

*Products &
Directions of
Work 2017*

elementa

Oslo

If 2016 made anything clear, it must be that we have all entered territory - economically, politically, artistically and existentially - that we don't have the language to deal with. It seems like the bandwidth of our thinking is unable to grasp the complex dynamics of our evolving world, even in a field like interior design.

Elementa's collection of 2017 shows both a notion of curiosity and the desire to just breathe and take in where we are at. This is reflected soberly in our Generics collection of essentialist hardware for the workspace.^(p. 4-11.) Our UT collection is about renewing our relationship with nature by design.^(p. 2-3)

Being intrigued about the state of reality, we have started a collaboration with surrealist art group ^O^. In the attached insert you can peak into their emerging Molecular Ballet of symbols and meanings, which we are taking into our core as a creative operating system.

The INN collection is a yet unrealized dream of approaching the world of patterns with new eyes and hands.^(p. 13)

We deeply admire the refined esthetics of Swedish brand Massproductions, and we are happy to offer their furniture as part of the Elementa collection in Norway.^(p. 12)

The last year we have started a series of conversations with designers and forward thinkers in the Elementa Blog, including Runa Klock, Kneip, Nils Faarlund and Jens Dyvik.^(p. 14-15)





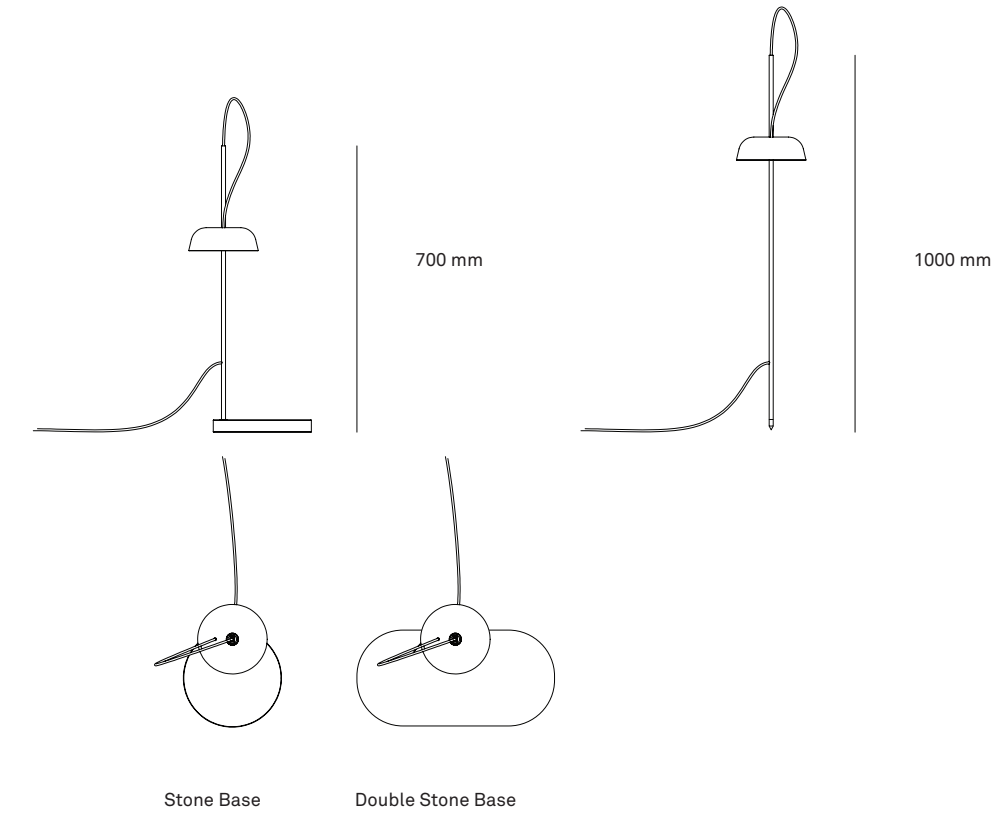
Directions

Elementa UT

UT means OUT in the languages of Scandinavia, where the impulse to spend time in nature is a major cultural activity.

With the Elementa UT series we aim to explore new strategies of cultivating respect and curiosity of nature through design – indoors and outdoors.

