

WALTER KNOLL

Characters

Of people, brands and furniture

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Of people, brands and furniture

Dear Readers,

I am delighted to be presenting you with the first edition of “Characters” – the new magazine from Walter Knoll. It tells of people who inspire us. Brands we work with. And the furniture we create. What do they all have in common? Personality and excellence.

It takes personality and courage to create something new that is here to stay. And it takes excellence and craftsmanship to transform an idea into the shape that makes it sustainable, precious and classic.

Which is why we are pleased to be introducing you to some of the most striking personalities of our times – in interviews, reports and pictures. From his London base, Norman Foster in collaboration with Walter Knoll has just created an iconic masterpiece, *Foster 620*, a new type of upholstered bench for large, urban spaces (page 128). In Vienna, the designers at EOOS came up with nothing less than the re-definition of the desk. *Tama Desk* is a song of form and shape. A sculpture for visionaries (page 94). In Tokyo, creative director Kashiwa Sato was searching for clear-cut, bold furniture to design a puristic interior for a Japanese pharmaceuticals company – and found what he was looking for at Walter Knoll (page 50).

A piece of furniture is only Walter Knoll if it has personality. And for that to be the case, down to the very last detail, it needs the attitude and expertise of our construction engineers, seamstresses and upholsterers. This is where everything comes full circle, a circle of excellence. And it's the reason why, in this first edition, we also present the people who turn the ideas of the architects and designers into excellent pieces of furniture, which above all else have one essential ingredient: character.

Enjoy your journey of discovery reading our magazine. For news and more information take a look at our website. We look forward to welcoming you to Herrenberg!

Sincerely yours,



Markus Benz



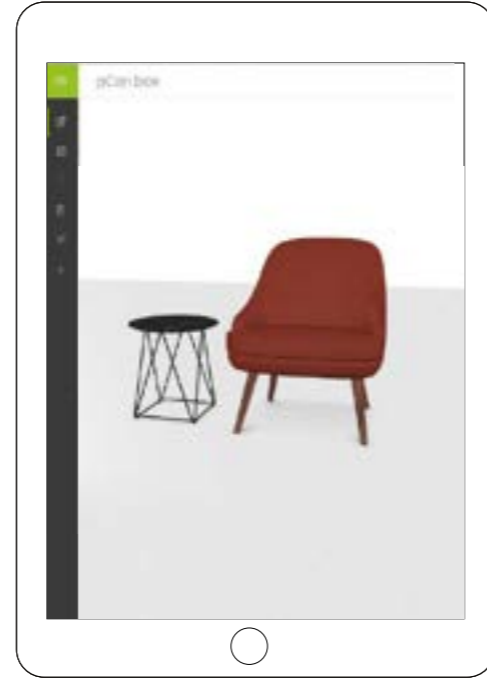
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CEO, Walter Knoll

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People

People shape progress and spawn innovation. They set up companies, create brands, construct buildings – sometimes even entire worlds – and fit them out. But what connects all this? How do ideas, attitudes and values become things of value? Seven managers, makers and creatives reveal what is important to them, what inspires them. And what influence furniture by Walter Knoll has on their lives

“We moved into an unusual building
and wanted furniture that emanated
both innovation and stability.
At Walter Knoll, we found what we
were looking for.”

Read the interview with Koen Maerevoet about **MINDFULNESS** on page 20



Barbara Knoflach

BNP Paribas Real Estate, Frankfurt

“Spaces shape people,
I’m convinced of that.”

Read the interview with Barbara Knoflach
on **QUALITY** on page 21

Barbara Knoflach
enjoys her view from
the thirty-third floor
of the Frankfurt
OpemTurm. Exec-V desk,
Leadchair Executive
chair by Walter Knoll



Frank Dopheide in the *Silent Chair* by Walter Knoll, the favorite armchair of the Handelsblatt editors. Together with the occasional table and pouf, it belongs to the *Seating Stones* range from Walter Knoll

Frank Dopheide

Handelsblatt Media Group, Dusseldorf

“Walter Knoll suits us to a T – like the Handelsblatt, it stands for excellent products. And astounding experience.”

You can read the interview with Frank Dopheide on **BRANDS** on page 22

Kashiwa Sato

Samurai Inc., Tokyo

“In every object there is an archaic function. I follow this design principle. And I know that Walter Knoll does too.”

Read the conversation with Kashiwa Sato about **NATURALNESS** on page 23

Kashiwa Sato, creative director and CEO of the agency Samurai Inc., has covered the walls of a Tokyo-based pharmaceutical company with stylized Japanese characters made of wood. Foster 500 armchair by Walter Knoll

Claus Sendlinger on the building site of his latest project, Marina Marina at the Rummelsburger Bucht in Berlin, a creative campus for communal working, living, eating, and being. *FK* chair by Walter Knoll

Claus Sendlinger

Design Hotels AG and SLOW Hospitality, Berlin

“With the *FK* chair, every point is defined. It just radiates a timeless power. And in this way every good design has its own energy, its own character.”

Read the interview with Claus Sendlinger on **PERSONALITY** on page 24

The EOOS design team
Martin Bergmann,
Gernot Bohmann and
Harald Gründl (from left)
in their studio in the
First District of Vienna

Martin Bergmann
Gernot Bohmann
Harald Gründl

EOOS, Vienna

“At some point in the design process, the model strikes back: you make another change and it all gets worse. You can feel it. That’s the moment you know the design is perfect.”

Read the conversation with
Gernot Bohmann and Martin Bergmann
about **CREATIVITY** on page 25

Mindfulness The CEO of KPMG Belgium explains what furniture has to do with respect, team spirit and management – and why his clients like to visit him at his office so much



Mr. Maerevoet, you just made a beeline for the 369 armchair by Walter Knoll. Is that a coincidence?

KM Not at all. This chair is my favorite model. It is compact, flexible and very comfortable, and its high quality is a way of showing respect to guests and employees alike.

Why did you choose furniture by Walter Knoll for your new headquarters?

KM We moved into an unusual building – and wanted unusual furniture. Furniture that would emanate the core values of our work: innovation, stability and trust. And at Walter Knoll we found what we were looking for. The architecture and furniture are in perfect harmony with one another and with the values of KPMG.

There are various meeting rooms here on the tenth floor. Almost all the tables are round. Does that have anything to do with your values?

KM Although we're a big company, we're essentially a family and communicate as such. Once a month I invite a dozen employees to lunch so we can have an

open discussion. If we're all sitting together in a big group, that makes the meeting easier.

What does management mean to you?

KM To guide a group towards achieving a shared goal. To effectively communicate a vision and be able to develop a strategy based on that.

What matters more? Managing or letting the employees do their thing?

KM Good question. Our employees are highly qualified individuals who want to make their own decisions. That's why it's important to us to always strike the right balance between autonomy and structure. On the one hand, there are employees who want to make their own decisions and, on the other, the team that is pursuing a shared goal. At KPMG, the team is ultimately more important than the individual.

How have managing styles changed?

KM Expertise used to be the main reason for hiring someone. Back then, managers had a scrutinizing role. Today, they focus more on motivating employees. That's why we prioritize social skills when recruiting.

How has your managing style changed?

KM I do a lot more listening and communicating than I used to. My employees expect immediate feedback to their questions and suggestions. We are in constant contact with one another.

These days there is much debate about new work, agility and holacracy when it comes to leadership. How important are these things to you?

KM We talk about them. In my opinion, they are important prerequisites for good teamwork. And I see teamwork as the future. Decisions can be implemented

more quickly and efficiently when the members of a team are working together – far more so than when they are just following orders from the top.

Did you want to reflect the corporate culture in the furniture?

KM Absolutely. When picking furniture, you must first understand the corporate culture. Ours is characterized by friendliness, transparency and intimacy.

How does the furniture show that?

KM Ultimately, it's about quality and trust. And the furniture perfectly embodies those values: clear-cut shapes and great skill down to the last detail – those are also our brand values. I like to think about KPMG as a family-run business. Our tone of voice is less aggressive than at other companies – we try to motivate our employees. The furniture conveys the way our company treats people and the environment as well as the company's approach to the future. In other words, our furniture is a way of showing respect to our employees and clients. And, naturally, the furniture is a part of our branding strategy.

How do visitors respond to the interior?

KM Our clients are very impressed by the building and the furniture. Lately, a number of clients have started to prefer meeting in our office. Which is, of course, a great compliment. *Interview: Ilona Marx*

About

Koen Maerevoet is CEO of KPMG Belgium. In 2016, the lawyer and tax expert became a Senior Partner at the company. Read more about the new KPMG headquarters starting on page 34.

Quality When the Frankfurt-based real estate expert talks about her new office, it sounds like a wonderful ménage à trois. And the other protagonists are a table and chair by Walter Knoll



rooms, open spaces or community working spaces rather than individual offices. If a building can do all that, then its resale value goes up.

Interestingly enough, quality and flexibility are also key values for furniture design.

BK A building and its furnishings are complementary: one begets the other and vice versa. The better both work with one another, the higher the value.

Why did you decide on furniture by Walter Knoll?

BK When I started to look for a desk during the move, I saw a model that I could move up and down: the *Exec-V*. I unexpectedly fell in love. Minimal design with an ingenious function – this table is just delightful.

Do you ever move it up and down just for the fun of it?

BK At the beginning, yes! It's so incredibly quiet. And now I see that it's good for both my back and my brain when I alternate between sitting down and standing up while working. Now I even have a second *Exec-V* in my office in Paris.

How often, approximately, do you adjust the height of the table?

BK Every day! I write while I'm sitting and I like to stand while on conference calls or for short meetings. And the *Exec-V* is well suited for people to gather around.

How did your *Leadchair Executive* come into your life?

BK I wanted a chair with a high back rest that supported my head but was still elegant. And I wanted the seating depth to suit me down to the ground. Most executive chairs are simply too deep for your average woman – only taller women can sit comfortably in them. My interior designer recommended me the *Leadchair Executive* and I ordered it.

You didn't even try sitting in it first?

BK No. And it has been extremely comfortable since day one. For years I suffered from back and neck pains and now they have gotten significantly better. It feels like the *Leadchair Executive* was designed for the sole purpose of doing my body good.

That's what you meant when you said that spaces influence our quality of life.

BK Harmonious surroundings are incredibly important. It shouldn't be too perfect, but livable. When I walk into a room, I want to feel comfortable there.

What do you feel when you walk into your office?

BK I look forward to my furniture and my view every single morning. The two things together inspire me. *Interview: Ralf Grauel*

About

Barbara Knoflach is Global Head of Investment Management at BNP Paribas Real Estate. In 2017, she received the Most Influential Woman of the Decade prize from the trade magazine PropertyEU in London. She is considered the most influential woman in the European real estate sector.

Ms. Knoflach, what matters more to you: furnishings or views?

BK (laughing) Spaces shape people, I'm convinced of that. So I believe that good furnishings matter most of all. They have an impact on our quality of life. And if you have a heavenly view like we do here from the thirty-third floor, well, that's an added bonus. Then again, I also like our lobby where you can see outside from almost anywhere – and there is lots of greenery. The entire building is massive and minimal at the same time. A mix of clear assertiveness and restraint.

It sounds like the building has a character. Is that what a property needs?

BK I am essentially an asset manager. If I invest my client's money in a property, I always consider three factors: quality, infrastructure and flexibility.

How do these factors increase the value of a building?

BK When you buy quality, you are sparing yourself future expenses. Which is to say: you buy cheap, you buy twice?

BK In most cases, yes. Quality can be seen above all in the workmanship and architecture. When I talk about infrastructure, I am talking about a building's proximity to public transportation or parking spaces for cars as well as bike stands. But that still isn't enough. The people who live or work in the building also want restaurants, bars and culture nearby; and if they get hungry, they should be able to go around the corner and buy a sandwich.

And flexibility?

BK Flexibility is becoming increasingly important because the needs of tenants are changing more dramatically and more rapidly than ever before. Companies no longer want to be bound to ten-year leases. And if they do, they want to be able to divide and sublet their spaces. Many users at some point will want flexible

Brand What does an armchair say about a company?

How does furniture inspire employees?

The media maker was intent on realizing his vision of the new Handelsblatt exclusively with Walter Knoll



Mr. Dopheide, what kind of furniture do you have in your office?

FD I don't have an office – that is part of the cultural change that we are going through. Publishing houses are hierarchical, making it very difficult for the management to gain a sense of the mood among the employees and within the various departments. That is why, day in day out, I find a place for myself among my colleagues. But from eight till nine in the morning, I sit downstairs in the foyer.

You work in the foyer?

FD I read our newspapers and the expressions on my colleagues' faces – to see their frame of mind as they come to work. Everyone knows and sees that I am approachable. Some might hesitate a few days, but they always come to see me. Sometimes it's about a difficult customer, other times it's to do with the office dog. Many things are too small to require a formal appointment with the management but can nevertheless place a strain on day-to-day office life, so we quickly find a solution.

Do you already have a favorite item among the range of new office furniture?

FD My favorite is the *FK Lounge* armchair.

It's a prestigious item that embodies ultimate relaxation. I enjoy sitting on our FKs with customers in the entrance hall. If people are as enthusiastic about the Handelsblatt as they are about these armchairs, then I'll be a happy man.

What will the Handelsblatt of the future look like?

FD We are shifting from a distinguished business paper to an innovative media group. We want to share economic expertise with society as a whole – be it in printed, digital or live format. Our newspaper is 73 years old, people love our experience, our analytical skills. That is great, but we cannot allow ourselves to be stifled by sobriety. That is why we must bring the old forward into the future.

How are you addressing this transformation?

FD Our new building is a cornerstone of the process. We wanted a flagship store. As our products become increasingly virtual, it helps to have a place where employees, readers and customers come into physical contact with the strength of our brand. The rooms and furniture must make our brand and our values both visible and tangible.

What do you feel now when you touch your furniture?

FD Excellence, independence, clarity, community and innovation. Excellence is fundamental – our desks, upholstered benches and sofas make that abundantly clear. Every employee feels that the desire for excellence also applies to them. Every visitor, regardless of whether they are a customer or a job applicant, should see us as a future-oriented company.

Does that mean job applicants choose their employer from the inside?

FD It is mind-boggling how much time we

spend at the office during our life. And this space has an influence on our decisions. If you don't care about the furniture, the technical equipment or the quality of the coffee machine, that shows your indifference. That is why we gave a lot of thought, and devotion, to the equipment in our new building.

Why did you opt for Walter Knoll?

FD The company suits us to a T – like us, Walter Knoll stands for excellent products. And astounding experience. Markus Benz and his team displayed the utmost empathy and creativity.

How did you brief Walter Knoll?

FD We handed them our brand strategy and then worked together to determine which values were to be conveyed and which area played which communicative and emotional role. It was sometimes something of a struggle, but the result is perceptible and quite exceptional.

What do your visitors think?

FD They say that they want to stay and work here. They praise the concentrated power and the pleasant atmosphere. The employees' perspective has also changed noticeably. They now tend to see us as being much more flexible and modern. It is important to remember that many of our employees are journalists, a highly critical breed if ever there was one. Praise from them is the ultimate accolade. *Interview: Hiltrud Bontrup*

About

Frank Dopheide has held the position of Managing Director, responsible for customer development and brand management, at the Handelsblatt Media Group since 2014. Previously he was Chairman at the advertising agency Scholz & Friends in Düsseldorf and at Grey Worldwide, and founded the agency Deutsche Markenarbeit.

Naturalness We are always drawn to the same things: fire, earth, water, air. The Tokyo-based creative director is a master of the four classical elements. A portrait



of an agency and graphic designer, he never gets tired of sitting at the drawing board. But above all, he likes to discover through dialog what a company needs and how it sees itself. "A pharmaceutical company wants to restore health, i.e., promote vitality. That's why I chose vitality as the basis for the entire concept." The source of vitality is found in nature, as is the source of medicine. It therefore seemed obvious to use natural materials, especially wood.

"In design, there is always the question of how much to preserve and how much to change," says Kashiwa Sato, while turning a handleless Japanese ceramic cup over in his hand pensively. In every artefact there is a basic function, an archaic form that must always stay the same. "People are the same all over in the world. As living beings, we function according to a basic biological rhythm. We have the same taste in music, colors and smells. There is something archaic that connects us all." Walter Knoll also works with time-honored, tried-and-tested design principles. Staff there take archetypes very seriously.

"And when new developments come along, they masterfully go about finding a balance."

His guiding principle: someone who wants to create something eccentric while disregarding the archetypes is bound to fail. "A concept must not stray too far from the known path, otherwise people feel overwhelmed and it is immediately rejected." If just ten percent of an object is new – that is already very good. "It's enough to provide that small stimulus. Like a muscle," says Sato and pinches his upper arm. "Without any stimulus it cannot grow either."

Kashiwa Sato created inspiring stimuli at Pharma Inc. in the form of eight Japanese characters, which stand for different areas of the building. Stylized in the form of kumiki, the traditional three-dimensional wood art, they adorn walls and lights. That is how a simple and remarkably effective design was produced. Clear and warm thanks to the light Japanese cypress wood and soft lighting. Valuable thanks to lovingly executed Japanese craftsmanship. Reduction, innovation and quality in perfect balance: "That's how minimalist design works," says Kashiwa Sato. And how it eventually becomes a source of power. *Sonja Blaschke*

Kashiwa Sato likes to keep it simple – just as long as it's not boring. The designer sits in the conference room of his agency, Samurai Inc., in Tokyo, in the middle of a long table made of fine, light-colored wood. The table is so wide that people sitting opposite one another can barely reach each other's hands. Apart from that, the room – framed by sliding glass walls – is empty. No pictures, no objects, nothing that could be a distraction. "Whoever comes in here should focus on the discussion," says Sato and smiles mischievously.

The 53 year old Tokyoite, dressed in a dark T-shirt and light pants, is one of the best known Japanese creative directors. Global companies such as the clothes designer Uniqlo, the car manufacturer Honda and the fashion label Issey Miyake treasure his talent for omission. When working on flagship stores and corporate headquarters, he boils down the design so dramatically that only the essence of the brand can shine through – and be understood the world over. "By leaving things out, priorities become clearer," says Kashiwa Sato, pushing aside imaginary weight with his hands for emphasis. "What remains is stronger and lasts longer."

He has just designed the new headquarters of the pharmaceutical company Pharma Inc. in Tokyo – with chairs, armchairs and sofas by Walter Knoll. He found a kindred spirit in the furniture maker 9,000 kilometers away in Herrenberg: "Walter Knoll has managed to tread the fine line between linearity and finesse perfectly," says Kashiwa Sato. When, like him, your core principle is minimalism, you need high-quality furniture that makes an impact in a room and pleases the senses with its perfection.

"What's important to you?" – This is Kashiwa Sato's favorite question to ask his clients face-to-face. After twenty years as head

About

Kashiwa Sato is one of the most sought-after creative directors in Japan. He shapes the brand identity of his clients from logos to company buildings. In addition, he teaches at various universities and writes books, such as the bestseller Kashiwa Sato's Ultimate Method of Reaching the Essentials. He has been running his agency, Samurai Inc., in Tokyo, since the year 2000.

*The company wishes to remain anonymous, so we have changed the name. Read more about the new headquarters starting on page 50.

Claus Sendlinger

Design Hotels AG, SLOW Hospitality

Personality Buildings with a special vibe. Employees with minds of their own. Accidents that become opportunities. Whenever this hotelier launches a project, something quite unique is created



cs It's working like a charm.

Will you be founding more farms like this?

cs Definitely not. The era of global franchises is over. A good product can't be multiplied endlessly. Otherwise it can't become a classic, a legend. This leather chair, *FK*, by Walter Knoll, the chair I'm sitting on now, is a classic. Every point is defined. It radiates a timeless power. And every good design has its own energy like this.

This all sounds very spiritual.

cs The trend forecaster Li Edelkoort says that in the next five years, we're all going to be yearning for spirituality and indigenous craft products. And for wabi-sabi. Which comes from Zen Buddhism, and means the beauty of imperfection, transience. Everything changes, and the beauty is in the ageing.

Workers at Walter Knoll also talk about imperfection in perfection. They work with natural materials, leather, wool, wood. They take the natural variations of those materials into account ...

Mr. Sendlinger, what is more important: personality or price?

cs Personality. The world is already gray enough.

Twenty-five years ago, you founded Design Hotels, a portal for select hotels. In 2011, you started your own project. Was that because you wanted to do yourself what you'd been encouraging others to do?

cs Exactly. It started with the Papaya Playa Project in Tulum, Mexico, beach huts for the digital community. We're particularly proud of our most recent project, the La Granja organic farm on Ibiza.

How important is personality in projects like this?

cs It's essential – just like it is anywhere else. If you want to stand out, you need character. We only find twenty cool hoteliers for our portfolio in a year. They're often career jumpers, but they know their way around music and art and the place where they live. Ideally, they're already doing good things in their current field – exhibitions, DJ sessions. The important thing is the user experience of our guests.

You're now moving away from Design Hotels and developing something new, the Marina Marina in Berlin. It has a... what do you call it?

cs A ritual space.

Aren't you afraid that's going to be too weird?

cs Rituals are exactly what people today lack.

How can you prevent yourself from losing contact with reality out of sheer originality – becoming untethered from the base?

cs The people who meet on the farm are exactly the people we want to reach. They're all working with sustainability, they want to work the land together, cook, eat, meditate together. We're doing all this entirely without social media. If you want to book, you write an email. Mystery of mysteries.

Is it working?

cs ... and so they play with the quirks instead of cutting them out. How do you think products with character are made?

cs I think you have to understand that every object basically has only one fundamental function to fulfill. A chair is a chair. A hotel is a hotel. So that's your foundation, and then on top of that there's a kind of play, with undefined spaces, niches, positions, horizons, and so on, to be explored and defined.

How do you find the right people to involve in your projects?

cs By accident and through friends. The team on the farm has just surprised me with a new chef. This guy had completely redesigned the whole kitchen. Great haircut, the right sneakers – he looked fantastic. Then he cooked for us: panzerotti, ceviche and a lamb that was brought in on a gigantic wooden tray. And I'm asking, who is this guy? (laughs) He used to be a waiter. Came from South America, and in his first year with us he got us three people from Francis Mallmann's kitchen in Uruguay.

I'm afraid I don't know anything about Mallmann.

cs He's from Patagonia, and he won the Grand Prix de l'Art de la Cuisine one time, in Kronberg – with potatoes. Because he wasn't allowed to import them into Germany from Argentina, he smuggled them in. Thirty varieties. Weighing one tonne.

He won the gastronomic Oscars with potatoes?

cs Nine courses of potatoes! That's personality. *Interview: Ralf Grauel*

About

Claus Sendlinger is one of the most innovative entrepreneurs in the international hotel business. Design Hotels AG, which he founded, lists over 300 hotels in its portfolio. Together with Peter Conrads, he now heads the SLOW Hospitality ("sensitive, local, organic, wise") creative laboratory, based in Berlin, with the aim of creating unique places around the world and reinventing gastronomy and the hotel industry.

Gernot Bohmann

EOOS

Martin Bergmann

Creativity How are classics made? Can you force inspiration? How do the designers at EOOS manage to design timeless furniture for Walter Knoll time and time again?



Mr. Bergmann, Mr. Bohmann, how do you create timeless design?

GB No idea.

MB That's not how we think about it. We don't sit down at a table and say: "All right, now we're going to make a classic."

So what is your approach?

MB We listen. We go to Herrenberg and talk with Markus Benz once a month. When he tells us about how he sees the market, about ideas and visions, I start to see shapes in my mind.

GB You see shapes? Remarkable.

For me, something starts to light up. A feeling of mutual understanding that inspires me.

MB Something lights up for you? That's also pretty remarkable.

Most recently you designed the *Tama Desk* for Walter Knoll. How did it come into being?

MB We turned the usual design process on its head.

GB Instead of drawing a sketch, we took some cardboard and cut out organic shapes with a pair of scissors. Very quickly. Because the process was meant to channel our intuition.

The result is more of a sculpture than a piece of furniture.

MB We were thinking: If only we could sit at a table that was more of a sculpture. One that gently wrapped around the curve of my belly which, after all, is a vulnerable part of my body.

Where do you picture this sculpture?

MB In a place where a person sits and thinks and writes and works on a vision. In a stately mansion or in the office of a person who moves effortlessly through the world of art and culture.

How do you know when a design is finished?

MB At some point, the model strikes back: you make another change and it all gets worse. You can feel it. That's the moment you know the design is perfect.

GB We try to take all design-related factors into account during the design process – from the aesthetic, functionality and material consumption of a product to its serial production options and manufacturing costs.

MB Design is a 380-degree process.

Why 380 degrees? Aren't 360 enough?

MB Those 20 extra degrees are necessary poetry.

Are you able to say in the end which of you had the pivotal idea?

MB No. I might see Gernot's three-hundredth sketch of a chair – maybe the wrong way round – comment on it, and the next day he'll have built a new model and found a new path. We'll work on a model for months – arguing about and changing things – and get into a flow where it doesn't matter who has what idea.

What sort of input do you get when you go to Walter Knoll?

MB An enormous input. We are a

three-headed team, but we do need an outsider's perspective. When Markus Benz sat down at the first *Tama Desk* prototype, he said: I'm sitting too far to the left, by about 15 centimeters. We wouldn't have realized that on our own. Now the person sits in the center of the desk.

GB That's what makes Walter Knoll special. Jürgen Röhm and the others in the development department are a group of pros, specialists and artists who we can talk to about each individual seam and who help us come up with ideas when we get stuck.

MB Another key factor: the people there always make sure we're well fed; they're very reflective and have a sense of humor. Otherwise it wouldn't be tolerable.

What makes your work stressful?

GB When the material resources, construction or price don't match up; when a project turns out to be garbage in the end. That's frustrating.

And what helps you get back up again?

GB When Markus Benz gives us the green light and the entire company stands behind one vision.

MB When I hear his almost archaic "Yes" in response to one of our designs – it still moves me. *Interview: Carsten Jasner*

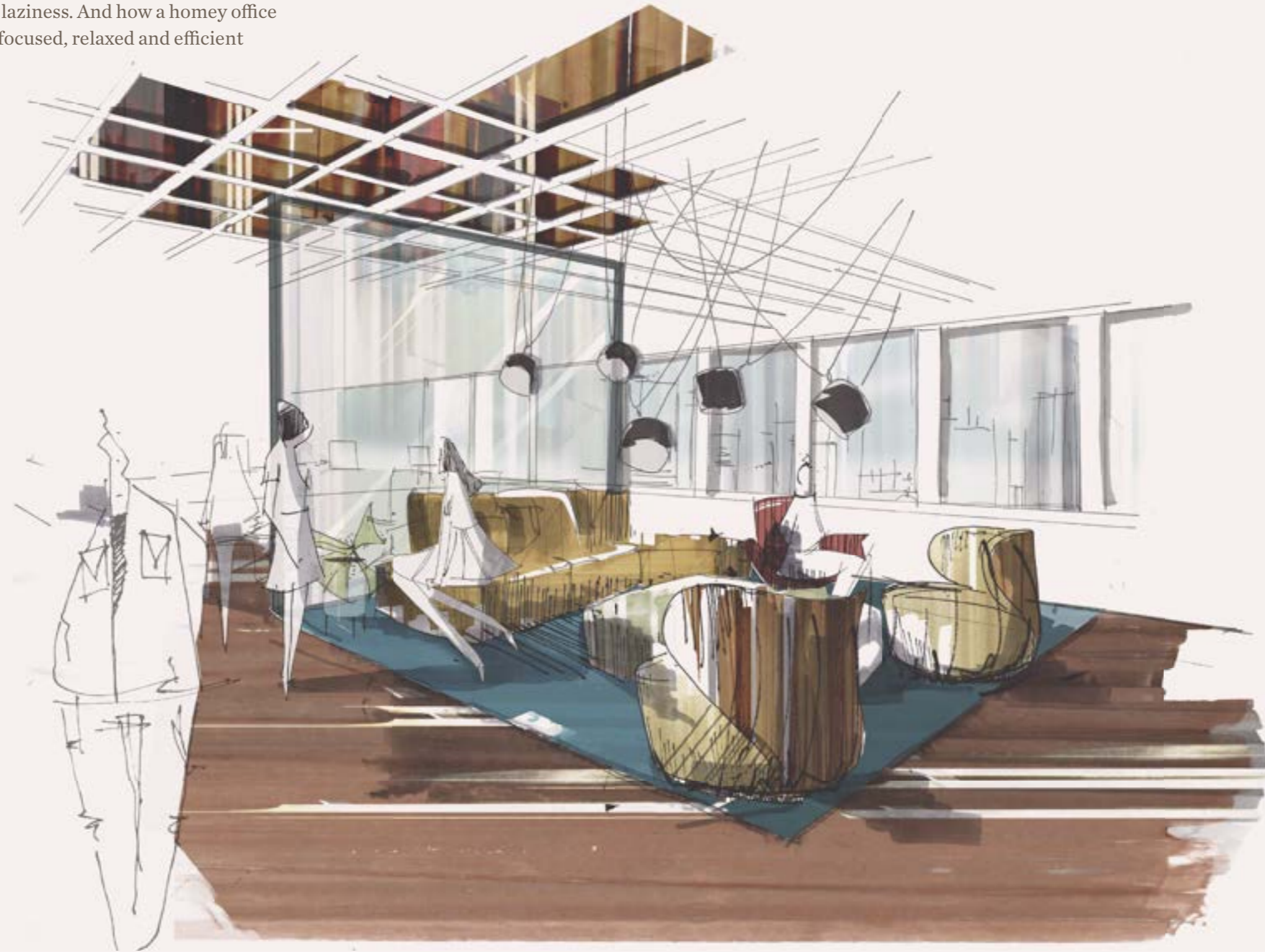
The Team

Gernot Bohmann (left) and Martin Bergmann studied in the master class of design at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. With their classmate Harald Gründl, they co-founded the EOOS design agency. Their designs have been significantly shaping Walter Knoll's catalogue for over twenty years.

The sofa revolution

By Ilona Marx and Ralf Grauel

Why the sudden appearance of upholstered furniture in our offices does not equate to laziness. And how a homey office environment makes us more focused, relaxed and efficient



Emotion and encounter: between a conference and working on the computer, we need some comfy zones

Are you familiar with Kastrup, Copenhagen's airport? Large, round lampshades diffuse soft, warm light. Dark parquet flooring, upholstered seats and couches – classic Danish design that exudes comfort. Kastrup, one of the coziest airports in the world, was made that bit cozier in December 2017: in Terminal 2, the Atelier Relaxium was opened, with upholstered furniture, carpets and luminous objects in all the colors of the rainbow. Just a stone's throw away is an inviting sofa landscape, the color scheme of which evokes a sunset above the clouds. Amid this absolute bliss, passengers here run the risk of missing their connecting flight.

“Hygge” is the word the Danes and Norwegians use to describe the feeling of the world hugging you; of being both snug and inspired at the same time. This Nordic variant of coziness is a mixture of ambiance and feeling; hygge is homemade happiness. With family, friends and loved ones we feel good all around.

Hygge is now the theme of attractive coffee-table books, colorful brochures, weblogs and magazines. The meteoric rise of this small, soothing word to one of last year's global trending terms is evidence of a universal yearning for deceleration. The more digitalized our work and daily lives become, the more important organic oases become. Last year, a meditation app of all things became one of the most successful apps. The pursuit of relaxation is one of the core trends counteracting digitalization. We long for tradition, vintage and coziness. That is why we are now seeing sofas and comfort zones in places that often cause a lot of stress. And so, with the advent of upholstered airports, the development that had for a long time been an inextricable feature of hotels, lounges, public areas and offices has reached a whole new level.

