Apollo* chair (1967), inspired by the staging sections of NASA's *Saturn V* moon rocket for the Apollo space missions. It was a constructional idea of "a central point and two types of the curve". As the leading Icelandic designer during the 70s, he was commissioned to devise the chess table for the 1974 World Chess Championship Match between Bobby Fisher and Boris Spassky in Reykjavik. His designs reflected the Icelandic penchant for elemental constructions and functional straightness. His works were shown internationally such as Cabinet Makers' Guild in Copenhagen.



Inka chair (1963), Apollo chair (1967)



N O R W A Y



THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY (Kongeriket Norge) occupies the western and northern portions of the Scandinavian Peninsula, bordered by Sweden, Finland, and Russia. As a rugged country of mountains, fjords, and glaciers, Norway covers an area of 385,155 km² including the territories Svalbard and Jan Mayen. Temperature is mild in short summer and is cold in long winter. The country has a population of 4.7 million, of which about 80,000 are Sami, an indigenous people in the northern part. Between the 8th and 11th century, the Vikings ravaged the coasts of northwest Europe, and Olaf II Haraldsson was the first king of Norway (1015), converting the people to Christianity. Norway ruled by Denmark (1442-1814) and later Sweden. In 1905, the country gained independence. The country's capital is Oslo.

BACKGROUND

Norway's extensive coastline, facing the North Atlantic Ocean, is home to its famous fjords. In the 1920s, Norway annexed Jan Mayen and acquired the sovereignty over the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard. Since World War II, Norway has experienced rapid economic growth and is now amongst the wealthiest countries in the world. Norway's two official names are Kongeriket Norge (bokmål) and Kongeriket Noreg (nynorsk). Although some medieval texts attribute the name to a mythical King Nórr, it conventionally derived from Old Norse *norðvegr, meaning "the northern route" (the way northwards). Norway inhabited since the early 10th millennium BC, and the populations came from present-day Germany. In the first centuries, Norway consisted several petty kingdoms. Harald Fairhair (Harald Hårfagre) unified them into a kingdom after the Battle of Hafrsfjord in Stavanger (872).

The Viking age (8-11C) characterised by expansion and emigration. Many Norwegians left for Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and parts of Britain and Ireland. Christianity slowly replaced Norse traditions in the 9th and 10th centuries and attributed to the missionary kings Olav Trygvasson and St. Olav. In 1349, the Black Death killed almost half of the population. Royal politics resulted in unions, bringing the thrones of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden under Queen Margrethe I of Denmark until 1814. After Denmark-Norway was attacked by Great Britain, the kingdom allied with Napoleon. On the losing side, Norway was forced to cede to Sweden but declared independence, electing the Danish crown prince Christian Fredrik as king (May 17, 1814).

This period saw the rise of the Romantic Nationalism of cultural movement when Norwegians sought to express a distinct national character. The movement covered all branches of culture, including literature such as (Henrik Ibsen), painting (Edvard Munch), music (Edvard Grieg), and

two official written forms for Norwegian (Bokmål and Nynorsk). On June 7, 1905, a national referendum preferred a monarchy, and the government offered the throne of Norway to the Danish Prince Carl, named Haakon VII. During both World Wars, Norway claimed neutrality but was invaded by German forces during World War II.



Jolunheimen National Park containing two of Europe's highest peaks, Borgund stave church, Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), often considered the "Father of Modern Drama".

Norway is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government, and the king acts as the ceremonial head of state and a symbol of national unity. The Norse followed a form of native Germanic paganism, known as Norse paganism. When Norway had been Christianised by the end of the 11th century, the indigenous Norse religion and practices were prohibited. Nearly 83% are members of the state church, to which they registered at birth.

Norwegian literature starts with the pagan Edda poems and skaldic verse of the 9th and 10th centuries with poets, Bragi Boddason and Eyvindr Skáldaspillir. The arrival of Christianity around the year 1000 brought Norway into contact with European medieval learning, hagiography and history writing. By the late 19th century in the Golden Age of Norwegian literature, the Great Four emerged: Henrik Ibsen, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Alexander Kielland, and Jonas Lie. Bjørnson's "peasant novels" are typical of the National Romanticism, whereas Kielland's novels and short stories are realistic. Ibsen's fame rests on his pioneering dramas, for example, *A Doll's House*, causing a moral uproar because of their candid portrayals of the middle classes. In the 20th century, three novelists awarded the Nobel Prize in literature: Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1903), Knut Hamsun (1920), and Sigrid Undset (1928).