KI Light options

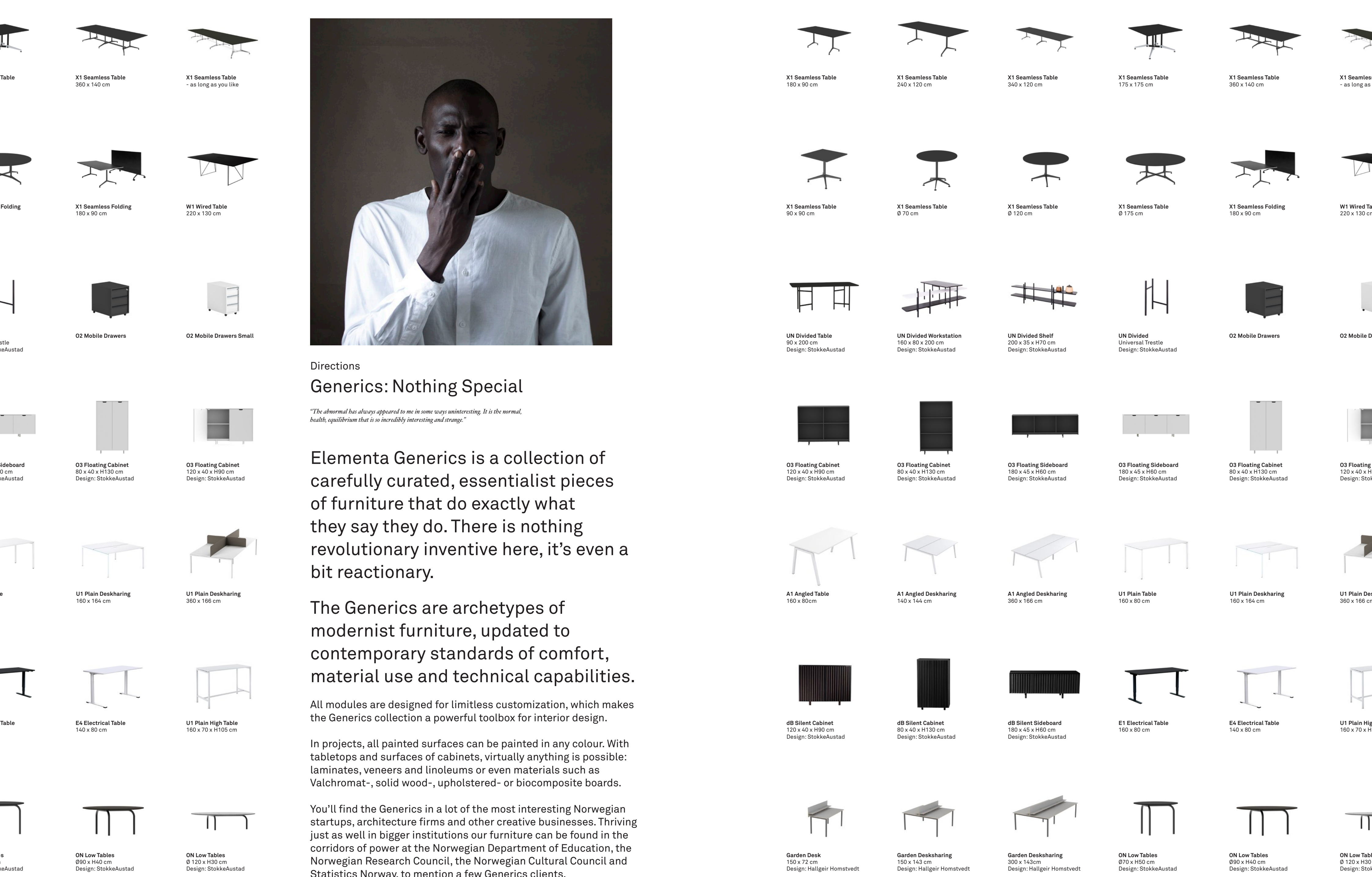


The KI light by Hallgeir Homstvedt is a minimalist lamp intended to give some extra love and nurturing light to your plants during the dark seasons. In the same time it transforms your plant into an interior object never seen before. A botanical light.

Available in 4 anodized aluminium finishes, the KI light can be plunged directly into the soil, or mounted on an elegant stone base.

KI lights by Hallgeir Homstvedt along with the UR watering can, the first proposal in a set of urban gardening tools by Norwegian design duo Kneip.





Directions

Generics: Nothing Special

"The abnormal has always appeared to me in some ways uninteresting. It is the normal, health, equilibrium that is so incredibly interesting and strange."

Elementa Generics is a collection of carefully curated, essentialist pieces of furniture that do exactly what they say they do. There is nothing revolutionary inventive here, it's even a bit reactionary.

The Generics are archetypes of modernist furniture, updated to contemporary standards of comfort, material use and technical capabilities.

All modules are designed for limitless customization, which makes the Generics collection a powerful toolbox for interior design.

In projects, all painted surfaces can be painted in any colour. With tabletops and surfaces of cabinets, virtually anything is possible: laminates, veneers and linoleums or even materials such as Valchromat-, solid wood-, upholstered- or biocomposite boards.

You'll find the Generics in a lot of the most interesting Norwegian startups, architecture firms and other creative businesses. Thriving just as well in bigger institutions our furniture can be found in the corridors of power at the Norwegian Department of Education, the Norwegian Research Council, the Norwegian Cultural Council and Statistics Norway, to mention a few Generics clients.



Generics

UN Divided Trestle System

Designed by StokkeAustad

The UN Divided system is based on a simple trestle unit in steel, with a moving joint. With one module you can support almost any type of table top size and shape to build tables, shelving and complete office landscapes.

«Knowledge workers of today do not need loads of closed storage or complicated cable management. Simple, functional and adaptable solutions with clean surfaces is the way forward, we feel», says designer Jonas Stokke of StokkeAustad.

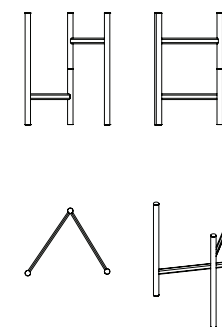
The system allows for quick assembly and re-configuration as needs change. Out of the natural placement of the base grows a series of elegant furniture pieces. The graphical character of the design allows for subtle architectural definition with minimal means.

«Starting out to make a one-size table base solution, we explored a new take on the classic trestle base. Playing around with the module, it turned out to carry a lot of interesting possibilities, resulting in a diversified furniture system with a distinctive form language.»