Cynics might soon be justified in lamenting the cushification of the world. But, actually, what we're seeing here is the spread of a vital synthesis; because, amid the multitude of acceleration and gear changes in our daily and professional lives, the simple fact is that we need places where we can restore our inner balance and relax. In the rooms where ping pong and foosball tables were once eyed with suspicion years ago in start-up offices, there now stand sofas, armchairs, reading lights and coffee tables today. And that is how

it should be. Because this new variety of coziness is not a means for distraction or shirking work. Quite the opposite: office workers are creating places for concentration, communication and encounters. Afterwards, it's back to the computer screens, where they click their way through open windows, emails, presentations and tables.

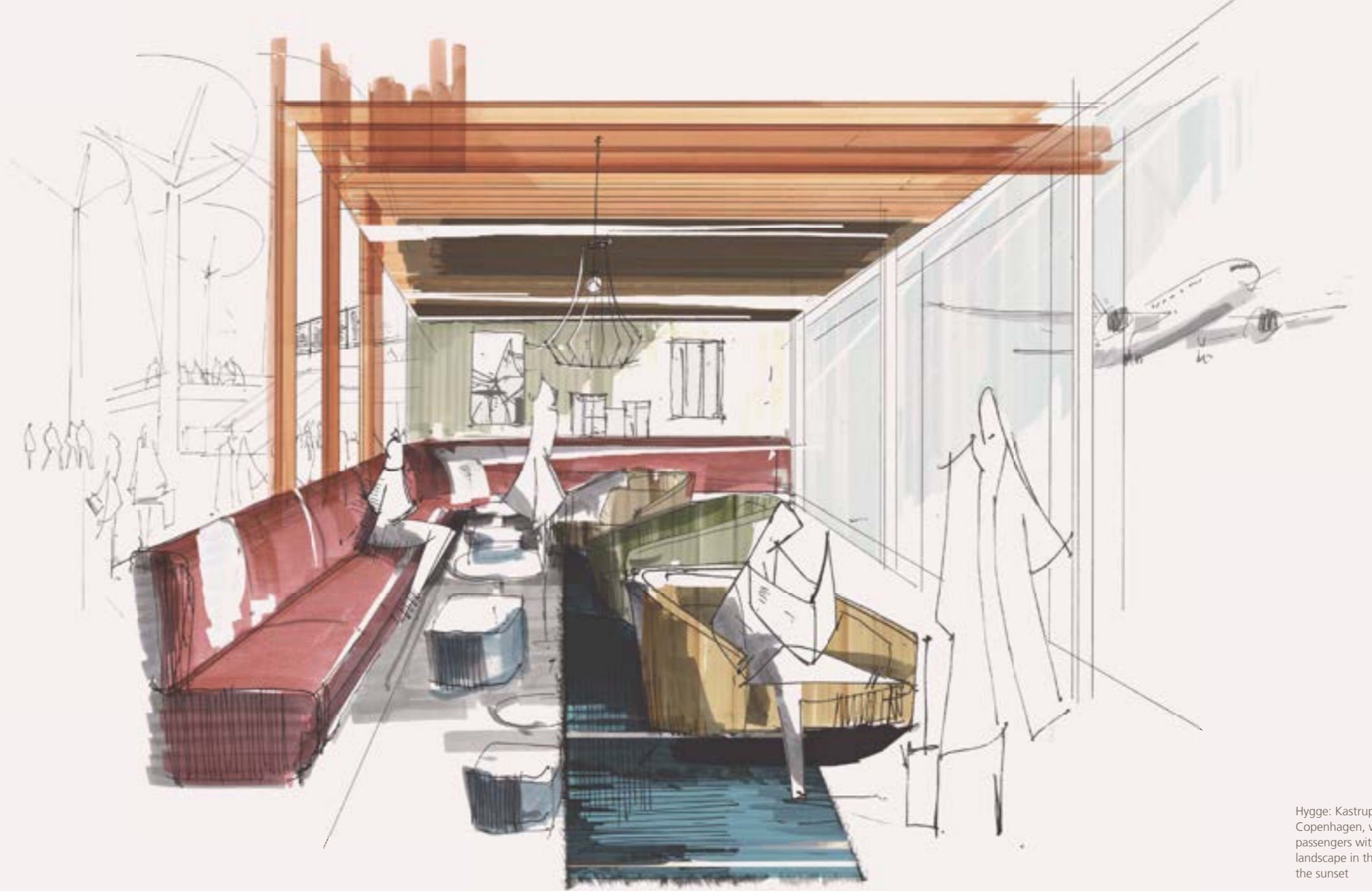
While during the new economy era the creative chaos of start-up interiors conjured up images of colorful hamster labyrinths, today, calm has finally set in. People and work come together in flexible workspaces, between sofas, multifunctional tables and areas that can be altered at will. In well-designed offices,

the mood is the same as the concentrated atmosphere in a factory.

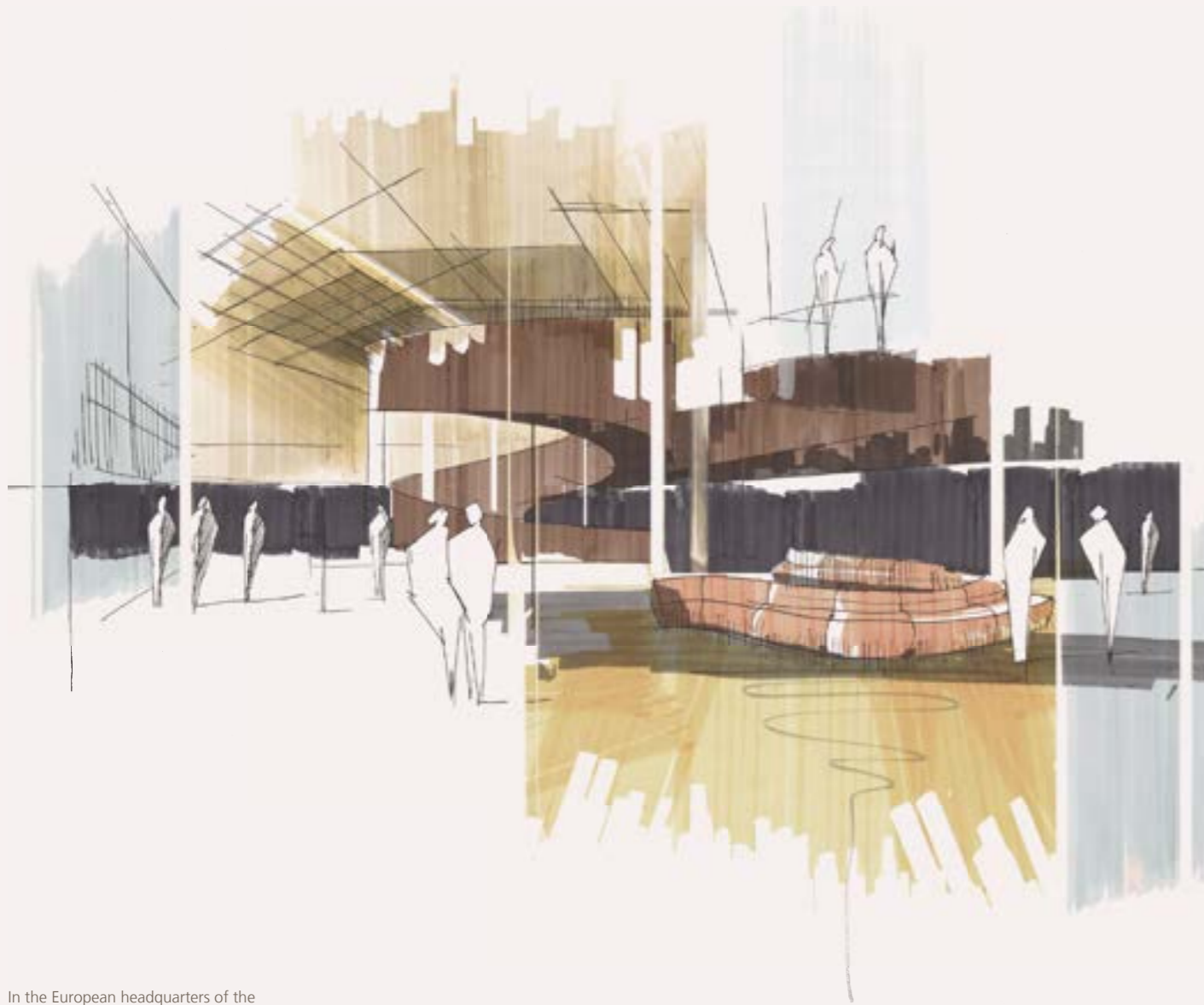
This was precisely the mood the Handelsblatt publishing group was going for when they set to furnishing their new editorial offices together with Walter Knoll. The transformation from a classic daily newspaper to an agile media company is in full swing. The new interior design had to be more flexible, and the furniture and materials absolutely had to reflect the media company's high standards of quality, management and excellence. The newspaper's new rooms combine open space with silent rooms, collaboration with concentration, communication with

discretion. This breathing structure landed the media company in the new world of New Work – it's no wonder the curvy, colorful sofa landscape *Circle* by Walter Knoll now forms the fulcrum of the office floor.

However, the office sofa is more than just the new foosball table. Taking a little time out and briefly stopping and sitting for a conversation are part of the new creative process – just like the latte macchiato is part of the morning ritual. For a long time now, laptops and smartphones have blurred the boundaries between work and free time. We occasionally like to work from home and, conversely, want to see homey features at work. And so, like an echo, in the era of the



Hygge: Kastrup Airport, Copenhagen, welcomes passengers with a sofa landscape in the colors of the sunset



In the European headquarters of the Bloomberg media group in London, the upholstered bench *Foster 620* by Walter Knoll structures the open space. It was designed – as was the entire building – by architect Norman Foster

home office, elements from home resonate in the office.

Of course, more than just furniture spills over – this also happens with all other tones and topics of a new era: culture and etiquette, democracy, communication at eye level, diversity and welfare. Spending all day and all night in the office has no place in the life model of Generation Y. YOLO (“you only live once”) is not the dictum of the digital natives for nothing. Nowadays, everything must fit – work to live and live to work. The office sofa has become a symbol of mindfulness, appreciation and authenticity.

New Work is me time and we time

At the same time, the upholstered comfort zones create points of contact in the truest sense of the word. In the 1980s, the future still looked bright, and progress was wrapped in plastic and held by a chrome-plated steel tube. But now, because digitalization is changing our lives and it can only be grasped in the form of a smooth screen, we need analog experiences: nature, material, haptics, substantiality. Satisfying the elementary needs of body and soul could become the luxury of the twenty-first century.

However, above all, comfort zones are a spatial representation of the change in work and organization. They give structure to everything that New Work stands for today. Agility, flexibility and diversity are direct responses to acceleration, digitalization and globalization. Projects, teams, targets and processes are so diverse nowadays because the markets are, too. And all these new aspects also mean that we can very rarely fulfill our multifaceted tasks sitting on our posterior all day in the same place.

Sometimes, it requires careful concentration at a computer and other times a relaxed conversation

with coworkers, and then sometimes a highly confidential three-way meeting. This can be stressful and can even easily lead to misunderstandings. That is precisely why zones are needed. For relaxation and exchange. For concentration and communication. In this way, office life is normalized into a mixture of me time, we time, sometimes work bench, sometimes marketplace.

As such, for a long time now, high potentials have been assessing a company’s strategy for the future not only based on its furniture but also on its floor plan. The architectural firm Foster + Partners, which already refers to itself as a “workplace consultancy,” has just developed the spectacular European headquarters of the Bloomberg Media Group. Founder Michael Bloomberg has always been an advocate of an open-plan office layout. And so, after years of research, Lord Foster and his colleagues have successfully eliminated footstep sounds and ambient noises to create a virtually limitless open-plan quiet zone. Vast quantities of wood and stone, ten open, curved floors, giant fish tanks, snack bars, and – running in long, flowing curves – upholstered furniture designed by Norman Foster and made by Walter Knoll, create a stimulating and, and at the same time, extraordinarily homey ambiance.

And did Jeff Bezos – Bloomberg’s compatriot who is also lauded as a visionary – not just buy 40,000 plants to create a jungle paradise for his staff in Seattle? The signs are clear: the number of office oases will increase. You could even say that work is becoming hygge. The coziness factor is therefore expected to continue on its upward course. But don’t think that it will make things more boring. At the end of the day, outside our offices, lounges and comfort zones, the world is still out there. And it continues to spin at break-neck speed. As do our jobs.

Written by

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Ralf Grauel is a business journalist, publicist and consultant. He worked as editor and author for brand eins and brand eins Wissen for ten years. With his agency Grauel Publishing, he develops books, magazines and digital platforms. His clients include bulthaup, Leica, Wempe – and Walter Knoll.

Brands

Brands guarantee performance, provide direction and make promises. The more digital our world, lives and work become, the more important become places that inspire trust and give back something very real. Places that give us comfort or respect, for example. Walter Knoll are masters of the art of expressing brands in furniture – be it in Los Angeles, Brussels, Munich or Tokyo

A part of the family

KPMG Belgium, Brussels

A strong character, but soft around the edges – the furniture in the new headquarters of KPMG Belgium immediately shows visitors what they can expect: reliability, warmth, stability

A visitor magnet. In the vastness of the room, in front of the floor-to-ceiling windows, the furniture delivers its iconic impact: characterful shapes, fine textures, inviting upholstery. *369 and Bao* armchairs, *Jaan Living* sofa, *Joco and Joco Stone* side tables, all by Walter Knoll

Living in the office

Home furniture transforms the office into a place where you can feel good. Splashes of color, soft textures, armchairs and sofas in appealing shapes take the edge off linear architecture. The result is a harmonious whole.

A plane takes off from Brussels Airport without a sound. Koen Maerevoet turns to look. From time to time, the CEO of KPMG Belgium treats himself to the show that unfurls before him through the panoramic windows of the company's new headquarters. Up here, on the tenth and highest floor of the building, is the auditing firm's visitors' floor and Maerevoet's favorite place – furnished with a stylish seating area by Walter Knoll. It consists of the olive-green leather *Jaan* sofa, two yellow *369* chairs and two yellow *Bao* chairs. Against the dark gray carpet and brown-paneled wall, the colors can reveal their true resplendence. In the center of the ensemble, the *Oki Table* – a low marble table of generous proportions on a delicate metal frame – appears to hover in mid-air.

In May 2018, KPMG Belgium moved into its new headquarters next to Brussels Airport. The lease on the old premises had expired, so they seized the opportunity to move closer to the airport. Auditors, tax specialists, management consultants and legal experts can now conveniently see their clients fly in. Just a few minutes' walk from the terminal, they greet

their visitors at the elegant *Keypiece* conference table made of dark wood and ask them to take a seat. Twenty bucket seats *Kyo* with leather upholstery in a warm grayish brown are grouped around the table, which is as spacious as it is inviting – the corners are rounded and there is not a sharp edge in sight. All the furniture in these rooms exudes warmth and trustworthiness.

During conferences, both the employees' and clients' gaze will occasionally follow the trajectory of inaudible take-offs and landings; some contemplate the striking control tower. A concentrated silence pervades the room – the sound insulation meets the highest



The conference area and lounge flow into one another, and the sweeping curves bring it all together: *Bao* and *369* armchairs, *Jaan* sofa, *Oki Table*, *Keypiece* conference table, *Kyo* chairs, all by Walter Knoll



“Since we moved here, our clients vastly prefer to come to us for meetings.”

KOEN MAEREVOET CEO, KPMG Belgium

standards. It is an ideal location for conducting important discussions and making big decisions. “Since we moved here,” says Koen Maerevoet with a smile, “our clients vastly prefer to come to us for meetings.”

Friendliness, solidarity, constancy – these are the values of KPMG, whose roots reach back to 1870. The company ethos has parallels with that of Walter Knoll. It is reflected both on the upper and the lower floors, where office spaces abound with unique pieces by Walter Knoll. The desire to reinvent familiarity can be felt everywhere in the light-flooded new building. Open spaces without a fixed seating arrangement, small



rooms for secluded work and plenty of space for encounters and communication. “The new office is truly luxurious. In a hotel, you would call it a two-star upgrade,” says Christine Reinders, Marketing and Brand Manager at KPMG, with regard to her revamped workplace. Maerevoet gives a satisfied nod. He likes to think of KPMG as a container ship that needs time for larger maneuvers. Here in Brussels, a course has been set for the future.

Ilona Marx



“The furniture by Walter Knoll is classic with a modern touch. It conveys a sense of sophistication that is even noticed by visitors who don’t work in interior design.”

KAREL TANGHE

Partner, Head of Audit, KPMG Belgium

Left: With its boat shape and vibrant solid-wood top, the *Keypiece* conference table embodies the familial identity of KPMG Belgium. Modern devices can be discretely connected to the media wall via connectors in the table top. Chairs: *Kyo*. Armchairs, sofas, barstools and occasional tables from the 375 range bring the lounge bar to life. The design was created in the 1950s. *Joco* occasional table.
Bottom: Shapes and colors in harmony. *Jaan Bench*, 369 armchair and *Joco* occasional table. All furniture by Walter Knoll



PROJECT

KPMG Belgium, Brussels Office, Belgium

COMPLETED

Spring 2018

ARCHITECTURE

Jaspers-Eyers Architects, Brussels, Belgium

INTERIOR

Alternativ Workspace Solutions, Brussels, Belgium

WALTER KNOLL PRODUCTS

369, 375, Bao, Jaan, Jaan Bench, Jaan Living, Joco, Joco Stone, Keypiece, Kyo, Oki Table, Oota Table, Seito, Tadeo, Tobu

LOCATION

Visitors’ room, office, conference room, lobby, lounge

PHOTOS

Benne Ochs, Hamburg, Germany

KPMG is an international cooperative of independent auditing and consultancy firms. In 2017, it had a total of around 200,000 staff members at locations in 154 countries.

Combining the comfortable with the beautiful: employees love to meet in the Sky Lounge where they can brainstorm while sitting on Bao chairs by Walter Knoll

L'Oréal Germany, Dusseldorf

New Work? New look!

At cosmetics giant L'Oréal, everything revolves around beauty – and speed is of the essence. At the new company headquarters in Dusseldorf, employees can always find the right place to get their creative juices flowing when inspiration strikes



The play of curves and verticals: the *Foster 512* upholstered benches by Walter Knoll shape the lobby space of L'Oréal Germany's new headquarters

New shades every season, hundreds of patents every year, a global market with different target groups: the world of cosmetics is colorful, competitive and changing all the time. Those who want to keep up or be the driver of change must be agile and quick. Inventive and alert. L'Oréal, the largest cosmetics manufacturer in the world, has moved into its new German headquarters in Dusseldorf. Ease and mobility naturally become a part of the working style here.

On the northern edge of the city, in the sixteen-story J1 building, huge spaces have emerged. The floor-to-ceiling windows merge with open spaces dotted with clusters of desks; in the middle, there are cozy meeting areas with armchairs and stools; next to that are closed-off think tanks for team brainstorming sessions and discrete places for quiet time. In total, there are 950 workspaces for the employees and almost 900 alternative workspaces where they can perform their diverse tasks. And yet, there is not a single individ-

ual office. "Not even our boss has one," says Sascha Gormanns, head of Campus Management and part of the team that developed the new office.

Everyone – employees and visitors alike – enjoys riding the elevator to the fifteenth floor and taking in the stunning view from the Sky Lounge. Sascha Gormanns also likes to hold meetings there. "In the past, there was always one employee behind his desk and another in front of it – I always felt uncomfortable," he says. "Today, we meet at the armchairs." His favorite one is *Bao* by Walter Knoll. "It's cushy and, in my opinion, incredibly comfortable. Everyone takes to it right away."

People at L'Oréal like to work at rotating workspaces. In the beginning, there were reservations about the new concept. But once the company moved in, everything fell into place. These sorts of ideas just have to be executed properly. Flexibility requires spaces for solitude and interiors that emanate respect

while fostering concentration, communication and creativity. With enough space for chance encounters of all kinds, as it is often out of these that new things are born. The employees co-determined the design of the new office. They established work groups, conducted surveys. The furniture by Walter Knoll had a lot of fans, and even people's different requests – modern or mid-century style? – could be granted. Both work; both go together.

Insofar as it was possible, the employees also worked flexibly in the old building. It was normal to leave the room to take a call, to have meetings at a restaurant – the desire to switch locations was there early on. Today, the employees intuitively choose from a wide spectrum of spaces and areas, from the coffee point to the phone booth. Staking out territories or blocking spaces by reserving them in advance – those things are simply not possible. Nor are they necessary, since there is space for everyone and everything.

Hiltrud Bontrup



The academy lounge, designed by engels architektur, has ample space for breaks. *Turtle* barstools by Walter Knoll



"We have been using furniture by Walter Knoll for a long time. At first it was classic office furniture: high-quality desks that still look brand new after 25 years. Now we've selected a lot of cozy furniture for meeting areas and areas where we welcome our guests."

SASCHA GORMANNS

Head of Campus Management, L'Oréal Germany

PROJECT

L'Oréal Germany, Dusseldorf, Germany

COMPLETED

November 2017

ARCHITECTURE

HPP Architekten, Dusseldorf, Germany

INTERIOR

Mertens, Willich, Germany
engels architektur, Meerbusch, Germany

WALTER KNOLL PRODUCTS

Bao, *Conference-X*, *Cuoio Lounge*, *Jason Barstool*, *Joco*, *Keypiece*, *Liz*, *Lox Barstool*, *Foster 512*, *Turtle Barstool*

LOCATION

Lobby, lounge, conference room, kitchen

PHOTOS

Andrea Dingeldein, Cologne, Germany
Rainer Rehfeld, Dusseldorf, Germany

The French company L'Oréal has been creating beauty products for more than a hundred years. Thanks to its innovative power and agility, it has become the biggest cosmetics manufacturer in the world. In 1930, the company first opened an office in Berlin and later in Dusseldorf. Today, it employs more than 2,000 people throughout Germany.

Thomas Mann House, Los Angeles

Once upon a time, the house was the refuge of an exceptional writer. Now the Californian villa is a place for German intellectuals, artists and researchers to write, debate and feel at home

Pacific bliss





“The struggle for democracy and for a free and open society is what will continue to unite us, the United States and Germany. That is why we acquired this house. And that is why we have made it so beautiful, comfortable and inviting.”

FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER Federal President,
at the opening of the Thomas Mann House in June 2018

A German cultural institute, not a museum.” The brief was clear. The Thomas Mann House in Los Angeles was not to be turned into a memorial site where literary pilgrims could ceremoniously shuffle around Thomas Mann’s desk. “Just the opposite,” says Ursula Seeba-Hannan. “Fellows will be living and working here for months, inviting guests over and engaging them in debate. The fellows are meant to feel at home – that’s why everything looks so natural.”

Managing partner at LenzWerk Holding in Berlin, Ursula Seeba-Hannan redesigned Thomas Mann’s American villa as a place for experiencing German culture. The writer had built the house for himself and his family in the early 1940s as a place of refuge during the Nazi era. In 1952, the Manns returned to Europe and the house was sold, rented, renovated. When it was back on the market in 2016, the Federal Foreign Office of Germany seized the opportunity, which turned out to be a double blessing. First, because the villa, designed by architect Julius Ralph Davidson, was spared from demolition. And second, because the German government secured a new place for German-American encounters.

Researchers, artists and intellectuals will now be able to fill the house with their democratic spirit.

Thomas Mann would have appreciated it. The *Buddenbrooks* author went into exile in 1933. After years of wandering from place to place, he and his family finally settled down in the house in Pacific Palisades, Los Angeles. While there, he wrote his *Deutsche Hörer* radio speeches in which he called for resistance against the Nazis. He also invited other exiles such as Theodor W. Adorno and Bertolt Brecht to his home.

A well-designed house is liberating. It provides shelter from the outside world and creates an indoor space for thinking and talking freely. Because everything says: “You are welcome here and may stay as long as you wish.” Because the furniture is made for people to use for decades, not for the sake of vanity. Because furniture can instill trust and provide a sense of stability.

“We picked the furniture for the Thomas Mann house as though it had always been there,” says Seeba-Hannan. The Mann family did not serve as the stylistic model for the house’s interior decoration. Back then, the family had brought their massive, ornate furniture from Germany to the villa. The current designer’s idea was to bring in furniture from German manufacturers again, but this time use furniture that better fit the style of the house and the present.

Seeba-Hannan knew immediately that she wanted Walter Knoll to be one of the project partners. “Their upholstered furniture is simply outstanding. There aren’t many manufacturers who are so deeply involved in their craft and pay so much attention to detail,” she explains. She chose companies with a long tradition and expertise; whose products would continue to be available well into the future. The models in the house



In the former living room of the Mann family, timeless furniture serves as inspiration to read and converse: the *Andoo Lounge* armchair in blue and gray, a *Votteler Chair* and footstool, and *Oki* occasional tables, all by Walter Knoll

range from the 1920s to the present: all of them classics that nevertheless feel contemporary today. “The *Votteler Chair* by Walter Knoll manages to blend in perfectly with the other elements in the room. It is my absolute favorite piece!” Originally designed in 1956 by Arno Votteler for Walter Knoll, the timeless armchair for reading and relaxing is inspired by Scandinavian functionalism, and artfully combines a delicate tubular steel frame with voluminous padding and solid wood armrests. Today, the designer is nearly ninety years old and incredibly flattered that his chair was selected for the house.

Ursula Seeba-Hannan has turned the *Votteler Chairs* into the protagonists of the living room of the house. The supporting actor is the light-colored *Prime Time* sofa by Walter Knoll, a contemporary design by the EOOS team, who made a few tweaks to give it a 1950s touch: the backrest was shortened a drop and the base of the sofa is now made of dark wood.

Vanity is the enemy of comfort. And democracies can only manage as long as nobody insists on going it alone. Guided by this belief, all participants cooperated on this project. Markus Benz, CEO of Walter Knoll, comments on the project, “For the Thomas Mann House, the companies worked together as a team, trusting one another and striving for the best result possible. These companies, which are all extremely creative and masters of their craft, are a part of the economic and cultural power of Germany.”

Along with Walter Knoll, Thonet and other companies, Seeba-Hannan was searching for the perfect fabrics and colors. There was just one problem she had not anticipated: furniture makers usually engineer their sofas and armchairs with the bigger picture in mind, producing their designs while constantly considering the proportions, materials and upholstery. Textiles from elsewhere need to be inspected first because not every thread is up to par.



“*Fellows will be living and working here for months, inviting guests over and engaging them in debate. The fellows are meant to feel at home – that’s why everything looks so natural.*”

URSULA SEEBA-HANNAN LenzWerk, Berlin



The solid wood *Tadeo* table with its cross grain provides ample space for residents and visitors alike. The chairs are part of the *Andoo* range, everything by Walter Knoll



As though they had always been there: the *Votteler Chairs* were upholstered in a muted green fabric that has a 1940s feel. *Prime Time* sofa, *Oki* occasional table. All furniture by Walter Knoll

And so, Seeba-Hannan went with her bundle of samples from one manufacturer to the next to talk about her vision. She finally put together a selection, flew to Los Angeles, and laid out her collection in the house. But in that moment she saw, in the light and heat of the southern Californian sun, that she needed entirely different materials and colors than she did in northern Europe. She returned to Germany, and the upholsterers continued to test things out and advise her. “Their commitment and vast knowledge really moved me,” she recalls. In the end, she chose linen and cotton in shades of antique blue and bottle green. Seeba-Hannan could not have been more satisfied with how the upholstering team worked with this fabric – yet another example of the flexibility and professionalism of the people at Walter Knoll.

She still thinks fondly about the villa’s inauguration, recalling the moment when the prominent sociologist Jutta Allmendinger discovered the *Votteler Chairs* in the living room and said, “They look just stunning.” As one of the first fellows in the Thomas Mann House, Allmendinger was invited to the opening, as were other fellows such as the actor Burkhard Klaußner and Thomas Mann scholar Heinrich Detering. In the future, they will all go on to sit and work at the *Andoo* solid wood table by Walter Knoll in Thomas Mann’s study. Seeba-Hannan recalls that the fellows were a bit hesitant at first as they walked around the rooms – until she invited them to take a seat. “Wow,” Allmendinger said after she sat down in the *Votteler Chair*. “It doesn’t just look good, it feels good, too!”

Hiltrud Bontrup

PROJECT

Thomas Mann House, Los Angeles, USA

COMPLETED

June 2018

ARCHITECTURE

Julius Ralph Davidson (1889–1977), Los Angeles, USA

INTERIOR

LenzWerk Holding, Berlin, Germany

WALTER KNOLL PRODUCTS

Andoo, *Andoo Lounge*, *Andoo Table*, *Oki*, *Prime Time*, *Tadeo*, *Votteler Chair*

LOCATION

Study, dining room, living room

PHOTOS

LenzWerk Holding, Berlin, Germany

The Federal Republic of Germany is the owner of the Thomas Mann House in Los Angeles. Funding for the house’s renovation and new furnishings was provided by the Berthold Leibinger Stiftung. The Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House association runs the house as a transatlantic meeting place and organizes the residency program. The program is funded by the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media as well as the Berthold Leibinger Stiftung, the Alfred Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach Foundation and the Robert Bosch Foundation.

Elements in balance: in the heart of the medicine district of Tokyo, in the new building of a pharmaceutical company, the *Jaan* leather sofas by Walter Knoll counter the pattern on the wall and floor with supreme calm

Pharma Inc., Tokyo

Going to the source of life

Health, strength, healing and nature – that is at the core of daily business for a Japanese pharmaceutical company. Its headquarters in Tokyo exude these very virtues – in no small part thanks to furniture by Walter Knoll

Fukutoku garden, just five minutes from Tokyo Station, is a small green oasis amid one of the largest and liveliest cities in the world. At the entrance, visitors are greeted by a bright orange torii – a Shinto gate with two characteristic, parallel curved cross-beams. It symbolizes crossing over into a sacred realm. Two shrines stand here: the smaller Yakuso Jinja is dedicated to a god of medicine. Under a canopy of leaves, people find peace and shade.

Just behind the garden, a narrow office tower of glass, steel and aluminum is a recent addition to the skyline. It was built by the company Pharma Inc.*, which has owned this plot of land for over one hundred years. It lies in the heart of the Nihombashi district – the “medicine city” of Tokyo – where medicine wholesalers and producers have been based since the beginning of the Edo period in the 17th century.

Pharma Inc. is deeply rooted in Japan and nowadays does business across the globe. And for the interior design of its headquarters, the celebrated brand architect Kashiwa Sato was given the following brief: “Draw on Japanese heritage and give it a contemporary twist.” He went for familiar, basic shapes: circles, ovals, straight lines. And he used a lot of wood – the traditional construction material in Japan – which has recently experienced a surge in popularity there once again.

It was no accident that creative director Kashiwa Sato realized his vision of a natural environment stripped back to its roots with handcrafted furniture by none other than Walter Knoll: experimenting with the elements comes as second nature to the furniture brand. All objects, their colors, shapes, materials, and even the way they are handled, are based on principles known to mankind for thousands of years. The result: in rooms with furniture by Walter Knoll, people immediately feel at home because they

more on page 57



The black stone in the fountain reflects the Japanese characters on the wall. They were designed according to the traditional kumiki method and stand for “water” and “light”: the sources of life

Playing with naturalness

Our age-old connection with nature is the result of a long process of evolution. Our love for the forest is hardwired into our DNA. Nature is a source of medicine, peace and spiritual clarity. In the office, elements such as wood and water boost our immune system and concentration. And when placed in the hands of expert craftsmen, they are fashioned into a paradise for the senses.