CONTINUITY FROM PAST AND CHALLENGE TO FUTURE

Natural boundaries forced people to live on their resources, and during the long winter, time was available for the home industry. The Viking folk art perpetuated respect for craftsmanship with materials from nature which became the key factor in Norwegian design. On achieving independence in the turn of the 19th century, there arose National Romanticism. The Neo-Viking "Dragon Style" reflected an aspiration to the roots of the country's identity. Gerhard Munthe's furniture, Frederik Holm's silverware, and Henrik Bull's ceramics stood for political statements

and expression of the Pan-Scandinavian decorative revival. After independence, Art Nouveau which was inspired by nature replaced as the first modern international style. Gustav Gaudernack and Thorolf Holmboe exemplified Norwegian Art Nouveau with enamelled objects of stylised yet sensitive representations of flora and fauna. During the pre-war period, the beauty of nature was still influential, while others were seeking for traditional folk weaving, such as Frida Hansen's woven panels with stylised floral motifs, a combination of heritage and Art Nouveau.

Since the foundation of the Norwegian Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design (1918), art and craft had a beneficial relationship. Independent craftsmen from the studio and industry designers worked under an organisation because both roles regarded as the same design process. Their cooperation created better daily objects and improved living situations because the comprehensive approach to design increased understanding of quality, production, and aesthetics of "Brukskunst (Useful Art)". Ferdinand Ars states,

Embracing the arts and crafts, applied arts and industrial design; it comprehends the process of social thinking, understanding of consumer needs, design, and first-class technical and artistic production. Above all, it implies the creation, for use, of objects which are technically appropriate and at the same time contain a quality of beauty which renders them easy and enjoyable to live with.

Between the two World Wars, Norwegian designers influenced by Art Deco and produced simplified forms and decoration such as Nora Gulbrandsen's ceramics with strong geometric lines. The 30s also witnessed functionalism in tubular metal furniture by Herman Munthe-Kaas' *Folkestolen* (People's Chair 1929). Like other Scandinavian countries during the early 40s, a softened form of Modernism gained ground. Alf Sture's wood and cane chair (1943) reflected as a more humanistic approach to design. Its anatomically moulded rear section predicted the ergonomic seating of later designers. After the German occupation of Norway during the Second World War, the country had to regain confidence. In 1945, the periodical *Bonytt* (Interior News) published an article by Håkon Stenstadvold's "Our National Character". Although Norwegian designers should be open to new international design trends, their main goal was to seek and express a cultural distinctiveness through their inward-looking approach.

In the 50s, Norway achieved more international success by Grete Prytz, Tias Eckhoff, Herman Bongard and Arne Jon Jutrem awarded Lunning Prizes. Willy Johansson won silver and gold medals for his glassware at the Milan Triennale. Nevertheless, Norwegian design lacked the stylistic consumer products from Denmark, Finland and Sweden. During the Golden Age of Scandinavian design between the 50s and early 70s, neighbouring countries succeeded by the distinct design, while Norway continued to grapple with establishing a national identity. Contemporary Norwegian craft and design are the aftermaths of the 50s and early 60s when Scandinavia achieved a collective international design profile with aesthetic, mildly functional,

and balanced between craft and mass production. The Society arranged several exhibitions for everyday goods and art pieces, influencing public interest in design. The reason was that Norwegian design tended to lack a directional focus and had difficulty in promoting its products in competitive marketplaces, having no excellence comparable to the Danish furniture, the Finnish glassmaking, and the Swedish consumer products.

By the late 60s, “Brukskunst” was abandoned when specialisation was an issue. The whole of Scandinavia focused on the restructuring of the educational system for training craftsmen and designers. Design activity was demarcated into a group of independent specialities with its profile, standards, and goals, bringing craftsmen closer to the fine arts and away from the industry. Instead of the 50s’ consensus of “Brukskunst”, the new generation believed either in use or in art, no longer in both simultaneously. Industrial designers wanted to work for special needs, public design and environment, stressing methods and ergonomics. Applied artists promoted pure craftsmanship, rejecting the usefulness in mass production, calling themselves “art-craftsmen”. Besides, this division was due to a generational shift. The younger generation made revolution, while the older generation did not agree with the separation, arguing the idea of “Brukskunst”, since it is vital to stand together in interdisciplinary cooperation.

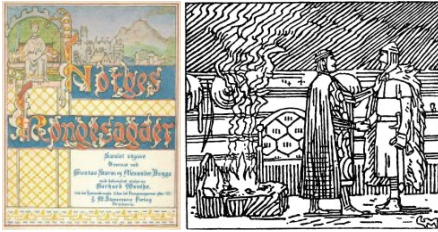
Since the 70s, although the wealth by oil made designers to depart from design in Norway than neighbours, there are a few exceptions such as Peter Opsvik’s *Balans Variable* sitting tool (1979). His innovative, ergonomic furniture reflected a tendency in Scandinavian design towards socially motivated solutions. As an experiment for the younger generation, it drew attention to solid achievement in Norwegian furniture. With its long tradition of combining craft sensibilities with social ideals, Norwegian design has characterised by constructional integrity, functional clarity, user-friendliness and the skilled handling of materials. By reconciling art with technology and by focussing on sustainable solutions, it can create innovative and relevant products for an international appeal with other Scandinavian countries against environmental awareness.