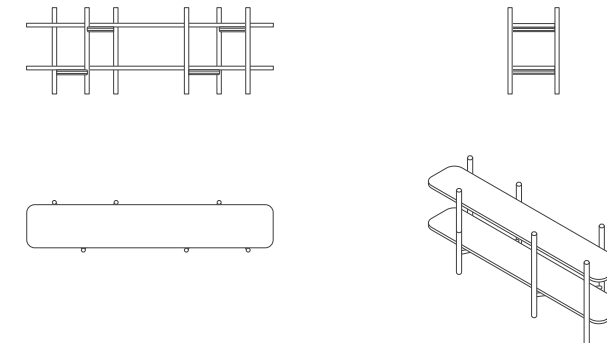


The UN Divided series is delivered as complete products – desks, tables and shelves, but you can also buy the trestles and tops separately to hack and configure your own furniture pieces.

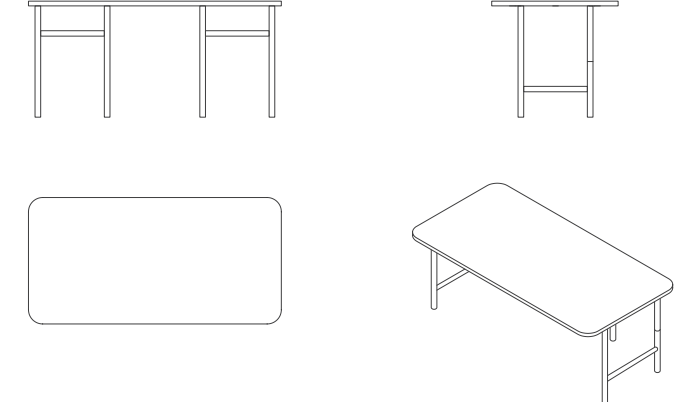
UN Divided
universal trestles



UN Divided
freestanding shelf



UN Divided
desks



UN Divided
meeting- and dining tables

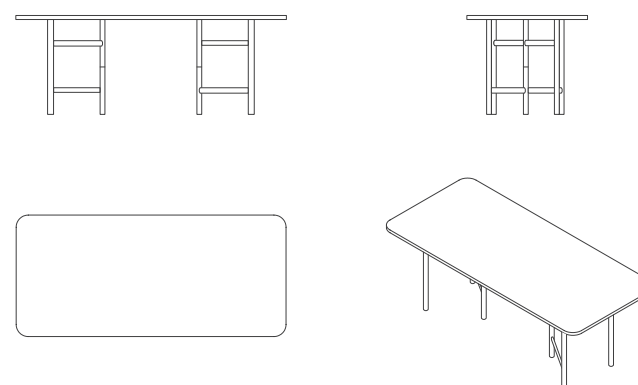
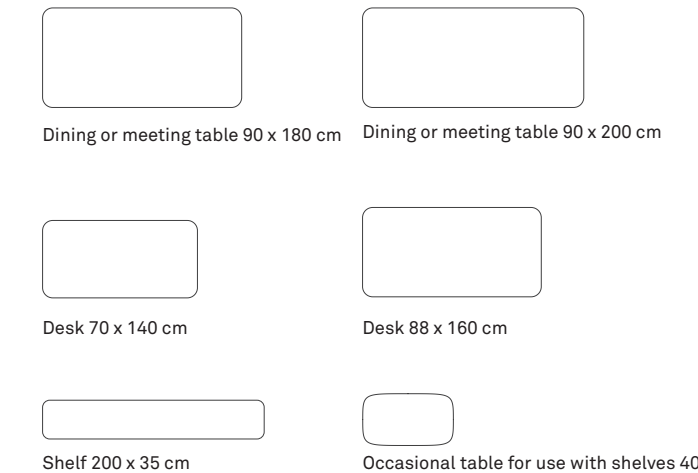


Table tops



Dining or meeting table 90 x 180 cm

Dining or meeting table 90 x 200 cm

Desk 70 x 140 cm

Desk 88 x 160 cm

Shelf 200 x 35 cm

Occasional table for use with shelves 40x70cm





Generics

H1 Exilis Shelving

Designed by We Do

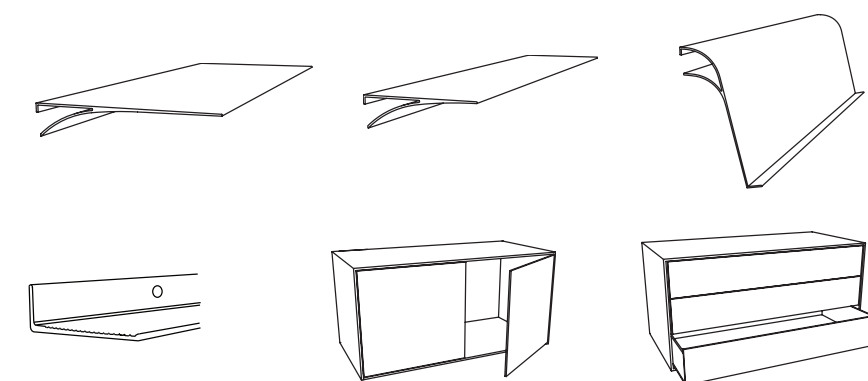
Exilis is a delicate and discreet solution for shelving, designed to avoid stealing space from the room, and to bear substantial weight. The extruded aluminium profiles measure a mere 2,5 mm and give a razor sharp and spacious look.

The shelves can be mounted directly on the wall with hidden brackets or on rails - in wall mounted, free standing or compressed systems.