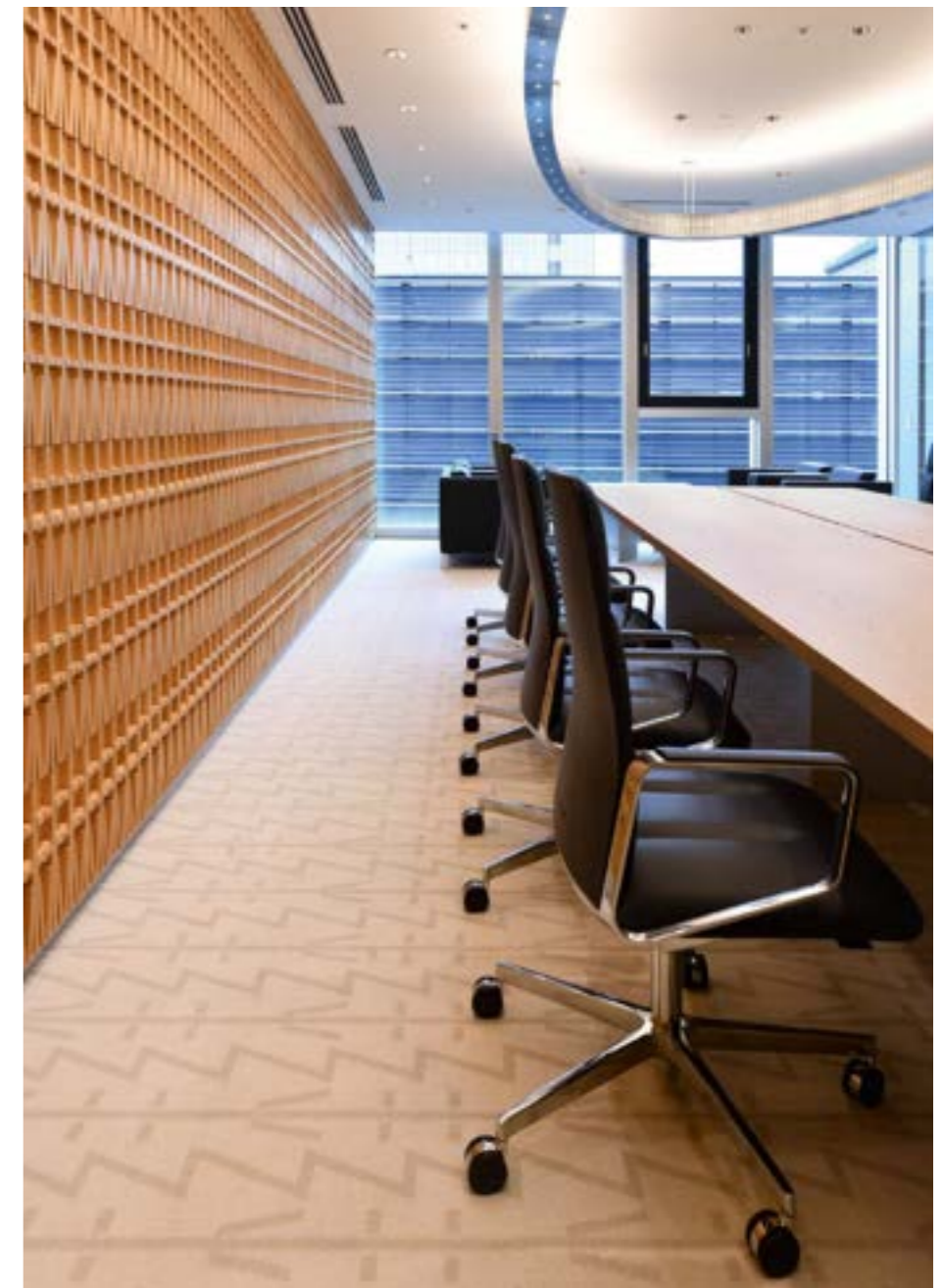
Creative director Kashiwa Sato realized his vision of a natural environment stripped down to its roots with handcrafted furniture by Walter Knoll. He chose materials, colors and shapes that humans have intuitively understood for thousands of years. A circular light hangs above the minimalistic wooden table, and the word "future" can be made out on the wall of cypress wood. Foster 500 leather sofas by Walter Knoll

Kashiwa Sato admires Walter Knoll's mixture of self-esteem and self-effacement, and its excellent craftsmanship and quality. He also found ultimate ergonomic comfort in the Leadchair Executive



"I love the process of elimination. When designing rooms, I leave as much out as possible. What remains has more impact and lasts longer."

KASHIWA SATO Creative Director, Samurai Inc.





A concentrated ambiance and comfortable *Leadchair Executive* seats by Walter Knoll for conferences (top), plenty of room for encounters (bottom).
Underneath a ring-shaped lamp, the light-colored high table made from Hinoki cypress wood serves as a meeting place for managers in the immense space.
Conversations that sprout up here are continued by staff in the *Turtle Lounge* chairs by Walter Knoll

intuitively understand that universal, age-old language of colors and shapes right away. Kashiwa Sato knew this too when he created a Gesamtkunstwerk in the heart of Tokyo: a tale about the source of life and health.

The story begins on the ground floor, where water trickles out of a fountain over a curved black stone (see page 53). The water flows so softly that the walls of cypress wood are reflected in it, along with the geometric structure formed by the stylized Japanese characters in the wood. The ancient technique used to achieve this is called kumiki. Those who can read Japanese will be able to make out the words “water” and “light” – the foundations of life. Past the fountain, the journey continues to the reception and the characters for “earth,” which provides health and well-being, and “trees,” which symbolize growth. Here, visitors wait on a bench that looks like a gigantic wooden puzzle. Anyone who sits on it feels as though they are in a forest.

Up in the conference rooms, the walls are covered in the character for “future.” And in the places where people come together – the cafeteria and the management floors – the theme is close bonds, or kizuna. “Bonds between people bring the world together,” says Kashiwa Sato. In this way, he is creating room for encounters. The offices and open spaces radiate calm – in stark contrast to typical offices in Japan, where every nook and cranny is put to use. “A room needs an artistic focus to work well,” says Sato. This is immediately obvious on the management floor, which is dominated by a ring-shaped high table.

Spontaneous conversations started here can be continued just a few steps away in a more intimate atmosphere complete with *Jaan* sofas and armchairs by Walter Knoll. The characters on the wall above mean “people.” This is where they sit to discuss how to develop and improve medicinal products, or: how people can acquire more life force. The furniture by Walter Knoll makes a noticeable contribution to that – your lower back is supported, you do not sink into the seats and you can get up again very easily. The pharma managers can appreciate the ergonomics and comfortable upholstery when they sit down for conferences on the *Leadchair Executive*. Another plus point is that the high-quality leather is breathable. So even in the sticky Tokyo summer, it still feels pleasant.

Kashiwa Sato was told by one of his employees – sent specially to Herrenberg, the location of Walter Knoll’s headquarters – how Walter Knoll makes its furniture. The creative director loves clear-cut shapes, fine details and perfect balance in furniture. For his tale about the force of life, he deliberately chose a respected brand that was not too ostentatious. He saw in Walter Knoll the Bauhaus spirit, that mixture of self-esteem and self-effacement that is so pleasing to him. This is furniture for people. *Sonja Blaschke*

Reduction and concentration

Quality comes from the things we don’t do. Decluttering spaces is a constant struggle for interior designers. As is arranging furniture and fittings to create a space and make people feel welcome. So that the person can loosen up – not the furniture.

PROJECT

Pharma Inc.*, Tokyo, Japan

COMPLETED

March 2018

ARCHITECTURE

Nihon Sekkei Inc., Tokyo, Japan

INTERIOR

Kashiwa Sato, Samurai Inc., Tokyo, Japan

WALTER KNOLL PRODUCTS

Foster 500, Foster 501, Foster 510, Jaan, Jason cantilever chair, Leadchair Executive, Turtle Lounge

LOCATION

Conference room, lounge, open space

PHOTOS

Masahiro Ishibashi, Tokyo, Japan

*Pharma Inc. is a pseudonym. We have changed the name at the request of the company. It has a global presence and employs around one thousand staff at its headquarters in Tokyo.

The executive office of the twenty-first century



Agility and stability. The headquarters of one of Europe's largest banks brings together the best of two worlds – thanks to furniture by Walter Knoll

The surfaces of the desks are finished in velvety nutwood, which radiates credibility and trustworthiness.
Exec-V desk, Leadchair Executive swivel chair, Kyo bucket seat, Mason table, Jangwa carpet.
 All by Walter Knoll



The headquarters keeps workspaces available for the executives that arrive from a thousand branches across the world. Those who get along well sit together in a two-person office: *Leadchair Management* swivel chair, *Exec-V* desk, *Storage System*. All furniture by Walter Knoll



“Bankers want an atmosphere that exudes naturalness and perfection in equal measure. Valuable. Durable. Sustainable.”

LUCAS M. WEBER Director, Corporate Business, Walter Knoll

Every morning, the chairman takes his place on the upholstered seat of a *Leadchair Executive*. He likes the look of the shining metal base, which matches the chrome legs of his *Exec-V* desk. The desk is two and a half meters long and one meter wide, and it is from here that the manager leads an international bank. The man values discretion, which is why he is not identified here. The entire management board appreciates the virtues of restraint, naturalness and perfection. The headquarters is located in one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. In the past two years, more than four floors have been redesigned – for working, receiving guests and dining.

The interior is intended to support daily work. And of course, the surroundings should exude a sense of esteem – esteem for the employees and clients, but also esteem and respect for the responsibility that is borne on a daily basis here. That's why the choice of furniture fell to Walter Knoll, whose materials, forms, surfaces and details directly communicate these values. The *Scale-Media* conference tables, *Jangwa* hand-knotted carpets, *Storage System* in nutwood, *Exec-V* desks and *Leadchairs* all reflect the bank's work ethic.

Bankers need privacy. Like most executives, they require spaces in which they can conduct confidential conversations. At the same time, openness is a key



Agility

Customer needs are changing fast, and companies need to keep up the same pace. One useful approach is to use open-plan offices, which facilitate a rapid exchange of information, shorten communication paths and encourage creative teamwork among employees. To complement the large rooms, there are separate, quiet zones for calling clients, brainstorming and thinking.



Coolness and warmth: The terrazzo floor provides the foundation for dark wood and silky leather in the open-plan office (above) and in the open area furnished with *Andoo* barstools (left page, top). In the boardroom (below left) *Jangwa* carpets create cozy islands. This is where high-ranking individuals sit down in the *Foster 502* armchairs and, according to several observers, unconsciously start stroking the soft aniline leather. *Exec-V* desks, *Leadchair Executive* swivel chairs, *Storage System*. All by Walter Knoll

consideration. Concepts like teamwork, modern management and agility have also made their way into boardrooms. Collectively captured by the term New Work, these concepts culminate in communication that is direct, condensed and rapid. This flexibility and openness, coupled with discretion, needed to be translated into the surrounding.

Each of the nearly dozen board members now has a “trilogy” at their disposal – a series of three interconnected rooms: the first with a desk and comfortable chairs, for both working and receiving clients; the second for administrative support; and the third for conferences. Across the hall the closest associates work in agile spaces: large offices for six, eight, ten or fourteen people.

In the run-up to meetings of the supervisory board, the floors bustle with people, as members arrive from all across the world. The conferences take place at a table that can be arranged in a V shape. For security reasons, the board members also dine on site, seated at a seven-meter-long *Scale-Media*.

And thus here, at the headquarters of one of the world's oldest banks, furniture from Walter Knoll makes it possible to unite two virtues: modernity and tradition. In today's world, every organization needs to demonstrate flexibility, vibrancy, transparency and openness – not only to stay on top of their market but also to appeal to employees. At the same time, it is important to preserve and pass on convictions and values. Furniture, which literally gives us something to hold on to throughout our day, transforms immaterial values into material experience. *Carsten Jasner*



COMPLETED

October 2018

ARCHITECTURE

EM2N, Zurich, Switzerland

WALTER KNOLL PRODUCTS

Andoo barstool, *Exec-V*, *Foster 500 Table*, *Foster 502*, *Frame Lite*, *Hausmann 310*, *Legends of Carpets – Jangwa*, *Kyo*, *Leadchair Executive*, *Leadchair Management*, *Mason*, *Scale-Media*, *Storage System*, *bespoke V-Table*

LOCATION

Office, executive offices, conference room, open space

RENDERINGS

screen ID digital imaging, Offenbach, Germany

The company is one of the oldest banks in Europe. They wish to remain anonymous.

The

What is it that actually determines the way we work – the way we organize our offices and projects? Is it the process? The function?

That's not looking at the whole picture, says Markus Benz, CEO of Walter Knoll. The third dimension is missing: the situation.

It is time to start thinking differently

It is companies that create a mindset – and it is offices that harbor identity. If you go to the doctor tomorrow, the moment you step into the office you'll know – consciously or unconsciously – whether you feel like you will be well cared for, whether you can trust the doctor or not. Even, perhaps, if you have never seen the doctor before. The same rule applies to other spaces, like legal firms, hotels and, of course, offices. People read spaces like they do faces – in a split second – and react correspondingly: with affection or aversion, trust or mistrust.

Our environment changes the way we think and act. In the age of the brand, digitalization and demographic change, it should be no surprise that offices are no longer a matter of secondary importance. On the contrary: the office is the powerhouse of the company. People should, at the very least, feel comfortable there. But for a long time even that was not the norm.

Offices used to resemble dreary cells. Endless rows of gray table-tops, beige laminate floors, spaces for the strict eight-hour workday. Design and materials were geared towards durability and exuded an infinite dullness – and it was no different in the upscale furniture segment. The approach was functionality: here is the boss's office, there the conference room; here the coffee maker, there the employees' cubicles. The value of the furniture was based on the status of its user.

In the mid-1990s, a new attitude towards life took hold and, bit by bit, conquered the world of offices, including in Germany. At the dawn of the new millennium, our way of seeing things became more international. Architecture, art, design, internet and digitalization began their victory march around the world. And so the bar was raised for design in general – and office design in particular.

But something else happened: paper disappeared, there were fewer and fewer documents and folders, screens on desktops shrank, and in their place were screens for video conferences and presentations in meeting rooms. White boards, flip charts, presentation kits.

situation

manifesto

by
Markus Benz

Suddenly people were talkative in the workplace because what happened needed to be recorded and processed. Work became more and more digital – and our tools followed suit. It is here that we began asking ourselves questions about processes. And we are still dealing with those questions today: What function do people have? What do they need in order to fulfill that function? How can a company foster an individual's creativity, performance and motivation?

These were good, pertinent and important questions. But up to this point, space has been basically treated the same as process. However, in order to achieve the above-mentioned effects – that is, to boost creativity, motivation and performance at once – it is necessary to have open and organic spaces. Surroundings that create connections. Rooms that are flexible. So we can work in the way the situation calls for.

People working in an office have an average of four to six meetings per day – and they are all different. At the same time, there is often a limited number of rooms in companies' offices. And that is why, today, we are designing offices and conference rooms to be able to offer more – different areas for different situations. A state-of-the-art conference room can host a large group at the conference table; we can have private meetings in a carpeted lounge area nearby; across from that, we can hold quick team meetings at the standing height table or the upholstered bench near the window.

That is how the situation – a mix of furniture and zones – becomes relevant to the office. Places for different types of encounters, sometimes private, sometimes casual. Conference tables become slim and foldable because that allows the room to be used without a table, too. And traditional desks can also become standing desks for small morning meetings.

This is the time for leaders to be sensible. Today a manager's chief task is communication. It is thus even more important that managers can find and take advantage of the right situation for their meeting: the conference room, the sofa, the bench, the standing height table. So in order to spread this communication and foster creativity, performance, ideas and success, it is essential to create pleasant, open, valuable and flexible spaces. How can you recognize such spaces? You will be able to tell as soon as you walk into the room.

Treat for the senses: opulent armchairs, earthy tones and brass details create a warm refuge in the heart of the city. *Isanka Chairs* by Walter Knoll

Beyond by Geisel, Munich

Home away from home

The private hoteliers Geisel have created a residence in Munich that its guests will never want to leave. Thanks to the spacious reading room, around-the-clock kitchen service and sumptuous seating by Walter Knoll, guests feel as if they are staying with generous friends



Inviting charm: the barstools and chairs from the 375 range by Walter Knoll huddle around the open-plan kitchen and provide comfort in the peaceful bedrooms



Premier seats: at the floor-to-ceiling windows, guests at Beyond can enjoy the view onto the bustling city streets. *Foster 520* by Walter Knoll

High above Marienplatz in Munich, at eye level with the glockenspiel of the New Town Hall, is Beyond by Geisel. You can take the name quite literally: Beyond is your second home located on the fifth and sixth floors above the city and far away from everyday life. It is a refuge for people who want to have some time to themselves, invite friends over or get to know like-minded individuals. Just like in a country house, guests settle into their rooms and can meet up in the central two-story library or the wine room, where they can help themselves to the exquisite selection. Hand-crafted furniture by Walter Knoll, such as the timelessly elegant 375 or the sumptuously upholstered seats and sofas from the *Isanka* range, provide the perfect setting for relaxing and chatting.

Inviting comfort in intimate spaces: with this concept, the hotel – or city residence – is following an international trend. The Munich-based private hoteliers Carl, Stephan and Michael Geisel have created a place with character where guests feel as welcome as

they would in the home of a good friend. By perching on a 375 bar stool at the counter of the open-plan kitchen or sinking into a *Foster 520* in their rooms, guests can take in their surroundings of brass details, wood in reddish hues and textiles in shades of honey and ocher. They exude coziness and warmth. The renowned designers from the Madrid-based agency Nieto Sobejano Arquitectos have worked with Walter Knoll to create a landscape of earthy tones in a spacious grotto that soothes body and soul. All the while, the city is at the guests' feet. Behind floor-to-ceiling windows, the towers, tiled roofs and the neo-Gothic façade of the town hall become part of the place. Guests feel as if they are floating over the Marienplatz in the *Isanka* sofa.

The hotel is open to private functions, exclusive parties and corporate events. Once inside, there is no real reason to leave. The kitchen is open around the clock, and meals and drinks are included in the room price. Those who still want to experience

everyday life in the city need only step outside the hotel. Guests are immediately engulfed by the hustle and bustle of Marienplatz, drifting between commotion and gritty Munich charm, before the craving for a cozy retreat catches up with them. *Ralf Grauel*

Immersive travel

Immersing oneself in a city means soaking in its rhythm, colors and sounds – and choosing a hotel that mirrors the spirit of the place with customized design and top-quality furniture. Amidst the splendid solitude and top-quality furniture, travelers find peace and space for the senses.

PROJECT

Beyond by Geisel, Munich, Germany

COMPLETED

November 2017

INTERIOR

Nieto Sobejano Arquitectos, Madrid, Spain

WALTER KNOLL PRODUCTS

375, *Isanka Chair*, *Isanka Sofa*, *Foster 520*

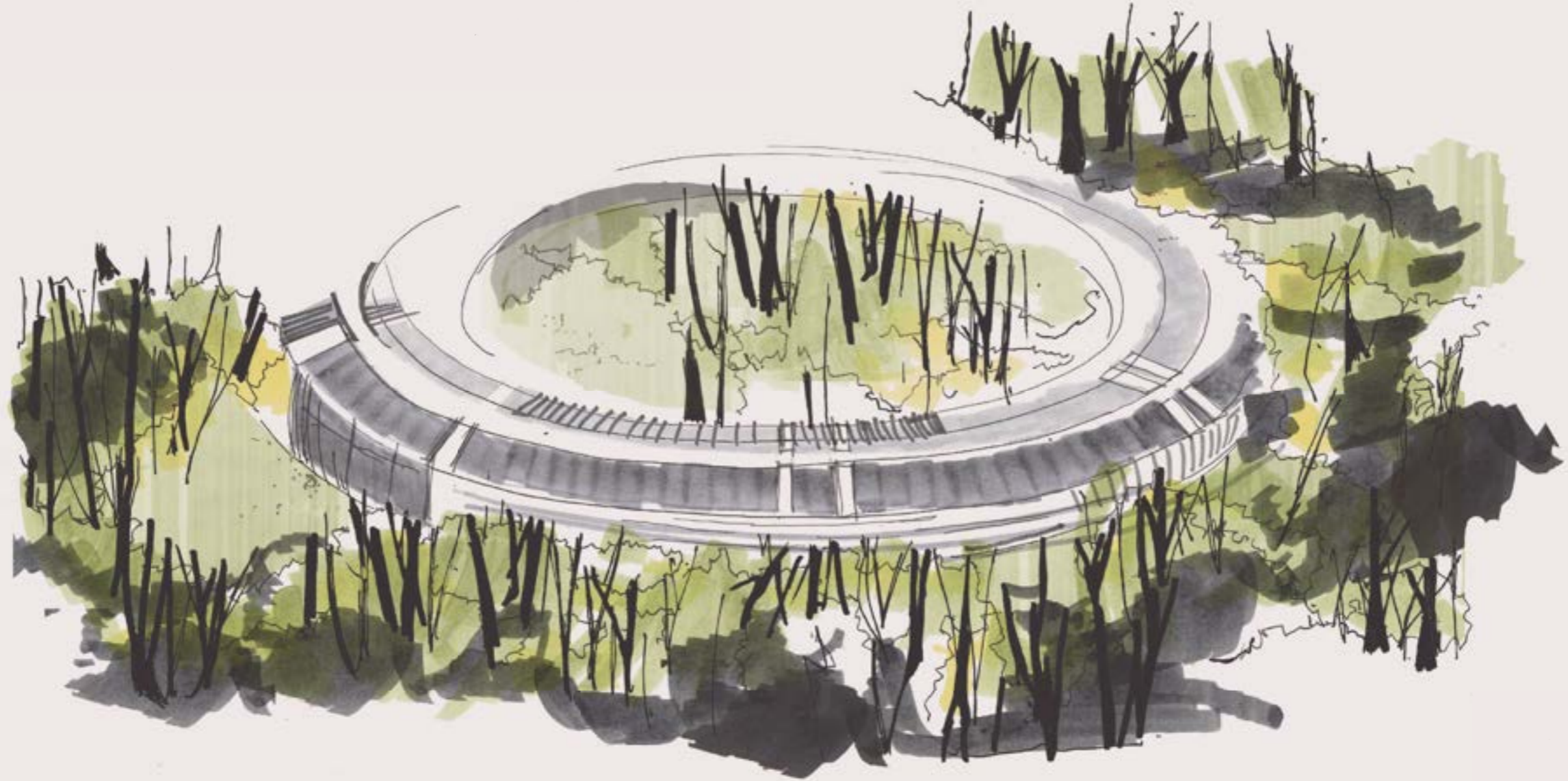
LOCATION

Hotel rooms, kitchen, suite, wine room

PHOTOS

Roland Halbe, Stuttgart, Germany
Marc Oeder, Munich, Germany

The company Geisel Privathotels has been in family ownership for over one hundred years. The brothers Carl, Michael and Stephan run four hotels and four restaurants in Munich, including Königshof, which is one of the "Leading Hotels of the World."



Free of hierarchy, without beginning or end: Apple's high-tech ring in Silicon Valley perfectly embodies corporate culture of the digital age. It was designed by the architect Norman Foster.

Look at us work!

by Oliver Elser

Tech giants Apple, Google and Facebook are in fierce competition for the world's most spectacular corporate headquarters. The workplace has become a brand's showroom. An exploration of the past, present and future of headquarters

The Circle”, a novel by Dave Eggers, was published in October 2013. The book quickly became an international bestseller. The story takes place at a fictitious American tech company called The Circle in Silicon Valley, easily recognizable as a mix of Google, Apple and Facebook. A young woman – in the film adaptation, the character is played by Emma Watson (the precocious Hermione in the “Harry Potter” series) – begins working for the company but soon realizes that the company wants to have complete control of all the personal data in the world. The first readers of this book did not need to wait for the movie to come out to have a vivid picture in their minds of the sort of beautiful new office landscape where the heroine finds herself losing a little bit more of her private life every day. Just that same year, the computer giant Apple presented its own real-life version of “The Circle”: a gigantic, circular office building, a sort of sharp-edged high-tech doughnut, designed by none other than the man of steel-glass-transparency himself: the British architect Norman Foster, who, incidentally, has also been designing furniture for Walter Knoll since 1999.

Was it a coincidence, then, that the tech utopia of the novel had the same unmistakable shape and emerged at the same time as the new Apple Park? Probably, given that the writer and the architect did not have any contact with one another. But it is possible that Eggers had been familiar with another doughnut-shaped building that was built in 2004: the headquarters of the UK intelligence agency GCHQ in Benhall. And yet, that such a circle appeared twice in 2013 could not have been a complete coincidence. Somebody simply must have come up with the idea of the circle – the perfect geometric shape without beginning or end that possesses a mercurial lightness free of hierarchy, and that allows all 12,000 top employees to be visible at all times. It is such a strong image, such a perfect symbol for the corporate culture of the digital era, that it was only a matter of time until someone made their corporate headquarters in the shape of a ring.

For years, the half a dozen corporations that are constantly reinventing our world have been in a fierce competition for the most extravagant, symbolically powerful and innovative office building. The biggest names in architecture have been summoned. The champion of this competition will be the company that

can do two things: rack up the highest construction costs and execute the wildest design. Of course, the new corporate headquarters must meet the standards of global communication. The more the architecture conforms to the essence of the brand the better. Show me how you work and I’ll tell you who you are: from the brand to the architecture to the floor plan.

The new Facebook headquarters was the first one finished, or rather, demonstrably half-finished, which seemed appropriate given that the world’s most important social network is itself a constant work in progress. The architect Frank Gehry designed the largest continuous office space in the world for Mark Zuckerberg, with 2,800 employees sitting together on the same level. It looks wild and chaotic, like a children’s birthday party that nobody ever wants to leave.

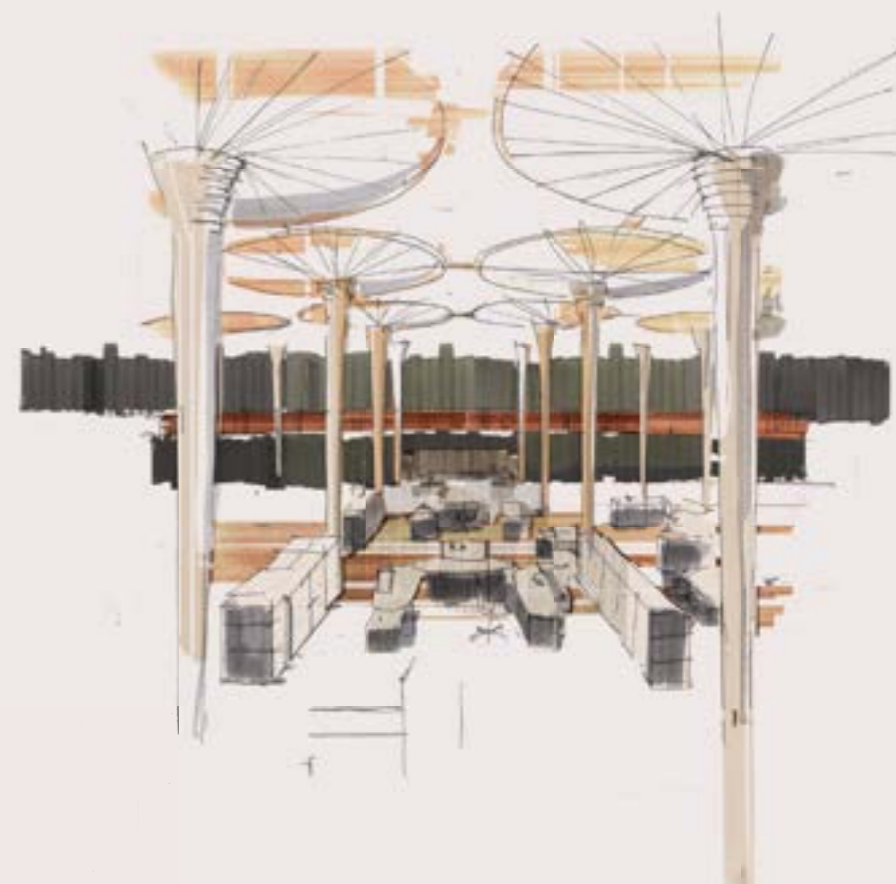
Google, however, let the architects Bjarke Ingels (BIG) and Thomas Heatherwick relive the visions of the 1960s. In the first design phase, everything was bubble-shaped and made of transparent, lightweight plastic, as though the science fiction icon Barbarella had been sitting in on the brainstorming session and appealed to Google’s honor. So, if you want to make the world a better place (“Don’t be evil” was Google’s motto for years), you may end up dealing with the unfulfilled dreams of hippie architecture. Meanwhile, the plans are looking a lot more conventional. The office landscape will be inaugurated under lightweight camping tarps in 2019.

In short, Apple is building an UFO, Facebook is cobbling together a shed and Google is pitching tents. But how new are the offices really on the inside? They are wooing the same clientele, after all. In order to recruit the best and the brightest, the high-tech corporations all offer gyms on the premises, outstanding food, communication zones, flexible meeting areas and a full package of leisure activities near the office (which Dave Eggers so artfully parodies in “The Circle”).

Offices in the style of a landscape architect

What distinguishes the headquarters is the way they deal with the outside world. While at Apple Park, workers are meant to dream their way into the landscape and, in a sort of transcendental experience, also forget the boundaries of the physical world. It is similar to the way in which Apple users – who are not sold a phone but a brightly shining window into another world – are meant to slip away. Meanwhile, the employees of Facebook seem to be stuck in their building in the same way as its users are as they scroll endlessly through a never-ending Timeline.

In principle, these concepts are not as new as they seem. Facebook’s architect Frank Gehry, who became one of the best-known stars in contemporary architecture thanks to his innovative design for the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, had also come up with the idea



Introverted: without windows and supported by mushroom-shaped columns – this was how Frank Lloyd Wright designed the open-plan office of the company Johnson Wax in Wisconsin in the 1930s

for the original office of the chaotic creative in the 1980s, namely, for the advertising agency Chiat/Day in Venice Beach, Los Angeles. In the 1990s, the same agency would propagate the concept of the virtual office – a playful, multicolor landscape without assigned desks – well over a decade before laptop and smartphone technology was developed enough to make that fantasy come true.

And still much earlier, in the 1930s, the architect Frank Lloyd Wright devoted himself to the design of a new factory. He was equally as detail-obsessed as Apple’s chief design officer Jonathan Ive is today, who put years of creative energy into perfecting the new company headquarters. Wright also wanted to make a “Gesamtkunstwerk” for the company Johnson Wax. Only under protest did he let himself be stopped by practical considerations, such as when dozens of employees complained after they had fallen off their wobbly three-wheeled office chairs, which Wright had designed just so, and the designer finally conceded, indulging them by adding a fourth wheel.

The giant open-plan office building in Racine, Wisconsin, one of the first of its kind, is still in use today. The idea of the office landscape did not exist back then. The desks stood, and still stand, in the middle of a vast, beautiful hall – supported by a forest of tall mushroom-shaped columns – without a trace of a private space. This was where management and bookkeeping sat. The



Opening in 2019: Google’s new headquarters under camping tarps, designed by the architects Bjarke Ingels and Thomas Heatherwick



The prototype of the office tower: Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building from the 1950s in Manhattan

chemists researching polishing paste based on tropical wax types, on the other hand, were given their very own Research Tower, which could be seen from miles away. However, the researchers were not there to enjoy the view – they were there to work. For that reason, the architect developed a façade of horizontal glass pipes which stretched and dissected the outside world, as though it were being seen through a fun house mirror. The Johnson Wax Headquarters was dubbed a factory of the future in specialist and mass media publications all over the world. But it remained a virtual “brand space” that could only be experienced from afar in photographs. The same went for the spectacular factory architecture that was emerging in Germany at the same time, such as the Fagus Factory by Walter Gropius, the founder of the Bauhaus school, or the expressionist

multicolor entry building of the Hoechst chemical plant by Peter Behrens. The public kept its distance.