NORWEGIAN DESIGNERS

Gerhard Munthe/ Frida Hansen/ Gustav Gaudernack/ Arne Korsmo & Grete Prytz Kittelsen/ Willy Johansson/ Tias Eckhoff/ Peter Opsvik

Gerhard Munthe (1849-1929) studied painting in Oslo and further trained in Düsseldorf, Germany (1874). Establishing a collective with fellow artists at the Fleskum farm, west of Oslo (1886), he pioneered a Neo-Romantic style which reflected Norway’s wish to assert its cultural identity. The cultural strength of the artistic community in Denmark encouraged him to revitalise the decorative arts of his country by pioneering a distinct Norwegian aesthetic. He subsequently drew inspiration from Norwegian legends and flora and fauna. His bold Neo-Viking narrative tapestries exhibited at the “Exposition Universelle et Internationale” in Paris (1900). The *Studio* magazine (1901) notes:

“In these remote countries a powerful art movement is forcing its way into the general art development of Europe.” Munthe believed that tradition was a crucial element in the developing power of the nation itself. He attempted to bring out a dynamic synthesis of the past and the present to realise objects that infused with a vital national spirit. Promoting the Viking Revival, his work imbued with symbolism of the country’s independence. His decoration of the medieval Håkon Hall in Bergen culminated the National Romanticism.



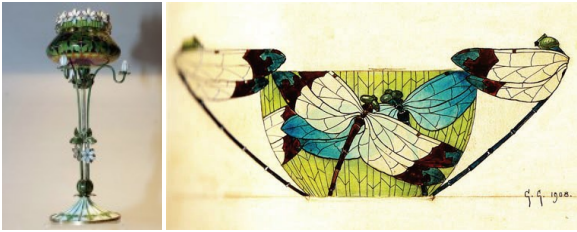
Norwegian King Saga’s title (1914), Saint Olav, Saga book illustration (1899)

Frida Hansen (1855-1931) established an embroidery workshop in Stavanger (1882). Since the 18th century, peasant weavers have produced tapestries depicting primitive biblical scenes. These artistic textiles were lacking in technical finesse, but they were national art treasures. Inspired by these, Hansen learned weaving techniques at Kjerstina Hauglum and became the first woman tapestry weaver in Norway (1889). She founded a weaving company, “det Norske Billedvæveri (DNB 1899)” in Oslo (then Christiania). After a trip to Paris, Hansen embraced Art Nouveau, and her style often adorned with Mackintosh roses, stylised flowers in saturated colours, and bold outlines. She also revived natural dyes and weaving techniques, innovating “transparent weaving” technique which brought her wide acclaim. During the 1890s, Hansen collaborated with Gerhard Munthe and wrote a book, *Husflid og Kunstindustri I Norge* (1899). She exhibited at the “World’s Columbian Exposition” in Chicago (1893) and the “Exposition Universelle et Internationale” in Paris (1900), winning a gold medal. She became one of the greatest advocates of Art Nouveau in Scandinavia.



Poppy tapestry (c1898), Milkyway (1898)

Gustav Gaudernack (1865-1914), born in Bohemia, studied at the School of Arts and Crafts in Vienna (1891). Soon after, he immigrated to Norway, becoming a leading Art Nouveau artist by designing glassware for the Christiania Glasmagasin and enamelling metalware, *Dragonfly* bowl (1908) with flora and fauna. He received acclaim for the skilful execution and imaginative style of a delicate yet sumptuous design which rivalled to Europe. He won a silver medal at the “Exposition Universelle et Internationale” in Paris (1900) and a Grand Prix at “Louisiana Purchase Exposition” in St. Louis (1904). At his workshop, he produced silver, filigree and enamel objects, while teaching at the National College of Art and Design in Oslo. His Art Nouveau work had a substantial impact on Scandinavian design during the early 20th century, especially in Norway where swirling naturalistic motifs adopted for furniture and textiles.