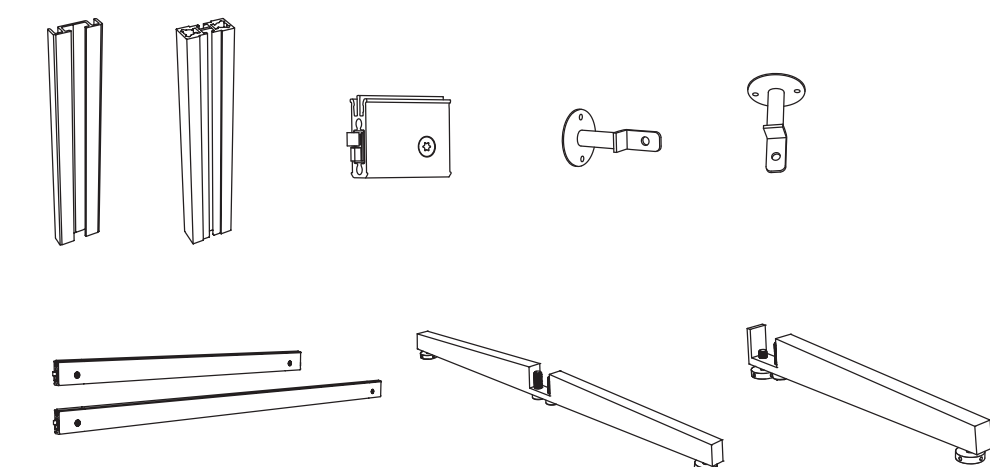
Available in several different designs, lengths and colours, it can also easily be customized and lacquered to suit special needs.

Elementa distributes Exilis in Norway as part of the Generics collection - it is manufactured by Nonuform in Sweden.

The shelves and the cabinets are the base of the Exilis system:



Combining the shelf with the system components you can build a shelf to fit every need:



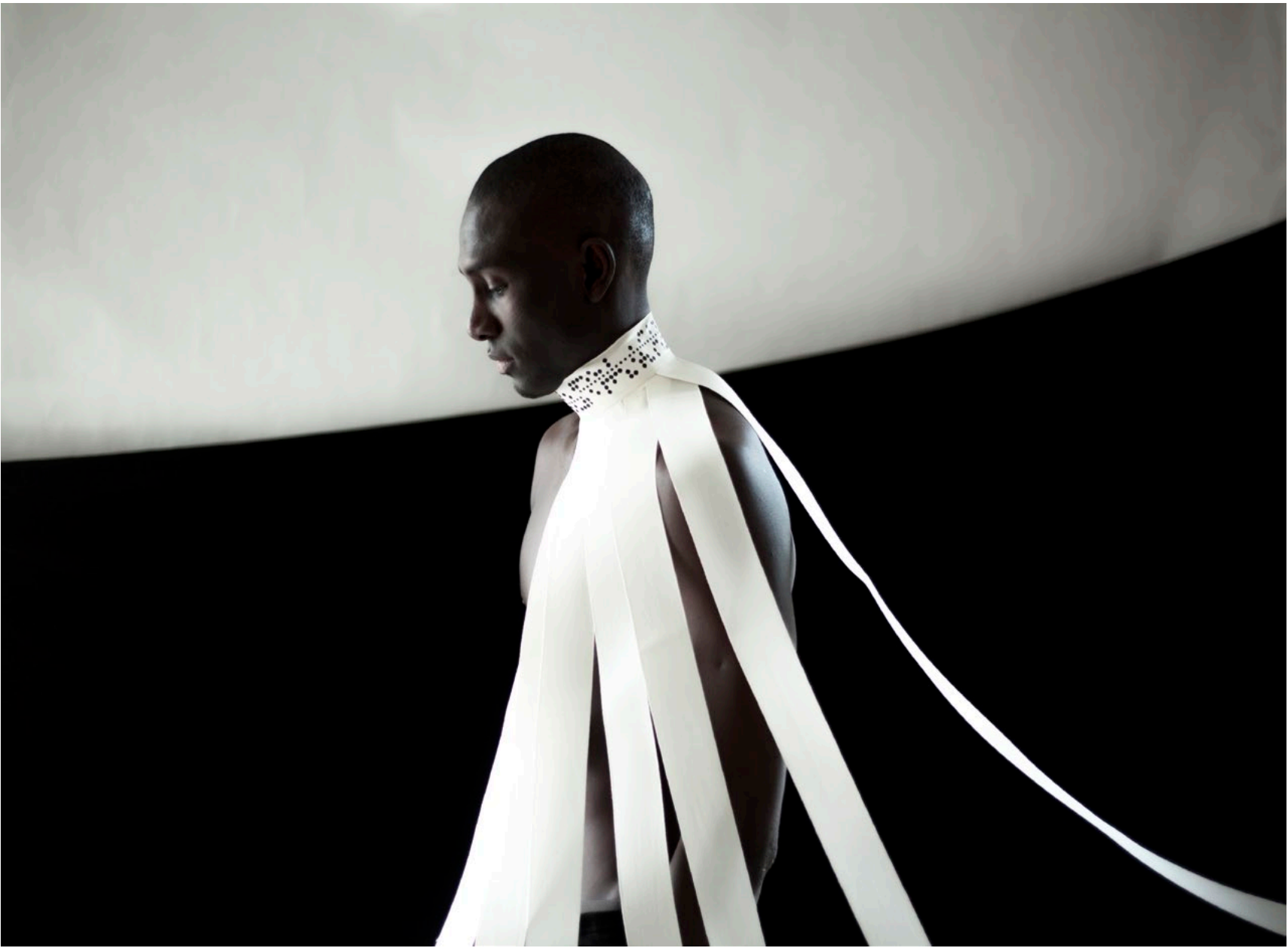
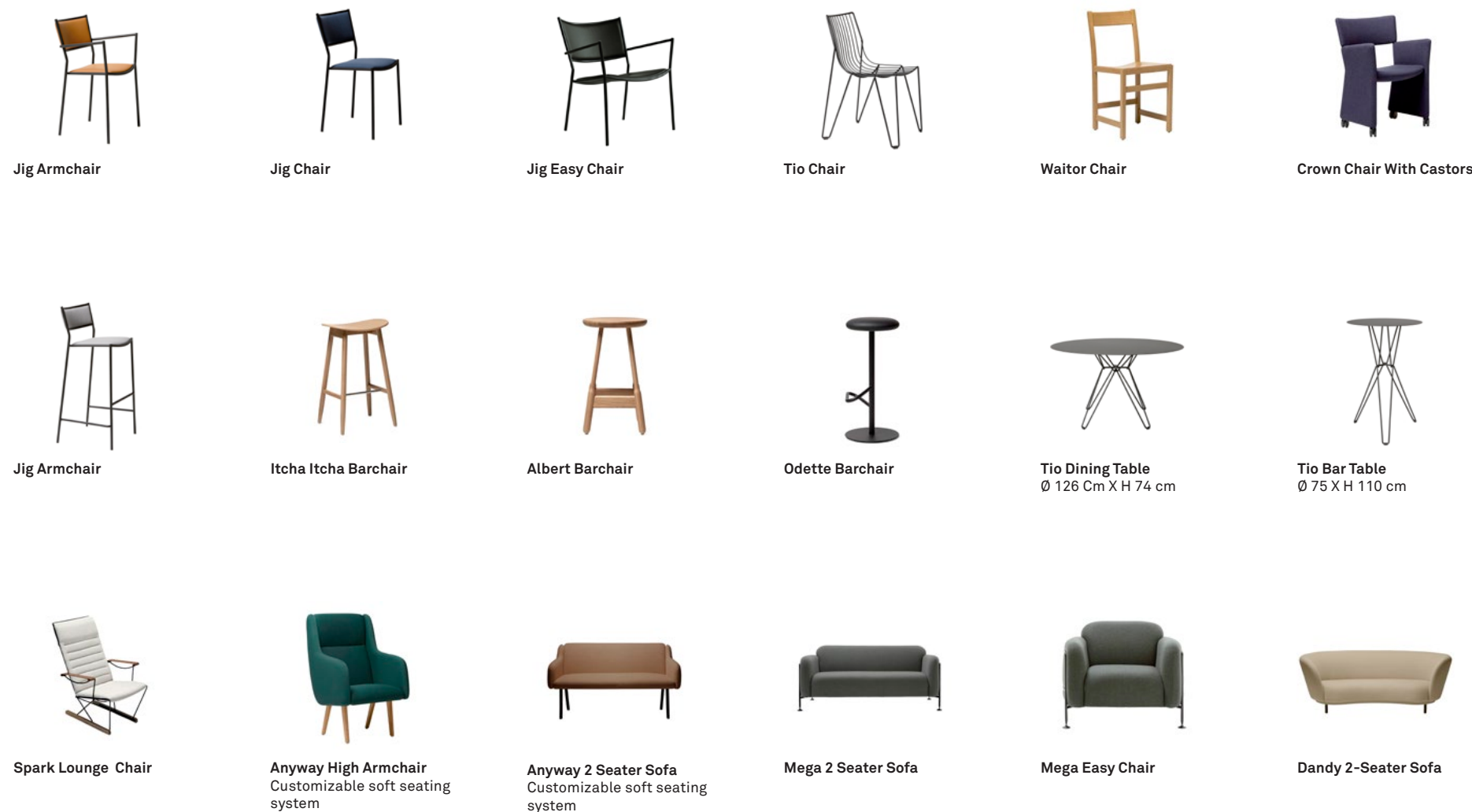
Distribution