It was not until the 1950s that office buildings which could fall into the “experiential spaces” category started to crop up: strong corporate architecture that could directly benefit city inhabitants, whether they were being targeted as customers or were simply doing well out of it. The Seagram Building – the prototype of the minimal, elegant office skyscraper, imitations of which were erected hundreds of times the world over – is still unmatched in its spaciousness today. Sometimes there is nothing like the original. Mies van der Rohe designed the tower for a Canadian whiskey company which previously had a New York branch in the world-famous Chrysler Building. The latter was a strong example of corporate architecture in its own right – a triumphant symbol for the rise of the American automotive industry thanks to Henry Ford's groundbreaking assembly line. Now, however, in the 1950s, people needed even stronger stuff and so new companies began to dominate the skyline. Thanks to the series “Mad Men”, we have recently been reminded of what life was like back then, especially at the workplace.

Software companies become wellness oases

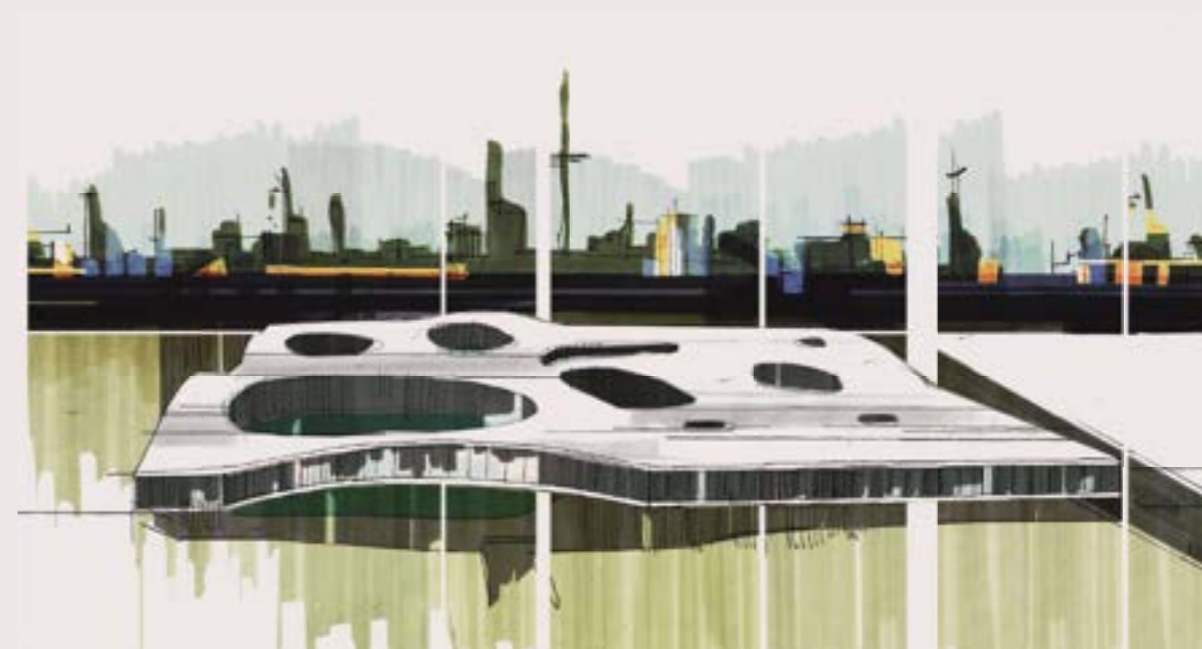
Mies did something that would, in due course, cost his client much more money on top of what he already had spent on the building: the architect convinced him that the building should be set far back from Park Avenue so there could be a big open space in front with water. It was the ultimate expression of luxury, even decadence, to not take advantage of every square inch of space permitted by law in a city as densely populated as New York. Needless to say, nobody has ever done it again. For the city then fined the building's owner, demanding him to pay taxes on the maximum amount of commercial space that could potentially fit in the undeveloped space – taxes that were far higher than the profits that could actually be attained. But the architect put elegance above all else. And New Yorkers are grateful to him to this very day for the opportunity to flock to Seagram Plaza on their lunch break. Ever since, such grand spatial gestures are only possible when they involve property deals that designate a certain amount of public space to offset a maximized exploitation of commercial real estate.

Today, the boundaries are being blurred: offices are becoming permeable, corporations are building marketplaces and software company offices are fancying themselves wellness spas. Still, it is not all as bad as it seems: the workplace is getting more colorful, lively and diverse as a result while, at the same time, the bar is being raised for companies. Whoever opens themselves up will be seen – and what is there will have

to be well thought out and well made.

Meanwhile, the arguably most radical public space-cum-workspace, was not made possible by a company but the EPFL, a public university of applied sciences in Lausanne, Switzerland. The Rolex Learning Center, also known as “The Wave,” was designed by the Japanese architecture firm SANAA, and resembles, from above, two giant, wavy slices of holey Swiss cheese placed neatly on top of one another. Students can be found between the slices. The floor curves so dramatically that a table cannot stand up straight on it. And that is precisely why it is a beloved place to study for groups and individuals. The Rolex Learning Center, inaugurated in 2010, is proof of how the power of architecture can create a pull and how maximum openness can, however paradoxically, improve concentration. Everything happens on the wavy surface; there is nowhere for people to hide.

The next experiment with this kind of all-purpose space is currently taking shape in Berlin. The Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas has designed an office building for the digital division of the German media company Axel Springer that called for a typical Berlin block to be hollowed out. Though it was not done in the usual way by clearing space for an interior courtyard: it was done with a horizontal cut. There, in the hollowed center of the building, desks will be spread out over dozens of platforms; the atmosphere will be unique. Dave Eggers could write a new book about it and call it The Hive. Will the experiment release unforeseen energy among the employees? Or will it remain a structural declaration of intent that the company is putting on display to give itself a fresh new image? Or can it do both things at once? The opening is slated for 2020, but people have already taken a great interest in it. Some are already hailing it as the first experimental building to be constructed in Berlin since the fall of the Berlin Wall.



Maximum openness: the holey, wavy Rolex Learning Center in Lausanne is a popular place among students. The idea came from the Japanese architecture firm SANAA

Written by

Oliver Elser is a curator at Deutsches Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt and regularly writes articles on architecture, design and technology for newspapers and magazines (such as Frankfurter Allgemeine or AD Architectural Digest).

Furniture

Furniture turns brand promises into real sensory experiences. It translates values into individual impressions. In the following pages you will get to know people who put all their knowledge, passion and craftsmanship into our products. So that the ingenious ideas of architects and designers metamorphose into uniquely beautiful chairs, tables and upholstered benches by Walter Knoll



En route to the workshop: as mediator, Jürgen Röhm is often on the move around Walter Knoll's traditional premises

“The qualities of nature give furniture character.”

Jürgen Röhm, the innovator

Developing a new piece of furniture is a voyage of discovery. Constructors, upholsterers and seamstresses are venturing into unknown territory with designers. As the expedition leader, I'm mediating between creatives and craftspeople. The former give us direction, making their sketches and plans, and the latter are digging down and collecting what they find. If all goes well, what we end up with is treasure – the perfect rendition of design in technology, construction, material, form and function.

Our aim is for our customer to get a perfect product. This means that our expedition might take a little longer. In the case of the *Leadchair*, it lasted five years. Three times, the designers altered the design for the better. The chair we discovered at the end of the process has almost nothing in common with the initial idea. But it is perfect!

We never develop a product for the product's sake. There is always a single, strong idea. Can we add new value to the category of the sofa or table – a new function, technology, or aesthetic? This might be a wonderful softness to the touch, an extraordinary seam pattern, or a fascinating surface.

Leather, wood, wool: we work with natural materials. And this fact harbors another exciting challenge. The beauty of nature has no limits. Technology can only control nature up to a certain point. So our designs and processes always take into account these wonderful variations and idiosyncrasies. We call it imperfection in perfection. That might sound lofty, but for us it's another factor that enhances the value of our products. Because our goal is to develop furniture with its own special character.



Mission *Tama Desk*: Jürgen Röhm with graphics for a new, sculptural Walter Knoll desk



What Jürgen Röhm has to say about the development of the *Tama Desk* — page 94



The looped fabric of the new *Liz-M* chair is everything at once: the armrest, seat, suspension and cover. Here, Oliver Siegelin is pulling it over the chair's frame



Multicolor threads give the fabric a three-dimensional look

“The designer is the one who sets the beat, comes up with the melody – and we look for the harmonies to go with it.”

Oliver Siegelin, model maker



How the *Liz-M* chair became a lightweight — page 114

I'm a sort of bandleader for my team. We play together, but I lead the rehearsals. The pieces we play are only partly composed. The designer is the one who sets the beat, comes up with the melody – and we look for the harmonies to go with it. What mood does the sofa want to express? How would I like to sit on it?

A sofa is a feeling sculpted into a shape. When I look at a design, I think about how we can express that feeling; how we can marry technical requirements with high-quality craftsmanship and beauty. I think about piping, invisible zippers, drawn-ins, creased upholstery – these details are my passion. They are also what make a piece of furniture into a Walter Knoll product.

We figure out solutions as a team. The upholsterers and seamstresses explore ideas and paths. We might think that a folded seam on a delicate armrest would be nice, though it's not until we have the life-sized model standing in front of us that we can decide whether it works. We strive for perfection *and* feasibility. The art lies in achieving both.

Often years go by before a design is ready for the production line. I always ask myself: are we on the right path? Should we consider pursuing a previous idea? Taking a break from the design can also be helpful. In the case of the *Leadchair* range, the balance between form and function had to be reconciled. We then felt we needed to give the upholstery more of a meaningful character. At some point I came across the club chair that Walter Knoll introduced in Germany in 1907: could we take some element from this perfect structure for our chair? When we find solutions like that – that is a phenomenal feeling.



Upholstery is like a pair of arms. Yielding gently, then taking me up. A sofa should be like a trained body: it should look good, feel good, instill confidence, offer safety, and carry me with ease. And hopefully a smile.

I build upholstery slowly, in several layers. There are many things to consider in the process. How thick should the bottom, middle, and top layers of foam be? What belts or metal springs are suitable for the suspension? What kind of cotton, what kind of fleece? Do I want to finish the top layer with feathers and down? That would be something special. A sheaf of down makes for a wonderful landscape, with a light look and soft feel.

For living rooms, I develop deep and voluminous upholsteries. Sitting in them, you should feel as though you are sinking into a cloud and being caught with the utmost care. But if a sofa is going to be used frequently by many people – in an office, waiting room, or airport – I need a firmer, more durable upholstery, although even this must be comfortable and must embrace me.

I have a very sensitive body. I can feel at once if the upholstery is right. It's difficult to describe, because it's a question of experience and sensation. If a mother is baking a cake, she takes "a handful of flour." She doesn't know exactly how many grams that is. It's the same with me. My hands, my instinct – these are incredibly important. What's the touch like? How does it feel to take hold of the upholstery? At the end, I put the cover on. I squeeze, knead, and pound it. It's rather like a massage. To get the body in trim. And then, in the showroom or at a trade fair, I love to watch people sit on it. Do their faces relax? Do they stroke the armrest with their hand? Do they nod in contentment?



How Elmar Böing has helped develop the *Jaan Silent* sofa — page 122



Elmar Böing uses different gauges of needles and awls to design details for Walter Knoll upholstered furniture – like the ornamental seams on the new *Jaan Silent* sofa (below)

“Good upholstery instills confidence and offers safety.”

Elmar Böing, the development upholsterer



“A good seam gives the eye a direction in which to look, guiding it to the valuable details.”

Julia Schroeder, the development seamstress



Julia Schroeder explains the part seams play in the *Foster 620* upholstered bench — page 128



Which seam works with which material? Where should the lines run in a piece of furniture? Questions that are resolved in a long development process at Walter Knoll

A good seam gives the eye a direction in which to look, guiding it to the valuable details. And it does this without being obtrusive. The color of the thread is usually related to the color of the material. But sometimes, the thread can also provide contrast, for example a light thread in dark saddle leather. The length of the stitches should be well balanced – it is often ideal for holes to be four millimeters apart. Finding the optimum is a developmental process, at the end of which I have the perfect seam in front of me, bearing witness to excellence in craftsmanship.

I have high standards in my work. When we develop a new sofa, I try out various decorative seams – folded seams, fell seams – using different needles, hole distances, threads. I get quite uneasy if the seam doesn't get put in the right place – you can feel the imperfection. I'm fascinated by getting the right seam in the right place.

When I develop a sewing plan, I think myself into the cover. The skin of the sofa is there in my mind's eye. Which seam do I start with, and which parts do I assemble in which order? If I make a mistake, our seamstresses are landed with a heavy burden – a leather cover weighs eight or nine kilos. When I run my fingers over the seam, I can feel whether the tension is right. A good seam in warm, soft leather should feel like coming home. Like an embrace. Like a promise that the seam is going to last.



In the development department, Julia Schroeder plans how the seamstresses will later assemble the pieces



Measuring, calculating, tinkering and thinking about the long-term behavior of the material – Rainer Brinkmann makes sure Walter Knoll furniture stands securely and withstands all the demands placed on it



“What makes a product truly fascinating is the marriage of craftsmanship and technology.”

Rainer Brinkmann, the constructor



More about *Conference-X* and its technical subtleties — [page 106](#)

If a table were a house, I would be the structural engineer. I calculate tensile loads and compressive forces, construct pillars, struts, frames. I draw the basic structure to exact dimensions on my computer. The thing to bear in mind is that even though every piece of furniture we make is the product of perfect craftsmanship, all our products also have a technological core.

What makes a product truly fascinating is the marriage of craftsmanship and technology. That's exactly what “Made in Germany” means. We're located in a region that is brimming with leading technology firms. In our development process, we work closely together with companies that are also involved in research for the automotive industry.

Take the soft edges of our *Tama Desk*, for example. We shape these with special care, using a unique vacuum process. We cast the legs of our *Conference-X* in solid aluminum. Beforehand, I must precisely calculate how much the metal will expand in the heat and contract again when cooled. And we only find out if my calculations were correct when the parts emerge from the mold. That's always an exciting moment.

With *Conference-X*, for example, the delicate feet support the center in an X shape. But how would the table react to loads placed on its edge? When it was finished, I sat on the very rim. I weigh eighty kilos. The calculations were right! The table didn't wobble at all.

I fight for every detail. You'll often find me lying under a table thinking about connections and cable ports. A single button can preoccupy me for three days. I spent months tinkering with one small occasional table. The problem was how to construct a solid wooden leg so that it could tolerate both heat and cold. We got there in the end. And the solution was simple and ingenious – which is a fantastic feeling.



The room planning tool

The pCon.planner is the most popular professional room and interior planning system for office and contract. The tools and functions are sophisticated yet intuitive, and the database contains the products of many manufacturers. Users range from manufacturers and dealers to architectural firms, interior designers and facility managers.



The planning office in your pocket

People customize their cars to suit them perfectly. And they do the same with sneakers. And soon they will also configure high-quality sofas, tables, chairs, armchairs, upholstered benches, carpets and their own interiors. Discover how Walter Knoll is digitalizing the future of furniture-buying, and how retailers, architects, planners and even customers are benefitting from this



pCon.box

The mobile furniture configuration tool

A mobile app for smartphones and tablets (also available as web version) that allows users to playfully configure furniture in 3D, and design, plan and calculate entire spaces. With the app, users can take photos of floor plans and then fill them with furniture. In an augmented reality feature the furniture can also be placed within real rooms. The app was developed to help improve the customer experience at the point of sale. It is easy and fun to use, but also incredibly professional. Each configuration can be exported in various data formats, sent via email, WhatsApp or SMS, or downloaded.



pCon.facts

The digital furniture catalog

In addition to pCon.box, professionals can also use pCon.facts, a mobile application containing details, images and additional information. Dealers, planners and architects can find assembly instructions, certificates, product brochures and high-quality photos here. This gives them another valuable tool for inspiring and retaining customers with impressive presentations and also includes an AR feature.

Not that long ago, customers often went to the retailer up to seven times before buying a sofa. They would embark on a journey through various stores, try out different models, study catalogs and slowly but surely form an opinion before returning to one of the retailers – and buying their sofa. This journey still takes place today, but now it leads through the internet. And when they show up at a retailer, they are often very well informed – it only takes one or two visits for them to make a decision. If retailers cannot answer a question at this juncture, they run the risk of losing their customers.

Smartphones make for smart customers. Everyone has access to a photo album, address book, calendar, music library, conversations, dictionaries, department stores, travel agencies, account balances – as a matter of fact, to the entire world. And so, hardly any big purchases are made without prior online research. Walter Knoll is turning this digital customer journey – from visiting the website to planning and configuring furniture at the retailer – into an interactive experience that takes place right on your smartphone.

Walter Knoll has just entered into a strategic partnership with the German software company EasternGraphics. For many years, EasternGraphics has been operating the pCon.planner: the standard software for room planning in office and contract

spaces. The software company has thus bridged the gap between the planning office on one end and the retailer/end consumer on the other. The tools include an updated mobile app for interior design (pCon.box) and a digital furniture catalog (pCon.facts). They are fun to use and accessible to the entire interior design industry.

This means that retailers, planners, architects and customers have access to free, complete, up-to-date and flawless data sets on a single compatible platform that guarantees secure processes. All data is provided in standard planning formats.

With this, Walter Knoll is putting itself right at the forefront of the digital transformation. Every product from the portfolio, every configuration, all prices and all lists are on one platform. A platform Walter Knoll is single-handedly and continuously adding to. The effect is an enormous increase in efficiency – along the entire process and value chain.

This platform is open around the clock. Architects can integrate high-quality 3D models into their planning; room planners drastically shorten their processing times; retailers can focus all their attention on their customers and inspire them with fascinating configurations. And, as for the customers, they can follow, post and share every one of these steps – and even shape them. Playfully, creatively, anywhere in the world.

WOW YOUR CUSTOMERS!

Retailers can reap lots of benefits from the digital planning office



MAXIMIZING SPACE

Turning shelves into showrooms

BEFORE Catalogs, price lists and updates: it is not unusual for dealer's shelves to be filled with several feet of binders per furniture manufacturer they carry. This collection of documents not only needs to be stored somewhere – it also needs to be maintained and regularly updated.

NOW There is a central database with all products, configurations and prices. The output of the database is platform-independent, which means that it works on desktop PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones. Data is managed and updated regularly. That is how shelf space can be transformed into showroom space.



PACKING LIGHT

An entire product library in your pocket

BEFORE Catalogs and price lists not only take up space, they are also heavy. This can be a problem during on-site meetings with customers since a number of their questions cannot be answered.

NOW A mid-sized phone or tablet weighs less than one pound. The screen produces well-illuminated crystal-clear images, is very easy to use – and the device can access all important information, figures, dimensions, data, pictures, prices and lists.



INVOKING THE SENSES

Experience variety with the latest technology

BEFORE Using furniture is a sensory experience – so selecting it should be too. Furniture needs to be touched and, at the same time, seen up close and in context. Showrooms and print catalogs are helpful but not capable of presenting all the possible configurations

NOW Zoom in on details, experience augmented reality first-hand, all on screens with 4K resolution – this is sure to provide the wow factor. You can run through each and every product variant. And furniture, materials and upholstery fabrics can be viewed as high-resolution 3D images, from the finest velvet cover to oak cigar veneer. The best part? Each configuration can be saved in presentation format and sent via email.



AVAILABLE 24/7

Creating configurations instantly

BEFORE No furniture purchase is the same, regardless of the scale or price class: customer requests, configurations and materials can change continuously, as can the combination of products. The more varied the configuration options, the longer it takes and more complicated it is to find answers.

NOW Complexity is not a problem anymore – it turns into variety! The customer's ideas can be answered right away. Thanks to high levels of speed, functionality and data quality the cumbersome manual configuration process turns into a dynamic kind of entertainment.



CLARITY FOR CONFIGURATIONS

"Sorry, we can't do that" will soon be a phrase of the past

BEFORE Walter Knoll offers its project partners a diverse portfolio with a near-endless number of configurations. Unfortunately this can also lead to errors and may require readjustment.

NOW The advantage of digitization is that products are always uniquely and unmistakably configured.

THE WIN-WIN CHAIN

A platform everyone can benefit from

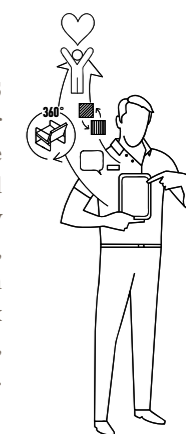


Architects

receive high-quality graphics so their visualization of 3D planning designs is as true to life and scale as possible. All files are available in open formats to guarantee seamless import and export into common CAD programs. On request, the set can also include certificates and product information, so invitations to tender are always accurate. All data is available 24/7, and always up-to-date.

Dealers

can concentrate on consulting and inspiring their customers right in the store. They now become proper consultants who can provide quick and simple answers to customers' questions. They impress customers by highlighting 3D models, zooming in on details, and playing around with dimensions, shapes and finishes. Even complex products can be configured playfully – directly, digitally, emotionally.



Planners

increase the proximity to the customer. They send images, lists and CAD models directly from the planning tools. From sending a quick picture of the latest idea to showing all the available options, this new form of mobile consultation is fast and available at all times – plus it can be used anywhere and even gives the customers some mementos to take with them on their device!

Customers

become involved in the process. People consciously and happily invest time into designing their surroundings. The digital tools turn planning into a sensory, interactive experience.

Customers can follow the progress of their furniture planning on their end devices, and share pictures and designs with families and friends. The apps are so simple and intuitive to use that customers with a special interest in design can take things into their own hands.





“Digitality strengthens our tradition. In doing so we are renewing it.”

Markus Benz, CEO of Walter Knoll, talking about a radical step and about what the change is bringing to partners, retailers and customers

Mr. Benz, will robots soon be building your furniture?

MB (laughs) A lot of water will flow under the bridge until machines are capable of doing that. Our profession has a lot to do with experience. The elasticity of fabrics changes from batch to batch. Leather and wood are living materials. We feel the differences during manufacture, and even them out. Only we humans can give the product its sculptural quality.

What does digitalization mean for Walter Knoll?

MB Change. Walter Knoll is all about years of tradition, perfection and craftsmanship. It may sound contradictory at first. But if we approach digitalization correctly, we can strengthen this tradition further, because we are renewing it. We are checking every component of our communication: when, where and with what content do we meet customers on their journey to making a decision? Within the company we are reviewing all processes: the whole organization is being digitalized – so that our internal processes and results correspond to the requirements which are dictated to us from outside. We are going to get better, faster and leaner.

Internal digitalization versus external? Could you explain that please?

MB Consumers are spending a lot more time using digital channels to find out about products. Website and social media activities have to be state of the art. If you look at our business partners, their degree of digitalization is also high: planners, architects and dealers are constantly requiring data sets, pictures and digital price lists for their projects. We are now taking a really radical step. All content and processes are now running on one platform. Pictures, data sets, configurations, price lists, offer management, merchandise planning and control systems. Everything is harmonized.

Being that consequent must have increased your efficiency the most.

MB Our efficiency – and that of our partners! Our strategy is based on an open industrial standard. So we haven't just created a solution for Walter Knoll. Our partners are part of our digitalization and benefit equally from it. All data sets are available 24/7 in the relevant programs for the dealers, planners and architects – without any gaps, in a transparent form, in top resolution. Just imagine how this harmonization of the data accelerates the processes.

Got an example?

MB Well, a process that used to take weeks, can now be taken care of in just hours.

Now we have lost sight of the customers...

MB Exactly the opposite is true! Because this strategy generates even more fascination, experience and involvement for the customer.

How does that work?

MB We are not just talking about merchandise planning and ordering systems. We have opted for software that helps us to create an unforgettable customer experience because it was developed to plan rooms and configure furniture. Walter Knoll only hands over complete and top quality data sets. The customer at the dealer's can then configure his interior, his furniture together with the advisor – without having to wait but with a definite wow effect. The products, surfaces, upholstery and materials are in a quality never seen before. This results in a completely new kind of selling and planning result. And at the same time, the software has been integrated in our business processes.

Can customers control this configuration themselves?

MB Of course they can! The dealer can send the configuration to the customer who then actually can continue to work on it with an app on his smartphone or tablet. The customer can take photos of his floor at home, scan and configure a room plan. And if he wants, he can send that to the dealer. Even by WhatsApp or as an SMS if he wants to.

Does that all work in virtual reality and augmented reality environments?

MB Yes. At Orgatec we will be presenting an AR application for the apps. The launch of further features is definitely just a question of time.

So what do you need dealers for?

MB People want to feel and try out high-quality products when making a purchasing decision. Planning and consultancy is still the retailer's largest talent and competency. Our digital excellence – only the best data for the best customer experience – strengthens the retailer's position and prepares them for the future. First of all, they have the time to focus entirely on the customer and, secondly, they can capture the customer's imagination with new, digital forms of presentation and win them over.

Interview: Ralf Grauel

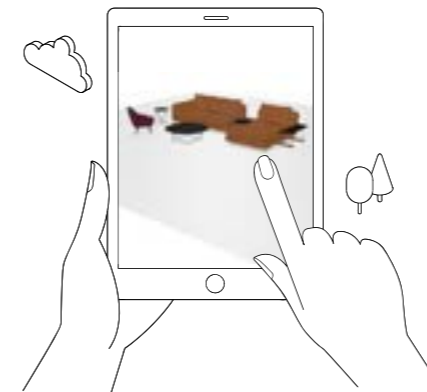
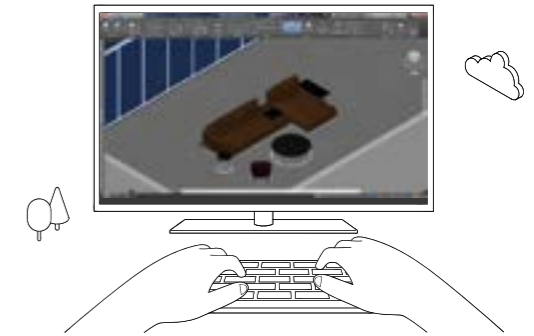
DIGITAL CONFIGURATIONS

How architects, customers and dealers communicate seamlessly with each other via smartphones, tablets and PCs. An example

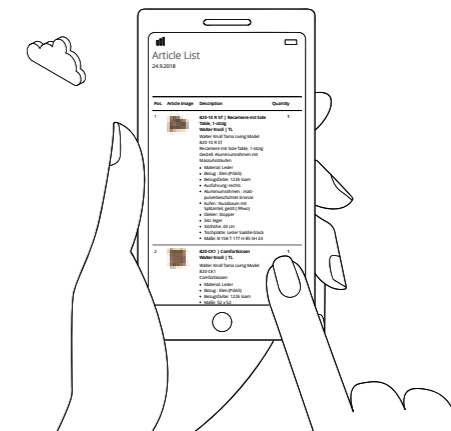


1. THE PLANNER AT THE ARCHITECTURAL FIRM configures a furniture setting from Walter Knoll in the pCon. box. He exports a CAD file for his architect and an open exchange format for the retailer (OBK file). The customer receives an image as well as a product list of the configuration.

2. THE ARCHITECT integrates the furniture configuration into the larger plan and exports a file to the customer.



3. THE CLIENT receives the image – accompanied by the article list of his configuration.



4. THE DEALER receives the OBK file. He exports the product list, places the customer's order internally and forwards it along with other orders to Walter Knoll in Herrenberg. There are no further questions. The production process is initiated on the very same day.

The sculpture for visionaries

TAMA DESK. Design: EOOS.

Tama is applied art. Sculpture, statement, commitment. To freedom and creativity, elegance and beauty, sensuousness and self-esteem.

Tama Desk is more of an attitude than a desk. If you sit behind it, you send your thoughts on a journey over the blue ocean of new markets and opportunities





Pedestal and drawer exude masterly craftsmanship. A light brush of your hand along the body and the corpus slides out, revealing an inner tray lined with soft leather and mirrors. A private compartment available with lighting if required.

Its design is a song of wood and craftsmanship. Bronze blade legs, elegant lines and terraced levels. *Tama Desk* marks the evolution from workbench to instrument.



The perfectly balanced form of *Tama Desk*, every detail, its finish, the charm of the surfaces and its subtle poise – all these aspects bring a fourth dimension to the category desk: creativity!

Tama Desk is a mind space. The redefinition of the desk as a think desk. A balancing act of dynamism and calm, shape and sensuousness. A sound board for the ideas of those sitting at it: managers, doers and all those people who look to the future because they know that that is where success is shaped.

- Iconic character
- Craftsmanship par excellence
- Interplay of horizontal and vertical surfaces



pCon.box

Find out more in the configurator



A new vacuum procedure was used to apply the veneer to desk top, sides and curves

The design story

How do you rethink the desk? How do you shape a haven of inspiration – a place that gives birth to ideas? Is there a design which can help us to think in new categories? In other words, what does a desk have to look like to literally make it its owner's think tank? It should certainly be organic because nature doesn't have any right angles either. For years now, EOOS has worked with the vital interplay of vertical and horizontal surfaces. *Tama Desk* is the culmination of this constructive exploration. A balancing act of lightness and strength, simplicity and complexity, dynamism, calm, shape and sensuousness. Pure inspiration! This truly unique furnishing sculpture only became possible with the craftsmanship of the Walter Knoll development team which came up with a range of completely new construction and veneer technologies for *Tama Desk*. Clemens Schmidt, developer: "*Tama Desk* is in no way like the construction of a typical model – maybe apart from the fact that it has a drawer."

Facts and details

- **Craftsmanship** at its best.
- **Three discs** carry the desk.
- **New nutwood maduro** and all other veneers possible.
- **Pedestal** with pullout.
- **Private compartment:** leather lining, mirrors and as an optional extra lighting in the drawer and pedestal.
- **USB power ports:** concealed charging stations for iPhone and iPad.
- **Invisible** cable routing.

Design: EOOS.

The Austrian designers Martin Bergmann, Gernot Bohmann and Harald Gründl run their atelier in Vienna and work in projects from Milan to Toronto, London to New York, Berlin to Herrenberg. EOOS draws on the archaic and creates visionary pieces. They observe human rituals, sense desires and instincts, and design furniture to suit life.



"This desk is organic through and through. It is different from all other desks before it. Brilliant. The question is: can you actually still call it a desk?"

JÜRGEN RÖHM Head of Research and Development at Walter Knoll

A table like a made-to- measure suit

SCALE-MEDIA. Design: Wolfgang C. R. Mezger.

It is the master of the boardroom. German engineering combined with perfect craftsmanship. The design options of *Scale-Media* in terms of size, material and media technology are so diverse that every table is ultimately unique – and the icing on the cake for every corporate identity



Scale-Media is the made-to-measure suit among the conference tables. Flexibility with character. The design team at Walter Knoll implements high-grade components to ensure the perfect fit for the most demanding of customer desires. Every individual piece stands for unrivalled excellence in scaling, processing and finishing. *Scale-Media* is a powerful tool for modern leadership. Ensuring that the company – with its aims, its values and its identity – is the focal point of a discussion.

- New boat form with rounded corners
- New veneer in oak cigar
- New panel leg with soft radii



pCon.box

Find out more in the configurator

The design story

The development of *Scale-Media* is the story of years of collaboration with conferencing customers the world over. It all started with the question: how can you develop a conference table to suit the highest demands but which, like a made-to-measure suit, can nevertheless be adapted to suit individual wishes and, at the same time, is based on established construction principles? This is why *Scale-Media* was designed as an intelligent toolkit from the outset. It is based on process-related manufacturing engineering, is variable in size and look, and characterized by excellence in material and the integration of media technology. In a continuous improvement process, every made-to-measure table enriches the design team's treasure trove of experience – and leads to unrivalled expertise in scaling, flexibility and finishing. Challenging customer desires have made *Scale-Media* the perfect tool for boardrooms.

Facts and details

- **Dimensions** are scalable.
- **Resolute excellence** in material and surfaces: veneers, fine textured paint and Fenix®.
- **Central section** made of leather.
- **Connectors** for media technology are discreetly positioned under the surface.
- **Connector covers** in the table top are also veneered.

