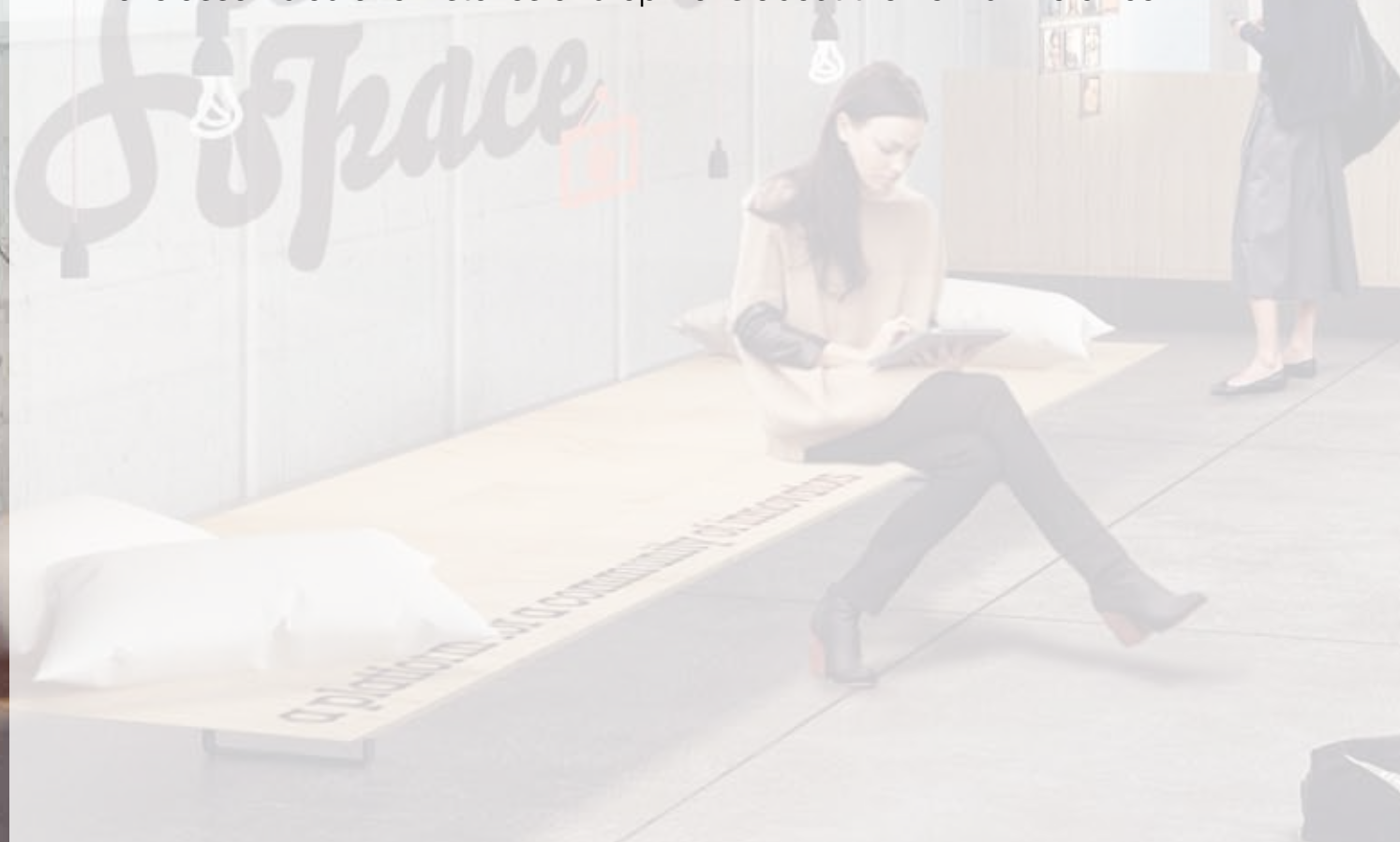


THE DIVINE WORKPLACE

See you tonight, I'm leaving for the office, you might say one fine morning... But where is that beautiful office? Somewhere in the busy city centre, on the 17th floor of a sterile building, in a neutral space locked between the photocopier and the coffee machine...? Perhaps. All we know is that working environments have changed a lot over recent years, mainly thanks to the laptop and other mobile communication tools. People have become much more free and flexible, working from wherever, whenever, and with or without whomever. While some people might be more productive working from their kitchen table, others prefer the noisy breakfast place round the corner. As long as there is a good Internet connection and nice coffee. In this section of the magazine, we have assembled a few stories and opinions about the new divine office.



Home by bunny productions, Susie Stummerer and Martin Habesreiter
From the book EAT DESIGN / Using knives to pick up food was normal for centuries. Nowadays, only in mountain huts is it 'allowed' to eat like Louis XIV did in Versailles – using the table as a fork.
Image courtesy of Martin Habesreiter, Susie Stummerer / Ulrike Kopy / Daisuke Akita

The Wiliness of Office Design

This way or that way?

Without a crystal ball there is no way to be certain of precisely how office design will alter in future. But it is indeed certain that it will do so, and likely markedly, as much research is being done on the effect of the workspace on output and on well being. The facts and figures testify to people's intrinsic disgruntlement. In short, it is clear that the majority of office environments are noisy, uncomfortable, and aesthetically displeasing, decidedly hindering the health and contentment of those who inhabit them day in and day out. DAMN° collects various imaginings about tomorrow's workplace.

LAURA TRALDI

There was a time when everyone thought that the history of office design would forever be marked as BG or AG: Before Google or After Google. Yet today, some 10 years since the playground concept was instated at the Googleplex in Mountain View, most of us are still working in old-fashioned spaces. And this despite much research indicating the economic value of people-focused work environments (a 5.5% increase in productivity per year, according to the latest paper produced by the Smart Working Observatory at the Politecnico di Milano). But, as a recent New York Times investigative article revealed, large employers like Amazon still thrive thanks to a culture of mutual spying, unbearable working hours, and office spaces purposely designed for people to look at one another's backs.

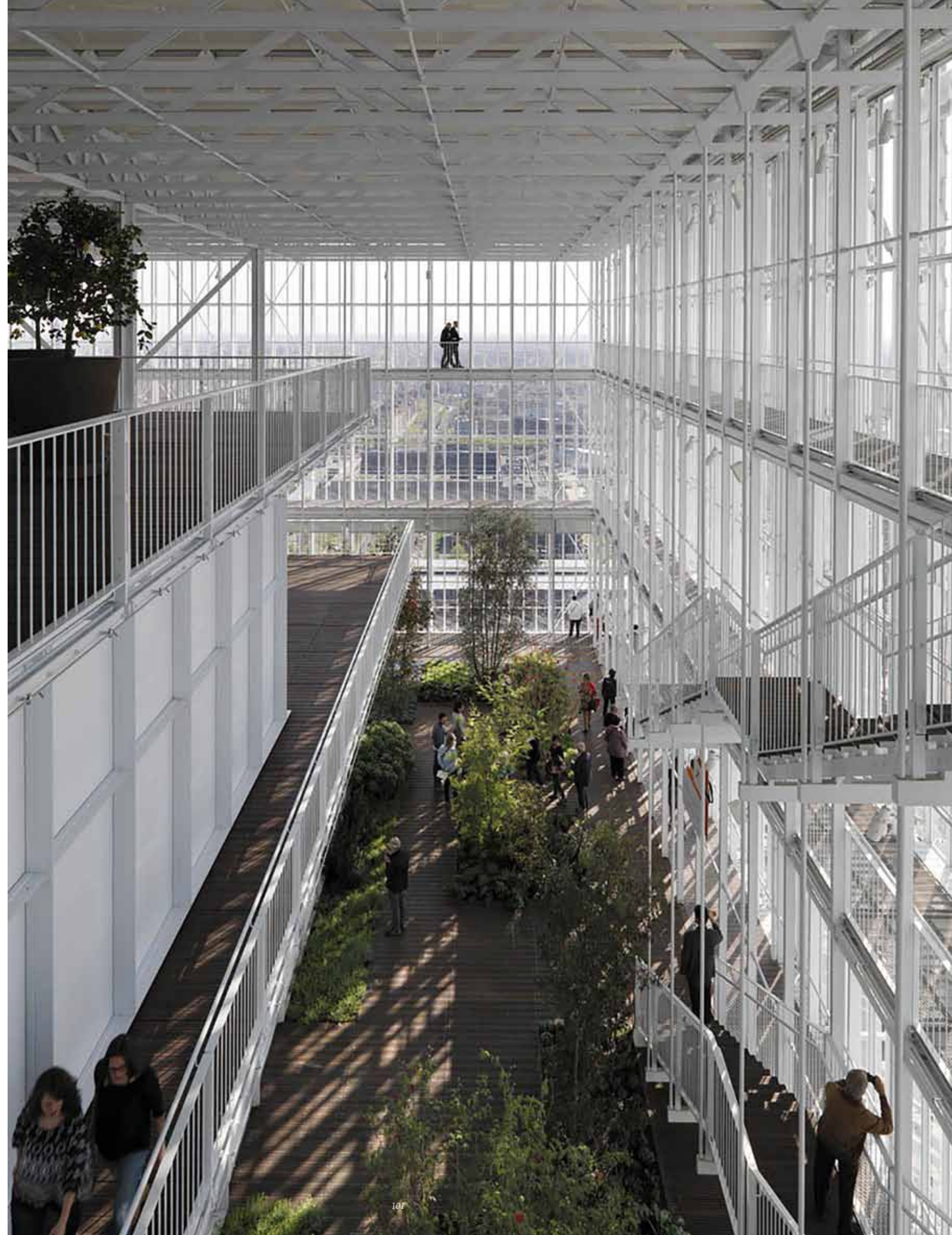
According to Barry Schwartz, professor of Social Theory and Social Action in the Psychology Department at Swarthmore College (Pennsylvania), this is a mentality issue. "A handful of forward-thinking exceptions aside," he writes in his recently published book *Why We Work*, "most companies are still stuck in the 18th century when

it comes to work ethics, with bosses believing, like capitalism's father Adam Smith, that people only work because they have to, with money as the main and only drive." Change the mentality, Schwartz suggests, and a new world will dawn.

What seems more likely to happen, though, is a bottom-up approach, a people-driven shift going mainstream come 2025, when 75% of the working population will consist of Millennials born between 1980 and 1997. They will – research tells us – have a very different approach to work than that of their parents: they will not give up their personal life or the quality of their daily experience for the sake of a career (or for a cool campus designed by a starchitect), and will actively pursue freelance assignments rather than steady jobs, with the most highly qualified individuals fleeing traditional workplaces.

In forward-thinking environments, this social and economic shift has already become a design issue. According to Matthew Kobylar, Workplace Strategist at AFK Studios, the first thing to immediately do

Torre Intesa Sanpaolo in Turin, a skyscraper housing the headquarters of banking group Intesa Sanpaolo, designed by Renzo Piano, with interiors created in collaboration with Lago
Photo: Enrico Cano



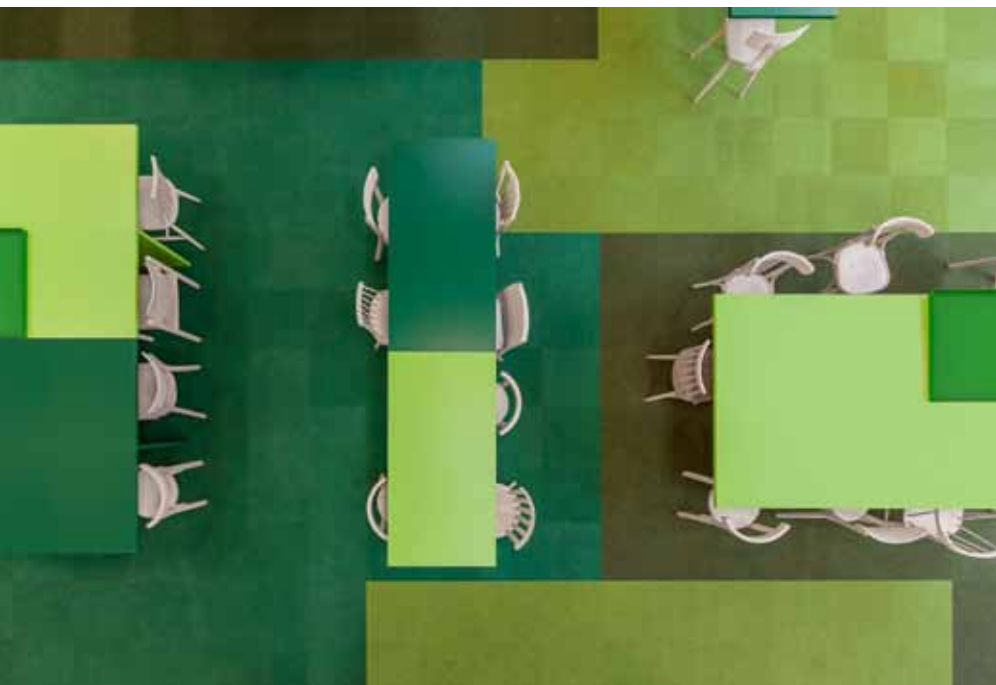


introducing lamps that capture noise without creating a physical barrier. And the 'vintage' atmosphere (so in demand in home interiors, hotels, and restaurants) is also growing immensely as an elegant, indulging office solution. For example, Vitra, together with G-Star Raw, has revived a selection of Jean Prouvé furniture for use in the workplace.

