

SUSTAINABILITY BY DESIGN: FURNITURE



Furniture design is at the core of our everyday lives. Whether we are aware of it or not, furniture embraces our body and creates and defines the spaces and surfaces we interact with when working, sleeping, eating, relaxing or commuting.

Danish furniture design is characterized by a holistic approach towards integrating furniture with architecture and utility items to create coherent spaces with strong identity and ease of function. In the 1950's and 60's 'Danish Modern' manifested this approach in the most beautiful way, and today this is still the basis of the work and innovation of Danish designers and furniture companies.

On the shoulders of giants

The icons designed in the post-war period did not arise out of empty space. They were the culmination of an evolution where craftspeople, designers and architects worked in close collaboration with the manufacturing industry to combine tradition with new technology and new materials to create the physical expression of the modern welfare society. Thus the furniture designed by Arne Jacobsen, Poul Kjærholm, Børge Mogensen and their peers was created to be not only a beautiful chair or a table, but with a specific purpose. Often they were even designed for a specific setting or a specific house from Aarhus City Hall, schools and public libraries to the concert hall at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art.

Though, today we enjoy the beauty and simplicity of the objects, it is the integration of crafts and design with society and technology that made them come alive, and that today still is the foundation for Danish furniture design.

New materials + new technology = new possibilities

Just like 50 years ago, Danish furniture designers and manufacturers are engaged in how they can contribute to a positive development. As focus has shifted from building the welfare state to equity on a global scale and the emerging challenges of climate change and resource scarcity, so has the objectives of the newly designed furniture.

In the new millennium, Danish furniture is following in the footsteps of the giants of the future generations while showing new ways to address the challenges of our time through continuously integrating new materials and new technology into the tradition.



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FRONT PAGE PHOTO: ARNE JACOBSENS FURNITURE IN A SAS HOTEL IN 1960. PHOTO: FRITZ HANSEN

CASE

WE:DO:WOOD & KOMPLOT DESIGN

Fond; WE:DO:WOOD

Though wood is a natural resource, deforestation of especially the rain forest is a major threat to the environment. Therefore, when the Danish carpentry We Do Wood was established in 2006 the two partners Sebastian Jørgensen and Henrik Thygesen went looking for sustainable alternatives to the conventional wood species used for exclusive furniture – and discovered bamboo.

Bamboo grows extremely fast – up to more than one meter a day – and in few years consumes more CO₂ than an oak tree in centuries. Moreover bamboo is extremely strong when used properly reducing the need for additional glue, screws and other additional materials. In the Fond series, We Do Wood demonstrates how a simple and honest design enhances the qualities of the material, which in return delivers a strong and unique expression to the furniture.

NOBODY; Komplot Design, 2007 Designed for HAY

NOBODY is designed by renowned Danish design duo Poul Christiansen and Boris Berlin – together Komplot Design – for the young progressive furniture company HAY, which was launched at IMM Cologne in 2003.

The chair is produced in one single process by thermo pressing a felt mat of polymer fibers (PET). The production process neither demands additives like glues or resins, nor any additional materials like screws or reinforcements. PET felt is a 100% recyclable material produced mainly of used plastic bottles. Apart from its environmentally friendly features the chair is light and stackable with a strong identity, and the inherent qualities of the material make it easy to clean and give it excellent acoustic qualities.



The company We:Do:Wood uses bamboo as a sustainable alternative to traditional timber.
Photo: We:Do:Wood



The Nobody Chair is made of PET felt based on recycled soda bottles. Photo: Thomas Ibsen