Design: Wolfgang C. R. Mezger.

With his good sense for the spirit of the times, he has been one of the pioneers in office design for more than thirty years. Wolfgang C. R. Mezger is a typographer, industrial designer and specialist for executive offices. He finds answers to complex questions in simple solutions and consistent details.



Boat-shaped table top with rounded corners, veneer in oak cigar. Panel legs with soft radii in fine textured paint black. Central section made of leather



Boat-shaped table top with rounded corners, veneer in wengé. Solid base in fine textured paint mineral



Boat-shaped table top, veneer in oak shining grey. Prism panel legs in fine textured paint anthracite



Trapeze-shaped table top with rounded corners in fine textured paint taupe. Panel legs in fine textured paint bronze

The agile table system

CONFERENCE-X. Design: EOOS.

Beauty, efficiency and stability – crossed with maximum flexibility. The elegant X-shaped base carries the slim, almost sensuous top. A table that is so airy that it liberates the room instead of dominating it





Working worlds are becoming more diverse, rooms more variable in use. The new elongated X base enables conference tables up to 1.40 meters wide. People can sit opposite each other and work together at one and the same table – with or without a computer. If a new situation arises, the system can be dismantled or converted in a flash



Conference-X is also a perfect individual working place. The airy X-shaped legs lend an air of lightness. The table is stable and provides plenty of legroom

Today an individual workplace, tomorrow a bench for a brainstorming session, the day after a series of tables for a seminar. *Conference-X* is easy to convert and dismantle in seconds – without any special knowledge, without tools. And it is precisely this flexibility that makes *Conference-X* a modern management table for start-ups, fin-techs and agencies. Scalable and adaptable: a table which grows with the ideas of the people sitting round it.



Beauty and stability made of solid aluminum. The slimline X carries tops up to one meter wide. The new, elongated X can shoulder areas up to 1.40m wide



“The secret is the X: a leg made of 60 individual parts with a powerful spring lock. Could withstand earthquakes – the more you rock the table, the firmer the base is locked.”

RAINER BRINKMANN Construction engineer at Walter Knoll

- Flexibility and agility in the office
- Elegant supporting structure
- No-tool assembly



pCon.box

Find out more in the configurator

The design story

Rooms are becoming more variable in use. What does a table that satisfies a whole range of different demands look like – from the individual workplace to an international symposium? That combines beauty and multifunctionality? That can be converted in a flash? Bearing these questions in mind, designers and construction engineers came up with the high-grade *Conference-X* system. The pivotal piece is an X-shaped base made of solid aluminum – elegant, lightweight with a high load-bearing capacity. People have plenty of legroom and the table top is stable. The newly created connecting mechanism can be locked and released in a flash.

Now the X has a big brother: an elongated X that can shoulder working spaces up to 1.40 meters wide. People can sit opposite each other and work together at one and the same table – with or without a computer. If a new task crops up, the system can be converted in a flash. *Conference-X* is the flexible table system for flexible companies. A construction which combines agility with stability.

Facts and details

- **Table top** in multiple shapes and sizes, materials and surfaces.
- **Rounded edges** for sophisticated requirements, straight edges for the business area.
- **The X is the base.** It carries the table top. And connects two tables.
- **Easy Handle connection technology** has been put forward for a patent.
- **Connectors** in the table top provide access to power and IT networks.
- **Textile cable mesh** bundles cables and small pieces of media equipment.
- **USB power port** for charging smart-phones and tablets is virtually invisible under the table edge.
- **Modesty panel** with a textile look provides visual protection and absorbs sound in a room.



1



2



3



4

From a technical point of view *Conference-X* is a table system. (1) The pivotal piece is an X-shaped base made of solid aluminum – elegant, lightweight with a high load-bearing capacity. (2) The newly created connecting mechanism can be released in a flash, (3) and quickly used to connect two table tops. (4) The joint is virtually invisible



Light now even lighter

LIZ-M. Design: Claudio Bellini.

Liz, has a ring of beauty to it, but also sounds like 'less'. And with that, the secret to this pure chair is aired. And its new variant, *Liz-M*, goes even one step further when it comes to sticking to essentials

Liz-M means: less is more. More minimalism, more lightness – in construction, upholstery and handling. Maximum comfort with a minimum weight. *Liz-M* is versatile: for flexible use round a conference table, at events, congresses, lectures. And *Liz-M* makes sense: its design demonstrates resolute reserve in the use of material. The result is a chair of maximum sustainability – because its reduced components are perfect in terms of separation and recycling.



Liz-M is light and narrow: it is easy to stack up to twelve chairs safely



1



2

Flexible and comfortable: (1) linked in a row or (2) free-standing – comfy with a pad on the armrest

- Reduction to essentials
- Light and sustainable
- Extremely simple handling



pCon.box

Find out more in the configurator

The design story

Claudio Bellini had designed a new variant of *Liz* allowing the safe stacking of up to twelve chairs. The construction engineers at Walter Knoll also asked themselves: how could they make this variant even lighter – in terms of weight, in terms of construction, while retaining maximum comfort? The solution? A new kind of knitted fabric. It has outstanding elasticity, which can be varied with the density of the loops. Different colored, twisted yarns give the surface a vital, three-dimensional effect. And it feels fantastic to the touch. The team came up with a construction technology as simple as it is ingenious: they pulled the circular-knitted fabric over the framework in one piece – like a stocking. Armrest and seating area, cover and cushioning – all made of the same material. And that is the reason why the chair is so wonderful to separate and recycle. *Liz-M* is the comfort champion among the conference chairs.

Facts and details

- **The knitted fabric** is a new kind of cover and substrate in one. It is elastic, breathable and particularly easy to care for.
- **The armrest pad** ensures extra comfort.
- **The tubular steel framework** makes it easy to stack and set up in rows.
- **All components** can be separated and recycled.

Design: Claudio Bellini.

The Italian designer has a studio in Milan and lectures in industrial design at the University of Genoa. The impulse of his work is the question of how new technologies can lead to new shapes. Many of Claudio Bellini's creations have won international prizes, including the chair *Liz*, which also received the Red Dot Award in 2013.



Liz-M features a new kind of knitted fabric (left), but is also available in all other fabrics and leathers in the Walter Knoll collection



“As a team we came up with a solution: why don't we pull a cover over Liz-M like you would a stocking? And that was it. Very simple and absolutely ingenious.”

OLIVER SIEGELIN Team Lead Development at Walter Knoll



Talking on a level playing field

DEEN. Design: EOOS.

A place that attracts you. A surface that wants to be touched. At a height that is just right. With a shape that is clear and open. Meetings at a standing height table are always meetings that need no hierarchy

At the standing height table *Deen*, there is no difference between those standing and sitting. If you are already standing there, you have everything in view; if you are joining the group, you immediately feel welcome; and if you have to leave in the middle, you certainly don't cause a commotion. Meetings at *Deen* are encounters. The soft edge is inviting. The solid wood top, that looks like a tree trunk, exudes warmth, dignity and respect. And this is how special moments occur in public spaces, an office and at home.



1



2

The table top of *Deen* is available in two designs:
 (1) "Advanced" with a rounded edge and surfaces such as fine textured paint, Fenix® and others.
 (2) And made of solid wood with a soft edge

- Masterpiece made of solid wood
- Superiority, overview, guiding principle
- Meetings on a level playing field
- Multiple hand-crafted details



pCon.box

Find out more in the configurator

The design story

A standing height table promotes open, dynamic exchange. That was something the designers from EOOS knew, and they also knew: height alone is not enough. The design should have a positive effect on those standing round the table. The table should feel pleasant. Sophistication was the core message, decided EOOS and Walter Knoll. They chose elegant solid wood for the top, mount and legs. The uniform, velvety oiled surface exudes a sense of calm. The radii of the boat-shaped top look harmonious. Those standing round the table come closer together thanks to the slimline form. The perfectly shaped soft edge sweet-talks your hand. The elegant legs look natural. The product is top-class, vital and relaxed through and through. And that is why *Deen* not only looks good in executive offices and creative rooms, but also in a bistro or your kitchen at home. The perfect meeting point.

Facts and details

- **Sculptural table top** made of solid wood or with surfaces such as fine textured paint, Fenix® and others.
- **USB power port**, connectors and cable outlet are available as an optional extra.
- **The soft edge** feels pleasantly soft.
- **The legs** are always made of solid wood.



Variety: *Deen* comes in two heights. The difference between them is ten centimeters – for different markets, preferences and situations. The table top comes in several sizes



"I like meetings that take place at eye level, literally. Deen is the perfect masterpiece. Hand-crafted, high grade. An attractive standing height table I like to lean on."

RAINER BRINKMANN Construction engineer at Walter Knoll



Oasis in open space

JAAN SILENT. Design: EOOS.

Ground and air. Strength and lightness. Volume and clean lines. Comfortable upholstery floating over understated legs. Distinction with discretion. The best of both worlds



Distinction and discretion: high, lightweight screens frame *Jaansilent*. The soft surface of the screen is protective and banishes disturbing noises. The screens come in various forms: semi- or fully closed, in an L or U shape, as shown on the previous page – resulting in tailored privacy

Closed quarters in an open office. *Jaan Silent* creates private islands: in a workspace, a lounge or at an airport. Everywhere we live, work, travel and are on the move, *Jaan Silent* structures space, issuing fine invitations – for a spontaneous get-together in a small team, a creative session or quite simply five minutes of ‘me’ time.



1



2

Tailored privacy: (1) on the *Jaan Silent* sofa with soft upholstery and a particularly comfortable seating space. (2) Or on the *Jaan Silent* bench with formal upholstery



Functional details: the leather-covered brackets ooze craftsmanship and hold the filigree screens of *Jaan Silent* together

- Rooms within a room
- Tailored privacy
- A retreat for concentration and communication
- Delicate design with distinguished details



pCon.box

Find out more in the configurator

The design story

The more open the design of our working worlds and public areas, the more significant areas of retreat become. A sofa and a bench were to be designed for *Jaan Silent* that would give maximum privacy – without overloading a room. The solution consists of screens with a new kind of construction made of fine upholstery, laminated wood and aluminum. *Jaan Silent* was developed entirely with a focus on its use. The system is flexible, extendible and can be combined individually. The *Jaan Silent* sofa with light, soft upholstery and a comfortable seating space. The *Jaan Silent* bench with formal upholstery and more compact dimensions. The backs and sides of the screens come in different lengths and depths, making it possible to realize private U shapes, semi-open L shapes or large open room dividers. This results in a private space in an open office. The best of both worlds.

Facts and details

- **The screens come in various forms.** Semi- or fully closed, in a U or L shape.
- **The decorative seam** lends the screen optical depth and emphasizes the hand-crafted style.
- **Electricity and USB connectors** ensure nobody will run out of power here.
- **Can be combined with *Oki* and *Oki Tablet*** – any scenario can be created with the delicate occasional tables, whether with a laptop, over lunch or in a short pep talk.

Partner in style

With its delicate wire framework *Oki Tablet* is the perfect occasional table for *Jaan Silent*. The table was specially created to hold a laptop or a tablet. The table top can be tilted – for stylish working in both private and public workspaces. Design: EOOS.



“I imagine somebody approaching the furniture because they feel attracted to it, to the material and its surface. This moment should be filled with awe.”

ELMAR BÖING Development upholsterer at Walter Knoll

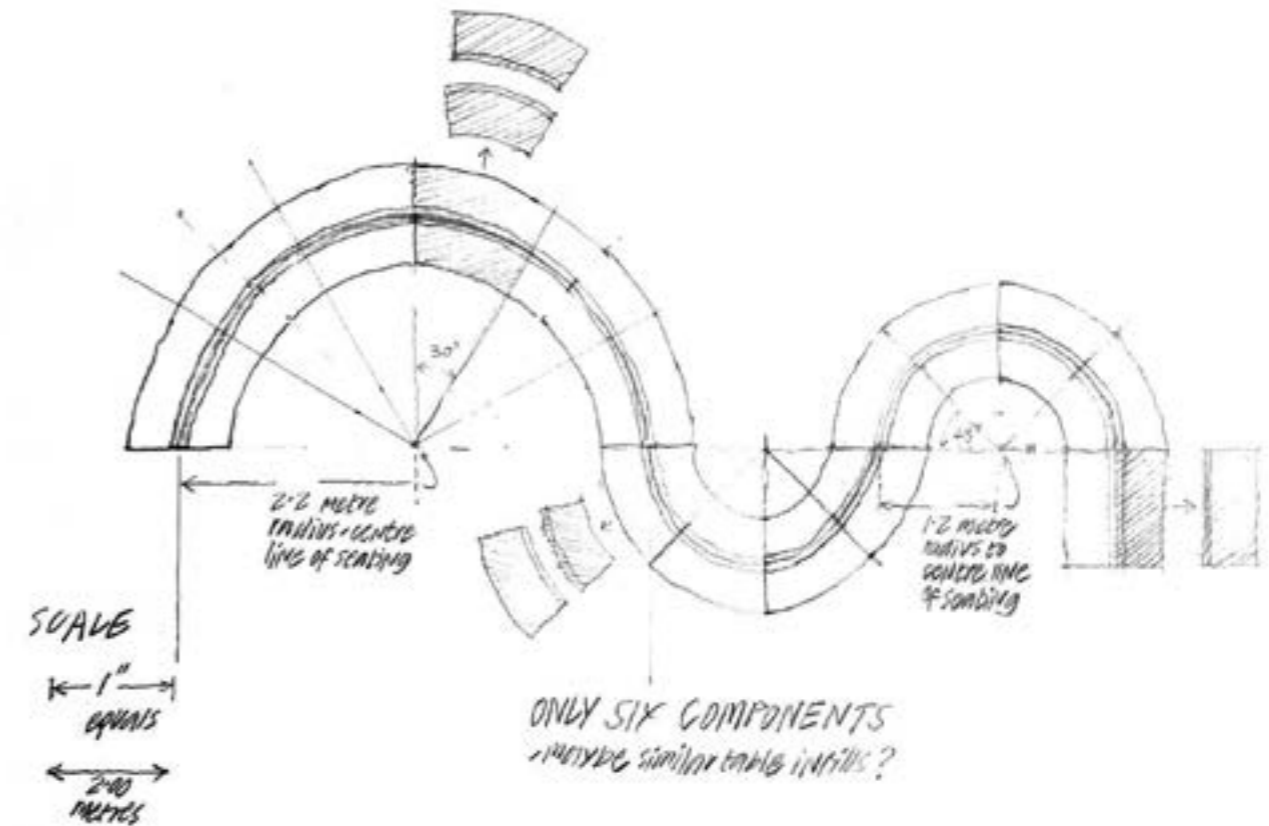
The upholstered kit

FOSTER 620. Design: Norman Foster.

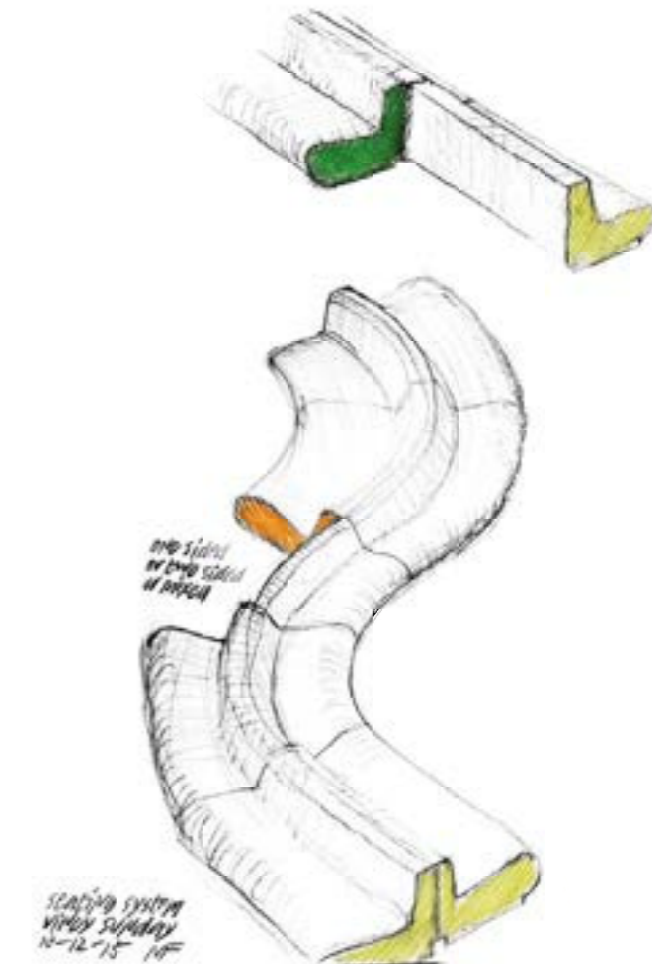
Foster 620 comprises six seating sections that can be interchangeably combined to create different layouts. It features a straight section, a semi-circular end segment, and two types of curved elements – a compact and a lazy curve, which can be adapted to any setting



Designed by architect Norman Foster, the *Foster 620* is designed to bring people together in an informal setting for group discussions or as individual seats, and can be part of any lobby, waiting room or lounge space. Its flexibility allows it to become part of a dynamic environment and respond to changing needs of any organization. Each element has a short backrest and a generous seat, which are supported by thin blade-like legs that almost disappear under the seat, as it appears to float effortlessly. Timber tables with tops matt powder-coated black or bronze, or lacquered in copper complete the ensemble.



Straights, compact curves and lazy curves: an ingenious system connects the benches either side panel to side panel or back to back. *Foster 620* is a playful, high-grade upholstered bench system for shaping movement and calm in urban spaces (sketches by Norman Foster)



Chatting on the finest leather: Norman Foster (right) and Walter Knoll CEO Markus Benz on a prototype of *Foster 620* in the architect's London studio

- System that brings people together
- Fascinating proportions, flowing lines
- Countless layouts for dynamic environments



pCon.box

Find out more in the configurator

The design story

How can architecture be complemented by furnishings? How can a piece of furniture, like a building in a city, steer the flow of human movement? This was the question British architect Norman Foster, who has collaborated with Walter Knoll for two decades now, set out to resolve when he started developing the upholstered bench system *Foster 620*. Used for the first time in London, in the European headquarters of the Bloomberg media group, and in Philadelphia, at a leading US cable network operator's offices, the modularity of the upholstered sections makes it possible to create a customized sculptural seating solution suited to a variety of different spaces. An ingenious system connects the benches either side panel to side panel or back to back. The upholstered configurations appear to float, carried by set-back blade-like legs. The specifics of craftsmanship, such as the long decorative seams and drawn-in details, underscore the sophistication and the bench's dynamic effect. The covers are available in leather or fabric, with the option of built-in USB charging ports to support flexible working.

Facts and details

- **Six seating sections** make up the upholstered bench.
- **All sections** are available as end and intermediate elements.
- **Exquisite leather**, finished by hand.
- **Firm upholstery**, providing the perfect balance for your body.
- **USB power ports** can be integrated if required.

Design: Norman Foster.

British architect Norman Foster is one of the most successful architects of our time. With his studio Foster + Partners, he has constructed a number of buildings all over the world, including public buildings such as airport terminals, town halls, subway stations, bridges, museums and sports stadia. Notable icons are the Millennium Bridge and 30 St Mary Axe in London, the Apple Park in California and the Reichstag Building in Berlin. It was the furnishing of the latter that saw the start of the collaboration between Norman Foster and Walter Knoll. Since then, they have created several programs together illustrating the synthesis of architecture and furnishings.



1



2

Six sections, interchangeably combinable:
(1) side to side for a lazy curve,
(2) back to back with compact curves



1



2



3

Very best of craftsmanship:
(1) nutwood with bronze-colored top,
(2) oak with copper-colored top,
(3) oak with black top

Foster 620 Table

The occasional table seems to have taken root, and is thus the perfect complement for the sweeping dynamism of the *Foster 620* upholstered bench system. *Foster 620 Table* was also designed by Norman Foster. The leg is made of timber in oak or nutwood, with a velvety soft surface. The table top is matt powder-coated black or bronze, or lacquered in copper



“The bench looks like a long meandering river poured out into a room. And that is why it is important that the joining and folded seams keep a linear form and support the movement.”

JULIA SCHROEDER Seamstress in the Development Department at Walter Knoll

Screens for all shapes

FOSTER 512. Design: Foster + Partners.

Bold lines and curves in space. *Foster 512* can be easily adapted and scaled to suit lobbies and airports, museums and galleries, showrooms and shops



As well as pre-defined modules, *Foster 512* has an innovative frame construction which allows for bespoke configurations. It supports multiple – almost infinite – seating configurations, with different levels of enclosure for groups and individuals, and is available in a range of materials and finishes. There could not be a more discreet invitation – to reflect, read and work, or simply relax.



The screens for *Foster 512* have either leather or fabric covers, they are fastened to the seat with brackets

- Elegant upholstered cube
- Beauty of symmetry
- Screens for a whole world of shapes



pCon.box

Find out more in the configurator

The design story

Agility is the result of the dynamic interplay of communication and concentration, sharing and privacy. The architects from Foster + Partners wanted to underscore this balance in large spaces such as airports and lobbies. They developed complementary screens for the existing *Foster 512* upholstered benches. Whether curvaceous or linear, they make it possible to divide a room in a number of ways – offering an individual niche for those in search of peace and quiet.

Facts and details

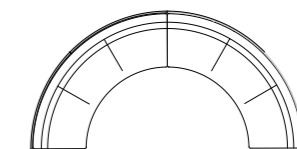
- **Diverse shapes** for the architectures of lobbies and airports, museums and galleries, showrooms and shops.
- The **symmetry** of the lines pervades the upholstery, the drawn-in sections and framework.
- **Aluminum blade legs** carry the bench.
- The **seat with micro-compartment spring core** ensures maximum comfort.
- The **screen** resolutely continues the fundamental shape – whether straight or curved.

Design: Foster + Partners.

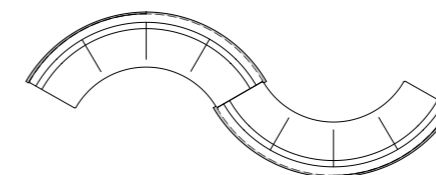
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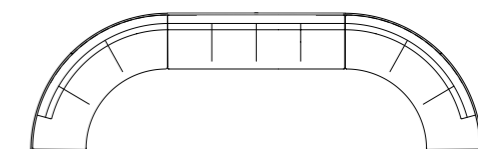
1



2



3



4

Foster 512 can be straight or curved. Various elements can be combined, creating a range of individual landscapes. The new screen suits all shapes with a backrest: for example (1) the linear variant, (2) the semicircle, (3) the lazy curve and (4) the bracket shape

Icon in the comfort zone

FK. Design: Preben Fabricius & Jørgen Kastholm.

The *FK* bucket seat is international design history, a beacon of modernity. The fine lines and clear contours are as compelling today as they ever were. The new soft upholstery is as reticent as it is effective, underscoring both the lines and the coziness. The perfect sketch, supplemented with long-lasting comfort



- Unique pieces, minimalistic form
- Understated, additional upholstery



pCon.box

Find out more in the configurator

The design story

Nobody needs to worry about the success of the *FK* family. Since the 1960s, members of the *FK* family have been welcomed all over in top-quality, stylish interiors – as a soloist, in compositions or as a complement for sofa and lounge groups. The developers rose to the challenge. Would it be possible to model softer upholstery into the seating area?

Facts and details

- **The bucket** is completely covered with soft leather.
- **The seat** swivels.

Design: Preben Fabricius & Jørgen Kastholm.

Inspired by functionalism and the resoluteness of Scandinavian design, interior designers Preben Fabricius and Jørgen Kastholm founded their atelier in 1961 – an atelier that was to produce icons of furniture history. Their main concern was to state the function of an aesthetic form. The *FK* bucket seat, designed by Fabricius and Kastholm, symbolizes classical design, and is as timeless as it is modern. It won the very first German prize for “Good Shape” (“Gute Form”) in 1969.



The armrests of *FK* seem to be beckoning – inviting us with open arms. The bucket provides ample protection, the leather oozes warmth and comfort



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WALTER KNOLL

Characters

The new modernity of living

VOLUME TWO | 2019



People
Aesthetics
Mastery
Progress
Relevance

- The Bauhaus was not a house: it was an awakening. It was made up of people, personalities and their approaches. It was a laboratory and a school; a place for research, teaching and creativity. A place for the arts, color and culture. The values enshrined by the Bauhaus are as alive as never before. *A tribute* ▶

Tribute to the Bauhaus

Dear Readers,

In 1926, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe moved from Berlin to Stuttgart, where he had accepted the post of artistic director for a project by the Deutscher Werkbund, the German craftsmen's association. He was to build the prototype of a housing estate on Killesberg hill, located on the northern edge of Stuttgart. "Die Wohnung" ("The Dwelling") was one of the first exhibitions of its kind. It offered a microcosm of modernity: the relationship between interior and exterior, building and living, house and human.

That is how the Weissenhof Estate was created, which marked the arrival of modern living – and the Bauhaus school – in Stuttgart. Mies van der Rohe engaged the most progressive architects of the time to work on the project. Gropius, Le Corbusier, Scharoun, Behrens and the Taut brothers designed buildings for this housing estate which only needed to fulfill two criteria: they had to have flat roofs and white walls.

And, as fate would have it, in the Feuerbach neighborhood right at the foot of Killesberg hill, Walter Knoll had just opened his furniture factory one year earlier. Every day after work, he would drive home to Vollmöller Villa in the southern part of the city. And a mere two-minute drive from his villa was the office that star architect Mies van der Rohe had rented for his project. It is thus highly probable that the two men encountered one another even more often than in their many business meetings. Walter Knoll furnished five prototype apartments for Mies van der Rohe as well as four other ones for other architects. This marked the arrival of modernity at Walter Knoll – first as a friendship, then as an approach.

It is thus with great pleasure that we present to you, on the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Bauhaus school, our new products – with which we also wish to pay homage to modernity and its masters. *The Farns*, a sideboard by EOOS, is a tribute to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and his iconic Farnsworth House. *Living Landscape*, the sofa that can change direction, was also conceived by constructively confronting the open spaces of modernity. Now, we present the redesigned model: *Living Landscape 755*.

The Swiss artist and designer Ginger Zalaba developed two chairs for us, both of which combine the Bauhaus ethos with a modern lifestyle philosophy: *Aisuu Chair* and *Aisuu Side Chair* – a tribute to designs by her grandfather, Otto Kolb, the great architect with whom we worked in the 1960s.

In the coming months, we will engage with Bauhaus and modernity in varied and hopefully inspiring ways. You have our word: we will keep you posted!

Until then, you can visit our website. Or come visit us in Herrenberg: we would be delighted to welcome you any time!

Sincerely yours,



Markus Benz



MARKUS BENZ
CEO, Walter Knoll

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PEOPLE

Furniture is for people

Meet three people who share a special bond with Walter Knoll, as they also draw their energy from Bauhaus ideals. A perfumer, a choreographer and a paper producer, a talk about their creative work: what simplification, clarity and craftsmanship mean to them

“The ultimate goal of all art is the building.” Thus read the first sentence of the Bauhaus manifesto, written by Walter Gropius one hundred years ago. He believed that buildings should be designed for people, not for the powers that be; that they should be understandable rather than overwhelming. To do so, he said, it would require architects, craftsmen and artists who thought independently: people who designed holistically, as though from the same mind. The Bauhaus school, with its design vocabulary, emerged out of this philosophy: it produced a style that was clear, reduced and so universal that it was understood throughout the world. We at Walter Knoll share this philosophy. We hold the uplifting, even liberating, impact of modernity in high regard. To us, the purpose of a piece of furniture is to create warmth, and a sense of security and trust. Walter Knoll designs furniture and objects that have a purpose. People feel immediately at home in spaces with Walter Knoll furniture – because we use the same universal vocabulary of color and design.

Geza Schön

Perfumer



The nose is not the most important thing, says Geza Schön. A good perfumer works with a wealth of emotions

With a touch of less

REDUCTION + SENSUALITY

Berlin perfumer **Geza Schön** is an industry rule-breaker. Just as the Bauhaus School dispensed with anything superfluous, the fragrance purist has used functional finesse to create a global success story

A modern perfume is not simply a fragrance. It is an intricate composition, unfolding in a choreographed sequence: there is the top note, which defines a perfume's first impression; then the middle note, which shapes its character; and finally the base note, which blends with the skin's own scent and is the reason why every perfume smells subtly different on different people. Even something as fleeting as a fragrance has structure.

"Linearity and complexity – those are the characteristics of any good perfume," says Geza Schön. "But that does not mean that it has to be complicated."

The Berlin perfumer is seen as a rebel in his field – firstly because he no longer works for a label, but produces his fragrances himself. But mostly because he has broken with the rule that a new perfume always has to be a combination of those two thousand tried-and-tested ingredients that all perfumers use when they want to create a fragrance. No one would have dreamed of using only a single fragrance ingredient for a new perfume. No one – except Geza Schön.

"It doesn't take a genius to do this," he says, "you just have to be able to think outside the paradigm."

Here, Geza Schön's philosophy meets that of Walter Knoll. Just as the perfumer

extracts the very essence of a fragrance, Walter Knoll emphasizes the origin of both material and function. A chair is, and remains, a chair. Leather, stone and wood are effective because of their natural qualities. Refined purism was central to the Bauhaus School – drawing a clear line, beyond which lurked the arbitrary.

Until now, in Geza Schön's industry the rule was that the more complex the composition, the more meaningful the fragrance would become. More was more: richness was created through quantity. This is a way of thinking in many industries. In perfumery, this led to a situation where fragrances were becoming increasingly similar – until Geza Schön brought "Molecule 01" onto the market a few years ago. A perfume that takes the opposite path, back to simplicity, clarity, reduction. A perfume that springs from a new way of thinking, as effortlessly elegant as a Bauhaus design.

"Molecule 01" contains just one, single, synthetically produced molecule. It is called "Iso E Super" and has been used as a component in perfumes since the 1970s, but always in limited quantities. Geza Schön was introduced to it while training to become a perfumer at a large German fragrance manufacturer. One evening, he showed it to a friend in

a bar – whereupon, less than ten minutes later, this friend was approached by a woman asking about his fragrance. The perfumer never forgot it. "Iso E Super smells woody, dry and warm, but also has something skin-like, velvety," says Geza Schön. "It is sexy, but it doesn't get on your nerves."

Geza Schön worked for the large German fragrance manufacturer in Singapore, London, New York and Buenos Aires for twelve more years before he turned the idea for his own fragrance into a reality. Now, his clients include stars such as Kate Moss and Lionel Messi. He would not say that he has a better nose than other perfumers. In truth, a good perfumer does not actually work with his nose; he works with the whole wealth of associations, memories and hidden desires that a fragrance brings out in a person.

"Everything we smell is emotion," says Geza Schön. "None of our other senses is triggered so much by our feelings."

Sometimes the path to great emotion seems simple. *Marcus Jauer*

About

Geza Schön began to collect samples of men's perfumes at the age of thirteen. After graduating from high school, he spent twelve years working in the global perfume industry. In 2005, he founded the label Escentric Molecules in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Here, he develops fragrances, some of which are based on just one molecule.

Katarzyna Kozielska

Choreographer



"I end up with a space in which I can develop my choreography," says Katarzyna Kozielska. "This process is very Bauhaus."

“Creating connections between disciplines”

FORM + MOVEMENT

Katarzyna Kozielska, from Poland, is regarded as the rising star of a new generation of choreographers. Her latest work “Aufbruch” (Departure) is about 1919 – the year in which the Bauhaus was founded

Ms. Kozielska, can the Bauhaus be translated into dance?

KK You can express anything in dance that you have a vision of. At least, that's the case with me. Of course, I went to Weimar and researched the Bauhaus. There is a lot of material this year for the centenary. Ultimately, however, it was about finding something that touched me personally.