But the biggest changes may come from technology. "The office of tomorrow? Think of it as a car-sharing service", proffers Giovanni de Niederhäusern of Carlo Ratti Associati, who is heading a tech+interiors project for a large international banking group in Milan, centred on an App. "You are an independent worker; you use a shared office space. Your smart phone is instantly recognised, thus allowing you to enter the premises, to unlock a desktop and turn it into your own, to access your private data with complete security. In the same way, you can book and access meeting rooms, labs, and workshop areas, regulate the climate, and connect all devices – with no cables in sight." According to Carlo Ratti, such products do not exist anywhere else in the world.



Jean Prouvé office furniture, re-edited by Vitra and G-Star Raw
Talent Garden co-working space in Milan, with interior design by Carlo Ratti Associati



away with, in order to start catering for the future, is the traditional open-plan space. "In the US, the open plan configuration is responsible for the 6% decline in productivity that has occurred over the last few years", he states. "The future model should be the home office: quiet and clustered corners, thoroughly customisable, where people can concentrate or talk in small groups in a relaxed, cosy atmosphere. Including proper acoustic insulation."

"I don't believe we can generalise or embrace a trend when thinking of what's next", remarks Steffen Lipsky, Principal Designer at American giant Haworth Inc. "I like to think of every office as an ecosystem in which variety – which is great for users – provides added value. Thus, my thinking is: analyse your workforce and come up with a plan that achieves that balance."

In the meantime, furniture companies have begun to experience the shift. "Versatility and personalised solutions are much more in demand than hyper-sophisticated tables and chairs", declares Monica Pedrali, marketing manager at Italian furniture brand Pedrali. "And so are all the elements that allow for privacy and silence in open spaces: high-back sofas, sheltered tables, lounge seats, and sound-absorbing dividers." Even lighting companies are thinking along these lines, with Luceplan



New offices for Crossboundaries (architecture and design practice) in the Chaoyang District, Beijing - the domestication of a 60-year-old auditorium
Photo: Xia Zhi, Dong Hao

Combiwerk Delft, a social workplace in The Netherlands, designed by i29



Talent Garden looks more like the lobby of a cool Berlin hotel than an office: there are simple yet comfortable mini-sofas everywhere, digital panels, and a nice cafeteria; the building's industrial aesthetic remains intact, with the concrete enclosure dotted with colourful accessories. Nothing is dramatically new in terms of its general appearance, but the mentality behind the design of the interior is new. "We think of the office as a cultural relationship and wellbeing hub. For 250 euros per month, our guests not only get an office space and Wi-Fi, but a home-like environment, with two hours of yoga and two hours of English lessons included, along with free access to the rooftop swimming pool. In the summer, it is also possible to work in the garden", informs Dattoli.

Next to this cool garage concept is another emergent type. "I believe the time has come for a new, Mediterranean work model to develop", declares Daniele Lago, owner of Lago. The company has recently co-designed office spaces for banking group Intesa Sanpaolo's innovation centre in the Renzo Piano tower in Turin, as well as the offices of a viral marketing agency, and it has furnished Patchwork, a co-working space in the rue de Cléry in Paris. "This is a model based on conviviality, the wide availability of noble materials, and comfortable solutions – where the meeting room is a kitchen

area and technology is present but unobtrusive. More than 70% of market value is created through intellectual work. Being in beautiful environs conceived for people rather than machines, will make us more productive and happy. We are thinking of affordable, not low-cost solutions."

"It is not necessary to go to the seaside to feel good", effuses architect Jean Nouvel, who has designed office spaces all over the world. "What truly makes a difference are environments impregnated with generosity." Which could also be the reason why the 'playground' format is steadily being replaced by a more 'adult' concept. When interior designers Morgan Lovell proposed to the web hosting team at Rackspace in London that they have a slide in their studio, they said no thank you. "All they wanted was an excellent coffee machine and a super-comfy sofa to sit on whilst drinking the superb coffee", claims the design team. We are left to wonder what Adam Smith would have said about this. But we do know what Millennials would say: It's (the new) capitalism, baby. And there's nothing you can do about it. <

*osservatori.net / afkstudios.com / haworth.com / pedrali.it / luceplan.com
vitra.com / talentgarden.org / carboratti.com / lago.it / jeannouvel.com
morganlovell.co.uk*

Why We Work, by Barry Schwartz, published by TED Books, 2015

The original version of this article is published online in Italian here: *designlarge-d.blogautore.repubblica.it*



The Singapore office of Leo Burnett, by Ministry of Design, with playful, Felice Varini-inspired art in the courtyard

Adjustable shelving system by Nendo, presented at London Design Week in September

Lego PMD in Billund, Denmark, designed by Rosan Bosch & Rune Fjord
Photo: Anders Sune Berg

New workspace for Second Home, London, designed by SelgasCano



SHARING PLACES

The office on the move

It's a drastic change from the days of placing all of one's eggs in a single basket – sticking with one company for life, remaining in a fixed location, and accumulating as many things as the pay packet allows. Today, it is about mobility and lightweightness. Working from hither and thither and not putting down roots, paired with owning a minimum number of earthly goods, is the more desirable way to roll. Reflecting this tendency are services that cater to the nomadic lifestyle, in environments both urban and natural. The question is: what can the creators of houses and products, the makers and sellers, and the politicians usefully prepare in tandem?

SVEN EHMANN



Even though this might sound like a clichéd stereotype, there is certainly a sense of magic to the idea of the new nomad. The current generation of experts and professionals – designers, software developers, yoga teachers, baristas, and consultants of all sorts – celebrate their independence like no other generation before them. Without a fixed place to call home or a job to last a lifetime – just a backpack full of things and a bit of storage space for any remaining belongings, they carry with them only as much as is really needed. Some aim to own no more than 100 items – including tools, underwear, and toothbrush, to achieve the freedom of minimalism; they have no bags to check in at the airport and are able to move cities whenever the time is right. All that is required is a laptop (or tablet or smartphone or watch) and a Wi-Fi connection to allow them to jump from place to place and from project to project. In this way, it makes perfect sense to belong to a global community of likeminded people rather than to the immediate neighbourhood. Openness is a given and sharing is the default mode – way more natural than having a boss.

A growing number of cities accommodate these new nomads both at the formal and informal level. The rise of bike rentals, car-sharing schemes, and Airbnb places on offer clearly proves the point, as do special co-working spaces like betahaus in Berlin or fast-growing chains such as NeueHouse or WeWork,

NeueHouse: gallery steps (main image)
Photo: Rockwell Group/Eric Laignel

betahaus Berlin

WeWork (former Wonder Bread Factory), Washington DC



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with its 16 locations featuring workspaces, seminar rooms, and auditoriums. These have become the most likely sorts of meeting spots and vibrant starting points for projects, professional as well as casual. For those who need a workshop more than an office, the global network of Fab Labs and makerspaces is a key source. Working with 3D printing, laser cutting, and CNC mills, they also provide the opportunity to encounter others, which is just as important as the technical facilities. This idea has also been picked up by NEW INC, an incubator at the New Museum in New York where artists and designers meet technologists to explore common or new ground. A whole economy of services can be built from and around such places.



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Fab Lab Berlin: workshop (1)

New Museum and NEW INC (2)
Courtesy of New Museum, New York
Photo © Dean Kaufman

NEW INC members experimenting
with Oculus Rift technology (3)
Courtesy of New Museum, New York

View of the newly completed
NEW INC workspace (4)
Designed by SO-IL architects
in collaboration with Gensler
Photo courtesy of New Museum,
New York, © Naho Kubota

Facing page:
Secret Operation 610 by RAAAF (1)
Photo © René de Wit

Walking House by N55 (2/3)



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Other conceptual projects, like the futuristic vehicle RAAAF by Studio Frank Havermans or the Walking House by N55, lend a completely new meaning to the concept of mobile home. Quoting the title of a publication by Foster Huntington, “Home is where you park it.” Other unusual forms of accommodation include My Plus One, where a visitor books an apartment and a local person for a guided tour in one of five major European cities, or urban camping grounds like Bivouac by Thomas Stevenson, which utilise vacant roof spaces in industrial and commercial buildings.

With digital services at their disposal, the new nomads arrive with a mind-set very different from that of travellers of the past. They know where to stay and where to go, before their feet ever touch the ground. They know the best magazine store, the best temporary concert venue, and their next guitar teacher. They also most probably have a couple of dates scheduled before they arrive. Almost as if they have always been around, as if they were locals – but they are not.

What started as an opportunity for the few seems now to have grown into a larger trend, not fully mainstream but big enough to be recognisable everywhere from Thailand to Berlin-Neukölln. The new nomads have become an economic force, a cultural opportunity as well as a social challenge. Industries that had been based on the idea of a stable, lifelong home and workplace need to reinvent their proposals. The pressing questions are: What do urban nomads need? How would my product be one of



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the 100 that they retain? Will they be taking the LoftCube by Werner Aisslinger – a 30 to 82 square-meter UFO home – along, and will they situate it on top of a building or somewhere in a park? Are they up for flexible or multifunctional furniture, even in the smallest of living quarters, or are they instead focused on smart baggage and clothing, bulletproof hardware, and extensive online Cloud services to take to their shared office space? Vast challenges have arisen for designers, architects, urban planners, manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and politicians.

Talking about politics: also yet to be explored is the effect on society. Whilst we are all looking at those who are now arriving as refugees – for many good reasons, the impact made by the new nomads on

the local infrastructure seems for the most part to be ignored. As a group constantly on the move because they want to relocate, not because they have no choice, the new nomads might bring a level of openness, flair, and happiness with them, but how much do they really care about their location? Do they actually connect with local issues? Are they part of a solution? Who do they vote for? Where do they pay taxes? Would they ever stand up, demonstrate, or fight against oppression? Would you meet them at the next Taksim Square, Tiananmen Square, or Majdan upheaval? Or only somewhere between the easyJet check-in counter and the Star Alliance Frequent Flyer lounge?

It is very likely that more and more people will be on the move – for a variety of reasons – more and more often in future. At a time in which established creative hotspots like London are afraid of losing their talent due to high rents and inflated living costs, places like Portland and Detroit offer a better and more appealing life than New York and L.A. The new nomads are the ones who take part in developing a new culture in unusual or unexpected places, often resulting in the first step towards gentrification. They are up for a new context, new ways of living and working. Meeting co-workers in a café or clients in an urban farm comes naturally to them.

The magic inherent in the nomadic lifestyle is obvious, but perhaps it deserves a more conscious, more concerned, more sustainable approach, as in literally designing places, products, and processes that will not just leave a mark but will create a positive and lasting outcome. Otherwise, the nomads might find themselves in the situation that Judy Nichols described in her book *Tree Huggers*: “If you can work anywhere, anytime, then pretty soon you’re working everywhere all the time.” Think about it.◀

airbnb.com / betahaus.com / neuehouse.com / wework.com / newinc.org
raaaf.nl / n55.dk / myplusone.net / bivouacnyc.com / loftcube.net

Bivouac by Thomas Stevenson (1/2)
 Photo: Mark Römisch

LoftCube by Werner Aisslinger (3)
 Photo: Steffen Jänicke



THE ANYWHERE WORKSPACE

Meet office furniture manufacturer Arper

As Claudio Feltrin, CEO of furniture manufacturer Arper, so astutely puts it: “The office world is in the middle of a deep transformation, we are surrounded by many contradictions.” For furniture companies, this means donning thinking caps and realising the huge difference in the customer’s requirements in a very short space of time. This coupled with the speed at which the current tendency is moving forward. One thing is certain, the office is no longer simply about a perfectly ergonomic chair positioned at a right-height desk in a particular position within a building solely for nine-to-five use on weekdays.