Massproductions

Elementa is the Norwegian distributor of Massproductions, a Stockholm-based furniture company, run by experienced designers Chris Martin and Magnus Elebäck. Massproductions develop high quality, tactile furniture in a modernist spirit.

“Our knowledge and passion is in mass production, hence the name. Our goal is to use industrial processes to create furniture which people can get excited about, something that gives them pride of ownership. You can do that with a hand-crafted piece, but for us the satisfaction comes from achieving it with an industrially produced article”, say Chris Martin.

The philosophy behind Massproductions is to harness the benefits, values and quality of volume production. They believe responsible and rational mass production benefits the consumer, the factory worker and everyone in between.



Directions

Elementa INN

What are the patterns of the incredibly strange time we live in? Which invisible patterns of nature and culture can we now make visible? Can we produce never-seen-before, yet meaningful patterns by the aid of new technology? How can we use decorative patterns in everyday objects to reflect the expanding world we are living in?

Geometrical patterns appear in some of the earliest human artefacts and resonate deeply in us. Many who have had near-death experiences report sightings of fabulous patterns, and we all know them from dreamland. Patterns are

everywhere, but most of them are invisible. Learning to recognize and understand patterns is at the core of our consciousness.

With the Elementa INN project we want to explore the relationship between interior design and the interior of our minds - through the language of pattern. The first collaborations in this series are planned for presentation in Oslo the fall of 2017.

Till then, whatever path we take will lead us further INN.



Making, Living & Sharing With Jens Dyvik

Jens Dyvik is a dedicated designer and an advocate for communal workshops. For two years he has been visiting and working in more than 30 different Fab labs, makerspaces and hackerspaces around the world, while making the documentary Making Living Sharing. Now Jens is one of the forces behind Fellesverkstedet in Oslo, and an expert in digital fabrication. We went to fellesverkstedet to talk with Jens about the maker movement, and the importance of sharing your ideas and designs.

What is your background, and what made you decide to develop a makerspace?