What touched you, exactly?

KK It was that, in the year of the crisis, when the world war had only just ended, people were saying, “We're going to start something new, and we're going to change the world.” That made an impression on me – their attitude immediately appealed to me.

The Bauhaus states: “The ultimate aim of all creative activity is the building” ...

KK ... and in dance, the aim is the movement – the exact opposite of statics. We create sculptures with our bodies. They usually last only for a moment. But that is exactly how we express ourselves. The greatest among us manage to do this in their own unique way. It's at this point that craft intersects with art.

The Bauhaus combined art and craftsmanship. Walter Knoll embodies this tradition: creation, craftsmanship, engineering – everything flows together harmoniously.

KK Exactly, I want to blur boundaries too! For me, the creative process is to make connections between disciplines. For “Aufbruch,” first of all I had the set built, then came the tailoring of the costumes, and then the composition of the music. This process is very Bauhaus in itself. We ended up with a space in which I could develop my choreography. I keep listening to the music until it turns into motion in my head.

At Walter Knoll we make endless sketches and build models. How do you capture your ideas?

KK I develop everything in my head. As long as I know what I want to say, the movement constructs itself. If I forget something, it doesn't annoy me because it means it probably wouldn't have worked. Otherwise I would have retained it.

You don't write anything down?

KK When I write something down, later on I don't understand what I meant.

I have to dance it. Even if I'm not performing any more – it's important to me that I can still dance every figure myself that I ask of my dancers. That's why I often practice alone in the studio first. I can ask my body how to express something.

How did you become a choreographer?

KK I became a mother ten years ago and took time to look after the baby. After that, I developed my first choreography. I used to paint and make sculptures, but they never turned out the way I had imagined. With choreography I knew immediately: that's it!

How do you see your future?

KK I will always follow my vision. That's also what I take from the Bauhaus. I see what I see and I don't ask why, I just follow it. There is no other way.

Interview: Marcus Jauer

About

Katarzyna Kozielska completed her ballet training at the John Cranko School, one of the most prestigious academies in the world. She then danced for eighteen years with the Stuttgart Ballet Company. Since 2011, she has been developing her own dance pieces, including solos for the German Dance Award, a tribute to John Cage and commissioned works for the Stuttgart Ballet.

Florian Kohler

Owner,
Gmund Papier



"Of course paper speaks to us, even if it's blank," says Florian Kohler.
"It is not as if wood has nothing to say until you make a chair out of it."

"We turned the Bauhaus idea into paper"

MATERIAL + EXCELLENCE

Florian Kohler runs an innovative paper factory with a rich heritage in Gmund. He has just developed a new variety of paper with the Bauhaus Dessau. Walter Knoll's Characters magazine is printed on this very paper

Mr. Kohler, why does the world need Bauhaus paper?

FK Besides wood, paper was the most important material in Bauhaus doctrine. Only a few people are aware of this today. We wanted a paper that had the impact of a Bauhaus building. Modern, aesthetical and discreet.

How did you get from the idea to the material?

FK Our papers are emotional; we convey the essence of a brand through the quality of the paper. But in order to trigger a feeling, you first have to experience one yourself. So we did a lot of research and went to our company archive – we're the oldest designer paper factory in the world – and we had a look at what we produced ourselves a hundred years ago. And of course we went to the Bauhaus in Dessau to get a sense of the atmosphere of that creative space.

What does the Bauhaus brand mean?

FK Design for everyone – that was one of the fundamental ideas of the Bauhaus. We felt bound to express that. The

result is a discreet, completely neutral paper – without effects, without structure – that embodies perfect simplicity. A paper that is excellent in every respect, yet is affordable.

We have made a democratic paper.

It is said that a blank page has no story to tell. You would probably disagree with that.

FK If I believed that, I wouldn't like my work as much as I do. Of course paper speaks to us, even if it's blank. It is not as if wood has nothing to say until you make a chair out of it. We coated the winning cards for the Oscars with gold, large car companies order papers from us with a metallic sheen, and we also design wedding invitations when asked by a manager like Marissa Mayer from Silicon Valley. There is no one in the world who covers such a broad spectrum as we do. We don't just make paper, we communicate via paper.

Who writes or prints on the Bauhaus Dessau paper by Gmund?

FK Most of our customers are bulk buyers who use it to produce brochures, catalogs and illustrated books. It is a

natural paper, but it is also good to print on. For example, if people open this Walter Knoll magazine and for a moment feel like they can step into the photo in front of them, then we have done a good job.

Why is the paper available in two different shades of white?

FK The first white is completely neutral, without any hint of color. The paper should step back completely behind whatever is printed on it. Brightness, functionality, materiality – that's what Bauhaus is about. In contrast, we have given the other white a bluish tone, which lends it a very modern, groundbreaking quality. This paper says, "something new starts with me." Because that is also what the Bauhaus stood for – the courage to have a vision, to make a departure.

Interview: Marcus Jauer

About

Florian Kohler is the fourth generation of his family to run Gmund Papier. The origins of the company in the Upper Bavarian Mangfall Valley go back to the year 1829. In 2011, the company became world famous when it produced the envelopes and the winning cards for the Academy Awards. Like Walter Knoll, the paper factory is a member of the "Meisterkreis", a network of companies, institutions, and people committed to creativity and quality. www.meisterkreis-deutschland.com

2

AESTHETICS

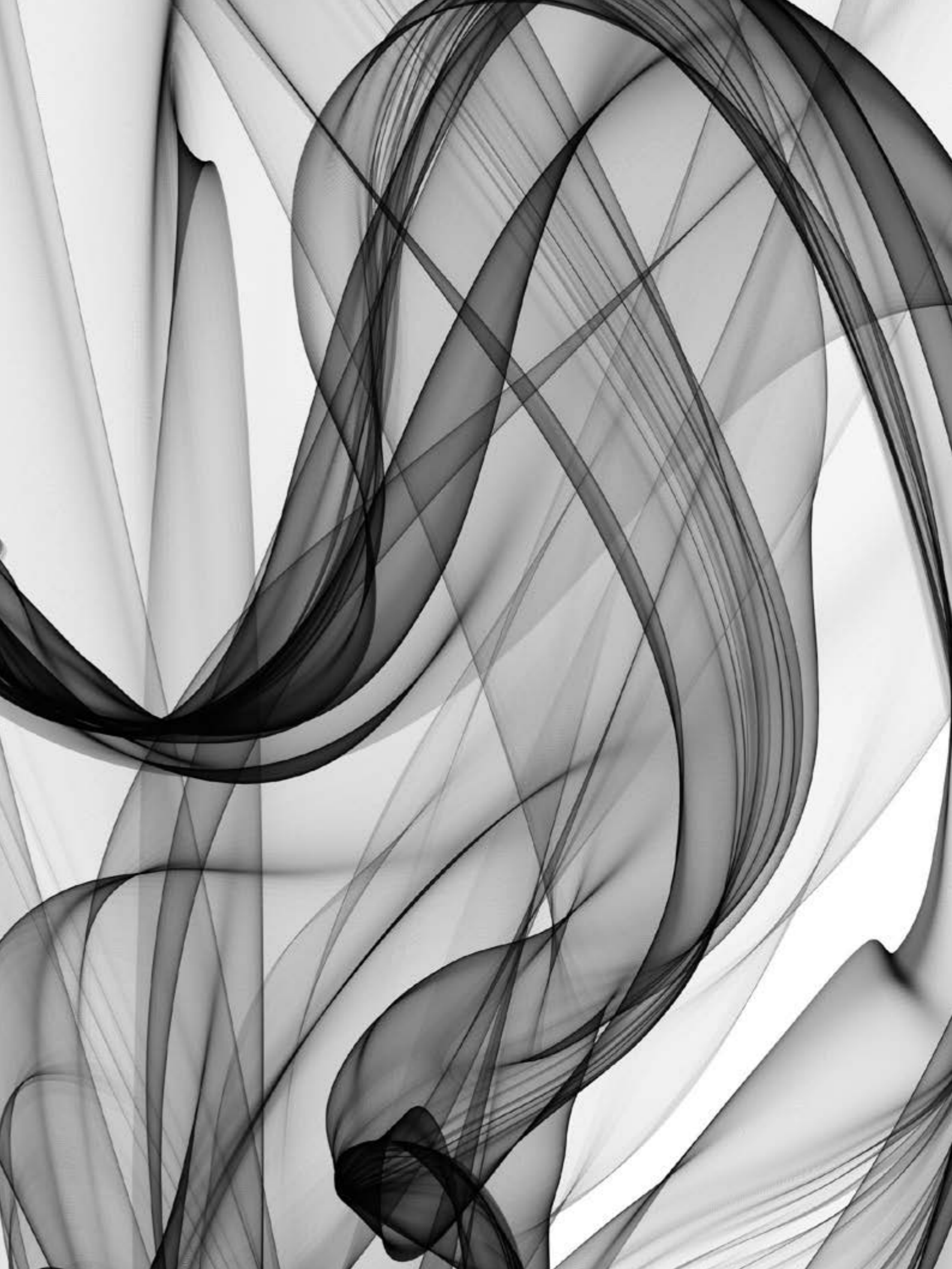
True beauty is timeless

Want to try an experiment? On the next few pages, through a sumptuous array of images, you will see just how rapidly you respond to beauty. An essay on the geometry of beauty explains why

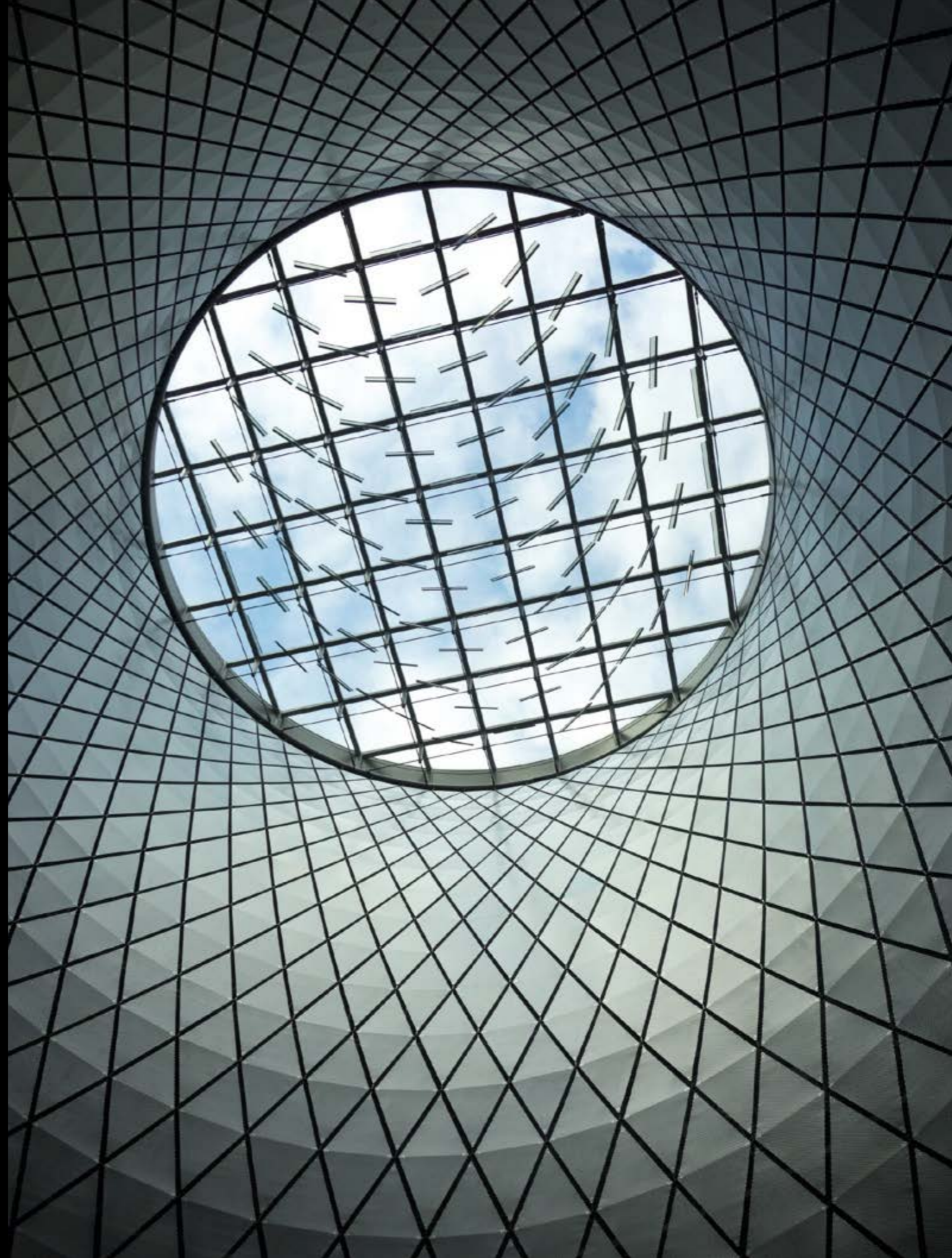
The Bauhaus was more than a revolt against ornamentation and excess. It was, above all, a liberating force that brought design back to its roots. Color, form, scale: the Bauhaus uncovered the age-old geometry of aesthetics. And once the dust of the centuries had been swept away, this new generation of artists and craftsmen came up with its forms of timeless coherence. Pure, reduced, classic. Just as the golden ratio existed before it was discovered, the Bauhaus describes an archaic aesthetic that dates back far more than a century. In that sense, modernity was never a fashion, but a tradition marked by the rediscovery and revision of true values. And upholding these values is a part of Walter Knoll's identity.











The beauty formula

by Hiltrud Bontrup

It moves us, delights us – draws us, spellbound, towards it: since antiquity, humans have been searching for the secret of beauty. It comes down to mathematics – and fractions

Beauty fades? No. Beauty endures! Fashions may come and go. Sometimes skirts are short, sometimes beards are long. Sometimes cars crouch like predators; sometimes they look like fortresses on wheels. However, the basic shapes behind them, the faces and patterns which appeal to us, remain the same, as they follow an age-old constant which is so ancient that it could effectively be seen as a universal standard.

Five to eight, that is the formula – a simple measure of proportion, which is also called the golden ratio. If you divide a length using these proportions, the split lies within the golden ratio. Anything that conforms to these proportions, in form and composition, has an immediate attraction for us humans. If you show someone a group of rectangles, they will prefer the one whose sides have a length ratio of five to eight; photographers always position the main elements of their pictures away from the center; paintings by old masters, Greek temples, the pyramids of Gizeh and the Apple logo are all constructed in this way.

Since antiquity, humans have been tracing the power of proportion. First came the mathematicians: Euclid documented it for the first time 300 years before Christ. Then came artists and designers, who worked and experimented with it. Plants, animals, human bodies: they all harbor this five-to-eight ratio within them. In horses, the foreleg marks the golden ratio, in bees it is the narrow place between thorax and abdomen, in humans it is the navel. Leonardo da Vinci drew the golden ratio on the Vitruvian Man, whose proportions still count as the universal beauty ideal. Today, we know that it was this physique

that, long ago, enabled us to walk. Long legs give us energy-saving leverage and allow us to travel long distances at high speed. Walking upright makes us human.

And yet – there is a formula that lies even deeper than the golden ratio. In the year 1202, Italian mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci noted a sequence of numbers that follow a particular logic. The sum of the two previous numbers always gives the next one: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34 and so on. If you divide a number by the next lowest, the result comes closer to a rounded 1.6180, the higher you go – just like when you divide eight by five.

Just a gimmick? Absolutely not. Walk through a garden sometime. You will see buttercups with five petals, larkspurs with eight, marigolds with 13, asters with 21. The leaves are always arranged at the golden angle of 137.5 degrees, a growth pattern that follows the golden ratio. This arrangement ensures that no leaf obscures another and each one receives as much light as possible.

The scales of pineapple fruit, romanesco and pine cones are arranged in a spiral pattern, as are the kernels of sunflowers. The number of left and right curving spirals in a fruit corresponds to two consecutive Fibonacci numbers – and of course, they also curve at the golden angle. Just like nautilus shells, snail shells, cyclones and spiral galaxies.

Proportions that create strength, angles that unleash momentum, regulating principles that ensure nourishment is available to all; the universe bears life according to a pattern. As we have always existed within this universe, we recognize it

intuitively, feel safe and secure within it. Every encounter with this pattern is a primeval moment, bringing joy. Regardless of background and experience, all humans light up when they see, hear or feel something beautiful. Neurologists have located the area of the brain that perceives beauty: it is in the frontal lobe of the cerebrum, just behind the eyes, and is one of the areas that are always active when we are making decisions.

This means: beauty is never merely beautiful. Beauty helps our perception. It helps us to master life, to reduce complexity. Beauty makes sense. Something beautiful creates trust, it signals truth, goodness and kindness: even as babies, we look at beautiful faces for longer.

And so, in human creations – in paintings, design, houses and fashion – we also celebrate the eternal aesthetic formula. Le Corbusier used the golden ratio and the dimensions of the human body for his modulator, a system of proportions for furniture and buildings on a human scale. Then there is Max Bill, Bauhaus scholar, architect and designer: his minimalist clock designs are still effective today. His graphic prints, which play with loops, spirals and patterns, also have a timeless beauty. An aesthetic based on mathematical principles – this was Max Bill's great theme.

We caress small scars and flaws

And yet – however secure we feel in the mathematics of beauty – we need small aberrations. All life also shows itself to be continually chaotic, wild, full of anomalies. Perfectly symmetrical faces are irritating, appear inauthentic and inspire mistrust. Small flaws need to be there, to lend personality – only then do we see someone as truly beautiful. Madonna's tooth gap, Marilyn Monroe's beauty spot, inclusions in a gemstone – the highest ideal is found in the balance between regularity and coincidence. Nature always perfects the relationship between these two forces.

Perfect imperfection – this also applies to Walter Knoll. For example, each marble slab of *Oki Table* and *Joco Stone* tells its own petrified version of the history of Earth. The brass-surfaced tables are also unique pieces, as the metal shows the finest traces of the polishers who gave it its last finish. This is what gives Walter Knoll products their allure – the allure of their beauty.

Playing with alluring forms like this begins early in the design phase. Walter Knoll creates products with lines that are, in fact, rational. And yet, to these rational lines Walter Knoll adds a creative twist, as in *Oota Table*. Its delicate wickerwork plays with graphic rhythms that draw an emotional response.

We love perfection, if it lives and breathes. As our materials – wood, fabrics, leather – are natural, they embrace change. They mature. Just think of the patina that our saddle leather

gains over time. We stroke our fingers over well-used surfaces, over small flaws and scars. Over the grain of a piece of wood, in order to feel the history of its growth.

Beauty is what is revealed when we master the creative process. Its matrix is what allows the energy of life to flow. And so, beauty gives us humans fresh nourishment every day. It explains the present, gives us a future – promises eternity.

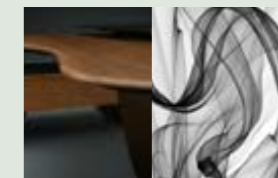
Connections



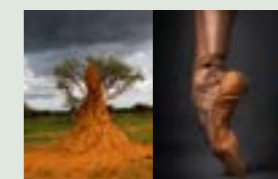
Organic curves: as the light plays, the shape begins to dance. This is true of both the calla lily and the Heydar Aliyev Center, a building designed by architect Zaha Hadid in Baku, Azerbaijan



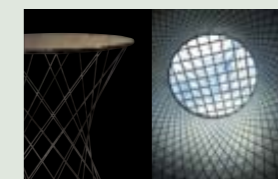
The allure of regularity: patterns create depth and catch the eye. The *Haussmann 310* chair by Walter Knoll, and the actress Capucine wearing a Barthelemy hat in 1952



The poetry of momentum: the natural-looking lines of the Walter Knoll *Tama Desk* and the cloud of silk on the right were formed with a flick of the wrist



Balancing act: lightness grows from firm foundations, the greatest art from the most delicate work. Termite mounds in the north of Namibia, and the foot of a ballerina dancing en pointe



Bold composition: meshwork meets smooth surfaces, straight meets diagonal. The tension here is created by the rotation of the lines. *Oota Table* by Walter Knoll, and the Fulton Center in New York City

The author

Hiltrud Bontrup is an editor at Grauel Publishing in Berlin, where she manages magazines and books for clients that include bulthaup, Wempe, the Staatstheater in Stuttgart and Walter Knoll. Before this, she wrote for Financial Times Deutschland, Spiegel Online and the fashion magazine Harper's Bazaar.

3

MASTERY

Craft is the refinement of design

Discover how Ludwig Mies van der Rohe built a fantastic bungalow, which unfortunately did not conform to the occupant's wishes. Nevertheless, this house inspired our designers to develop a sideboard whose refined technical and craftsmanlike details inspire total delight

“We must all return to craftsmanship!” Walter Gropius wrote in his manifesto, calling for the creation of a new guild without “a prideful barrier between craftsmen and artists.” It was in this “purposeful and cooperative endeavor of all artisans” – in the interaction between poetry and know-how, intuition and technology – that the Bauhaus movement was born. It is also the point from which Walter Knoll begins its work every day. Art is the refinement of craft, Gropius said. But we also know the reverse to be true. In the same way that art and craft were united in the Bauhaus school, design and craft are intertwined at Walter Knoll. As are construction and imagination, perfection and craftsmanship, attention to detail and a passion for materials and technology. By balancing all these aspects, the ideas of architects and designers become true interior masterpieces.

The impossible house

by Carsten Jasner

A crystal. A poem. A sound. Also, a temple. The house that Ludwig Mies van der Rohe built in a patch of woodland in Illinois in 1950/51 has elicited enthusiastic descriptions from fans. But there's another side to the story



Farnsworth House is a floating masterpiece. Huge panes, eight girders, one room. The architect's motto: "Less is more"



The customer: Edith Farnsworth was initially thrilled – by both the design and by its creator



The architect: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe realized his artistic vision of transparency – almost ruthlessly

The Farnsworth House is considered an icon of architectural modernism. It has influenced practically all subsequent steel and glass buildings – from villas to skyscrapers, and smaller-scale architectures as well, such as furniture by Walter Knoll. The unique building was the inspiration behind the development of *The Farns* – a house within a house, a revolutionary side-board (more on page 35).

But the building on the banks of the Fox River, 75 kilometers west of Chicago, tells yet another story which sounds as contradictory as it is instructive. For the cuboidal glass house is not only a world-famous, ingenious masterpiece of modernity; it was also a misunderstanding. The commissioner Edith Farnsworth, after whom the house is named, considered the house uninhabitable. She refused to pay the architect his fee.

What happened? It is a story that reveals a lot about the eccentricity of an artist. And about a customer's disappointments.

At first, the pair get along famously. Edith Farnsworth meets Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in 1945 at a dinner given by a friend. She is a respected nephrologist with a practice in Chicago and is on the look-out for an architect to build her a weekend home. Mies accepts the proposal right away. She shows him the plot of land – an area semi-covered with woodland, overlooking a river which swells over its banks with every melt of the snow. Two months later, Mies delivers a draft, which is unusually swift for him as he is generally considered to be a very methodical planner.

His drawing shows a rectangular bungalow with fully glazed walls, seemingly floating about 1.5 meters above the ground, supported by eight steel girders. It consists of a single room around a small core containing bathrooms, a heating system

and supply pipes. Edith Farnsworth is thrilled. She confirms the order. The two drive to the plot and picnic there almost every Sunday. Friends and relatives suspect an affair.

Construction will cost around \$ 40,000, which is equivalent to about € 350,000 today. Farnsworth is awaiting an inheritance and work is finally able to begin in 1949. But their harmonious relationship begins to disintegrate before the first sod is turned. Mies wants to build on the gentle elevation of a grassy hill, about 150 meters from the river, under a magnificent 200-year-old maple tree. However, Edith Farnsworth imagines the house further away from the shore and higher up. The contractor commissioned by Mies, a carpenter from Germany, also proposes a higher location to avoid the expected flooding. Mies insists on the meadow. "It's an adventure," he says. "But that belongs to life."

At the commencement of construction, costs increase by fifty percent, which Farnsworth accepts. For Mies, only the best craftsmen and the best materials will do. For the floors and for the freestanding terrace, which lies in front of the house like a giant step, he chooses Roman travertine, a bright, porous limestone. Fine primavera wood clads the plumbing and engineering core. Mies has the steel girders sandblasted until their surface is silky smooth. In 1951, the house is ready for Edith Farnsworth to move in. A lawsuit begins the following year, ending in 1955 with an arbitral award.

It's mainly about the money. Farnsworth not only refuses to pay the architect's fees and the additional construction costs, but also demands reimbursement of a considerable amount of the money already paid. Her statements show that she feels exploited by the architect. Apparently, Mies had ignored most of her wishes regarding comfort and coziness, and fulfilled others only later and reluctantly.



Mies van der Rohe selected only the finest materials: Roman travertine slabs, primavera wood and sandblasted steel

"The house is transparent, like an X-ray," she says. "I can't even put a clothes hanger in my house without considering how it affects everything from the outside." When she asks Mies for more closet space because she doesn't know where her clothes are supposed to go, he suggests she hang them "on the hook on the back of the bathroom door." Finally, he concedes and has a closet with a wardrobe installed, likewise clad in primavera wood.

Sleeping, cooking, eating, living – everything takes place in the open space, visible from the outside. Sometimes the occupant has to hide in the shower from curious neighbors, tourists and architecture fans – the curtains made of natural silk apparently provide little protection. She is also vulnerable to the mosquito infestation ubiquitous in the river valley: for a long time, Mies van der Rohe refuses to hang mosquito

nets for aesthetic reasons. Climatically, the house is a disaster. In the summer it's an oven – only the front door and two small windows in the back can be opened and no air conditioning was installed. In winter, ice forms on the steamed-up windows because the underfloor heating is too weak. What's more, the site really does turn out to be too low: the first high water floods the hill even during construction. Three years later, the bungalow is 1.2 meters deep in water.

The dispute between the two parties becomes personal. Mies van der Rohe is an inflexible, narrow-minded, unapproachable primitive, fumes the lady of the house. He, in turn, implies that her romantic feelings had been frustrated: "The lady expected the architect to go along with the house." Particularly revealing is the addition: "The good lady doctor knew very well that the house was meant to be the pure expression of an idea." ▶



Reductive Romanticism in the corpus delicti. Once a bone of contention, today an architectural icon and museum

Mies van der Rohe clearly understood the assignment as an opportunity to realize himself as a freelance artist. Whether someone would feel at home in his “pure expression of an idea” was of lesser importance. The house, he said, is “a prototype for all glass buildings.” A prototype, sure, but not a finished product, not something ready for the market. Rather, it was an ingenious, avant-garde experiment. Today, the house belongs to two monument protection organizations and is open to visitors as a museum.

Edith Farnsworth deserves our gratitude. By giving the architect creative freedom, she made architectural history. She enabled the realization of an idea that continues to inspire people to this day. And she can’t have disliked the house as much as all that. After all, she spent her weekends there for twenty years.

The almost impossible sideboard

Mies van der Rohe inspired the designers of *The Farns*. However, EOOS go a decisive step further



The basic version of *The Farns* is reminiscent of the Farnsworth House. Completed by doors, it creates an interplay between transparent and opaque zones

EOOS are seeking to rectify an injustice. The architecture of a house can often be impressive, say the three designers, because different perspectives open themselves up to you as you walk through it. It’s more difficult for a cabinet or a sofa – you don’t walk through them. This is why many pieces of furniture simply can’t keep up with their environment. The designers want to change that. They create designs based on strong ideas that are not only on a par with structural architecture, but enhance the experience of it.

The Farns is the result. A sideboard that is revolutionary because its focal point is continuously revolving. It can be facing one person on a sofa while at the same time serving a group at a dining table. It conceals some things while revealing others. It provides different functions at the same time; its appearance is always changing.

How did EOOS come up with it? At the beginning of the development process, the designers were still under the impression that the idea had arrived by itself. But when they took a top and bottom surface and suspended them between

mirrored side panels, they realized that there was actually a forerunner: Mies van der Rohe and his Farnsworth House. Six years before, the three had spent a day on the grounds of Farnsworth House to the west of Chicago. The way the glass bungalow is embedded in the forest, says Martin Bergmann, “is so beautiful that you can hardly stand it.” Their experience unconsciously affected and influenced EOOS. Now, as the new piece of furniture takes shape, those impressions begin to reveal themselves.

“The top and the bottom seem to be floating,” says Gernot Bohmann. “At the Farnsworth House, the natural surroundings shine through; with our sideboard, it’s the living space that shines through.” This is made possible by an interplay between glass and wooden doors. The central wooden doors can be swiveled 180 degrees and can be merged with the outer glass doors via a magnet, creating a new front. And if the connected doors are pushed in the opposite direction, a glass corner is opened up.

On a technical level, the free pivoting of the heavy glass doors on tiny, hidden hinges is a very demanding feat. When the developers at Walter Knoll heard about EOOS’s plans, they said that a hinge like that doesn’t exist yet. So what do they do? They invent one themselves. Bohmann: “This hinge is what makes *The Farns* possible.” It also marks an important difference to the Farnsworth House. Much to the occupier’s chagrin, the architect designed everything to be transparent. “But there are some things you don’t want to reveal straight away,” says Bergmann. A bar, a cigar box, a TV remote. That’s what the opaque areas are for, and they can be converted into an airy shelf at will. *The Farns* is an item of furniture for looking and reaching through; the Viennese designers call it “living through” – a neologism they find very poetic.

Carsten Jasner



Fans of American modernity: EOOS designers Harald Gründl, Martin Bergmann and Gernot Bohmann (from left to right)



PROGRESS

A product is good when it makes an improvement

Over the course of the next few pages, we will transport you to the Weissenhof Estate in the year 1927, where entrepreneur Walter Knoll worked with architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe to set standards for modern living. This is still our mission, now using a super-dynamic living laboratory. You will also learn how a revolutionary tool allows you to position any Walter Knoll furniture very easily in any chosen room – digitally and using augmented reality

The Bauhaus school was an awakening. It married art and craft – and connected both disciplines with the technology of the time. It was characterized by an unbridled curiosity for processes, industry, working techniques and manufacturing. In this way, nearly every creation that came out of the Bauhaus pushed the boundaries of the feasible. That is also our approach at Walter Knoll. We only consider a product finished when it has made an improvement. When it has added a new vital element to its category. When it has done more with less. When it has set aesthetic standards as well as standards in manufacturing, workmanship and sustainability. We cannot live up to these standards on our own. Our headquarters is located in the heartland of modern technology. Some of our partners have their roots in the Bauhaus school. But what they all share is a passion for innovation. And for making good things even better.

An encounter at Weissenhof

by Carsten Jasner

Stuttgart, 1927: as the architecture of the modernity era emerges, on a hill above the city the paths of two unusual men intersect: Walter Knoll and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Together, they begin their careers. And a friendship

In the 1920s, the Weissenhof Estate was where young architects showcased their visions for modern building. The area, dominated by a block of four connected apartment buildings, is world famous. Architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was in charge of planning and overseeing the project



Overnight, a white blanket has covered Swabia. Mies van der Rohe looks out of the window – he likes the glittering snow. Indoors, in his office, there is less cause for joy: waiting for him are the countless jobs that a construction manager must deal with. The Taut brothers, Max and Bruno, want to know when they will finally be able to build their houses. He has just found out that the town planning council suddenly wants to build streets through the Estate. To make matters worse, the secretary from the “propaganda office” is piling on the pressure: when will Mies finally get around to writing the foreword to that exhibition catalog, which, after all, need only be very short? “Mercy me,” he might have muttered. “That will take some time.”