SANDRA HOFMEISTER

In 2001, Catifa conquered the world market overnight. A principle reason for the continued success of the chair, designed by Lievore Altherr Molina, is that due to its many variations, it can be used almost anywhere – in offices, homes, and public spaces alike. With the launch of this product, the Italian family company - having emerged from a humble leather workshop – was on the map, and Arper became internationally known. Claudio Feltrin, the founder’s son and CEO, offers his vision of the offices and living zones of tomorrow.

DAMN°: Offices, living spaces, and hotels are all alike these days; they cannot be distinguished any more. How do you see the effects of this trend?
Claudio Feltrin: The de-specialisation of spaces gives us many perspectives. In any case, the com-

mon basis is always the human being, the individual, and his/her way of living in different spaces. Nowadays we use spaces in a much more flexible way than in the past. We used to define an office as a workplace with a desk – a very rigid space, organised in an open or closed structure but always in a strictly ordered way. However, the office world is changing – and will go on to do so. Thanks to communication devices, people can work more easily from wherever they want, and in the way they want. They don’t need a fixed station, or only in a greatly reduced way. This change provides more creative freedom for reflecting and making plans. And it allows for more fantasy, even for us, the producers. Of course, this fantasy has to become concrete and has to accompany the transformation.

Stitching, upholstery, and leather-cutting are only some of the crafts carried out at Arper’s headquarters in Monastier di Treviso, near Venice.
Photo © Varianti



DAMN°: What does this change mean for furniture?

CF: We don't produce rigid products anymore, but instead, objects that are pleasing to use, no matter what the situation. I'm referring to functionality as well as to aesthetics, the values of communication, emotion, and motivation. If you feel good in the environment in which you work, which is perhaps not exactly a classical office space, you will forget about the nasty side of the job and notice the nice aspect, which is the creativity. In my opinion, an environment must always stimulate its users.

DAMN°: Ever since the beginning, you have created collections for the office that equally suit private houses and hotels. Where did the idea originate for an in-between universe?

CF: It was the company's intuition and that of Alberto Lievore, with whom we have worked from the start. Together we have effected the desire to create something different, and to align the company with design. But I don't mean design exclusively as a functional or superficial form. We also wanted it to possess meaning. So we analysed people's everyday needs and made up our mind with regard to how these needs will develop in future. Our idea was to improve the environments we live in. As we are furniture producers, we cannot intervene in the structure of a building, but we can propose furniture that creates an environment – and can thus improve the internal spaces. We wanted to develop our interpretation to enhance the daily work environment. With that as the backdrop, we gradually realised that our intentions were confirmed by the market. We had found the right way.

DAMN°: Today, 15 years after the Catifa, you are launching an office chair for the very first time – Kinesit, designed by studio Lievore Altherr Molina.

Will this be the beginning of a new specialisation?
CF: With Kinesit we simply wanted to solve the problem of the office chair – which will still be necessary – by bringing a new vision. Naturally, there will be fewer office chairs in future, but the ones that remain must have a holistic quality. The chair

DAMN°: Speaking of the future of offices, the big trend now is for co-working spaces containing different zones that are rentable for a certain period. What is your reaction to that?

CF: It is a development that allows us further possibilities. Every kind of schematisation pretends to help you because of its rules. But strict norms create many restrictions. At present, the office chair must have many clearly determined requirements. But as the office world is in the middle of a deep transformation, we are surrounded by many contradictions. One of them is that there are conventional rules for office chairs, and at the same time, people work while sitting on a pouf that does not at all respect those rules. Finally, we understand that the most important thing is to feel comfortable at work. People currently work everywhere, including at the airport or in the plane – they don't care if they are sitting on a proper office chair. We want to create models for living coherently and to find honest answers through products, their quality, and their extended ergonomics that are no longer fixed to the angle of the seatback, but rather to the feeling of comfort, even in the aesthetic sense. I think this will be the principal precept for the future. <

must be innovative in terms of function, but also as a whole, and it must be a pleasure to look at, even though it is still an office chair. We wanted to add value to the market with an elegant chair that uses advanced technology without it showing. But we don't intend to develop any other office-only systems. We work on subjects in a wider context. The product itself is not enough, you must think about a more complex world.

Parentesit, an acoustic system that covers the wall with single textile panels of different size and colours (1)
Photo © Marco Covi

In the upholstery workshop in Monastier di Treviso, some of the steps involved in the making process are fully automatic and others are manual. (2/3/4)
Photo 2: Mark Mahaney / Photos 3 + 4 © Varianti

Catifa Sensit, 2014, the most recent variation on the bestselling Catifa chair launched in 2001 (1)
Photo © Marco Covi

Kinesit, the new office chair with invisible technology (2/3)

Barcelona-based trio Manel Molina, Alberto Lievore, and Jeannette Altherr, who not only design single products for Arper, like Kinesit and Catifa, but are also responsible for the art direction at the company (4)

The Kinesit chair variations exist in a wide range of unusual colours that can be individually combined. (5)
Photo © Constantin Meyer

arper.com
lievorealtherrmolina.com

THE END OF SITTING

Pondering the format of the body



When an inventive architectural practice teams up with an enlightened artist to work on a practical project, the result can be delightful. Such has been the case with the installation configured by RAAAF and Barbara Visser, who created an answer to a very apt issue of our time, which is the inordinate amount of time that humans in the developed world spend in a seated position.

LEOPOLD LAMBERT

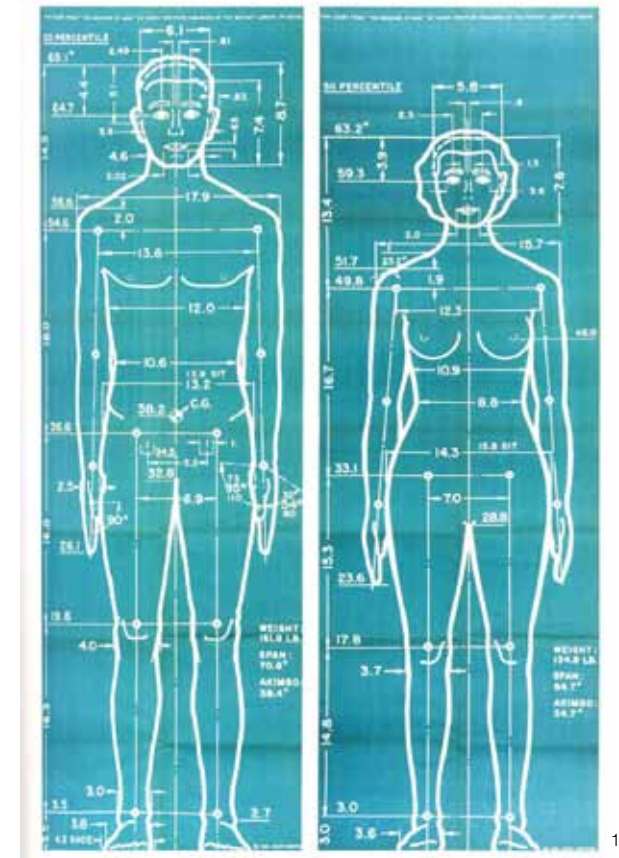
Last year, Amsterdam-based architectural office Rietveld Architecture-Art-Affordances (RAAAF) collaborated with artist Barbara Visser to design an installation entitled The End of Sitting. This installation was cited in many news platforms (e.g. Wired, Huffington Post, La Repubblica, et al) and more recently in an article written by Aaron Betsky for the architectural magazine The Evolving Landscape of Architectural Affordances (27 July 2015). This term 'affordances', described by

Betsky as being a new buzzword in architecture schools these days, is precisely what is at stake in the installation The End of Sitting, which offers a built environment where bodies can adopt multiple positions, in opposition to the traditional standing versus sitting ones. Nevertheless, it is my conviction that this project remains problematic for two main reasons that have to do with its refusal to address the notions of the norm and the politics of work.

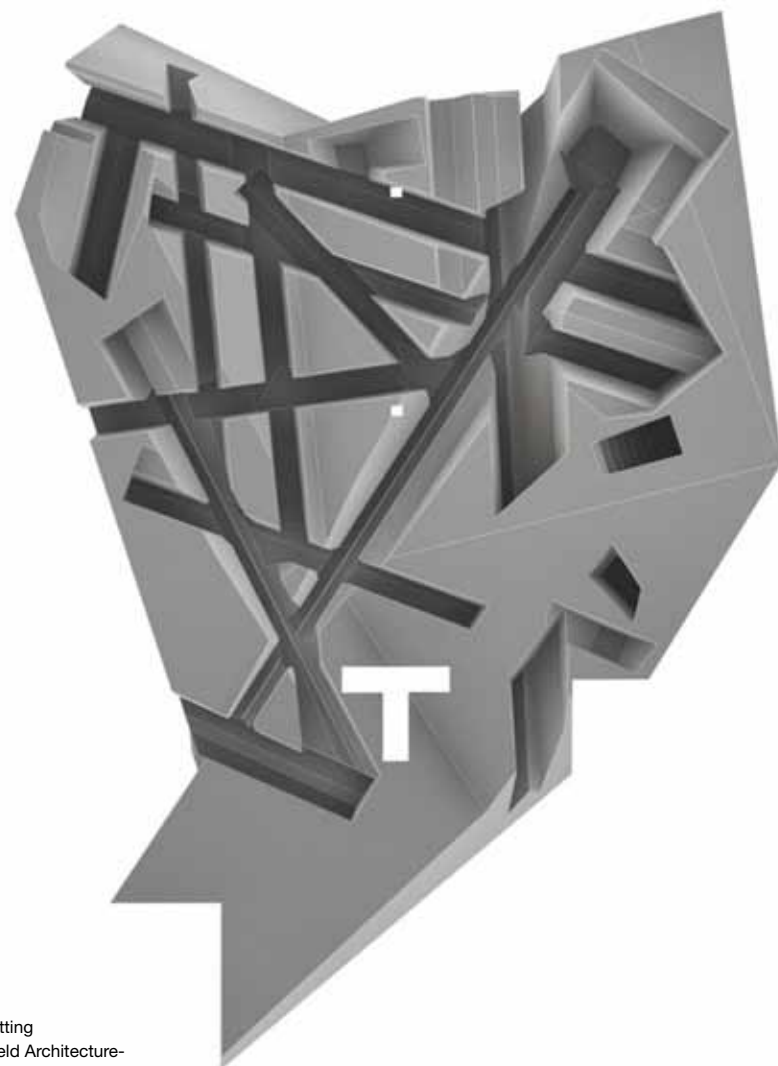


that addresses the way a firm communicates about its projects rather than the project itself, would be a mistake. If indeed the figures shown in the photographs are employees of RAAAF (or any other architectural firm, for that matter), we might want to be concerned about the uniformity of architects' imaginations concerning the people for whom they design. Although this critique is potentially unfair since it is based on an uninformed supposition, anyone who has visited or worked in a European architecture office will probably recognise such uniformity and the potential consequences it can have on design itself.