Art Nouveau vase (c1900), *Dragonfly* (1908)

While working in the goldsmith and jewellery firm Torstrop, Arne Kosmo (1900-68) designed the Norwegian pavilion at the “Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne” in Paris (1937). His silver cutlery (1949), distinct for its soft, ergonomically inspired melting forms was awarded a gold medal at the Milan Triennale (1954). Kosmo also designed wooden and tubular metal furniture. During the post-war years, he and his wife, Grete Prytz Kittelsen (1917-2010), were “design couple”, influencing the Norwegian design. Grete Prytz studied at the National College of Arts and Crafts in Oslo (1941) where her father advocated functionalism in the 20s and 30s. Grete designed jewellery and metalware for her family firm, specialising in enamelling that became a Norwegian speciality through revision of technique for abstract motifs and vibrantly colour. She collaborated with the Central Institute for Industrial Research on enamelling silver. Her *Domino* rings (1952) showed at the “Norsk emaljekunst i lyset” (Light on the Enamel Art of Norway) in Oslo. She was awarded the Lunning Prize for advanced techniques and free-hand engraving by the cutting tool. During the 70s, she designed stainless-steel bowls, revealing her commitment to the design - inexpensive and highly qualified.



Arne Kosmo, the Vase thread (c1950), Grete Prytz, Catherineholm ice bucket (1955), Arne & Korsmo's Casserole-Steel with black/white enamel and steel handles (c1950)

Willy Johansson (1921-93) designed decorative engraving glassware for Christiania Glasmagasin (1947). As an art director, he became responsible for free-blown art and pressed glass production at Hadeland glassworks. Norway's first exhibition at the Milan Triennale (1954) brought him a Diplôme d'Honneur for his glass, sandblasted vases that blow into wooden moulds. He also received a gold medal at the Milan Triennale (1957) for clear coloured dishes. The colour of the free-blown designs intensified to their outer edges, contained by Johansson's trademark opaque white rims. Likewise, blue-green vase (1958) and *Medoc* decanter (1961) pursued simple forms and perfect proportions in a quiet monumentality. Although Johansson's clear and smoked glass designs did not possess the expressive spontaneity of Italian glass, they had underlying integrity which was utterly Scandinavian.



Medoc glassware range (1961), Atlantic vase (1970), Free-blown vase with colour (1963)

Tias Eckhoff (1926-2016) apprenticed under Nathalie Krebs at the Saxbo pottery studio in Copenhagen (1948) and studied at the National College of Art and Design in Oslo (1949). He began working for Porsgrun Porselænsfabrik whose factory was modernising its old product line by reorganisation and recruit. One of his first successes was *Der Riffede* (The Fluted One 1952) tableware range - a white porcelain service recalled the soft forms by earlier 30s' design. His aim was "of arriving at a beautiful, simple and functional solution". He also designed fireproof *Glohane* (1955) and *Regent* (1962) tableware ranges. His talent in artistic and industrial design brought him two prizes for decorative and utility glassware in a competition by Hadeland (1951). He gained a reputation for metalware of silver *Cypress* cutlery at the "Inter-Scandinavian design

Competition” by Georg Jensen’s 50th anniversary, leading to a Lunning Prize (1953). Later Eckhoff made highly polished stainless steel cutlery, *Fuga* and *Opus*, *Maya* (1961), *Ulla* (1973), *Tiki* (1974), and *Chaco* ranges (1990). His rational and scientific design was an artistic sensibility. His awards include five gold medals at the Milan Triennale (1954, 57, 60), and three medals from the Norwegian Design Council (1962, 65, 66). As the most prominent Norwegian designer of the modern era, Eckhoff contributed to international attention on the country’s design output.



Maya cutlery (1961), Coffee pot (c1961), Regent coffee service (1962)

Peter Opsvik (1939-) won a scholarship from the Norwegian Credit Bank (1967). As a freelancer, he designed the *Mini Max* desk and chair (1970) to meet the needs of adults and children. With an innovative concept of “Generationsstuhl” (a chair that grows with the child), Opsvik designed the best-selling *Tripp Trapp* high-chair (1972). This chair can elevate the child to normal table height and allow free movement with its footrest: “to explore the world in comfort and safety”. His next design was *Model no. 2010* office chair (1974). With Hans Christian Mengshole, he introduced the revolutionary *Balans Variable* sitting tool (1979) for better ergonomic seating. Opsvik continued to design a Post-Modern style of *Balans Supporter* (1983) and *Garden Seating Sculpture* (1984). Since the mid-80s, he has produced a conventional style and ergonomic seating, such as *Sitti* child’s chair (1993) and *Actulum* rocking chair (1995) as well as more experimental and expressive designs. Despite Scandinavian concern for social inclusiveness (children’s furniture) and healthful living (ergonomic products), his work concerned with expressive form, a reflection of the Norwegian liking for oddness in the visual arts.