I studied at Design Academy Eindhoven, a highly conceptual design school in the Netherlands. I established my own freelance design practice immediately after graduating in 2009. Through my design company I started to research and experiment with new business models for creativity and knowledge sharing. This led me to start a two year independent research project, where I continuously traveled as a nomad to different fab labs and makerspaces around the world. It was during these two years as a knowledge sharing nomad that I fell in love with communal workshops, realizing that I wanted to give something more to my city than just running a good design company. Luckily I learnt from my travels that you should never build a social space on your own and I've been lucky to team up with absolutely amazing hardcorees here in Oslo.

How can you sum up the philosophy of the makers movement?

For me it is about openly supporting and building upon each other's shoulders, instead of dragging each other down though negative attitudes. It's about taking part in something bigger than yourself by tapping into an internet fuelled collective global brain. And putting more soul into the stuff you make, by adding and sharing components of your creation with humanity.

Do you see makerspaces staying in the counterculture domain, or do you believe this way of thought can scale to become a mainstream phenomenon?

The idea of making stuff together, in open and informal ways, definitely has a universal appeal. But not everybody likes to make. Some people love to consume, or support those who make the stuff they love. Everybody has a relationship with music, but that doesn't mean that everybody should be musician. But similar to the way Youtube has uncovered hidden musical talent, so can happen with open workspaces and online knowledge sharing platforms for making.

How has the maker movement evolved over the past years and what is the future of designing and making things?

We are now at a point of dilution and making stuff in new ways has been embraced by such a diverse set of people and organizations that the so called maker movement fades into infrastructure background, becoming more anonymous, yet widespread. There is a lot of confusion between the general evolution of digital fabrication, and the social side of making, known as the maker movement. There is no doubt that more and more physical stuff will be produced

digitally and locally. Hopefully we can use this technology train to connect people to each other, to the machines that make stuff and to the stories of why we make things.

In your documentary you emphasize sharing your design and your process with the world. Why is this important to you?

On the rational side, it's about eliminating artificial scarcity. Instead of holding human progress back by artificially limiting who gets to learn or do what, we can openly share and support each other by making our knowledge and tools available for everyone. On the emotional side, it's about acknowledging that creativity does not come from inside you alone, but is synthesized from the thoughts and actions of millions of people through the ages. Intellectual property is a bizarre concept: Where did you get your inspiration from? Where did you learn the mechanical principles, or how to shape language behind your creation? What happens when multiple people take in input from the world, and come up with the same idea at the same time? Should only one lucky lottery winner be allowed to do business with this idea? Instead of spending resources on defensive strategies and safety fat in the value chain, I think it is better to invest in positive developments and collaborations. For me, knowledge sharing is about diversifying and multiplying your creative activity, instead of hedging your bets.

What is the biggest challenge of the maker movement?

The global trend of wealth distribution regressing back to pre 20th century levels can make it tougher for young creatives to challenge the status quo and shape their own future.

Search for Making, Living & Sharing on Youtube to learn more about the Jens Dyvik and the Makers Movement.



Weathered - sculptures by Kneip: "We began the process by exploring the theme weather and nature phenomenons. With this in mind we created a series of sculptures that explores and illustrates the force of nature. The series consists of five objects that each in different ways contains traces of elements like, degradation, humidity, wind and movement. The surfaces refer to a process where nature over time, will take control of their basic materials and return to zero."

Kneip: Stack One Thing On Another And Dip It In An Unknown Solution

While it has been suggested that era of the object is behind us, Norwegian art- and design studio Kneip are infusing their objects with meaning, beauty and a real sense of wonder. The studio is run by Stian Kortnved Ruud & Jorgen Platou Willumsen

Find below an account of our recent conversation with Stian on their work, object culture and on natural corrosion.

Where exactly are you now & how does that relate to your work as designers and artists?

In the workshop, We try to spend as much time as possible experimenting with materials and different techniques. Many of our products and projects started this way. Stack one thing on top of the other and dip it in a unknown solution.

Your products often emphasize handicraftsmanship. Do you see a new place for the artisan in the present culture?

With more and more mass production of similar stuff, I think the artisan will always have his/hers place in the word - at least to keep craft traditions alive or in collaboration with the industry. Artisans do not only make jewellery and pots anymore. I am excited to see more people working with technology and new field of expertise.

Several of your products and art pieces explore ageing and corrosion. Please share some of your thinking behind this.

Nature and natural processes has always been a great inspiration to us. By working with natural materials, mostly by hand, you get a close relationship to its structure, for instance the natural laws that have assembled the wood fibers in a log.

After a while you get the feeling of collaborating with the material in the process. The patination projects are influenced by this collaboration process. We do our part by thinking, planing and preparation and then we hand it over to nature and let it do its thing.

Communication and social media seem to be a hugely important concern for most designers today. Do you see this as an asset or a problem in the creative process?

I do not see social media as an asset in the creative process, but in the marketing and getting your products out there it's an incredibly powerful tool.

Is design turning into a sort of a visual language of ideas, more than real life solutions?

It might be, it's often hard to distinguish prototypes and concepts to real life buyable objects.

What will the workspace of the future will be like?

Hopefully just as you like it!

The Path Leads Into Nature With Nils Faarlund

Nils Faarlund is a legendary Norwegian eco-philosopher, mountaineer and a great friend of nature. We spoke to him about the Norwegian term for outdoors life, friluftsliv, natural materials and design.

How would you explain the Norwegian term friluftsliv to English speakers?

In my opinion, outdoor activities in modern societies are responses to the stress, boredom and effort for building identity caused by an urban lifestyle.