Irremediably, the uniformity of the imagination develops a uniformity of the bodies considered in the design. Even in the case of an interesting and rare project like The End of Sitting, in regard to the physicality it proposes, the considered bodies remain fundamentally the indexed norm: the multiplication of body positions is not enough if all of them are calibrated with a normative body. Although contemporary architecture does not necessarily consider this normative body through an explicit designation like the modernist one (i.e. Le Corbusier's Modulor, Ernst Neufert's Architects' Data, Henry Dreyfuss's Joe and Josephine), this figure remains implicitly present. What I argue for here is not that they should be calibrated with more representative bodies: one using a wheelchair, one of above-average weight, one of below-average height, and so forth. Calibration considers bodies through statistical characteristics in relation to their anatomy. Struggling against calibra-



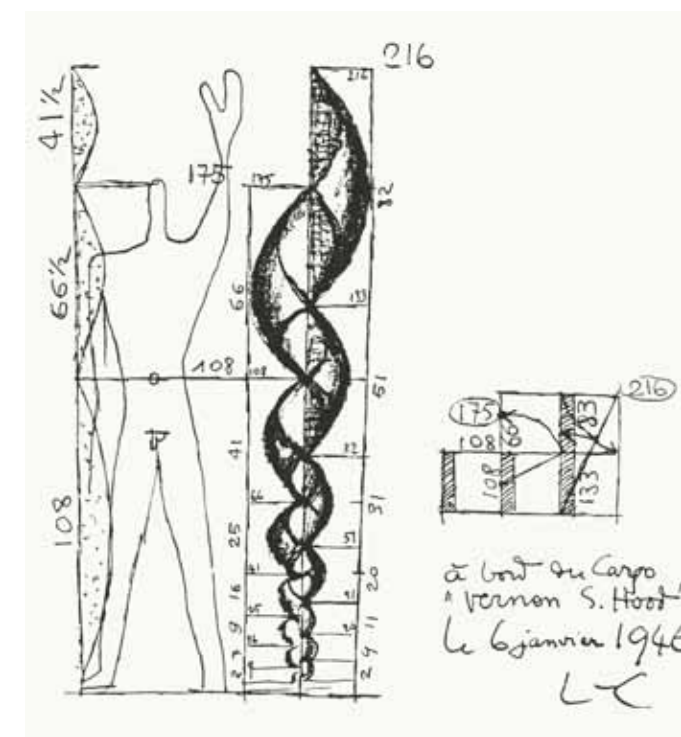
tion implies designing for the unknown, or "designs that do not know what bodies aren't", as we tried to articulate with Minh-Ha T. Pham in a recent essay entitled Spinoza in a T-Shirt (The New Inquiry, July 1, 2015).



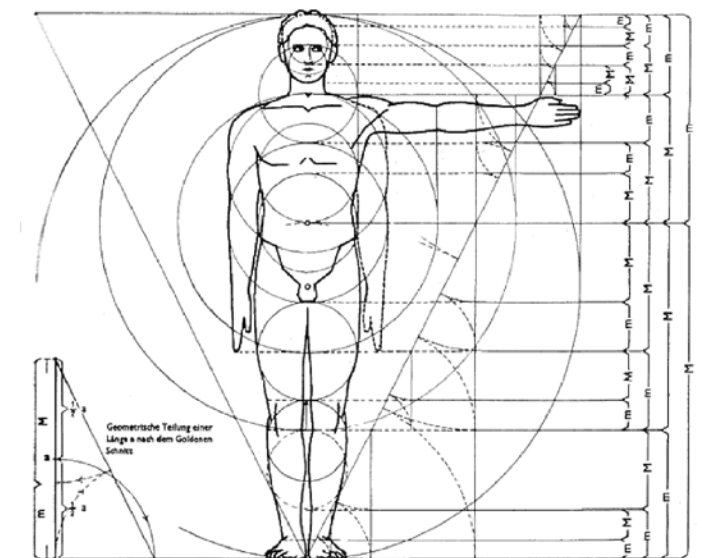
The installation was a response to a call from the Chief Government Architect of the Netherlands to rethink the office space paradigm, following scientific studies that reported the long-term health risks induced by prolonged sitting. The End of Sitting thus registers within a biopolitical project that considers the assemblage formed by architecture and human bodies, in relation to the lives of the latter – something inherent to the architecture of the last two centuries, but not often made explicit by its designers. Rethinking the office space design paradigm necessarily involves rethinking the work paradigm, too, as the function of a space and its physicality are necessarily intertwined. We observe such a shift in the way companies like Google and Facebook have organised their places of work, both spatially and temporally. This raises the following question: for whom is the work paradigm reformulated? The photographs of the installation give us an indication of the explicit and implicit answers the designers bring to this question, both at the social and corporeal levels.

These photographs are disturbing due to the extreme uniformity of the figures they represent as being users of the space. Besides their different genders, all bodies wear the marks of a particular class of worker: young, able, concerned with health and fashion (and having the means to be concerned), and work exclusively with specific mediums: printed and digital. It might not be surprising that these figures are none other than RAAAF employees themselves, asked to pose in the environment that they contributed to designing. Thinking that what I describe here is merely a representational issue

The End of Sitting
RAAAF, Rietveld Architecture-
Art-Affordances
Photos: Jan Kempenaers



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Joe and Josephine by Henry Dreyfuss Associates, 1974 (1)

Modulor by Le Corbusier, 1946 (2)

Bautenwurstlehre by Ernst Neufert, 1936 (3)



This is where the new work paradigm developed by companies like Google and Facebook begins to crackle: behind all the care for the well being of their employees offered by their ‘campuses’, there is a strategy of productivity control not dissimilar to the previous forms of capitalist spatiality, from the assembly line to the open office. The normative worker’s body in these companies is itself calibrated to reach its optimal degree of creativity and productivity; therefore, design has to form the body to reach or maintain such a degree. On the contrary, a non-calibrated environment tends toward a real multiplicity of affordances for all bodies. With this agenda, the act of design consists of this complex question: how can we reconcile the apparent contradiction between the resolute essence of design and the indefinite aim of non-calibration? The answer seems to be more empirically formulated than theoretically formulated. ◀

Léopold Lambert is a French architect who resided in Paris, Hong Kong, and Mumbai prior to his current location in New York. He is the writer and editor of the blog The Funambulist: Architectural Narratives, a daily platform whose name refers to architecture’s representative medium, the line, and the line’s philosophical and political power when it materialises and subjectivises bodies. A funambulist, also known as a tightrope walker, is a character who somehow subverts this power by walking on the line.

Google Mountain View Campus, California
Heatherwick Studio and BIG

EXHIBITION AS WORK

PATRIZIA COGGIOLA

What happens if the concept of occupation takes the form of a choreographic piece? What about the spiralling circularity of our daily movements being engaged as a task performance, nine weeks long, where dancers come to work-dance every day, nine hours per day?

That is the question posed at the beginning of *Work/Travail/Arbeid*, a project by Belgian dancer-choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, a choreographic piece, or rather — a choreographed exhibition that premiered at WIELS in Brussels from March to May 2015. The implications are unsettling as regards how contemporary dance and art exhibitions are conventionally thought, constructed, and experienced. The complex conceptual, technical, and physical labour involved is the backbone of the entire oeuvre.

Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker explains that “the choreography was about organising movements in time and in space, performing dance as a laborious task, and using the duration and daily ‘time’ of the exhibition as a framework.” WIELS’s invitation was to make an exhibition as a performance and a perfor-

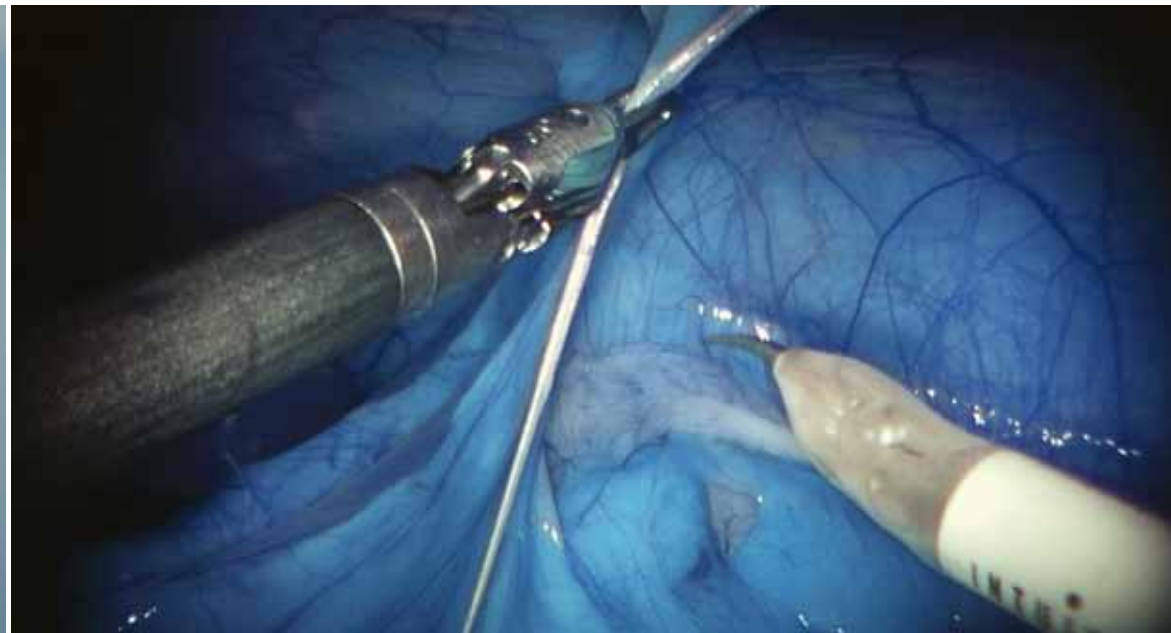
mance as an exhibition, but with *Work/Travail/Arbeid*, continues the performer, “It was about bringing together parameters, questions, and possible answers to 30 years of taking dance and choreography seriously as a way of organising movement in time and space. It has been a way to work with the basic tool of the body: observing the human body, especially in its skeletal and mechanical aspects, but also as a social, emotional, and intellectual organism. Not as it would be performed on stage, but as one works on it: the different perspectives and layering of the working process.”

Dancers worked on cycles lasting nine hours that shifted over the seven opening hours of the museum. “What we were showing is the process, what we do to make a piece, step by step. We show all the individual steps, not didactically, but experientially. That’s what work has always meant for me: a constant search, not only during the rehearsal process, but also in the performances themselves.” <

wiels.org

Work/Travail/Arbeid will be at Centre Pompidou, Paris, 26 February – 06 March 2016 (centrepompidou.fr) and at Tate Modern, London, 18 - 20 July 2016. tate.org.uk

Work/Travail/Arbeid by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker
Photo © Anne Van Aerschot



FORMS OF LABOUR

Il Quarto Stato at Kunsthalle Brixiae in Brescia, Italy is featuring a themed exhibition connected with the forms of work at large. It is characterised by the presence of three artists who are investigating the interstices between production and product, labour and commodity, industrial manufacturing and new technologies. Work as a framework for life, is the fulcrum of invited artist Yuri Ancarani, who is regularly present at the Venice Biennale and was recently selected for a MAXXI Prize. Here he presents his trilogy of short films, each focusing on a highly specialised form of labour. The title refers to a syndrome similar to cabin fever, an ailment that sailors experience after being out at sea for great lengths of time. The first film in the series, *Il Capo* (2010), is a beautiful portrayal of a Car-

rara marble quarry, with a magnanimous foreman directing his crew in the way of an orchestra conductor. *Piattaforma Luna* (2011) takes place inside the rarely seen daily routine of scuba divers on board a submarine stationed deep below the surface of the ocean. *Da Vinci* (2012) features a surgical robot whose mechanical arms perform an operation, exquisitely capturing the procedure from inside and outside. Together, the three films explore the interdependent relationship between man and machine, and the beautiful choreography of labour. <

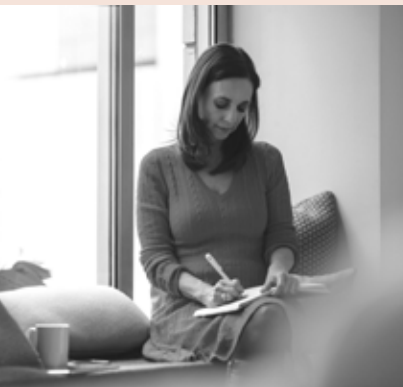
yuriancarani.com

Il Quarto Stato is at Kunsthalle Brixiae, Palazzo Martinengo Colleoni, Brescia, Italy until 31 December 2015.



THE INNER OFFICE

The workspace of the future will be intelligent, implicitly adapting to ergonomic, social, and cultural requirements. It will be the place where privacy and solitude are allowed and demanded, alongside room for seamless exchanges and encounters. Comfort translates into specified environments and differentiated uses. It also implies that offices be enabled to adapt to our psychological, emotional, and humanistic needs.



SUSAN CAIN

Author and Consultant to Steelcase

Research shows that 31% of full-time employees do most of their work away from their official workplace, seeking physical and emotional comfort and familiarity. In her bestselling book *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, Susan Cain underlines that workers are often left to deal with the situation at the office, with little opportunity to tailor their environment based on their mood or on their need for privacy and focus. "Introverts recharge their batteries by being alone, extroverts recharge when they don't socialise enough." From this perspective, a new investigation has been carried out at one of the major players in office design worldwide, Steelcase. Susan Cain *Quiet Spaces (1/2)*, by Steelcase suggests five diverse ways to empower introverts at work. Each space supports specific postures, work modes, and expectations for quiet and privacy, supported by a carefully chosen range of architecture, furniture, materials, and technology. Every quiet space offers superior acoustic performance and an atmosphere in which introverts can comfortably work. "Introverts represent one-third to one-half of all workers, yet companies often fail to provide environments that bring out their best. The idea is to give people permission to be alone. Private, quiet spaces free from interruption support focus and innovation, providing a respite from an otherwise highly stimulating workplace. Creating spaces that are available to introverts signals that the organisation understands and respects their need to work differently."