TrippTrapp adjustable high chair (1972), Balans Variable sitting tool (1979), Balans Vital kneeling chair (2003)

S W E D E N



THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN (Konungariket Sverige) locates on the Scandinavian Peninsula in Northern Europe. Sweden borders with Norway and Finland and is connected to Denmark by the Oresund Bridge. It has 449,964 km² with a population of 9.17 million. Sweden has lowland areas similar to those in Denmark and Finland, and mountain areas not steep as those in Norway. The agricultural south is flat and hilly, compared to the wilder landscape in the north where Lapps are living. Temperature is cool in summers and cold in winters, but the south benefits from milder Gulf Stream. In the ninth century, Vikings raided Europe, and during the 11th and 12th centuries, Sweden became a unified Christian kingdom.

BACKGROUND

The modern name “Sweden” is derived from Old English Sweoðeod, which meant “people of the Swedes”. The Swedish name Sverige means “Realm of the Swedes”. Prehistory begins in c.12,000 BC with Late Palaeolithic reindeer-hunting camps at the edge of the ice. Farming and cattle breeding, monumental burial, polished flint axes and decorated pottery arrived from the Continent in 4,000 BC. The third of southern part was the stock-keeping and agricultural Bronze Age area in 1,700 BC. Caused by a Roman attempt to move forward in the ninth century, a major shift in the Scandinavian material culture took place, revealing contacts with the Romans. In the second century, the runic script invented, but the people used Proto-Norse, a language ancestral to Swedish and other North Germanic languages.

The Swedish Viking Age lasted between the eighth and 11th centuries. They travelled east and south, going to Finland, the Baltic countries, Russia, the Mediterranean and further as far as Baghdad. It is not known when and how the kingdom of Sweden was born, but the list of Swedish monarchs drew from the first kings who ruled Svealand (Sweden) and Götaland (Gothia) as one with Erik the Victorious. St. Ansgar introduced Christianity around 829, and Sweden counted as a Christian nation from 1050. The period between 1100 and 1400 was characterised by internal power struggles and competition among the Nordic kingdoms. Swedish kings also began to expand in Finland. In the 14th century, Sweden struck by the Black Death (the Plague). However, the cities began to acquire the rights, influenced by German merchants of the Hanseatic League. Sweden and Norway united under King Magnus Eriksson (1319), and Queen Margaret I of Denmark affected the union of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark through the Kalmar Union (1397). On 6 June 1523, Gustav Vasa became the king, leading Sweden to the Protestant Reformation. He is considered to be Sweden's “Father of the Nation”.



The Riksdag building, Stockholm, summer scenery in Jämtland, Gustav II Adolph of Sweden

During imperial times, Sweden was the most powerful country of northern Europe and the Baltic Sea. By his Protestant leadership in the Thirty Years' War, Gustav II Adolph made Sweden the third biggest nation in Europe after Russia and Poland. Although Sweden could not maintain its territories outside Scandinavia entering the 18th century, Norway ceded to Sweden after Denmark-Norway's defeat in the Napoleonic Wars (1814-1905). Sweden gave Finland to Russia (1809), and French Marshal Bernadotte was elected Crown Prince as Karl Johan. The country dissolved at Norway's request (1905). The country's capital is Stockholm.

Sweden remained officially neutral during two World Wars but was under German influence. When Germany started to defeat, Sweden played a role in humanitarian efforts, and many refugees, among them Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe, were saved. Before the 11th century, Swedes adhered to Norse paganism, worshipping Æsir gods, with its centre at the temple in Uppsala. With Christianisation, the laws of the country were changed, forbidding the worship of other deities. The 19th century saw the arrival of evangelical free churches and secularism, leading many to distance themselves from the church.

CONTINUITY FROM PAST AND CHALLENGE TO FUTURE

Swedish daily life guides by liberal attitudes with a strong sense of civic duty. The balance of individual freedom and collective responsibility has ensured a stable and comprehensive society. The humanist ethos of Lutheranism has permeated all aspects, and aesthetic considerations have tempered by economic and social concerns - simple and modest products of Swedish Modernism. Utilitarian products are for every day to everyone. The origins of Swedish design can be traced to the 18th century when King Gustav III (reigned 1771-92) initiated Neo-Classicism. Gustavian interiors, underlining lightness, comfort, and simplicity, were filled with pastel colour, pale painted pine furniture, and bare wooden floors, offering a gentler interpretation of continental Neo-Classicism. In the 1830s and 40s, Sweden produced sparsely decorated furniture in birch and maple under German Biedermeier. This restrained design reflected not only the lack of importing fine materials but also the Swedish moral of modesty and simplicity.