This is what a day in the life of architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe might have looked like in Stuttgart in February 1927. In five months’ time, the Deutscher Werkbund’s exhibition “Die Wohnung” (“The Dwelling”) is supposed to open on the Killesberg – a hill to the north of the city. Mies van der Rohe has roped in the brightest and best architectural talent from across Europe, including Walter Gropius, Hans Scharoun, the Taut brothers and Le Corbusier. The roughly 30 apartments of the Weissenhof Estate will be the symbol, in brick and mortar, of the “Neues Bauen” movement. But no brick has yet been laid. Instead, Mies is having to wrangle with local politicians, officials and architects.



Methodical and visionary: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, star architect and exhibition manager, is considered as much of a genius as he was a bon vivant

As he leaves his office in the south-western district of Heselach at noon, he takes a deep breath. The air is crystal clear and the sun is shining. He is looking forward to the half-hour walk alongside the snowy forest up to the Hasenbergsteige. This is where he intends to meet a furniture maker, a proponent of modern living. He’s an energetic man with a good sense of humor to boot. Meeting Walter Knoll will be good for him.

Unfortunately, little is known about the meetings between Mies van der Rohe and Walter Knoll. But they must have gotten along well. Both loved geometric forms. They were both forward-thinking men. And both saw the Werkbund’s exhibition as a great opportunity. Walter Knoll furnished five apartments in Mies van der Rohe’s exhibition building – more than any other manufacturer. But what happened during their encounters? The two shared a naturally happy and carefree disposition. Even their trajectories in life are similar.

Both men come from devout families of craftsmen, one from the staunchly Catholic Rhineland, the other from Pietistic Swabia. Mies van der Rohe is born Ludwig Mies. He grows up in a workshop in Aachen run by his father, a stonecutter, whose own father had worked marble before him. Walter Knoll’s grandfather was a shoemaker, and his father learned the tanning trade before opening a leather store in the center of Stuttgart. School life ends early for both Walter Knoll and Mies van der Rohe. As young men, they take to their heels. This is how they discover their talents and interest in art and philosophy, and how they meet their wives.

Flexible walls, versatile furniture

When Mies van der Rohe moves from Berlin to Stuttgart in 1926, he is forty years old. Walter Knoll is fifty. The architect works in a humble office belonging to friends in south-west Stuttgart. In the front house there is a grocery store and on the first floor is a chicken coop. Walter Knoll lives a stone’s throw away in the imposing Villa Vollmöller. It belonged to Robert Vollmöller, one of the most important knitwear manufacturers in the world. Walter Knoll married his daughter, Maria. He probably invited Mies van der Rohe to the villa, who no doubt accepted with great pleasure.

The men almost certainly fell into conversation – about architecture, design, crafts, art and the new modernity movement. “The modern interior will break away from the traditional paradigm. We will now focus on making versatile furniture, without considering the broader décor.” This is how Walter Knoll puts it in the founding program of his company. They mingle, perhaps, with Walter Knoll’s friend and brother-in-law, Karl Gustav Vollmöller,



In work coat and evening collar: Walter Knoll, here as a 32-year-old man, has many talents – furniture manufacturer and brand visionary, entertainer, singer and dancer

a celebrated poet who is currently writing the script for “The Blue Angel” with Marlene Dietrich. And perhaps Walter’s sister-in-law Mathilde comes to visit – she is a modern painter who was taught by Henri Matisse and who later married the painter Hans Purmann, an Expressionist and also one of Matisse’s students. Mies van der Rohe may have sat on one of the curved upholstered chairs.

He likes what Walter Knoll is saying. He is also looking for versatility and variability. He wants the apartments on the Killesberg to be open-plan; using movable room partitions, the tenants are to decide for themselves whether they want to use a space for sleeping or as a living room, or both. “For pity’s sake, make sure the place is big enough,” he says to one of his colleagues. “So you can walk around freely, and not just in a rigidly defined movement. We don’t yet know whether people will use it as we intend.” Walter Knoll talks of his “psychology of sitting” – about individual pieces of furniture that can be easily rearranged. They allow the user to shape the space themselves.

It was not an easy road to this concept, or to his own company. Originally, Walter Knoll was supposed to take over his father’s leather shop. But in his

father’s eyes, he was a failure. He did badly in school, liked to go out, he was a bit dandyish, he danced and sang, and was always joking around. A charming scalawag. He was completely unlike his younger, ambitious brother Willy, who left school with a glittering track record and who presented himself as the perfect successor. For a while, both brothers try to run the business together but they are like chalk and cheese.

In the company of artists and intellectuals

Walter tries his luck in the USA. He lives there for several years from around 1900 and tries his hand at various things. He works in imports and exports, runs his own business, learns English, boxing, and even opera singing. He then returns to Germany and falls in love with Maria Vollmöller. He had already crossed her path as a 19-year-old. Thanks to Maria and her family, a world free of dogma unfolds before Walter Knoll – a social, liberal, modern world. The father is friends with Robert Bosch and with artists, adherents of the “Lebensreform” movement and bankers from all over Europe. Maria’s siblings paint and pen poetry, cite Ancient Greek classics in the original language, take part in car races, tinker with aircraft and shoot movies.

Mies van der Rohe has a similar experience, if less colorful. As a child, he helps in his father’s stonecutter’s workshop; as a 15-year-old apprentice, he hauls bricks onto building sites; subsequently, he works for a plasterer. An architect discovers his talent for drawing and recommends him to an artist in Berlin. There, Mies designs his very first furniture and soon he will be allowed to build his first house. The contractor, a philosophy professor, takes a shine to the confident man with the striking facial features. He arouses Mies’s interest in art and philosophy, and invites him to evening gatherings in the newly completed house. It is here that Mies comes into contact with artists, collectors, the literati – and, soon enough, his wife as well.

And so, both men step into new worlds – one in Stuttgart, the other in Berlin. They meet artists, intellectuals, businessmen and patrons. And, while on their separate paths, they find their purpose in life: as catalysts for international modernity.

Just like Russian Avant-Gardists and Dutch Constructivists, Mies van der Rohe calls for the abolition of mere decoration: “We reject all aesthetic speculation and all formalism.” He shows us what he meant by this from 1924 onward. Inflation is over, the Roaring Twenties have begun, and cities are investing in the construction of housing estates. Architects are seeking out new, light-filled homes and modern, lightweight furniture. ▶



No frills: récamière with a geometric design by Walter Knoll in the Weissenhof House by Hans Scharoun

The launch of Walter Knoll's company in 1925 goes without a hitch. He has a simple factory building constructed in Stuttgart-Feuerbach. Barely one year later, in 1926, dealers in thirty German cities are already selling his furniture, as well as three stores in Switzerland. Turnover doubles in the space of two years, reaching just under half a million marks. Coincidentally, the factory stands at the foot of the Killesberg – the hill on which the municipality is to build the Weissenhof Estate.

Mies van der Rohe probably has the odd prototype or two presented to him in the burgeoning factory. It would be reasonable for us to surmise that they then both ascend the Killesberg to inspect the building work. Spring 1927: the snow has long since melted and wild flowers, grass and fruit trees are in bloom on the hillsides. The beautiful view stretches southwards, down into the basin of the city center, and eastwards into the curve of the Neckar Valley. The two men stand there in the middle of it all, in the mud.

Finally, in March, the first sods are turned – the groundbreaking ceremony has been postponed. Mies van der Rohe, the “Rhenish Hardhead,” as some people call him, was unfazed. As far as he's concerned, he's the artistic director. The site manager is the one responsible for the deadlines, he says. It's his job to direct the masons, roofers and foremen, who cope remarkably well with the new materials – reinforced concrete, hollow blocks, reinforced bricks, plasterboards and plywood.

The Estate is an experiment. Architects from Germany, Holland, France, Belgium and Switzerland are drawn to it, not only to play around with different

shapes, but also different building materials and statics. Foremost among them is a gangly man with horn-rimmed glasses. Approaching Mies, he gesticulates wildly with his pipe. Le Corbusier comes up with probably the most daring design.

The apartments are meant to be affordable, the roofs flat and the facades snow-white – such is Mies van der Rohe's demand. But Le Corbusier insists on bright red, blue and lime-green rectangles. Inside, he breaks through the ceiling to create a maisonette with a continuous window and gallery. He counters Mies's objections by declaring that he is an artist. It is no coincidence that he has adopted an artist's name; he used to be called Charles-Édouard Jeanneret. Ludwig Mies has done the same: he has borrowed the “Rohe” from his mother's maiden name and invented the connecting “van der”.

Forays into the night

Slowly but surely, Walter Knoll gets to know the architects on the Killesberg and discusses geometric reduction and new, elastic steel structures with them. Could these perhaps be extrapolated onto the architecture of a piece of furniture? Four more architects will go on to commission Walter Knoll to furnish their apartments: Ludwig Hilberseimer, Adolf Rading, Adolf Schneck and Hans Scharoun.

Stuttgart is booming. The streets are filled with the sounds of more and more car horns and the ringing of electric trams. Department stores open their doors, dozens of newspapers hang on the



Extravagant exhibit: a chaise longue by Walter Knoll, organically rounded with unusually strong quilting, in the Adolf Rading exhibition house



A modern relationship: an angular upholstered armchair by Walter Knoll next to a cantilever chair by Mies van der Rohe in one of his apartments

kiosks, and at night variety shows pull in the crowds. It's a bit like Berlin, but smaller.

Walter Knoll probably takes some architects out on the town. It's possible he takes Mies van der Rohe to the Excelsior, where high-spirited people dance the foxtrot and the Charleston and where Joachim Ringelnatz recites lewd poems in his sailor suit. Nearby, in the Friedrichsbau, the dancer Josephine Baker will appear on stage in her banana skirt.

During their forays, the men pass the building sites of a new era. The Schocken department store by Erich Mendelsohn is emerging on Eberhardstrasse – the rounded glass facade becomes a showcase for “Neues Bauen.” Opposite, the 18-storey tower of the daily newspaper “Tagblatt” is springing up, the first reinforced concrete high-rise in Germany. Walter Knoll talks of the impression made on him by the skyscrapers in Manhattan. Mies van der Rohe mentions his lofty 20-storey ambition for Berlin's Friedrichstrasse, with a continuous glass curtain.

However, just a few blocks away a bone of contention rears its ugly head: the central station by Paul Bonatz. Bonatz and his conservative colleagues railed against the Weissenhof project. They decried it as “inappropriate,” “formalistic” and “amateurish.”

Mies van der Rohe almost certainly takes this criticism personally, as he himself is not sure he is on the right track. In articles, he presents himself as a rebel, sets out his case against “meaningless

jumbles of shapes” and welcomes the “mechanistic age.” But, in reality, he keeps his options open. Of the fourteen projects he has already realized, he built most for wealthy contractors in the traditional style with gabled roofs and window shutters.

The exhibition opens on July 23, 1927 and is a resounding success. Within the space of just two-and-a-half months, 500,000 people from all across Europe come to have a look. The Estate gives both men's careers a tremendous boost. Walter Knoll then goes on to develop the *Prodomo* armchair, which uses springy steel bands to streamline the upholstery. He gets this idea patented: the innovative chairs are the first pieces of upholstered furniture to be made in the modern way. In 1929, he kits out the “Do X” with these chairs – the largest airplane in the world at the time with twelve engines – as well as the “Bremen” – the most advanced passenger liner of the time. In the same year, Mies van der Rohe celebrates success at the World Exhibition in Barcelona – the cubic glass pavilion with slender leather seats becomes an icon of modernity.

Today, over ninety years after they worked together in Stuttgart, the men cross each other's paths once more. Just not in person this time. However, the Walter Knoll company is making sure that Mies van der Rohe's concept of flowing space lives on in its furniture, such as *The Farns* and *Living Landscape 755*. What a friendship!

The author

Carsten Jasner, a historian and journalist from Berlin, himself lives and works in a well-known modern estate dating from 1929. He loves the brightness of the rooms, the proportions and the brilliant floor plan.

Clear contours, a lavish use of glass, high energy efficiency and elegant furnishings: the B10 active house



The future at Weissenhof

For more than ninety years, the art of living has been studied above the rooftops of Stuttgart. With furniture by Walter Knoll

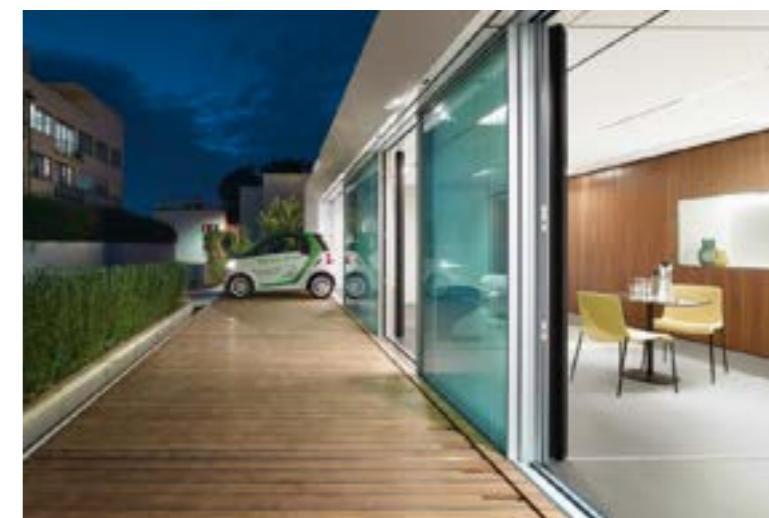
Stuttgart, Bruckmannweg 10: the world's first active house, known as B10, now stands across the way from the Mies van der Rohe building. It produces almost twice as much energy as it consumes. Its interior design proves that revolutionary, forward-thinking architecture can also be comfortable – thanks to furniture by Walter Knoll. Fitting out the B10 active house marks a return to Weissenhof for the company. In 1927, Walter Knoll furnished nine prototype apartments; today it is once again the

first choice among leading architects. The modular bungalows by Stuttgart-based architect Werner Sobek are prime examples of his building style: geometrically pleasing, light-flooded, inexpensive and eco-friendly. The B10 was industrially prefabricated and erected by crane in two days. The front face is glazed in three vacuum-insulating layers. Walter Knoll furniture ensures that the 85m² area can serve equally well as either a comfortable office or a modern apartment: the *Bao* armchair,

the *Bahari* carpet from the *Legends of Carpets* collection, the *Oota Table* and *Liz* chairs. Technology is behind the rest of the conveniences. A photovoltaic system supplies energy for heating, showering and lighting; it powers an electric Smart car, two e-bikes and the Weissenhof Museum in the Le Corbusier House next door. A computer, accessible via tablet and smartphone, controls electricity and ventilation. B10 is transportable. And recyclable: wood, glass, aluminum, the textile facade covering – in the end, everything can be sorted by material. *Carsten Jasner*



A comfortable future: the *Bao* armchair, *Bahari* carpet and *Oota Table*. The electric Smart car awaits in the background



Bungalow, garage, office and living space – multifunctionality with *Liz* chairs and a *Lox Table*

From your smart- phone to your home

The planning office in your pocket

Imagine a furniture catalog that fits in your pocket because it's on your smartphone. In it, you will find furniture by Walter Knoll in every size, color and variant – all in high resolution. With a simple swipe, you can make modifications to the furniture and examine your creations from every conceivable viewpoint. Better yet, you can even try out various furniture configurations for your chairs, sofas and tables at home with an augmented reality

function – and see your furniture as if it were right there in the room. Want to make a change? No problem: all variants are stored in the app and you can easily configure them with a few taps of the finger. Digital furniture planning doesn't get any more convenient for customers than this. And even planners, architects and dealers can reap the benefits – using Walter Knoll's digital planning office.

The digital planning toolkit

Three tools for professional furniture planning



The mobile furniture configuration tool

The app for furniture enthusiasts

The smartphone and tablet app for visualizing interiors. Furniture is customized in 3D and placed in the customer's home. The app designs entire rooms in real time. All products and configurations are already integrated. The views can be exported and shared as a PDF or image file via download, email, WhatsApp or text.

The digital furniture catalog

The app for professional users

The pCon.box add-on for professionals. Dealers, planners and architects can look up prices and find additional information such as assembly instructions, certificates, brochures and high-quality photos. This app also has an augmented reality function.

The room planning tool

For architects, interior designer and planners

By far the most widely used platform for room and interior planning. Intuitive and easy to use. Any product can be displayed in 3D on floor plans and in rooms. Simple exports in all standard CAD formats (dwg, dxt, dxf, sat, sab, 3ds, skp, etc.) and as images, videos or panoramic views for presentations.

Now you can configure furniture from Walter Knoll yourself using a laptop, tablet or smartphone. Easily create detailed interior designs. And position your furnishing ideas within your own home using augmented reality. For dealers, interior designers and architects – and now also for anyone interested in furniture.



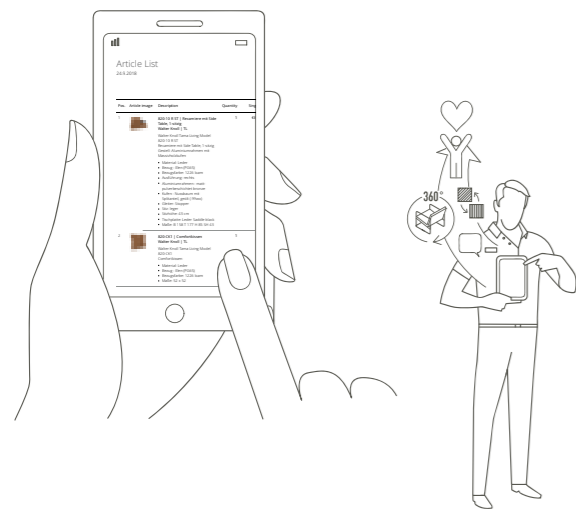
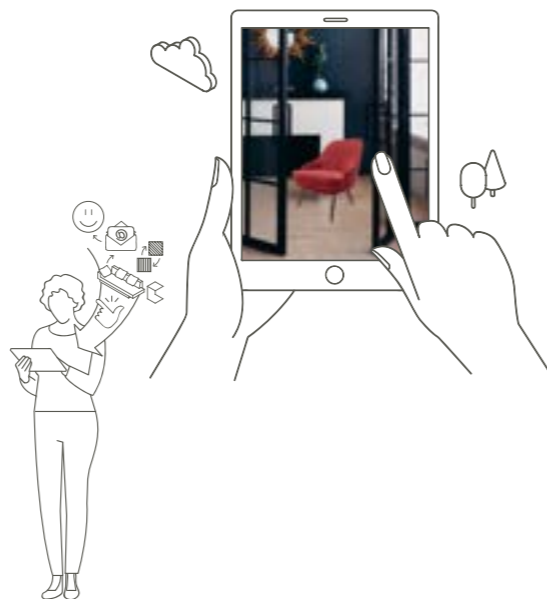
The pCon planner (above) is the ultimate room planning software for interior professionals. It was the basis for the development of the new tablet and smartphone app (below). This makes it possible for everyone to be creative with just a few clicks and configure their own interior visions – with armchairs, sofas, carpets, tables, even pillows from Walter Knoll

Interior design – now digital and crazy simple

ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS: you can now customize all furniture with all surfaces easily and intuitively. From anywhere in the world, you can get high-quality graphics data 24/7, to enhance your 3D planning with product representations that are as realistic and true-to-scale as it gets. These can be exported and incorporated into your CAD planning. Product data, certificates and material information are also included, so you can execute tenders as accurately as possible.



DEALERS: you have access to all data. You can answer customer queries immediately, digitally, proficiently and vividly. Do they want a 360-degree view of furniture in 3D? To zoom in on details? To browse through all sizes, shapes and finishes right there? Questions are transformed into customer experiences. Every product, every configuration can be ordered from Walter Knoll in Herrenberg directly from the app. Convenient, efficient and your configuration guaranteed.



CUSTOMERS: you can design things on your own. With augmented reality, you can place the furniture you've configured in your own home digitally and to scale. The apps are free and highly intuitive. Images and designs can be shared with family and friends, so you can discuss them together and change them as many times as you like. The new digital tools turn furniture planning into a sensory experience. For more information, please send your desired configuration to your dealer.



Every single item of furniture can be placed, moved and swapped within your own four walls, playfully and in real time, using augmented reality

5

RELEVANCE

The more we leave out, the longer we last

Experience our latest example of the beauty and power of reduction. Swiss designer Ginger Zalaba has taken her grandfather's Bauhaus-inspired designs, and reinterpreted and honed them to perfection. We also invite you to discover the spirit of Walter Gropius in the permeability of our corporate architecture

The Bauhaus is alive. As a school of the classics. As a standard and an approach. Its timelessness stems from an intense reduction process. From designs, philosophies and forms that are so clearly and rigorously distilled that they are able to withstand the test of time. We do the same at Walter Knoll: in our designs, it is only the essence that remains. Relevance emerges out of the opposite of indifference. Concealed in every design are hundreds of ideas we have discarded. We keep on refining as long as we need to. Then we ask ourselves: is it truly good? Is there anything else we can leave out? It is this ambition that creates values that last. And it is this process of refinement that enables us to create furniture with relevance – with designs so fully developed in terms of form, workmanship and materials that they transcend generations.

Inspired since childhood: Ginger Zalaba grew up surrounded by her grandfather's artistic creativity. Windows, textiles, furniture, sculptures – all designed by him



“I am a child of the Bauhaus”

by Marcus Jauer

Swiss-born Ginger Zalaba has rediscovered and reinterpreted her grandfather's furniture. The story of an inspired fusion of Bauhaus, modern lifestyle and Walter Knoll

In the mid-1950s, the American edition of Playboy published a photo of a chair that was celebrated by the magazine as an invitation to seduction. It had been created by the Swiss designer Otto Kolb, who called it the bat chair after its wing-like, protruding armrests. Following its publication in Playboy, however, it carried the name that the editors had bestowed upon it: “Love Chair”.

More than sixty years later, in 2015, at the most important furniture trade fair in the world – the Salone del Mobile in Milan – a design appeared that referenced that legendary chair. It was part of an exhibit by a young and still-unknown Swiss artist and designer, who was presenting her own collection for the first time – chairs that, from a distance, were reminiscent of Otto Kolb and the Bauhaus, and yet also had their own unique quality.

What happened next is like a family reunion in recent design history, instigated by Markus Benz, CEO of Walter Knoll. In 1961, the company had already worked with grandfather Otto Kolb to develop an upholstered version of the avant-garde chair, which caused a great sensation. Now, Markus Benz discovered the granddaughter's reinterpretation – and decided on a new collaboration. ▶

“It was time to bring the chair up to date.”

Ginger Zalaba

As children, we learn from our parents what is good and what is not so good, and how we should approach life’s challenges – and in pretty much the same way that they learned from their parents. However, few people realize that children also receive an aesthetic education from what they see in everyday life and their surroundings. This may be down to the fact that a special sense of form, color, material and composition is not part of every family’s philosophy. In Ginger Zalaba’s family, it is part of the ancestral consciousness.

“We grew up with Otto Kolb’s designs,” says Ginger Zalaba. “What my grandfather created seemed normal to us.”

Otto Kolb, born in Zurich almost a hundred years ago, was a Swiss architect and an all-round creative genius. In his youth, he belonged to the circle around artists such as James Joyce, Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee, and architects such as Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier, before going to America at the end of the 1940s to teach at the famous Institute of Design in Chicago, and befriending Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. He built houses that are now listed as American cultural monuments and developed furniture that was purchased by museums in New York and Paris. He was one of the first to build in a resource-conscious way, using solar panels and working with spectacular cable bracing.

Returning to Switzerland at the start of the 1960s, he became wealthy thanks to the invention of a steel spiral staircase and built a house in Wermatswil, a small village in the Zürich highlands – a house with no equal in the world, that mixes Bauhaus principles with American influences and is immortalized in international architecture guides. So it is absolutely not normal to grow up surrounded by Otto Kolb’s designs – unless he is your grandfather. “He just had a talent for making beautiful things,” says Ginger Zalaba. “They were always important to our family. I am a child of the Bauhaus.”

All-round creative genius: Otto Kolb, Bauhaus-inspired architect and designer, taught at the famous Institute of Design in Chicago in the 1940s and 1950s



Entirely unique: the villa in the Swiss village of Wermatswil is Kolb’s life’s work. Along with its furnishings, it graces the pages of international architecture guides

She is sitting inside the artistic legacy that her grandfather left to his family and the world – in the legendary roundhouse that is shaped like a glass cylinder set into the mountainside, and inside which everything, truly everything – from the floor plan to the furniture and fittings right through to the Christmas tree stand – can be traced back to his ideas.

There is the spiral staircase that forms the spine of the building and on which the different levels are suspended like free-floating islands on a mobile. There is the indoor pond, in which plants grow and koi swim, that finds its echo in the pools of water that surround the house, connecting the inside with the outside. It seems as though Otto Kolb has opened up all the areas that are usually closed off in a house – rooms, floors, levels – so that a restless eye can move freely within it.

“As children, we lay on the master bed in the evenings and watched the squirrels in the trees,” says Ginger Zalaba. Anyone growing up with this kind of heritage only really has two options. One option is to reject it and set out in a new direction because you do not want the continual comparisons – and this is exactly what Ginger Zalaba originally planned to do: in fact, she wanted to run a gallery. Having studied at art college in Zürich, she traveled to Los Angeles for her first internship. However, at that point her father died at home in Switzerland, and at the age of twenty-six she became the head of the family business. ▶

Inspiration takes flight: the original 1951 bat chair in the family library

The second option is to take on the legacy and reshape it in your own way – and that is exactly what Ginger Zalaba is doing now.

“I knew that it would take courage to do this,” she says. “But I also knew that I could do it. If anything, being Otto Kolb’s granddaughter made me stronger.”

Within a very short time, her grandmother trained her in the family business, which mainly focused on construction for trade fairs. When Ginger Zalaba later offered to refurbish her grandmother’s chairs to say thank you, it was probably the first time that the young woman truly appreciated her grandfather’s work, in her capacity as an artist and designer. She studied the individual elements, the material, the lines and the way that things were made. Just like any gifted student, at some point she began to develop and consolidate her own ideas. When she travelled to the Milan furniture fair with her first collection of chairs based on her grandfather’s designs, she used up her life savings.

“For me, being able to show my work was a huge achievement,” says Ginger Zalaba. “Especially when it ultimately led to contact with Walter Knoll.”

Markus Benz, CEO of Walter Knoll, was primarily interested in the reinterpretation of the bat chair, but was undecided whether such a unique piece would fit into the rest of the collection. Ginger Zalaba began to rework the concept, drew a hundred new designs, changed proportions, frames and armrests. She simplified the design further and further, until it turned into a dining chair. Then, she expanded it again into a side chair.

It is not true that Ginger Zalaba does not respect her grandfather’s work – rather, she is unafraid. The original is distinctive in its delicate opulence; her design is distinctive in its compact clarity, which cuts out the superfluous and yet avoids the austere. She has reincorporated the original elements: steel tubing and saddle leather. The construction and statics are completely new – and more original:



The steel spiral staircase forms the main core of the building. It is one of Otto Kolb’s most important inventions



A feeling for materials: for her Walter Knoll designs, Zalaba chooses from a range of different samples. For her *Aisuu Side Chair* and *Aisuu Chair*, she uses leather and steel

“Design was always important to our family.”

Ginger Zalaba

elegant, simplified and strong. Now the *Aisuu* exists as a side chair, but also as a dining chair that suits both homes and restaurants.

“The Bauhaus gave us an aesthetic which has remained relevant for a hundred years,” says Markus Benz. “Ginger Zalaba manages to take on this aesthetic and develop it further in her own way: unusually different, yet sensuous and beautiful.”

“It was time to bring the bat chair up to date,” says Ginger Zalaba. “The fact that the new interpretation is being presented by Walter Knoll would certainly have pleased my grandfather.”

She still often visits her grandfather’s roundhouse, where she has photographed all of her collections to date – which makes perfect sense, given the breathtaking architecture. She even lived there for a while, during a phase of her youth when she craved freedom and therefore preferred to live with her grandmother. Jane Kolb, Otto Kolb’s last wife, is now 91 years old and still wakes up every morning inside the livable sculpture that her husband designed.

She met and fell in love with him in America in the late 1950s, before moving to Switzerland with him. She always felt that he built the most beautiful houses that she had ever seen. “This house keeps me above ground and stops me from going downhill,” says Jane Kolb.

In the world outside the house, the afternoon has set in. Sunlight falls through the windows and meanders through the space. Deer from the neighboring woodland amble onto the property. The cellar still contains many of Otto Kolb’s designs for furniture and houses that he never built because they were ahead of their time. One could imagine turning this place into a museum, in memory of its creator. But then you realize that a museum only displays things that no one needs any more, things with no life left in them – and as long as Ginger Zalaba visits this house, to gather memories and to work, that will not be the case. For now, the past remains a part of her inspiration.

About

Marcus Jauer, 44, used to write for the culture section of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. For a number of years he has worked as a freelance contributor for publications including *Die Zeit*. In his free time, he enjoys building shelves and closets for his family, or kennels for his children’s pets.

Walter Knoll and the effect of modernity

Does architecture influence the motivation of the people who work within it? Yes. Can good architecture embody the philosophy of a business? Again, yes

Deep insights: the headquarters in Herrenberg shows the efficient linkage of manufacturing, administration and exhibition



We've known what can be achieved with light-filled architecture since Walter Gropius built the Fagus Factory in Alfeld over a hundred years ago, and later the Bauhaus workshops in Dessau. The cuboid buildings with generous glass facades brighten both the rooms and the spirits of the employees, and appear open and inviting to the outside world.



Clear corner: the distinctive corner in the glass facade showcases some of the company's core values – depth, diligence and openness

If you notice similarities between the Walter Knoll headquarters in Herrenberg and the Gropius buildings, you'd be right. Walter Knoll lives and breathes modernity.

This is underscored by a striking detail: the glass corner flanking the entrance area over four floors. In passing, visitors are struck by a sense of lightness and transparency, and they are able to glean something of an insight into the internal goings-on. Huge panes of glass measuring 4 by 1.88 meters have been brought right up to the corner. Behind them are rows of slim concrete pillars that are quite visible in their supporting roles, but allow the glass to enjoy the limelight.

Walter Gropius made the idea of the glass corner world-famous. With the Bauhaus building, Gropius was the first to join transparent corners, creating a continuous glass facade. Mies van der Rohe perfected the technique and called it the Curtain Wall – a glass curtain. That's also the effect produced by the facade in Herrenberg, as though it were hung on a slim concrete frame.

The architect Hansulrich Benz built the company headquarters and two factory buildings in nearby Mötzingen between 2001 and 2012. The factories are also built around the theme of a cube. However, these are clad in titanium-zinc sheeting and include semitransparent sections in which doors, windows and loading ramps are embedded.

Hansulrich Benz has created a corporate architecture that is self-referential and complementary. The fact that the buildings are influenced by the style of modernity is firstly down to the company tradition. Founder Walter Knoll worked with Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe personally.

But more important is the fact that even today, modernity embodies Walter Knoll's self-image:



Corporate architecture: the factories in Mötzingen are built around the idea of a brace surrounding a transparent cube



A dialog between eras: aluminum panels on the new building accentuate historic features on the Walter Knoll brandland



Sleek: the concrete in the stairway glows in the light from the ribbon windows with such silky-smoothness that you almost want to stroke it

minimalism, clarity, transparency and aesthetic longevity. These are the principles which underpin the design process for furniture here. This applies at all levels, which the building's transparency reveals: upholstery work goes on over the ground floor; above that is the sewing area; the administration works on the third floor; and on the top floor, customers reach the showroom. Everywhere are bright spaces made up of only three materials: glass, steel and light exposed concrete. Mies van der Rohe's motto is still valid: less is more.

The minimalist clarity showcases the expertise that put the company at the forefront of its highly complex business – international furniture design. It also shows the intensity of what goes on here: thinking. Hansulrich Benz was tasked with linking the new building with several other historic buildings on the grounds of the Walter Knoll brandland. To that end, he effected a complete spatial restructuring of the various departments – from manufacturing, to distribution, warehousing, administration and exhibition.