At NeoCon 2015 in Chicago, Steelcase presented its vision for embedded technologies that help mitigate distractions and augment interactions at work. Its Intelligent Office concept (3/4), integrates sensing devices into the work environment that gather and aggregate data and learn over time what people want and need. This represents Steelcase's exploration into how future work environments might better address a range of distractions and obstacles that leave people feeling overwhelmed and less productive at work. The Intelligent Office concept includes the Brody WorkLounge, with sensors and a red light around the perimeter signalling to others that the unit is occupied. A simple audio control appears on the side surface, allowing the worker to choose from a selection of sounds playing from speakers embedded in the headrest. A heated lumbar option keeps the worker comfortable, addressing one of the top distractions in the workplace: feeling too cold. The Divisio screen, which divides individual workstations, displays the time, date, and temperature, and also provides workers with notifications to support their wellbeing, such as to periodically stand up and move, and to take a break, as well as posting reminders of upcoming meetings.

steelcase.com



MICHELE DE LUCCHI

Architect and Designer at Unifor

Devoted to the contemporary work environment, *La Passeggiata (The Walk)* describes a large installation shown at Workplace3.0 during this year's Salone del Mobile. The project was conceived by Michele De Lucchi with the aim of creating an area in which to present design ideas and proposals that address the many ways in which we live and experience the workplace today. "La Passeggiata is a metaphor for the importance of avoiding immobility. Walking helps keep anxieties and worries away. Thinking of the work environment as a sort of gymnasium for exercising the mind means transforming it into a space in which interaction with others generates new ideas and possibilities", comments the architect. "The office of the future is an ever-changing landscape, free from convention, always different, and it's a constant instigator of innovation." A circular, never-ending path through the labyrinthine meanderings of the workplace emphasises moving about in the office in order to spark the crucial stimulus needed for the creative process. This includes Hatch (1), a modular system consisting of refined partitions that incorporate doors, cabinets, desks, and sofas, in addition to Secretello (2), a desk conceived as a modern, functional, self-sufficient workstation and secretaire, in the concept of a display case.

unifor.it
micheledelucchi.com

FANTONI

Once a month, from October 2015 to May 2016, Italian brand Fantoni is organising 'blind lunches' at which the most diverse personalities from various sectors are invited to share their views on the Milano Design Factory, an experimental workspace platform. A programme developed in collaboration with designer Matteo Ragni, the project is about an attitude of change, with attention to what is new and surprising, something highly valuable to the growth and wellbeing of working people.

fantoni.it
matteoragni.com



ZUMTOBEL

Zumtobel has recently engaged in a research study to examine the emotional and economic effects of Limbic® Lighting, for example in public spaces and stores: a lighting concept was specifically developed for a target group, to investigate the impact of light on our emotional condition. These effects can only be partly measured using customer surveys, so implicit methods were called upon for the analysis. The method employed by Zumtobel, developed by Gruppe Nymphenburg and known as the Limbic® Emotional Assessment (LEA), specifies various parameters for measuring unconscious physical responses, lending valuable insight into emotional reactions.

zumtobel.com
nymphenburg.de

SOFT TECH

Technology has expanded the way we work, freeing us from the strict impositions of time and space and encouraging the search for new solutions for our workplace. Most of all, we want an environment that reflects who we are. We want our surroundings to go beyond function alone. We require spaces that support a holistic life, and need tools that are as adaptable as we are.



MICHAEL FRIED

Executive Board member responsible for Sales & Marketing at the Bene Group

Netzkern, one of Germany's fastest-growing digital agencies, has recently built a new head office, offering its employees an inspiring environment that aims to strengthen team spirit. An extensive multitude of spaces are available for different work styles and tasks, for which the creative interior-design input came from Bene. "Netzkern is a company without strict hierarchies, where communication and collaboration are very important. The different work functions have to be considered. For smart offices, it is important to conceive of the environment as a living urban landscape where each employee can choose the place s/he needs – for concentrated work, productive work, or informal communication and interaction." In addition to areas for informal discussions, employees have access to classic workstations with a high degree of functionality. "Bene defines the office as a vibrant living space, with many different zones that support different activities. These areas are structured into 'Me- and We- and Workplaces', influenced by the elements of flexibility, mobility, new technologies, and communication media: Me-places for focused work, We-places for exchange, and Workplaces as traditional places for working. At Netzkern, not only the individual desk but the entire office infrastructure is utilised by employees, and space for dialogue is created. Good office design has to support concentration and communication, inspiration and recreation."

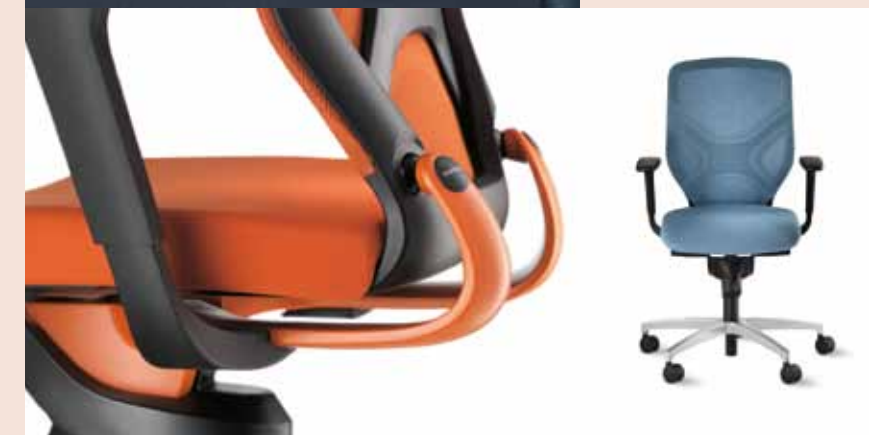
bene.com / netzkern.de



MICHAEL ENGLISCH

Head of Design and Development at Wilkhahn

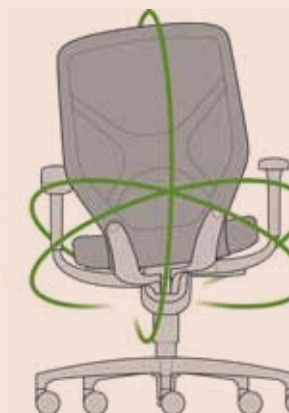
Five years after ON, Wilkhahn now launches IN, another office chair featuring the patented 3D kinematics technology called Trimension. The chair encourages movement while seated, boosting fitness and powering concentration. Michael Englisch spoke with DAMN° about the characteristics of this project: "Wilkhahn is taking an innovative approach, both to materials and production methods. This time, the goal was to make this stimulating movement concept available in a simpler, more compact and therefore lower-priced office chair, so that a broader range of projects can reap the benefits. The IN stands out with its relatively wide dimensions in the upper part of the backrest, conveying a sense of comfort and security to the user at a visual level. It's pretty much the same effect as a wing chair. The silhouette tapers down towards the pivot points and where the backrest merges into the seat, which creates a sense of lightness and elegance. It's this central area with the two swivel arms that contains the main element of the chair – the flexible mechanism that's responsible for its three-dimensional movements. Although IN is narrower than its 'big brother' ON, it still has an extremely comfortable look and feel. Both chairs make it seem as if you're sitting in them rather than on them, almost like an armchair. We want to convey what we've achieved with Trimension visually, too – i.e. optimal freedom of movement in three dimensions, combined with a secure, steady posture."



THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL EXPERIENCE

While the chair follows the body like a second skin, the comfortable experience while sitting in it is conveyed by its three-dimensional movement. The two swivel arms, part of the patented 3D mechanism, move independently of one another. These arms have a direct impact on the extremely powerful central spring; resistance can be adjusted by turning a knob. The partially elastic seat shell and back are made using high-tech two-component technology from the automotive industry. As a result, the different levels of elasticity and strength in the flexible seat shell and the very strong frame of the backrest could be integrated into one single piece. The rear component is connected to the swivel arms via two hip-like joints, and the front component via sliding joints near the knees. The cover on IN's backrest is made of special 3D Formstrick (form-fit knit).

wilkhahn.com



HUMANSCALE

The **QuickStand** height-adjustable workstation by Humanscale raises the bar for ease of use and stability among sit/stand products. The unit seamlessly transforms any fixed-height desk into an active one, promoting collaboration and well being in the workplace. With weightless operation and a plug-and-play cable management system, QuickStand neatly attaches to the back of any work surface, placing the screen and keyboard in an ergonomically correct position for the user.

humanscale.com



ENGELBRECHTS

Erik Magnussen

Engelbrechts has recently presented **Tabois**, a long table in solid oak designed by Erik Magnussen. Originally conceived by the designer for his own house in the south of France, the lovely simplicity of the frame is clearly inspired by the domestic environment. An assemblage of only three parts, without the use of screws, forms an elegant and very stable base for the fourth and last piece: the massive wooden table top, which is currently available in two lengths.

engelbrechts.com
magnussen-design.com



KNOLL OFFICE

Formway Design

Knoll Office expands its seating range with **ReGeneration**, created by Formway Design. The New Zealand studio began its collaboration with Knoll back in 2002, with the launch of the Life Chair, famous for its sophisticated design, intuitive regulation devices, and reactive ergonomics. ReGeneration has been conceived to facilitate everyday work by way of optimised materials and components with technologically advanced characteristics: a slim rear profile with a shaped frame, a precise backward flex with high-performance elastomer to cradle the back while providing lumbar support, and a guarantee of 270 degrees of inclination for maximum comfort, support, and flexibility. With a particular focus on the environment, the seat is made using recyclable materials. It has received SMaRT® certification from the Institute for Market Transformation to Sustainability in Washington DC.

knoll.com
formway.com



LAMMHULTS

Johannes Foersom & Peter Hiort-Lorenzen

At the 2015 Stockholm Furniture Fair, Lammhults and Danish designers Johannes Foersom & Peter Hiort-Lorenzen introduced **Portus**, a new sofa series offering different possibilities for meeting and resting areas. As a bench, easy chair, or sofa, the seating series works as a stopping point, a gathering point, a relaxing space, or a sharing dock, all created by the combination of three elements: a soft sculptural bench, an ergonomic support cushion, and a shapely back. The frame, in wood or steel, is plain and uncomplicated, almost archetypal, referring to Nordic simplicity and restraint in the use of materials.

lammhults.se
f-h-l.dk

ACTIU

Sylvain Carlet & Isern Serra

Sylvain Carlet & Isern Serra have designed a 'natural desking system' for Actiu. Evoking simplicity and structural elegance, **PRISMA** describes an operative programme of Nordic-style desks of maximum versatility for all types of spaces and projects. Characterised by a feeling of order and cleanliness, the furniture is produced in melamine and steel, with various finishes and combinations that recreate a wood effect, offering a natural aspect thanks to an innovative technique that reproduces this texture.

actiu.com



TRUEDESIGN

Studio Architetti Parisotto e Formenton

At Workplace 3.0 during this year's Salone del Mobile, Italian architecture and design firm Studio Architetti Parisotto e Formenton presented **Millepiedi**, its new seating system for Truedesign. The furniture is modern and minimal, functional and flexible, ensuring a wide range of configurations and dimensions. The sober colour palette was inspired by the desaturated tones of Giorgio Morandi's paintings.

truedesign.it
studioparisottoeformenton.it



ARPER

Lievore Altherr Molina

Kinesit, designed by Lievore Altherr Molina in Barcelona, is Arper's first office chair that is one hundred-percent compliant with regulatory requirements. The chair seat and back are fully adjustable for optimal comfort. It features a built-in mechanism hidden discreetly under the seat that provides synchronised movement and seat height adjustment. An invisible, lumbar support setting is concealed within the backrest's thin frame, to provide additional flexibility. The chair received the iF Gold Award 2015, the top prize in the German design competition.

arper.com
lievorealtherrmolina.com

Lievore Altherr Molina

Adaptable, open, and generous, Arper's **Cross Table**, designed by Fattorini+Rizzini+Partners, is equally suited to boardrooms, residential spaces, and collaborative work environments. Thanks to its optional configurations, the table can serve as a temporary meeting place for group gatherings or be arranged to form a communal workstation with plenty of room to share.

arper.com
fattorini-rizzini-partners.com



OFFECCT

Richard Hutten

Richard Hutten's **Satellite** chair for Offecct, presented at the Stockholm Furniture Fair this year, was designed for the digital age. The Dutch designer has conceived a spinning 'satellite' that encourages interaction and collaboration amongst individuals. Characterised by round, playful features, "the Satellite is a perfect circle, to me the most elegant form: it is without direction, has no bulky sides, no beginning, no end", says Hutten.

offecct.se
richardhutten.com



LAPALMA

Hee Welling

Designed by Hee Welling for Lapalma and born from a combination of geometric shapes, **Auki** completes Lapalma's proposal for the lounge area. The Danish designer's idea started with lifting up the corners of a flat surface, forming a kind of cocooning bowl. He then defined a central line, shaped to welcome the human body. The result is a lounge chair with a simple aesthetic and a high level of comfort.

lapalma.it



LIFECYCLE

There are companies and industrial programmes that actively strive to contribute to a more sustainable society. These innovators have now taken further steps to offer one or more of the following: a prolonged lifespan for objects, shared designs, a local chain of production, a second-hand market. All such initiatives contribute to creating a healthier circle of life for furnishings and other products, a positive development that hopefully indicates the future direction of the sector as a whole.