Entering the mid-19th century, Neo-Classicism was usurped by Revivalism with a heavily ornamented mixture of historical influences from Gothic to Rococo. Moreover, the economic slump

forced manufacturers to evaluate their products. In response to these, the Föreningen Svensk Form (Swedish Society of Craft and Industrial Design 1845) founded, hoping that Swedish industry maintains through good design and high standards of technical quality: “bring about improvements in handicraft and industry through cooperation with artistic forces, better the household culture, and work to raise the general level of taste.”

At the end of this century, the Arts and Crafts movement was nationally distinct. Carl and Karin Larsson furnished their house in a simple peasant culture against Industrialisation. The Swedish Art Nouveau was prompted to a national aesthetic, exemplified in Gunnar Wennerberg’s work of flora and fauna themes. It was Ellen Key who wrote the liberal morals through aesthetics in “Skönhet åt Alla” (Beauty for All 1899). Inspired by Larsson, she urged that design standards could be raised to bring out social reform by refining people’s taste and enhancing their appreciation of aesthetic issues: “beautiful home surroundings would be sure to make people happier”. However, Art Nouveau was criticised for moral turpitude and lack of social purpose at the Baltic Exhibition in Malmö (1914).

Wilhelm Kåge’s *Arbetarservisen* (Workers’ Service 1917) displayed the new ethos of ethics-through-aesthetics in design. The printed *Liljeblå* (Blue Lily) flint ware alluded to folk art with soft Rococo forms. The simplicity as a symbol of beauty gained ground after the end of the First World War when a world conjured up ideas for a better society. Gregor Paulsson wrote at the “Home Exhibition” in Stockholm (1918) with a key phrase, “Vakrare Vardagsvara” (More Beautiful Everyday Objects). The industry overlooked a new and large group. Low-wagers need inexpensive, useful yet attractive wares, and factories could benefit from design as a marketing tool. “Good design” is pleasant without wasting natural and human resources.

During the 20s, a combination of avant-garde and industrialisation revealed contradiction: national/international, urban/rural, primitive/modern at the “Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes” in Paris (1925). However, their commonness was simplicity and elegance. At this time, the Swedish Social Democratic government regarded modern design as a means for social reform because modernity and technology can bridge the gap between capitalism and collectivism. Functionalism (Funkis) projected a sterile institutional aesthetic that stressed hygiene over cosy comfort. Cleanliness was the key to a strong nation with good health.

The Stockholm Exhibition (1930) marked a turning point of urban progress over rural traditionalism. Erik Gunnar Asplund was responsible for this. Funkis underlined industrialisation as a social and aesthetic ideal and claimed standardised building and functional furniture. In contrast, the opponents of Funkis argued that social needs could address through the implementation of modern design. To this, a compromise sought between organic materials and industrial production, initiated by Bruno Mathsson’s *Eva* chair (1934) whose seating was made of moulded solid wood and woven hemp webbing, echoing human body. After the Second World War, Modernism became a symbol with “design as a lifestyle”. Dogmatic Functionalism rejected, and

Modernism of sensual forms, warm earth colours, natural materials, and rationalism was evolved at “H55” in Helsingborg (1955), as a pioneering generation of industrial products.

The late 50s post-war baby boom promoted child-oriented design, while a focus was on ergonomics and safety in the next two decades. Victor Papanek’s book, *Design for a Real World* (1970) called for a high level of moral and social responsibility in the design profession. The most successful was Innovator Design (1969) which Johan Hultd and Jan Dranger retained their designs anonymously to counter the cult of designer products. Using tubular metal and canvas, they developed colourful, inexpensive yet practical furnishings. It was the democratic roots of Swedish design and signalled a new internationalism within the Scandinavian design. Although their designs were the 30s’ Functionalism, they are the international High-Tech style.

During the early 80s, Post-Modernism arrived. Jonas Bohlin’s *Concrete* chair (1981) was one of the first Scandinavian manifestations, and Mats Theselius’ *National Geographic Magazine* bookcase (1990) brought international attention to contemporary Swedish design. However, it was flat-pack furnishing of IKEA that played the enormous role in exporting the notion of “design as a lifestyle”. Today, Swedish design continues the components of durability, economy, honesty, affordability, and functionality by democratic and responsible solutions. Believing that well-designed products can enhance the quality of life, “Vackrare Vardagsvara” will validate the future design. On the 50th anniversary of IKEA, Papanek noted,

The sustainability of life on this planet can be helped or hindered through the design and use of the objects we make. The ethical design must be environmentally and ecologically earth-friendly. It must be human-scale; it must be humane; it must be embedded in social responsibility.