Norwegians struggling for national freedom in the 19th century found the worldview and values of The Romantic Movement appealing. The Romantics were inspired by traveling in mountain terrain – not as sportive activities, but as an encounter with free nature and the noble savages of the valleys of the Alps who were unspoiled by the industrial revolution in the European plains, leading their life in an intimate dialogue with their homeland.

In the 20th century the Norwegian tradition of encountering free nature in the mountains diversified to the woods, lakelands and the sea. Referring to the historical events of the 19th century, we can say that for 9 out of 10 Norwegians, this pastime which we enthusiastically name friluftsliv, is a way of embodying the inherent value of free nature as well as human worth and dignity.

We met for the first time during a seminar on Green Growth. Is it possible to combine nature conservation with economic growth?

If we use the term green to replace nature friendly, and understand growth as the maturation growth in - for instance a birch tree, I'm with you. Still I insist on using the term free nature to express that nature has intrinsic value.

As long as we allow limitless growth to be an ideal in the society of modernity, the adjective green is really nothing else than cosmetic camouflage. Allowing society to be ruled by the principle of quantifiable growth in the form of GNP is breaking of the tolerance limits of free nature.

It is an irrefutable fact that free nature cannot be produced. Neither can the natural condition be recycled. The idea that economic growth, as expressed globally today, is compatible with nature conservation is a deep misunderstanding. Incidentally, nature conservation is already long ago a too defensive attitude:

Nature friendliness is the way!

What is your experience of the development of the last years with regards to the use of mobile technology? Is there any path back to silence and presence from where we have come?

It looks undeniably dark with the vital presence and silence. These days it's not far between those who roam both the streets and free nature with cords hanging out of their ears. It doesn't look like the growth of that phenomenon will decline any time soon. But all the growth curves of modernity's trend activities have one thing in common, they culminate.

Back in the early 90's I got the mission to do a study of the meaning of silence for the Norwegian Environmental Directorate. The results ended up as the most popular report in the Directorate. Silence was a subject in Norwegian media for a long time afterwards.

Even if in daily life, it can be discouraging to see the large flock of the lonely, silence is not a term to be joked around with. And even if Norwegians are often pretty loud in their outdoors life, there are occasions where silence gets its place. My contribution in finding words to describe what lives in silence:

Silence is a way that free nature speaks to us by keeping quiet.

How important is it to acquire a language that is close to nature to understand the universe?

After having been concerned with the 'purposeless' encounter with free nature – in accordance with the Norwegian tradition of friluftsliv for half a century - I still hold that :

Nature is the Home of Culture

In the part of the Universe that we can relate to with our senses, we can also feel at home. As humans we have developed a remarkable ability of language that helps us to share experiences and collaborate in understanding both the small and great contexts of life. As Einstein said, abstract thinking – removed from reality – runs short when exploring the secrets of nature. In his opinion, we can only get there with experience made with empathy, interpreted with intuition.

Parenthetically, I prefer pattern recognition thinking rather than intuition, which is really to loose after the New Age movement conquered this term. Again, Einstein warns us in believing that the way of logic – that is the language of abstraction – is of help. No, we need a language that is close to nature, because:

The language is the tool of thought – if the words are dull, the thoughts are dull

In Norway we are lucky to have had countrymen who made haste slowly during the industrial revolution. That spared Norwegian nature. Not only that, but a language that has been made in cooperation with the 'noble savages', with a diverse and demanding nature, still gives us the best opportunities to find nature-friendly ways of life.

You are known for you love for traditional mountain gear. What would you like to tell the new generation of designers who create clothing and equipment for the future?

I meet them with Gandhi's question:

Do you want to be part of the problem, or of the solution?!

Seen with the eyes of modernity, the gear I hold on to is really antiquated, or more diplomatically expressed, classical. Since nature will never go out of fashion, we can learn a lot from the material choices and design of previous generations.

A good example is the British cotton quality Ventill and rainwear made of quality cotton impregnated with natural waxes and oils – for instance Barbour. The ski design of the generation of Sondre Nordhem (Norwegian skiing pioneer b. 1825), is another example of timeless design and material choices.

Wood is an irreplaceable material in making skis – all skis of outstanding quality have a wooden core. You will also have to search far and wide for a solid that provides better glide on snow than wood does. The word ski means a long, thin piece of wood. When holding on to using natural fibres in clothing for friluftsliv and outdoor activities, it is to be part of the solution, in the context of Gandhi's statement. Having tried out synthetic fibres in my time as an engineer, I haven't suffered one day as a result of valuing natural fibres.

What can designers learn from nature – and from the Norwegian tradition of friluftsliv?

The most admirable proof of what designers have learned from free nature in this country is to be found in the field of shipbuilding. Already in the Viking Age. As can be seen in the magnificent ships conserved in the museums, the skills in material choice and design had reached an impressive level.



Along the long Norwegian coast these skills have been further developed and adapted to local conditions and use. The process starts with choosing the material in the woods, continues with the material processing, discriminating craftsmanship, experiential learning from the use and an exemplary end of the time in use – all without burdening free nature.

Skiing is an equally impressive example, albeit not as immediately noticeable as a wooden boat. When using equipment while seeking to embody the traditional values of Norwegian friluftsliv, there is hardly a situation where synthetic fibre offers any advantages over the natural. This gives clear guidelines for the manufacture of clothing and gear even in other fields. There is a lot to be learned from life out of doors – that is to say, not the activities that are sportified and goal-oriented, but when in free nature our intention is being and learning.

Being a man of nature, can you provide some examples from the cultural sphere that has inspired your work?