KURT TINGDAL

CEO of Offecct

Swedish company Offecct has for many years actively strived to contribute to a more sustainable society and has now taken another step by giving its own products a prolonged lifespan. The concept trademark project LifeCircle is a service that looks at the company's products in relation to how the customer buys and uses them on a daily basis. "It creates an increased interest in a second-hand market and creates a circle of life around furniture and interior design. We have long been thinking about how we — as producers — can do more for our customers who chose, use, and live with our products. We have reached the conclusion that we have to look at our role from a new angle", says Kurt Tingdal. "Used Offecct products are traded-in when new items are purchased. These are given new life thanks to a reupholstery service. We are constantly looking for new ways to further reduce our environmental footprint through the choice of materials and suppliers, as well as in our production process." With a brand-owned technique, Offecct goes beyond its role as a mere producer and takes greater responsibility for its products. LifeCircle follows the items from the beginning, lending them new life through regular care, servicing, reupholstery, and renovation, as well as via exchange. Recently, Gothia Science Park (GSP) employed this service. A number of Cornflakes chairs, used in the dining area, were reupholstered and impregnated with an extra stain-resistant finish to further prolong their life.

offecct.se
gsp.se



PHILIP BRUNNER

Head of Sales at Brunner

The German contract furniture manufacturer has recently developed a modular lounge system for the new Freiburg University Library. Designed by Basel architect Heinrich Degelo, the building won an architectural competition, and after six years of construction was inaugurated in July 2015. Inside, individual seating components by Brunner can be combined as per a unit assembly system, and in the event of damage, each part can simply be replaced. "This saves money and resources. The seating system was devised especially for this project, and one of the reasons the client bought our product is the fact that the upholstered elements are attached with only four screws and can be readily replaced. The library is open 24/7, so if something becomes damaged, the whole product line needn't be thrown away. Modularity is an important factor in a public building, which is first and foremost judged by its price-performance ratio. Modular means sustainable. Equally important, the awarding authority stipulated the need for easy cleaning at the base of the furniture: the aluminium underframe is perfect for this purpose. We are very happy to be able to contribute and to do our part in modernising the building while helping the students feel at ease."

brunner-group.com



JAMES ARTHUR, IAN BENNINK, TIM CARRIGAN, NICK IERODIACONOU, AND JONI STEINER

Founders of Opendesk

Opendesk is a global platform for local production using digital designs. One can use the platform for the purpose of downloading, making, or buying furniture for the workspace. It cuts out the middleman and the logistics of the murky global supply chain, providing a more direct and personal option. "It has all the benefits of designer furniture without the long lead times and designer price tag. You can customise the designs to suit your brand and environment. Because each furniture piece is designed for digital fabrication, it can be downloaded as a digital file and produced locally anywhere in the world. We're focusing first on workspace furniture because it's the best fit for current digital fabrication technology. The workspace of the future will be intelligent, implicitly adapting to ergonomic, social, and cultural requirements." Opendesk is the trading name of Fabled Limited, which in its turn spun out of the architecture and strategic design firm 00:/ (zero zero). Following receipt of crowd funding in July 2014, Opendesk is now part-owned by members of the community. Minimising environmental impact and maximising economic benefits are the core values, appreciated recently by Greenpeace, which asked Opendesk to find a series of makers that would ideally be within a bicycle ride from their Islington HQ in London. We connected Factory Settings in Leyton and Wooden Horse in Hackney Central." Refitting an open-plan area of 10,000 square metres, and showcasing variable and adapted desks and storage systems, Opendesk is continuing to work closely with Greenpeace. By the end of 2015 it plans to upgrade the next floor of the building.

opendesk.cc



ÉLOI CHAFAÏ AND JEAN-FRANÇOIS DINGJIAN

Designers and Founders of Normal Studio

Normal Studio industrial design office has side-stepped conventional norms and behavioural patterns to propose a non-standardised approach to comfort that suits traditional as well as contemporary offices. "We have imagined a habitat fitted out with four simple comfort-improving pieces that enact mini-strategies capable of producing a complement: energy exchange, temperature modulation, noise absorption, and transmission of and access to online information sources. These work in perfect symbiosis with the physical and cultural milieu, and with the ambient climate." The four prototypes developed for the Atmosphères project integrate existing typologies (wall vent, mirror, storage unit, lamp) through design, bringing new capabilities and offering new qualities and functions.

"The project includes a non-structural air-cooling component for the façade, in the form of a large, extruded clay brick called Refresher (1). It works through the evaporation of water: sun and wind activate its porous body, creating an exchange of heat between outside and inside. This is a low-tech alternative to the mechanical air-conditioning units that eat up energy and aggravate global warming." As well as that, there is Muffler (2), a device for improving acoustic comfort that doubles as a storage unit; Captor (3), in which organic photovoltaic cells printed onto glass plates absorb all types of light (natural or artificial, direct or indirect) and produce enough current to recharge micro-utilities like mobile phones, notebooks, etc. or even small electrical appliances; and Diffuser (4), a LiFi lamp that transmits numerical data through light (rather than through potentially harmful electromagnetic waves). "It's a lamp that also serves to relay and localise information, modulating the principle of access to information any time, any place."

normalstudio.fr / via.fr



RETRO

How to bring back the authenticity of industrial culture into our digital offices? By creating a strong contrast and an interesting balance between today's office norms and the allure of the great classics, allowing terms like 'vintage' and 'second-hand' to be part of the play. Offices are seen sporting identity and history, filled with objects that are meaningful to them and their branch of business.



ECKART MAISE

Chief Design Officer at Vitra

In late-2014 Vitra presented the Prouvé RAW Office Edition. Following the success of the Prouvé RAW crossover project between Vitra and G-Star RAW in 2011, the partnership continued with the development, producing this second collection: a series of furniture pieces and lighting originally designed by Jean Prouvé in the 1940s for the offices of major French industrial companies. Prouvé's constructive logic and strict utilisation of honest industrial materials not only corresponds to the product philosophy of G-Star but also exhibits a strong affinity with the architecture of the brand's new headquarters, built in 2014 by architect Rem Koolhaas. Thus, it was only sensible to furnish the offices of the new building with designs originally created by Jean Prouvé some 70 years ago. But how did the fashion brand happen to fit into the Vitra design process? Eckart Maise revealed some clues. "Vitra and G-Star share a passion for Prouvé's designs. It is a collaboration based on content; the discussions are entirely about understanding Prouvé's work and about how to give it a contemporary expression. The marketing and co-branding aspects were secondary, even though they were important during the project's roll-out. The desks and chairs were designed decades ago, but they still meet the modern needs of office environments in terms of functionality. In addition, they are unique in terms of their aesthetics and cultural value. The Prouvé pieces bring the authenticity of industrial culture back into our digital offices once again, creating a strong contrast and an interesting balance at the same time." The collaboration offers some rare insights into the merging of two creative teams and a family heritage: "The creative team at G-Star Raw are huge fans of Jean Prouvé's furniture, they have a detailed knowledge of his works. This seriousness is paired with an open-minded creative approach. As a third partner, Jean Prouvé's family took part in the project. Together, we decided early-on to leave the construction and materials as close as possible to the original. We only made slight changes in order to meet today's office norms. The main work was on the colours, finishes, and details."

vitra.com
g-star.com
Portrait, photo: Bettina Matthiessen, © Vitra



LUCIE KOLDOVÁ

Designer

Czech lighting and furniture designer Lucie Koldová, now based in Paris, presented a writing desk this past spring called Sheets, which exhibits a classically pristine look. "This writing desk reminds one of the blank sheets of paper waiting for the first sentences to fill their lines. Elegant proportions, with gentle curves and an attractive combination of boldly coloured legs and wooden surfaces, defines the look. Two softly-shaped composite sheets of veneered plywood, the upper plane levitating above the larger one, create enough space between them for storing necessities such as pens, a laptop, or a keyboard. It seems as though the table was designed for the writing of love correspondences or for the exchange of exciting electronic conversation, but it can equally well serve as a dressing table in a lady's boudoir..."

luciekoldova.com



HAY

Iskos-Berlin

Soft Edge, the chair series designed by Iskos-Berlin for Hay in 2015, represents the next step in the development of the moulded plywood technique. Using regular veneers, it provides significantly bigger double curvature in order to obtain three-dimensionality, which is unusual for ordinary moulded plywood. "In a way, Soft Edge is a kind of a hybrid between the Gubi chair's sculptural form and the democratic rationality of Børge Mogensen's chairs", say the designers at Iskos-Berlin.

iskos-berlin.dk
hay.dk

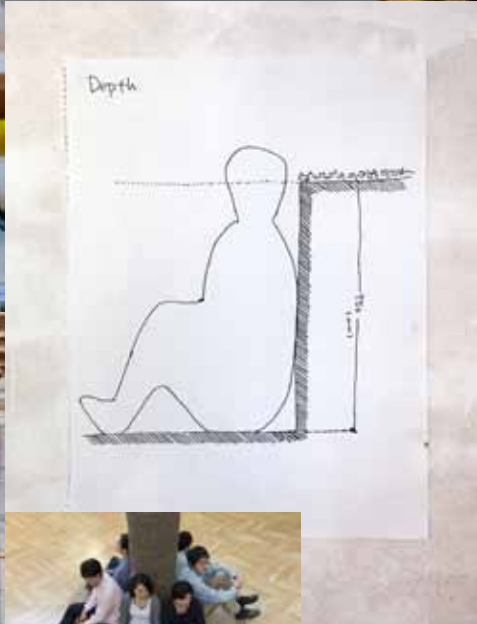


WE DO WOOD

We Do Wood has introduced **Field Desk**, a flexible home office workstation designed to occupy a minimal amount of space while still allowing for the storage of office essentials such as laptops and magazines. The table can easily be disassembled when required, due to specially designed brackets.

wedowood.dk





ALEXANDER SCHÄRER

CEO of USM



To celebrate 50 years of USM Modular Furniture, the Swiss company has launched project50, an initiative that aims to encourage a new generation of creators from various countries to explore the concept of modularity. At the core of the project is the concept: rethink the modular. Students of architecture and design from seven international universities find answers to the question: What does modularity mean today? As Alexander Schärer explains: “The basic idea behind project50 isn’t about looking to the past and patting ourselves on the back, but quite clearly about the future. The tagline ‘since 1965’ is not important. What matters are the next 50 years, especially as we’re so convinced that our product has a promising future. That’s why we invited lecturers, students, and curators to a workshop at the Domaine de Boisbuchet last September, people who are concerned with the future of design.” For this purpose, the campuses of ECAL Lausanne, Politecnico di Milano, HfG Karlsruhe, Tokyo Institute of Technology, and ENSCI Paris received some 50 pieces of the collection distributed in elevators and other unlikely places, clad with stickers that invited the students to take them home. How did future designers perceive the iconic Modular collection by USM? Would the students even like the furniture? “The product is very easy to understand. You can immediately see how it works and that it can be adapted and added to. Despite this modularity, it’s very durable, both visually and physically. Visually, because there’s nothing pretentious about it, and physically, because it’s built for longevity. Let me take the ‘rethink the modular’ workshop as an example: the design students played with the linking-components, the ball joints and the tubes. They were thrilled at how extremely precisely everything links together and becomes a cohesive whole – and that kind of mobility and flexibility are precisely what modularity means to me.”