SWEDISH DESIGNERS

Carl Larsson & Karin Larsson/ Erik Gunnar Asplund/ Bruno Mathsson/ Sigvard Bernadotte/ Gunnar Cyrén/ Johan Hultd & Jan Dranger/ Björn Dahlström

Carl Larsson (1853-1919) and Karin Larsson (1859-1928) were pioneers to the notion of design as a lifestyle due to their eclectic style on warm domesticity. During his study at the Academy of Art in Stockholm, Carl did caricatures to the journal *Kasper* and graphics to the newspaper *Ny Illustrated Tidning*. He moved to Paris and Grez, painting a poetic realism and strong narrative quality. He married Swedish artist, Karin Bergöö (1883). Karin’s father gave the family a small house in Sundborn village of Dalarna, the spiritual heart of Sweden. Karin decorated it with a simple folk style of white painted and built-in furniture, wooden floors, embroidered textiles, and pots with red geraniums. His idyllic, rural, and free lifestyle reproduced in an album, *Ett Hem* (Our Home 1899) with a phrase of “reform taste and family life”. His house was remodelled with simplicity and warmth to evolve a new concept of Swedish domesticity. Believing art in the home,

Larssons embellished every surface of the house by portraits and mottos of “Love Each Other Children, for Love is All”. This house was a realisation of Arts and Craft for a rural ideal and a manifestation of the Scandinavian notion of “Hygge”, a joyful cosiness. The integrated and simple lifestyle formed a background from which modern Swedish design evolved, seen as the spiritual progenitor of the IKEA aesthetic.



Ett hem illustration (1899)

Erik Gunnar Asplund (1885-1940) became editor of the journal *Teknisk Tidskrift Arkitektur* and received recognition for interior design at the Liljevalchs Art Gallery (1917). He designed several Neo-Classical buildings, notably the *Scandia Cinema*, Stockholm (1923) and the *Stockholm City Library* (1928). Asplund also made classic furnishings such as *Senna chair* (1925). His work underwent a dramatic transformation when he became a chief architect for the Stockholm Exhibition (1930) organised by the Swedish Society of Craft and Design. His Modernist glass and metal exhibition building drew international recognition and introduced Bauhaus to Sweden. By combining Modern functionalism with the grace of Scandinavian Neo-Classicism, Asplund developed a design language that was less severe than that of contemporary German Modernist architects. His achievements included *Skogsykogården*, Stockholm, and an extension to the Town Hall in Gothenburg. One of the most prominent advocates of functionalism and Sweden’s most influential architect, Asplund combined common sense with artistic intuition in his lifetime search for balanced unity and clarity of form.



Stockholm City Library (1928)

Bruno Mathsson (1907-88) trained under his father's firm in Värnamo (1933). During the early 30s, Funkis dominated in Sweden, and designers such as Axel Larsson and Sven Markelius produced strong geometric forms of functional furniture. In contrast, Mathsson claimed the necessity of design for the natural sitting and designed an ergonomic perspective with its contours echoing the human body. Flexibility and comfort solved by using jute or hemp webbing. His first chair *Arbetsstol* (Working Chair 1936) afforded the sitter greater comfort, explaining a generational shift from geometric Functionalism to organic Modernism, and signalling new sculptural confidence in product design. His organic *Arbetsstol* and *Pernilla* chaise lounge (1934) with bent laminated wood frames can predate Aalto's *Model no. 43* (1936) and *Model no. 406* (1939). Although his designs were less utilitarian than Aalto's, they were more ergonomic. He participated in the "Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne" in Paris (1937). *Karin* chair (1968) was a proto-High Tech design with a tubular metal frame, hemp canvas seat, and upholstered cushions. Mathsson was awarded the Gregor Paulsson Trophy (1955) and exhibited at the New York World Fair (1937), "Svenska Form" in Copenhagen (1946), etc. As a pioneer, Mathsson devoted himself to the continual refinement of ideal types based on structural purity and human-oriented logic.



Pernilla lounge chair (1934), Eva chair (1936), initially as the *Arbetsstol* - working chair, Jeson chair (1966)

Sigvard Bernadotte (1907-2002), the son of King Gustav VI Adolf of Sweden, studied at the Royal University College of Fine Arts in Stockholm and the National School of Applied Arts in Munich (1931), despite his earlier studies on political science. He joined Georg Jensen, becoming the first designer to use geometric forms against the naturalistic Arts and Crafts forms in a silversmith. *Bernadotte* flatware (1939) displays a typical angular form. He also designed a volumetric metal and bakelite cocktail shaker. After his travelling in Europe, Africa and, particularly America with Acton Björn, he founded *Merkatil Grafik* (1950) whose first success was a compact metal and plastic adding-machine (1952). The practice was expanded to other products such as melamine *Margrethe* stacking bowl of non-slip rubber bases, pouring spouts and hand-grips, and compact *Privat* typewriter (1960), a cigarette lighter, in-flight tray and cutler for SAS, modular kitchen electric equipment and a plastic picnic set. Bernadotte and Björn were the first Scandinavian design

consultant to achieve international recognition. Bernadotte went on to found his own Bernadotte Studio (1964), specialising in heavy industrial design from forklift trucks to outboard motors. He was the first European designer to be elected to the American Designers' Institute.