This architectural intelligence can also be found in the energy system. The new heating installation requires 40 percent less energy for the whole brandland in Herrenberg than previously consumed by the old building alone. Photovoltaic technology and the heating system in the concrete cores, that stabilizes room temperature, make a contribution to that reduction. In summer, the cores can also be cooled with water from the sprinkler tank. The technology is elegantly concealed in the ceilings and floors.

Wherever you go, look or touch, the corporate architecture at Walter Knoll tangibly conveys how the company works: careful planning, intelligent development, a clear language of form, high-quality materials and perfection in technical detail. And a lot of love for corners and edges.

NEW PRODUCTS

The new modernity of living

Ready for the future? Let us welcome you to the Bauhaus, to the poetry of awakening, the freedom of living that is Walter Knoll. Discover our new products!

The Farns – house in house

Living Landscape 755 – living with a 360-degree perspective

Foster 620 Table – a small tree in the room

Aisuu Side Chair – sensuously attractive

Aisuu Chair – just right

Deen Table – come together

Vostra Wood – transcending time

FK – icon in the comfort zone

Open, clear, confident

The new modernity of living opens up the space;
it loves beauty. Its geometry of aesthetics negotiates
between indoors and out, yesterday and tomorrow



*Living Landscape 755 sofa, The Farns
sideboard, Oki and Oki Table occasional
tables, Kivara pillow from the
Badawi Pillows range, Suma carpet,
Tadeo dining table, Saddle Chair chairs*



Benchmark and attitude.
 The design language of modernity
 outlives all fashions. Clear, reduced,
 universal. *The Farns* sideboard,
Living Landscape 755 sofa,
Foster 620 Table occasional tables,
Isanka basket, *Usiku* carpet



Between creation and imagination. With a love of material and a passion for innovation – this is how furniture is created at Walter Knoll. *Tama Living* sofa, *The Farns* sideboard, *Ishino Table* occasional tables, *Mwamba* pillow from the *Badawi Pillows* range, *Kiwara* carpet

House in house

The Farns. Design: EOOS.

It is a striking, small building in a living space. More architecture than furniture. More statement than server. *The Farns* is as clear and innovative as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's "Farnsworth House" was at the time – the prototype of all glass buildings. A landmark in every living landscape. Like the timelessly valid architecture of modernity, *The Farns* also plays with light and shade, with shape and geometry, wood and glass. A modern spacious bungalow, fascinating by day and night, open on all sides, transparent and accessible – always the center of attention



Form follows the love of material:
tinted glass, masterly finished veneer
and mirrored walls



Innovative and reticent: the doors can be opened 180 degrees thanks to a concealed hinge mechanism. The sideboard becomes freely accessible, from the back and from the front, from both the living and the dining room. A piece of furniture that allows you to look and feel through – the charm of "open plan"

- Classic linear shape
- Fascinating mirror effects
- With light if desired
- Innovative use of glass
- Up to eight doors
- Accessories in leather, from inlays through to pads and trays
- Drawers with magnetic divider elements

The design story

"Great sketches, but it can't be put into practice." Enthusiasm about the look, but the developers and construction engineers otherwise shook their heads. How on earth could you work out the statics? Without a rear panel? With that much glass? With doors that open 180°? And how should the undersized hinges carry the large glass doors? This sideboard draft by design trio EOOS seemed to be a flight of fancy. "Attractive, admittedly, but it will never work!" But it did. The development team from Walter Knoll set about looking for the very best in the region of inventors to make the impossible possible. New door fittings and an adhesive that balances the temperature differences of aluminum and glass without losing strength were specially created for *The Farns*. A new lighting technology to perfectly showcase what is inside. And the glass itself became the carrying static element. The result is more than a sideboard: dresser or credenza, highboard or lowboard, display cabinet or bar unit, floating shelving or luminaire – a structuring architectural element for every living area.

Facts and details

- **Individual configurations**
- **Virtually invisible hinges**
- **180 degree opening angle** for the door elements
- **Light package** optionally available
- **Cable ducts** allow unproblematic media installation
- **Veneers** in oak burned, white pigmented or nutwood, all oiled – to make them look and feel like solid wood

Design: EOOS.

The Austrian designers Martin Bergmann, Gernot Bohmann and Harald Gründl run their atelier in Vienna and work in projects from Milan to Toronto, London to New York, Berlin to Herrenberg. EOOS draws on the archaic and creates visionary pieces. The designers observe human rituals, sense desires and instincts, and develop furniture to suit life.



pCon.box

Find out more in
the configurator



Geometrical games: *The Farns* sideboard, *Tadeo* table, *Saddle Chair* chairs, *Votteler Chair* armchair, *Vladi* occasional table, *Safara* carpet

The Farns is a grown-up version of the sideboard. It can be used as a luminaire, make a statement within a particular space – like a bungalow in a park. The doors of *The Farns* can be opened 180 degrees creating a spatial item with a range of faces for innumerable lighting effects. *The Farns* furnishes every living landscape with a secret. The mirrored panels make the inside seem endless. Construction and statics? Remain a mystery. And even when *The Farns* stands against a wall, the mirrored panels magic it into a light board – transparent, resolute and straightforward. A sideboard that is like a gallery, a true tribute to the Bauhaus.

“The statics of the sideboard were a particular challenge. And we are really proud to have found a solution.”

Clemens Schmidt Technology and Development at Walter Knoll



The language of *The Farns*: clear, comprehensible, transparent, straightforward, with no frills. Like a bungalow



U-shaped glass panels in different heights provide additional shelves

All variants of *The Farns* can be equipped with a range of accessories



If required, LED strips can be integrated in the “roof” of *The Farns*. They can be switched on and dimmed using a concealed button. A light installation with fascinating effects, supported by the mirrored wall sections

The all-rounder

The Farns was developed as a modular system. Accessible from both sides and as a sideboard against the wall. From 60 centimeters high to a highboard measuring 1.50 meters. With or without light installation. With or without wooden doors. This way or that – a sculpture of clarity, pure and versatile.



Sideboard without doors

The Farns is 240 centimeters wide. The corpus is either 45 or 75 centimeters high and can be combined with a framework of 15 or 30 centimeters. The rear panels are made of glass. If desired, the sideboard is illuminated on the inside with LED strip lighting



Sideboard with 4 or 8 doors

The free-standing variant has a total of eight doors – four at the front, four at the back. The other variant has four at the front. The outer doors are made of glass, the central ones feature veneer in nutwood or oak. The sideboard with four doors is also available with a cable duct. The interior can be equipped with lighting if so desired



Sideboard with 2 doors

As a highboard, *The Farns* has a corpus 120 centimeters in height, plus the framework at a height of 15 or 30 centimeters. One door is made of glass, the other of veneer. The interior can be equipped with lighting if so desired



Striking format: the corpus of the two-door highboard *The Farns* makes a cubic statement. *Deen Table* standing height table, 375 barstools, *Chimbuka* carpet

Living with a 360-degree perspective

Living Landscape 755. Design: EOOS.

A sofa landscape with which our perspective of life can change direction. *Living Landscape 755* modifies a space – it not only opens up the area in front of but also behind the sofa, thus widening our views. To the lake, the fireplace, the people at our side



Spending the evening with friends? Or enjoying some me time with a view of the outside world? The corner elements of *Living Landscape 755* can be simply turned 90 degrees by hand – to suit every requirement. *Oki* and *Oki Table* occasional tables, *Kiwara* pillow from the *Badawi Pillows* range, *Suma* carpet. The leather bolster supports both cushion and head

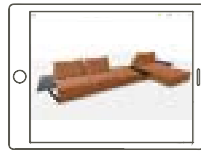
Living Landscape 755 is the comfort zone for everyone and everything. One person might be reading, another gazing at the landscape outside, while a third person works. Independently from one another, but close enough to be together. Just right.

Living Landscape 755 flexibly fits into a room without taking over – living room, loft, open space. With a clear shape, solid and stable. Expertly created in perfect craftsmanship from the upholstery to the seams.



Living Landscape 755 exudes a sense of calm and guarantees long-term pleasure in comfortable sitting. The bolsters provide additional support. The tray made of saddle leather and solid wood provides practical storage space; it perfectly matches the side table which is made of the same, warm materials. The upholstered element on the right can be turned 90 degrees – to face the fireplace. *Foster 620 Table* occasional tables, *Usiku* carpet, *Isanka* basket

- Living with a 360-degree perspective
- Agile versatility
- Calm, elegant aura



pCon.box

Find out more in the configurator

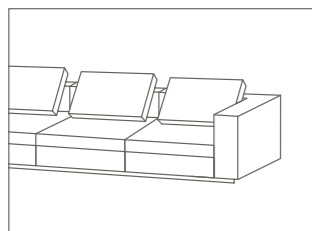
The design story

The houses of the great masters create relationships. They link inside and out, between surrounding landscape and the people in the room, between areas for eating, living and sleeping and a view into the distance. The designers from EOOS studied the plans of great architects such as Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright as well as Shigeru Ban and asked the question which pieces of furniture can best establish a relationship between furniture and room? The answer: the ideal sofa has to reflect the diversity of open architecture by opening up, or “activating” as the designers from EOOS call it, the various perspectives of the room. This was how *Living Landscape 750* came into being a good ten years ago. A success. A living landscape which gives its occupiers a new spatial experience thanks to gently swiveling corner elements. Cubist, communicative with a range of possible uses. A patented mechanism, concealed in the attractive corpus, is the secret behind these changing perspectives.

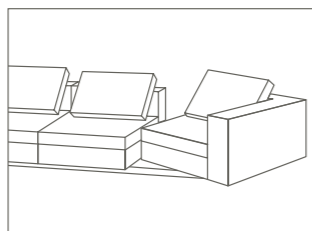
This idea, the interaction of form and function, makes *Living Landscape* a timeless, modern living object in the very best sense of Bauhaus. The redesign of 2019 entailed a sensitive revision of shape for a softer touch and feel. And the soft upholstery now offers even more comfort and depth in the seating experience. Supplemented with the new tray and the side table, *Living Landscape* satisfies the desire for a modern lifestyle.

Facts and details

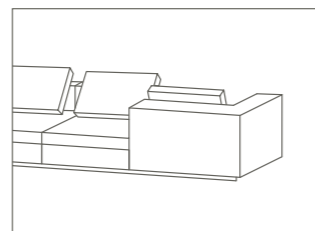
- **Smooth-running mechanism**
- **Countless possible variations**
- **Patented technology**
- **Maximum seating comfort** thanks to the soft upholstery
- **Tray and side table** made of solid wood and saddle leather



1



2



3

Flexible living landscape:
(1) The sofa looks in one direction.
(2) The corner element can be turned in a flash. (3) To enjoy the view in the other direction.

“Every sofa opens up a space in front of it. Living Landscape 755 uses the space in all directions.”

EOOS Designers

A small tree in a room

Foster 620 Table. Design: Norman Foster.



The *Foster 620 Table* looks like it's grown out of the floor, naturally belonging to the room. The harmony of the shape inspired by nature, the elegant top and unique grain make this occasional table a sculpture

- Very best of craftsmanship
- High-grade, solid timber leg
- Slimline table top



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Find out more in the configurator

The design story

Developing the *Foster 620 Table* also meant coming to terms with nature. Not just in terms of design – the table looks as if it is rooted to the spot. But also in terms of manufacture. The leg is made of solid timber with an evenly velvety surface. The challenge: how can you get a chunk of a tree to withstand heat and cold in all kinds of climatic regions without cracking? The construction engineers spent months thinking round the problem until they had a brainwave.

Facts and details

- **The sculptural design** is attractive and calming
- **The solid timber leg** seems to have taken root
- **The circular table top**, matt powder-coated black or bronze, or lacquered in copper, accentuates the room

Design: Norman Foster.

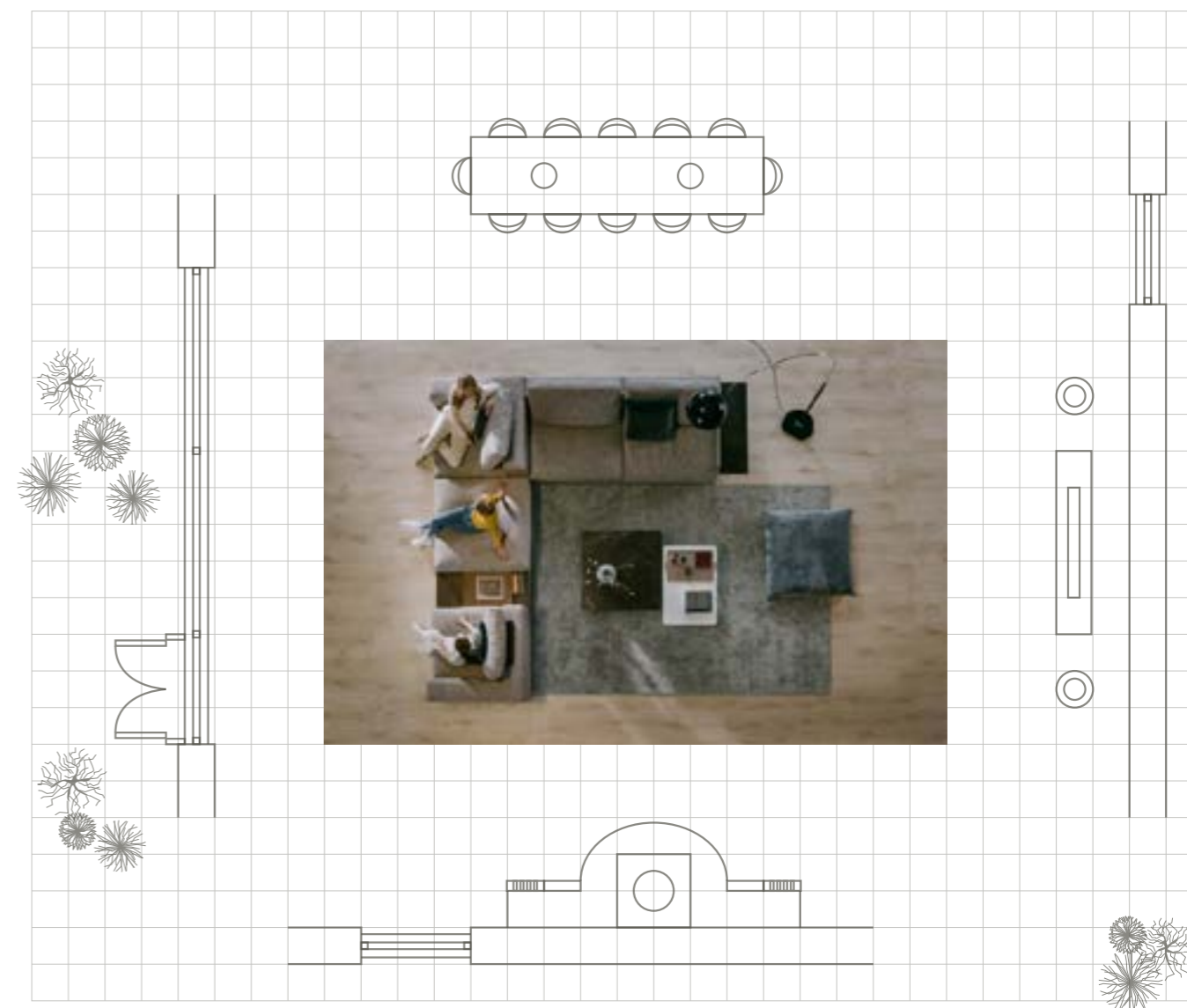
British architect Norman Foster is perhaps the most well-known architect of our time. With his studio Foster + Partners, he has constructed a number of buildings all over the world, including public buildings such as airport terminals, subway stations and museums. Notable icons are the Millennium Bridge and 30 St Mary Axe in London, the Apple Park in California and the Reichstag Building in Berlin. It was the furnishing of the latter that saw the start of the collaboration between Norman Foster and Walter Knoll. Since then, they have created several programs together illustrating the synthesis of architecture and furnishings.

Living life with a sofa

Just as the wandering sunlight divides up the day, *Living Landscape 755* shapes lifestyle. A sofa landscape which can be converted whatever the time of day – to suit your particular purpose



Coming together:
Living Landscape 755
encourages family life from
morning till night – here
watching a movie together



Sitting side by side looking out into the garden, on your own gazing into the fire, or turning to face others at the dining table. The sofa opens up the room on all sides as well as new perspectives



The corner elements can be turned 90 degrees in a flash. Take a look at the different living scenarios in the movie “Living life with a sofa” – at www.walterknoll.de

Reduced and roomy at the same time: *Aisuu Side Chair* in black. *Foster 620 Table* and *Joco Stone* occasional tables, *Ilanga* carpet

Sensuously attractive

Aisuu Side Chair. Design: Ginger Zalaba.

Clear, almost austere in its geometry – casual in its effect. Swiss designer Ginger Zalaba has made *Aisuu Side Chair* something of a tribute. A tribute to Otto Kolb, her grandfather and a master of the New Bauhaus, who designed avant-garde furniture in the Chicago of the 1950s



With its wing-like armrests, it was ahead of its time. The American Playboy editors were certainly enthusiastic. They called it the “Love Chair”. Walter Knoll found it good from the outset. In 1961, we created an upholstered version of it. And today we are more than pleased that his granddaughter, herself an artist, has reinterpreted the original design. Ginger Zalaba grew up among the furniture of Otto Kolb. She has been fascinated by her grandfather’s work and the Bauhaus from an early age. She asked herself how she could translate his most important piece of furniture into the present day. She gave it her own language, her own sense of lifestyle: a love of lines, material, reduction. *Aisuu Side Chair* is a soloist. Exceptional, cool, irresistible.

“We conceal the leather seams in a fine channel – for a wonderfully smooth surface.”

Oliver Siegelin Team Lead Development at Walter Knoll



Bauhaus look for today's lifestyle: with *Aisuu Side Chair*, designer Ginger Zalaba has brought her grandfather's "bat chair" into the present

- Tribute to an avant-garde soloist from the 1950s (Chicago Bauhaus School)
- Unique esthetics, casual comfort
- Sustainable resources: tubular steel and leather
- Elegant material, filigree structure



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Find out more in the configurator

The design story

Otto Kolb, a Swiss architect and designer, lived and worked together with Le Corbusier, Johannes Itten, Max Bill and Hans Arp. On the recommendation of the pioneers of modernity, he went to Chicago, to the New Bauhaus, where he designed the “bat chair” in 1951. Playboy rechristened it the “Love Chair”. Shortly afterwards, Walter Knoll created an eye-catching upholstered version of the chair. But, at the time, it seemed too avant-garde. Otto Kolb’s granddaughter, the designer Ginger Zalaba, found her grandfather’s sketches a few years ago and was particularly fascinated with the bat chair. She presented a draft of her grandfather’s inspired prototype in Herrenberg. The Walter Knoll team was immediately taken by the reduction of the elegant material, the unusual supporting construction and outstanding finishing. With their extensive experience, the developers tweaked a few things here and there, optimized the ergonomics and the inclination of seat and backrest, as well as the tube wall thickness and the finishing of the leather. The result: recognition of a master of the New Bauhaus, modernized with true designer grit, refined with premium craftsmanship.

Facts and details

- Striking, **three millimeter thick**, saddle leather
- **Leather edges** rounded off, polished and dyed to suit the cover **by hand**
- **Framework matt** powder coated in black or bronze

Design: Ginger Zalaba.

Ginger Zalaba grew up among artists and designers. Originally she dreamt of owning a gallery. She graduated from Zurich University of the Arts with a master's in exhibition design. After her father's death, she took over her parents' company in her mid-twenties and, with great determination, transformed it into the design studio she has managed since 2012. In the meantime she has studied interior design at the IED Institute of Design in Italy and made her debut at the world's leading furnishings show, the Salone del Mobile in Milan, with her own furniture collection in 2015. She draws on the designs of her grandfather Otto Kolb, the famous Swiss architect and designer, who designed buildings in America in the 1950s which adhered to the principles of the Bauhaus – buildings which today feature in the National Register of Historic Places. *Aisuu Chair* and *Aisuu Side Chair* are the artist's tribute to her grandfather – and the first joint project of Zalaba and Walter Knoll.

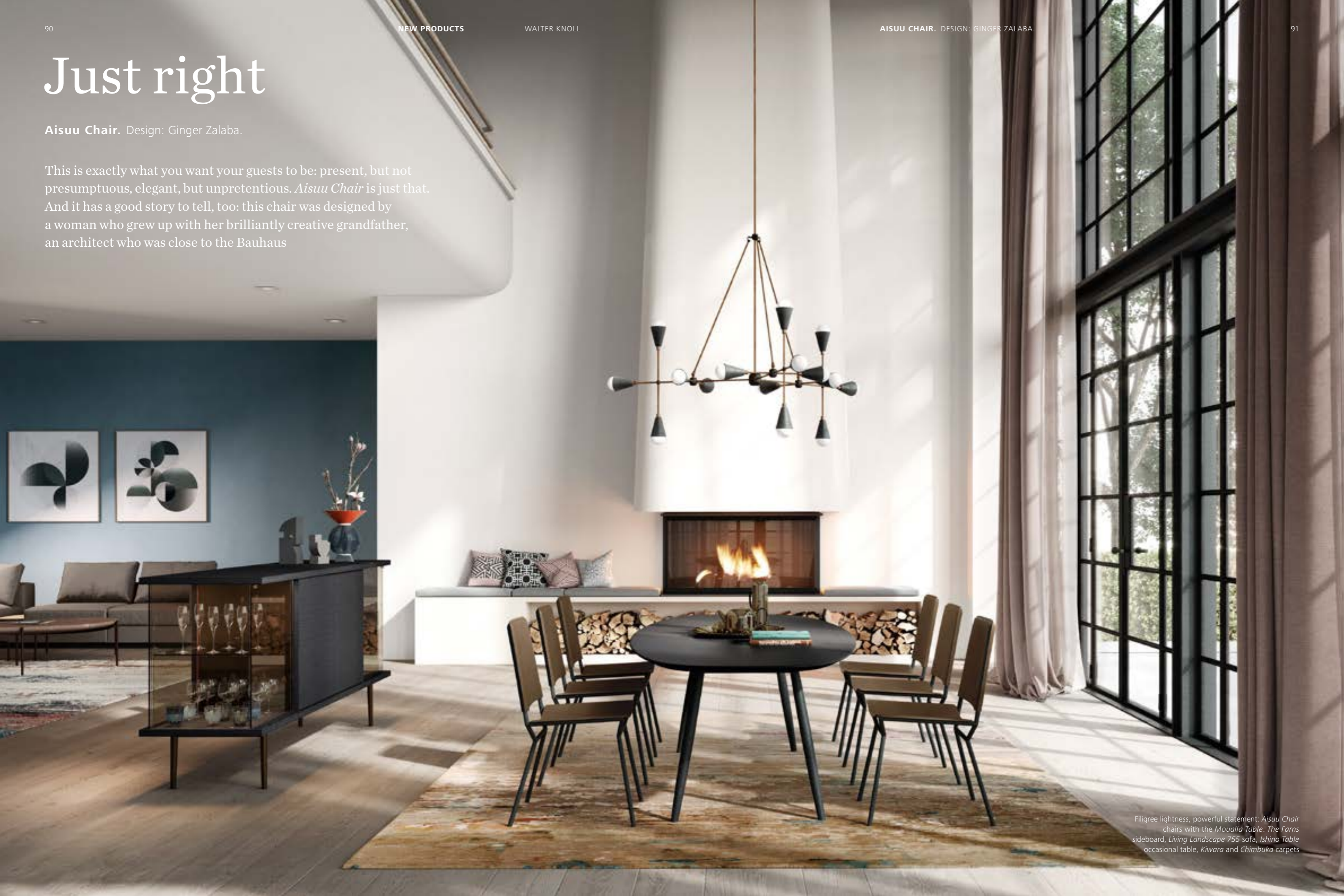


A confident character, a powerful design. *Aisuu Side Chair* comes with a black or bronze framework; the elegant saddle leather is available in a wide range of colors

Just right

Aisuu Chair. Design: Ginger Zalaba.

This is exactly what you want your guests to be: present, but not presumptuous, elegant, but unpretentious. *Aisuu Chair* is just that. And it has a good story to tell, too: this chair was designed by a woman who grew up with her brilliantly creative grandfather, an architect who was close to the Bauhaus



Filigree lightness, powerful statement: *Aisuu Chair* chairs with the *Moualla Table*. The *Farns* sideboard, *Living Landscape 755* sofa, *Ishino Table* occasional table, *Kiwara* and *Chimbuka* carpets

As a child, designer Ginger Zalaba was surrounded by the irrepressibly creative work of her grandfather, Otto Kolb. She lived and breathed the design language of modernity. *Aisuu Chair* is made up of its vocabulary, put together to create its very own, new esthetics. As lightweight and delicate as verse, as powerful as a statement. Its construction alone – a masterpiece of statics and craftsmanship. Three tubes each meet up at six points. Although they are welded, they seem to be of a piece. The high-grade saddle leather – left natural, warm on your body, finished by hand at the edges. Over the course of its lifetime, the leather will develop a patina, which in turn will tell another, very personal story.



Reduced design, top-quality material, compelling structure: *Aisuu Chair* has everything that characterizes modernity

- Furniture with Bauhaus DNA
- Sustainable use of resources: tubular steel and leather
- Filigree, lightweight and extremely stable
- Structure that seems all of a piece

The design story

Ginger Zalaba, now a designer, has studied hundreds of sketches and designs by her grandfather Otto Kolb as well as finished examples of his work. Kolb, a representative of classic modernity, worked together with Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Johannes Itten and Wassily Kandinsky. His granddaughter has transferred his furniture into the here and now. By giving the Bauhaus values their own, new significance. Ginger Zalaba is now presenting two products which carry the family DNA of modernity: *Aisuu Chair* and *Aisuu Side Chair*. The Walter Knoll team immediately took a shine to them. And decided to enrich the original designs with their knowledge and expertise, unique in the industry. Structure and tubular steel, leather and seams: with high-grade, elegant finishing. Both minimalistic and sustainable with the homogeneous use of just two materials. *Aisuu Chair* and *Aisuu Side Chair* pay tribute to her creative grandfather. A contemporary interpretation of the Bauhaus with new, optimized means.

Facts and details

- Striking, **three millimeter thick**, saddle leather
- **Leather edges** rounded off, polished and dyed to suit the cover **by hand**
- **Framework matt** powder coated in black or bronze



Find out more in the configurator



Matt powder coated framework in black and in bronze. A chair for multiple occasions – at home, in a restaurant or hotel bar

“The fused joints feature such excellent finishing that the carrying elements look to be all of a piece.”

Jürgen Röhm Head of Research and Development at Walter Knoll

Come together

DEEN TABLE. Design: EOOS.

Family life: coming and going, sitting and standing. Obligations and pleasures. And *Deen Table* is pure pleasure. Unconventional, communicative, dynamic: life at a standing height table is life on a level playing field. Whoever is there first extends the invitation. The minute you arrive, you are immediately on board. The warmth of the solid wood top and the round edge immediately engender closeness and trust

- Masterpiece made of solid wood
- Sophistication and delicate elegance
- Invitation to talk
- Multiple hand-crafted details

The design story

A standing height table promotes open, dynamic exchange. This is where you can keep track of what's going on. The narrow table top ensures proximity. That was something the designers from EOOS knew, and they also knew: height and slimline dimensions alone are not enough. The design should have a positive effect on those standing round the table. The table should feel pleasant. Class was the core message, decided EOOS and Walter Knoll. They chose elegant solid wood for the top, mount and legs. The velvety oiled surface exudes a sense of calm. The radius of the boat-shaped top looks harmonious. The minimal width facilitates communication. The perfectly shaped soft edge sweet-talks your hand. The elegant legs look natural. The product is top-class, vital and relaxed through and through. Which is why this standing height table fits in fantastically to a lively household. The ideal meeting point.

Facts and details

- **Sculptural table top** and legs made of solid wood
- **The soft edge** feels ultra pleasant



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Find out more in the configurator



Deen Table, the snug meeting point. The perfect place for a conversation, a coffee or a book. At this standing height table, everyone will find the space they need. 375 bar stools, *The Farns* highboard and sideboard, *Grand Suite* sofa, *Oki Table* occasional tables, *Chimbuka* and *Safara* carpets, *Atelier Chair* armchair



Rich in variety: *Deen Table* comes in two heights. The difference between them is ten centimeters – for different markets, preferences and situations. The table top is available in several sizes

Transcending time

Vostra Wood. Design: Walter Knoll Team.

Successful design knows no expiry date. On the contrary: what is already good becomes valuable over time. The function proves its worth. The comfort is compelling, the shape pleasing, the classic is strong enough to adapt – so that it stays

Clean lines with fine curves:
Vostra Wood has been synonymous
with modern living since the 1950s.
375 occasional tables, Usiku carpet



- Legs in four solid wood variants
- Comfortably upholstered
- The armchair of the 1950s

The design story

The history of *Vostra* dates back to a draft by the Danish/American designer Jens Risom from 1943 – a small armchair made of beech wood and belted. Five years earlier, Hans Knoll, son of Walter Knoll, emigrated to the US, set up business on his own, included the chair in his successful collection and, in 1947, sent it to his father. That is how the precursor of *Vostra* came to Germany. Walter Knoll then developed a new, proprietary form of the armchair with tubular steel legs and elaborate upholstery. This classic piece was first produced in 1949, exactly 70 years ago. And right in time for its 70th birthday, the chair is now once again available with solid wood legs: *Vostra Wood*, based on the 1956 version.

Facts and details

- **The three character buttons** prove the upholstery experience of Walter Knoll

Design: Walter Knoll Team.

Walter Knoll has always seen itself – in Bauhaus tradition – as being equally committed to design and craftsmanship. The creative minds in the team at Walter Knoll develop exceptional top-quality furniture. And *Vostra* is an example of this. The Walter Knoll team designed the small armchair in 1949 for the post-war German market. Its modern, timeless lines have made it a classic.



pCon.box

Find out more in
the configurator



Three tufted buttons reveal the masterly signature of the upholsterers at Walter Knoll

“Vostra is a prime example of the style of modernity. Best craftsmanship, timeless design.”

Jürgen Röhm Head of Research and Development at Walter Knoll

Icon in the comfort zone

FK. Design: Preben Fabricius & Jørgen Kastholm.

The *FK* bucket seat is international design history, a beacon of modernity. The fine lines and clear contours are as compelling today as they ever were. The new soft upholstery is as reticent as it is effective, underscoring both the lines and the coziness. The perfect sketch, supplemented with long-lasting comfort

- Unique pieces, minimalistic form
- Understated, additional upholstery



The design story

Nobody needs to worry about the success of the *FK* family. Since the 1960s, members of the *FK* family have been welcomed all over in top-quality, stylish interiors – as a soloist, in compositions or as a complement for sofa and lounge groups. The developers rose to the challenge. Would it be possible to model softer upholstery into the seating area?

Facts and details

- **The bucket** is completely covered with soft leather
- **The seat** swivels

Design: Preben Fabricius & Jørgen Kastholm.

Inspired by functionalism and the resoluteness of Scandinavian design, interior designers Preben Fabricius and Jørgen Kastholm founded their atelier in 1961 – an atelier that was to produce icons of furniture history. Their main concern was to state the function of an aesthetic form. The *FK* bucket seat, designed by Fabricius and Kastholm, symbolizes classical design, and is as timeless as it is modern. It won the very first German prize for “Good Shape” (“Gute Form”) in 1969.

Pioneer of minimalism: the three-star base of *FK* is made of polished aluminum



Minimalism meets coziness:
FK armchair in black with *Tobu* table.
Andalusiti carpet



pCon.box

Find out more in the configurator

“Every piece of upholstery requires precision. And it was a very special challenge to model soft upholstery for the seating area on the classic FK.”

Elmar Böing Development upholsterer at Walter Knoll

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