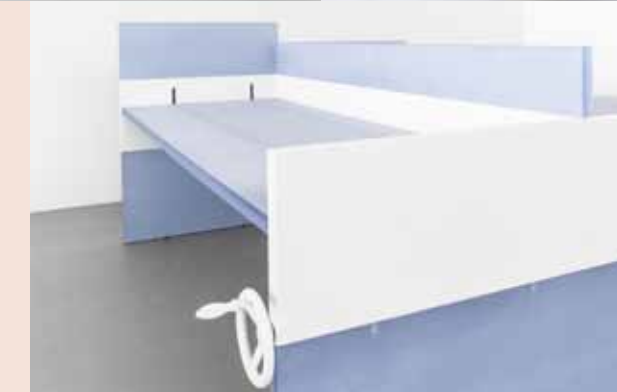
ch.usm.com
boisbuchet.org

NINA GRAZIOSI

Designer for Lensvelt

This year Lensvelt presented a system of adjustable desks called UNM (You and Me), devised in various materials by Italian/Dutch designer Nina Graziosi. However exclusive the desks might appear, they meet every standard and regulation, and their height can be adjusted using a wheel whose technical elements are hidden in the central panel. UNM has been developed to push the boundaries of office interiors into a more luxurious and stylish panorama. As the designer explains, “This project was born from a very frustrating moment last year. I was meant to work on the interior design of certain offices, and I kept coming across the same elements, adjustable desks that were either too technical or merely functional, or systems that had already existed for decades. All with height-adjustable legs. Together with Lensvelt, we imagined a different solution for changing the height, such that the movement is contained in the horizontal element, allowing the architect or designer to select another material for the lower panels. Choices range from stainless steel, copper, Plexiglas, marble, glass... There have so far never been glass legs in office environments.” Some 100 desks from the UNM collection by Lensvelt are on display in the head office in Amsterdam.

graziosi-progetti.nl



HANS LENSVELT

CEO of Lensvelt

When the CEO of Lensvelt talks about his role in the world of interior design, he promptly serves up a culinary comparison: “Just like a cook wants the best ingredients for a meal, I want to supply the best ingredients for the interiors of office buildings, theatres, hotels, schools, restaurants... And just like having my own side of the bed or my own place at the table, I don’t believe in flexible workplaces in the office where you can sit somewhere else all the time. That’s not what people want.” Still, a lot has improved in office interiors over the last couple of years, he realises: “Let’s not forget that 10 years ago we were still working in little cells. It’s now more about communication, planning, and making presentations together. And that’s best done in a pleasant environment.”

Inspired by the steel office furniture with which Lensvelt started off at his father’s office furniture company, an ingenious concept by Edward van Vliet was presented this year: Album Armarium. The filing cabinet has been transformed into a unique storage unit, a cabinet of curiosities that lends a totally different look to workspaces. Lensvelt explains, “Edward van Vliet was invited to be one of the top curators of Salon Residence at the Singer Museum in Laren (Netherlands). His task was to turn a historical room into a very special office. The basis for the interior was this same filing cabinet he designed for Lensvelt, but then made out of glass. He wanted to turn it into a cabinet full of beautiful objects. According to van Vliet, every office should have such a cabinet, filled with objects that are meaningful for their job and their line of business. Because it’s beautiful, and it can also make people aware of the beauty of their profession.”

lensvelt.nl
edwardvanvliet.com
singerlaren.nl



FAIRPHONE

Studio Yvonne Modderman

The Amsterdam head office of smartphone manufacturer **Fairphone** was created in 2015 by Studio Yvonne Modderman in collaboration with MDID. Located in a former industrial building, the interior is informed by the same sustainable design principles the company applies to its products (Android devices from ethically sourced materials). It comprises an open-plan, transparent space that emphasises reclaimed and environmentally friendly materials. Here, mismatched second-hand or vintage furniture pieces are arranged to form small living rooms.

thomas-porzellan.de
officeforproductdesign.com



ON THE MOVE

Offices of the future are changing landscapes, unfettered by convention. They are evolving spaces that perpetuate an endless stream of new ideas. Spending every day at a desk increases one's exposure to a slew of health issues, from heart disease to cancer, diabetes, and obesity, according to researchers from Sweden, Australia, and the UK. "Walking helps keep worries and anxieties at bay," states Luca Gianotti, author of *The Art of Walking – Practical advice for setting off on the right foot, "and reconciles mind and body."* And, as Wu Ming 2 says, "The art of walking is a visual art that confers the ability to look at the world differently."



RIANNE MAKKINK AND JURGEN BEY

Designers and Founders of Studio Makkink & Bey

In recent years, Studio Makkink & Bey has been increasingly focused on interiors. "We often develop special products for certain interiors, which are subsequently launched on the market", explains Jurgen Bey. For instance, the studio has been handling the interior design of the Municipal Offices in Rotterdam, a building designed by OMA. "In today's working environment, people are always busy going somewhere. As a result, the lift lobby in an office building is no longer a tedious waiting area but an ideal place to meet people." Together with GROUP A and Roukens + Van Gils, Studio Makkink & Bey designed the interiors of the 33-storey City of Rotterdam Municipal Offices. The emphasis here lies on the idea of always being busy going somewhere, which is in line with the New Way to Work: "What if waiting becomes less tedious because it is turned into meeting?" A striking example of this is the situation with the lift lobbies, which, covering a total floor area of 3,500 square metres, were transformed from waiting areas into meeting areas by adding standing-and-sitting furniture and colourful floors. Rotterdam had originally been designed as a 'vertical city'. The workplaces, indicated as 'districts' within a city, are interconnected by means of 'urban junctions'. The public rooms are the 'parks' and 'squares' — informal meeting places where people can relax, meet, and catch up.

studiomakkinkbey.nl
Portrait photo: Roel van Tour

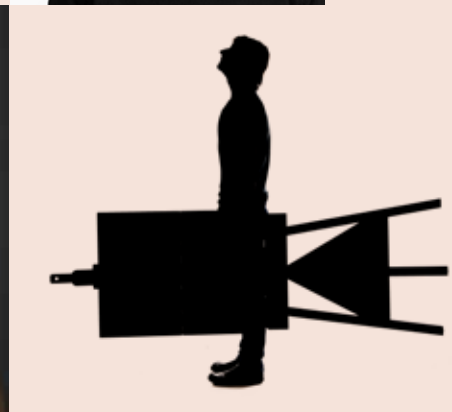


PAOLA LENTI

Francesco Rota

Build was designed by Francesco Rota for Paola Lenti. The panels are conceived to divide and equip interior spaces. Covered with Brio fabric, they can be fixed to the wall or used to create self-bearing compositions. The panels are available in different heights, with the possibility of adding wooden shelves in a natural finish or iron-grey colour, or they can become wooden cabinets with fabric-covered doors.

paolalenti.it
francescorota.com

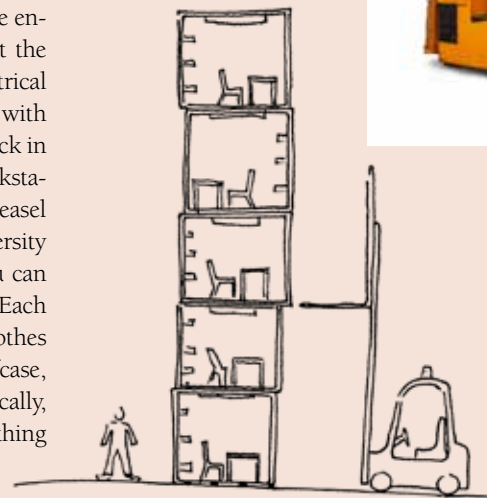


LORENZO DAMIANI

Designer

Italian designer Lorenzo Damiani has created and directly manufactured an office that is literally mobile. "The Flying Office is a mobile office, a flying one. This project renews the traditional concept of the workplace as a static place, occupying a corner often isolated from the rest. With Flying Office, the office 'flies' — it is lifted off the ground to be transported, moving in space not only horizontally but also vertically. The project is based on the pallet module: a crude wooden pallet turns into an office. Eight axes define an open cube, without walls, able to continuously modify its relationship with the environment. Despite this ease, nothing is missing at the functional level: the lighting system and the electrical outlet, the comfortable desk, the chair — equipped with pillows, and shelves for documents and objects." Back in 2010, Damiani also created a kind of portable workstation. Called the Iulmino, that one was based on an easel and devised for use by 33 students at IULM University in collaboration with the Triennale di Milano. "You can use it while standing or sitting at different heights. Each configuration includes a table top, pen holder, clothes hanger, and a supplementary holder for a bag, briefcase, computer, etc. Also, the table top, if turned vertically, becomes a tool for presentations." And the entire thing can be closed to save space!

lorenzodamiani.net



STRING®

String® Works is a pioneering series of ergonomic office furniture elements that are fully functional, flexible, friendly, and visually appealing. Designed by Swedish-duo Anna von Schewen and Björn Dahlström, the range includes a detached shelf in the style of the iconic String® system, and a height-adjustable desk, which forms the core of the series. Presented at imm cologne 2015, String Works has been nominated for the German Design Award 2016.

string.se
annavonschewen.se
dahlstromdesign.se



ELISABETH SLUNGE

Brand/Range/Design Director at Kinnarps

Contemporary smart offices are based on more free and interactive movement: the Capella chair by Kinnarps subscribes to this trend, as Elisabeth Slunge confirms: "In today's activity-based offices, we move around and choose the best workspace for each activity during the day. A task chair can be used by different persons at different times. We have therefore developed a chair that is very easy to adapt to individual needs, with simple setting controls. Every user has an individual need for active sitting." Does this also mean that the chair can provide the user with a healthier life at work? "The best sitting position is always the next position. The body needs movement to ensure well being. The Capella chair is based on a new mechanism called FreeMotion™, an entirely new system in which balanced micro-movements in the seat create tiny adjustments but without the chair feeling unsteady. It has been developed according the principal that sitting down is not about sitting still, which is why the chair encourages the body to move while seated."

At the heart of Capella is the newly-developed and innovative FreeMotion™ patent-pending mechanism, which promotes active sitting through mini, smart, micro-movements. The chair has also been fitted with Kinnarps's next-generation FreeFloat™ system, whereby the seat and back move independently of each other, following the natural movements of the user. Capella was created by Johan Larsson at Idesign, a Stockholm-based practice that has extensive experience in designing for work environments. Johan Larsson has collaborated with Kinnarps for many years, resulting in several highly successful, ergonomic chairs. Capella is available in various editions, with sleek white, polished, or black metal details, and a graphite black or chrome frame. In addition, the seat can be upholstered in any of the fabrics from Kinnarps's large collection. A task chair to suit one's own personal style.

kinnarps.com

PEDRALI

The **Arki-Table** family comes in various configurations, each with a 6mm thick, solid laminate top, an extruded aluminium frame, and steel trestle legs. The high version, at 110 centimetres, is suitable as a workstation or a meeting area in office environments.

pedrali.it



MICHAEL SCHMIDT

Designer at code2design for Hawthorn

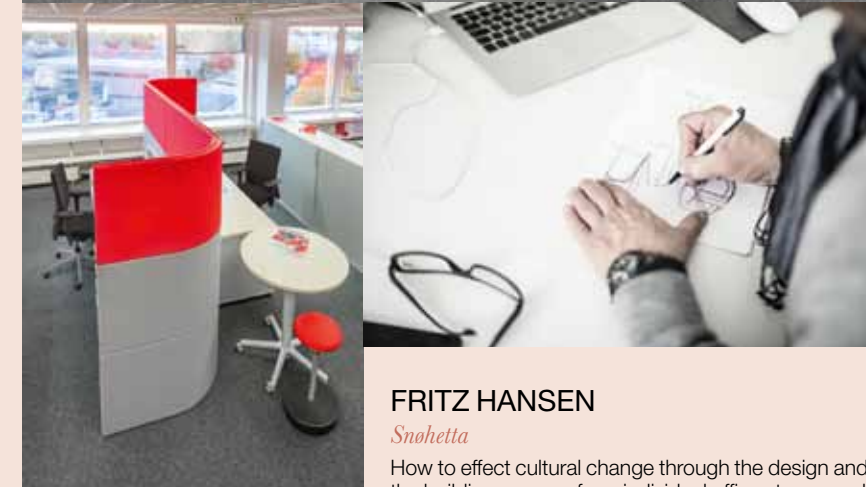
"As places where people meet and communicate, office meeting areas should fulfil two key criteria: communication should be a pleasant experience, and the meeting environment must be appealing, comfortable, and cosy. Thus, we were inspired to create self-supporting partitions and coherent, flowing landscapes with excellent acoustics, maximum unbroken wall surfaces, and minimal visible supports. The result is an innovative solution with unique acoustic and design qualities. The interior of each wall is made of a patented, lightweight, flame-resistant material that is 100% recyclable", Schmidt says, explaining the details of the interior design project for Kreissparkasse Köln. For this, Hawthorn developed a streamlined open plan that promotes communication and provides flexible spaces for a variety of tasks. The challenge was to accommodate a wide range of different work modes with often contrasting needs, such as privacy and discretion on the one hand, and open and friendly spaces on the other. Customer service areas and consultation booths were equipped with Hexagon desks and Comforto 59 swivel chairs, complemented by casual LTB and MeetYou lounge elements.