Bernadotte thermos and cutlery (1939), Bernadotte & Björn: Margrethe melamine mixing bowl (1950), Can opener (1966)

Gunnar Cyrén (1931-2013) worked for Orrefors (1959). In contrast to the prevailing Scandinavian taste for rusticity in the early 60s, Cyrén designed glassware that was distinguished by its precise and refined craft skills. This design approach exemplified by elegant overlaid glass bowl decorated with bear motifs. Cyrén's later iconoclastic *Pop* goblets (1966) with colourfully striped stems and opalescent bowls are similarly radical but perfectly encapsulated the joyful and youthful exuberance of the period. For him, the design has always been a private activity, and his work often displays "a personal touch", being at odds with the constrained mass production. Cyrén has concerned of objects that function and personality as well. He awarded the Lunning Prize (1966) and during the 70s began designing for Dansk International Designs. In the next decade, his glassware kept a characteristic of restraint and elegance in design. He received the Prince Eugen Medal (1988) and contributed glass tableware with many coloured stems (1991) to the commissioned *Nobel* service for the 90th anniversary of the Nobel Foundation. As "the innovative grand old man of glass", Cyrén continues to design original and beautiful glassware for Orrefors.





Vase (c1960), Pop goblet (1966), Nobel glassware range (1991) - jug, wine, snap, martini & champagne, liquor, sherry, beer, decanter, candlestick, cutlery to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Nobel Prize

During the 60s, a trend of the group was an effective means of production caused by the anti-Vietnam war protests and student riots. Four students from the College of Arts, Crafts and Design and Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Johan Hultdt, Jan Dranger, Martin Eiserman and Jan Ahlin formed Dux4rya. They invited to the Dux for functional and affordable furniture experiments for a “do-it-yourself” element. After graduating (1968), Johan Hultdt (1942-2016) and Jan Dranger (1941-) founded Innovator Design, and their *Stuns* chair came to international prominence at the Cologne Furniture Fair (1973). This functional tubular metal chair with a canvas sling and polyurethane upholstered cushions had simplicity towards the High Tech style. This knockdown furniture sold in the unassembled competent form in a cardboard box. Innovator Design furniture would reinterpret the 30s’ Swedish Modernism whose materials were steel and glass. Hultdt and Dranger’s designs signalled a new internationalism in Scandinavian design and were sold anonymously against the cult of the designer in the 50s and 60s. Having suffered copyright infringement with *Innovator*, Hultdt became a leading campaigner against plagiarism. From the mid-80s, Dranger has been focusing on sustainable design, collaborating with IKEA. He received an Ecology Design Award (IF Hanover 1999) for inflatable *SoftAir* couch- inexpensive, durable, environmentally sound furniture.



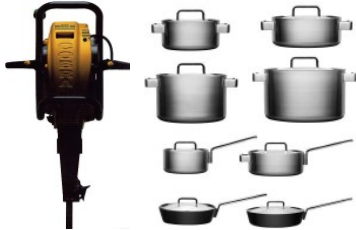
Stuns (1973), Balluff middle section (1974), Slim chair (1982)

Björn Dahlström (1957-) began his career in the mid-70s, designing graphics and animations for the film. He worked for clients who turned his attention to three-dimensional design. *Rocking Rabbit* (1985) and streamlined *Toyicar* (1966) inspired by his earlier studies of animation and

graphic design, distinguished by soft yet elemental forms and straightforward function. In the 90s, Bahlström encompassed a wide range of products including a flashlight and soldering equipment, a pneumatic drill, toys and water-play system, and electric handicap aids, with the belief that “the designer has to be part of the industrial process, taking the role of free-thinking catalyst.” One of his skills was to transfer hard industrial design to look and feel attractive. *Cobra MK1* pneumatic drill set a new aesthetic precedent for such a product and maximised ease of handling by lessening vibrations. Bahlström won many awards - Excellent Swedish Design and Plus Design. His successful *Tools* cookware range (1998) embodies the high object-integrity, epitomising one of the best Scandinavian designs since the late 20s.



Rocking rabbit (1985), Superstructure easy chair (2003)



Cobra MK1 (1990), Tools cookware series (1999)



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Detailed information on Scandinavian Design can be found in a Korean book version, called “37 Scandinavia Designer” Published by Korean Studies Information, 2013. <http://ebook.kstudy.com>

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