Early on, when Henry David Thoreau's Walden was published in Norway in the 1950's under the name "Life in the Forests" a hundred years after its publishing date in the US, I immediately understood that this was something for me. I devoured books in many different genres, but this was the book above all others. I bought the book with shirtingbind (a tightly woven cotton fabric) using money I earned while helping out during the potato harvest. Thoreau was a big inspiration for me to start The Norwegian School of Mountaineering in 1967 to win friends for free nature. When I recently wrote the book Friluftsliv – a formative journey I ended with a quote from Walden:

In Wildness is the Preservation of the World

When encountering free nature, we acquaint ourselves with nature. Acquaintance commits us for nature friendly ways of life and to help changing the world joyfully.

The list of thinkers who have inspired me after I left my career as a researcher in microbiology and biochemistry in 1967, is long. Closest to Thoreau is the philosopher Spinoza that, thanks to my fellow mountaineering rope mate professor Arne Naess discourses, has provided values anchoring for my thinking and action at work.

Gandhi was also an early guide in the art of being a part of the solution, a way of thinking that rhymes with Einstein's reminder that the problems that the modern way of life has led to, are not solved by thinking in the way that has caused the misery in the first place. Since the core of my work has been about making learning happen in the encounter with the potential life dangers of free nature, other important references have been Jean Jacques Rousseau, Martin Buber and our own Hans Skjervheim (Norwegian philosopher 1926-1999) - in embodying the intrinsic value of free nature and human dignity.



Runa Klock On Social Design, Dreams And Work

Runa Klock is a Norwegian designer working with a mindful approach. She is also one of the most energetic people we know, with an unusual ability to juggle several ambitious projects in the same time.

Runa is the driving force behind several social entrepreneur businesses including Bohkari, a company providing education and work for young women in Pakistan. She is deeply involved in Klubben, (the Norwegian Designers Association), the social entrepreneur Epleslang - and she works she works with exhibition design for institutions like the Jewish Museum and Nobel Peace centre.

We asked Runa a few personal and not so personal questions about the transformation of work, space and social design:

What do you have in front of you right now - and how does that relate to your vision as a designer?

Right in front of me, physically, I have an old, beautiful window framing a soon very green and lush backyard, 5 birds on a wire, blue skies and the promise of an early spring.

I guess this ever-changing scenery mirrors quite well what being a designer is much about: Learning, adapting, observing, taking on new challenges as the world changes and new needs emerge.

What are the unique powers or qualities of design in addressing social problems?

The power lies in the process of designing, not in "design" as a result. Design thinking is a method that is human-centred, focusing on the needs of the people who will be using the solution, and engaging with them to understand for whom we are designing.

Design is not a quick fix and can't alone solve the huge problems we are facing, but if we cooperate; if politicians, law and entrepreneurs use design thinking, it can offer a better chance to solve the problems facing us all.

Do you find role models for ethical design practice in modernism or do you find the need to reinvent your platform?

More and more designers won't compromise with ethics, following a historical line of designers who felt responsibility in being the creators of the new. As a student I was as very inspired reading about Buckminster Fuller and Victor Papanek's critical approach to design culture.

Papanek's principles of socially responsible design made me realize the role designers can play if we choose to. Today the voices preaching Social design come more from organizations, businesses and schools, such as Ideo and Stanford University.

I guess the new role models are the social entrepreneurs, not waiting for the rest of the world

to change, but going out there and changing it themselves.

What are dreams? Do dreams have a role to play in your approach to creativity?

Dreams are visions and goals to strive for. My dream is to work with something that matters. To use my skills and creativity for something important has always been the driving force and compass when choosing where to put my energy and focus. Many of the projects had no commercial or marketing value when I initiated them, but have later proven to be sustainable projects also in those matters.

How will we think about money, ethics and design in 10 years?

It's all changing so rapidly, and still so many things stay the same. The rich become richer, and the poor poorer. Still, I hope the circular economy will change how we understand the value of resources and how everything is linked.

The sharing economy, crowd funding and collaborative consumption we now see, demonstrates the power of the consumer's voice and hopefully this will have positive effect on the ethics of business.

What will a typical workspace look like in 10 years?

We all need a good chair, and a desk, and most likely, the catalogs from the furniture providers won't look all that different then form what they do now.

But speaking about the room and space, hopefully there are no typical workspaces, as we all are individual with individual needs. We work from home, at the bakery, in a co-working space, from a mountaintop. The possibility of being online everywhere doesn't restrict your work to a particular space. But concentration and quietness is a luxury and an asset beneficial to both productivity and the quality of work.

I just read that plants in the workspace may improve productivity and wellbeing by 50 %, and employees who have control over the design and layout of their workspace are not only happier and healthier, but also 32% more productive, so hopefully this will be considered before more people are forced into open office-spaces with clean desks.

Please share something that really inspires you.

I love science and new research; astronomy, philosophy, there so many interesting and inspirational subjects. I admire scientists who manage to make difficult topics easily understandable (like Ulf Danielsson), and those who question the established (like Rupert Sheldrake).

I find great pleasure in reading in my old encyclopedia and also love poems where a lot of wisdom and guidance can be found. Nothing is as educative as travelling, and I don't have to travel far; As long as you put your phone down and observe the world around you there are all kinds of inspiration to be found even on buss No 37 to Helsfyr.

Photo: Svein Gunnar Kjåde (UT and UN Divided)
& Ann Holmgren (Molecular Ballet)

Model: Ebrima Bojang

Concept: Elementa, Ann Holmgren & ^O^

Graphic design: ERIK(SEN)

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