code2design.de
hawthorn.com

ESTEL

Evo Sit-Stand is the newest product by Italian company Estel. A desk that responds to today's ergonomic essentials: alternating between the two postures of sitting and standing has been proven the best way of working at a desk, as it promotes focus, concentration, and well being.

estel.com



FRITZ HANSEN

Snohetta

How to effect cultural change through the design and layout of the building: a move from individual offices to open plan offices, free seating, and zone-based work spaces. Deloitte Office Building, Oslo, Norway
Architects: Snohetta / Interior Architects: IARK
fritz-hansen.com
snohetta.com / iark.no



SOUNDASTIC

Acoustic elements for the office have undergone a radical conversion. From their historic role as purely functional structures with an aesthetic twist, they now serve as a major vector in the entire interior-design identity of the workspace. With materials having greatly evolved and a broader variety therefore becoming available, sound-absorbing panels can boast the characteristics of movability, sustainability, and even appeal.

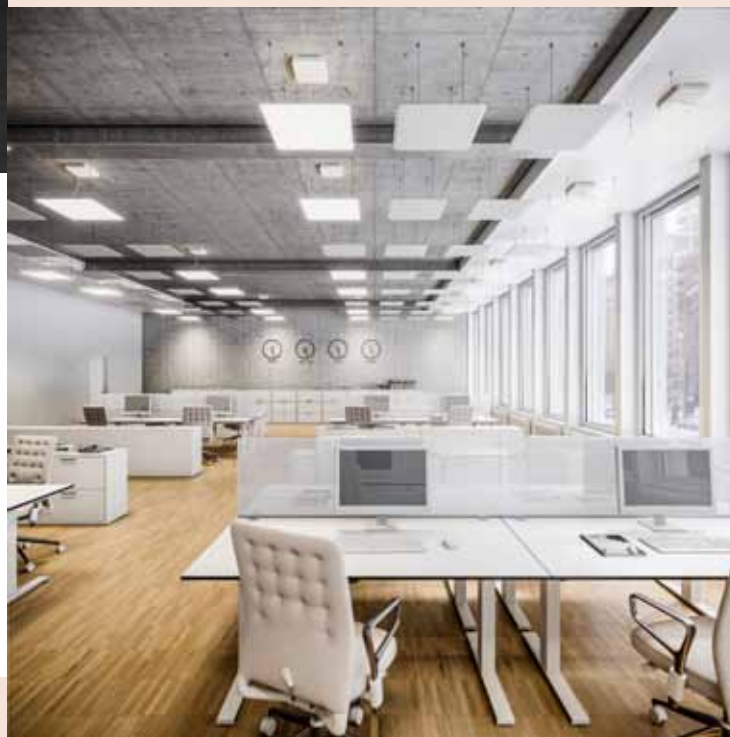


DIETRICH F. BRENNENSTUHL

CEO of Nimbus Group

The Nimbus Group, based in Stuttgart, has developed an acoustically effective ceiling and wall system: Rossoacoustic PAD. It consists of lightweight, visually appealing sound absorbers in the highest sound absorption class, which can also be combined with Nimbus LED luminaires. The result is a palpable improvement in acoustic comfort and a harmonious work environment. As Dietrich Brennenstuhl explains: "Light meets acoustics: this motto stands for the coming together of the Nimbus (lighting) and Rosso (acoustics) brands in high-quality architectural settings, in particular, modern open-plan offices. The Rossoacoustic PAD system opens up a great many design options that create a homogenous look on any ceiling, whether freely arranged or positioned in a strict pattern. Moreover, the elements can be used to accentuate specific zones in a room, as well as to create individual spaces with the six available natural colours."

nimbus-group.com
rosso-acoustic.com

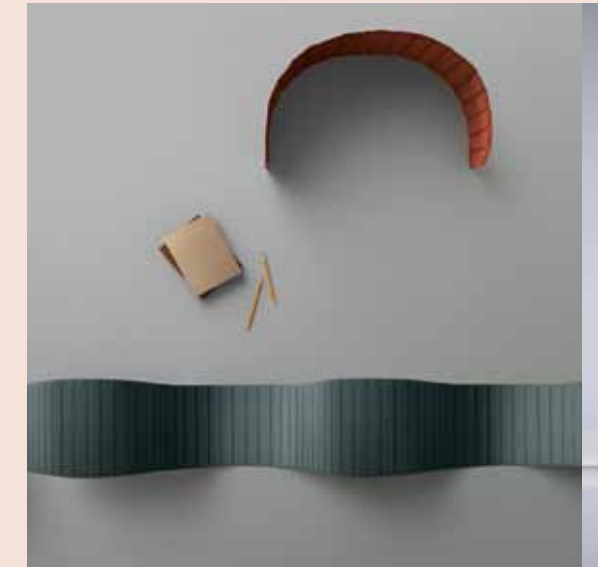


JONAS PETTERSSON, JOHN LÖFGREN AND PETRUS PALMÉR

Designers and Founders of Form Us With Love

Baux Acoustic Panels & Tiles is a joint venture between entrepreneurs Johan Ronnestam and Fredrik Franzon, and the founding partners of design studio Form Us With Love: Jonas Pettersson, John Löfgren and Petrus Palmér. "Baux aspires to bring the calm tranquility and beauty of the forest into large urban spaces. We live in Sweden, which makes the forest a classic environment for us to access in order to get some quiet time. The wood wool from spruce trees that grow in these forests is bonded with cement in the factory to create environmentally friendly elements with excellent acoustic properties, including marvellous natural insulation. Both the panels and the tiles have the ability to rejuvenate spaces with transformational designs." Swedish architects Codesign soundproofed the newly remodelled Grilliska gymnasiet in Stockholm using Baux tiles and panels of different shapes and colours on all three floors of the building.

formuswithlove.se
baux.se
codesign.se



ZILENZIO

Focus, an intimate product within ZilenZio's collection, is a space-dividing textile screen for mounting on the desktop to help define one's personal sphere. Note Design Studio, which devised the screen, wanted to provide a means for people to create their own personal space within a shared environment.

zilenzio.se
notedesignstudio.se





STEVE SYMONS

CEO of BuzziSpace

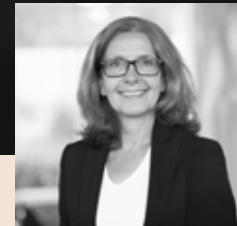
Young Belgian brand BuzziSpace and family-run Danish fabric firm Kvadrat joined forces at Maison&Objet in Paris and at 100% Design in London, where they launched the first range of BuzziSpace furniture upholstered with Kvadrat fabrics. “A major project has brought us together”, as Steve Symons puts it. “We are active in the same market, and although interior designers regularly ask us to get together, we’ve never done so... Up until now, we have upholstered our designs with our own fabrics, such as the signature material BuzziFelt, with its high sound absorbency. But there are three factors that have brought our two businesses together: sustainability, quality, and international ambitions. Kvadrat is the number one premium fabric brand in the sector. We would not enter into a commitment like this with just anyone, but with Kvadrat it is almost inevitable. Great minds think alike. We have the same principles in terms of sustainability and quality, and we think along absolutely the same lines.”

buzzispace.com
kvadrat.dk
BuzziScreen

RCKA

In 2015, London architecture practice RCKa completed **Acoustitch**, one of two winning designs in the Ground Floor Project competition organised by The Crown Estate in partnership with The Architecture Foundation. RCKa worked with East London-based suppliers Cutfoam to devise a high-quality, cost effective way to fabricate the artwork, which is constructed from 789 pieces of high-density acoustic foam cut into triangular forms. Taking their cue from traditional woven fabric swatches, the triangular forms are grouped and rotated to form a homogenic texture and pattern, to maximum visual effect.

rcka.co
cutfoam.co.uk



BEATE OBLAU

Head of Marketing and Communication

Made in Germany, all writing instruments by LAMY combine functionality and attention to personal handwriting styles. C. Josef Lamy founded the business in 1930 by purchasing the Orthos pen manufacturer, Füllfederhalter-Fabrik. LAMY's first distinctive product, LAMY 2000, was born in 1966, a direct result of the Lamy Design vocabulary that was crafted for the purpose. The fountain pen has cultivated an image of design-focused production — there is a certain mystique around its Bauhaus sensibilities. “When we write manually, we do it using all of the senses. Whether small and even, large and elaborate, straight or sloped: every person’s handwriting is unique – reason enough to give it the attention it deserves. LAMY has high-quality writing instruments that transform manual writing into a personal experience. So, for example, the LAMY 2000, LAMY dialog 3 (picture), and LAMY studio Palladium fountain pens have a 14-carat gold nib refined with platinum, guaranteeing a uniquely smooth writing experience. The body of the LAMY scala is made completely of stainless steel and has a sophisticated titanium, matte black, or brushed black finish, depending on the model.”

lamy.com

ARCHIVIA

Architecture at your desk: **Archivia** describes a collection of notebooks, bags, and other accessories that speak of architecture and design in reference to the city. At the core of the project is the story of the city’s identity and its excellences, with each element represented by an original drawing or sketch made by a designer or architect, such as Michele De Lucchi, Franco Albini, Piero Portaluppi, ...

archivia.it



ACCESSORIES

Accessories, on the desktop and/or the office shelves, provide us with an affectionate and personal atmosphere without our having to move away from the collective space. Boost these with items from the most edgy design collections, and see how that works for your office reputation.

STEFANO SELETTI

Art director and Owner of Seletti

“These days, there is less and less division between the workspace and the home. Seletti has this new trend very well in mind: our approach is to offer products that combine function with a fun and ironic look. The office is one of the places where people spend most of their day, so it is only fair that they be surrounded by objects that are not only useful but that create a pleasant environment. When we ask our designers to think about an object, any object, our idea is to create something that helps people make their lives more comfortable, at an affordable price; plus, we create objects that can be adapted to different kinds of furniture and different tastes. In this way, every house and every office can have a playful and unexpected side.” During recent years, the Italian company has presented various products dedicated to the office desk. To name a few: Suburbia by Note Design Studio, Inception by Luca Nichetto, Le Morandiane by Elena Salmistraro (2), Deskstructure by Hector Serrano, Memento by Alessandro Zambelli, and Still Alive by Antonio Ricò (1).

seletti.it



1

DELPHONICS

Delfonics is a premier stationer, showcasing a range of refined, eye-catching products designed for functionality and practicality. Recently, the Japanese brand has introduced two new collections of desktop accessories. One of these is by one of the 20th century’s iconic designers: Ettore Sottsass. The Italian architect and designer became known through numerous architectural projects, as well as through the creation of furniture and decorative and functional objects. These accessories consist of a pen and small storage bins (image below). The second collection, Formwork, is by Herman Miller, who was always surrounded by legendary designers such as George Nelson and Charles and Ray Eames. It comprises of stackable desktop storage items.

delfonics.com



2

CAIMI

Alessandro and Francesco Mendini

The two products **Diesis** and **Bemolle**, by Alessandro and Francesco Mendini, constitute a new phenomenon in environmental acoustic design. Mounted on shiny black steel self-supporting structures, the composition of these sound-absorbent panels is based on the brand new Snowsound-Fiber technology. This consists of soft polyester fibres with silver ions, intrinsically fire-resistant and bacteriostatic. The curved or cylindrical shapes of the panels are based on precise ratios and measurements that relate to the precise layers of fibre. The visual softness of the components gives them something in common with the delicacy of textile furnishings and, as a result, also makes them suitable for use in classic environments where rigid shapes cannot be introduced.

caimi.com
ateliermendini.it

