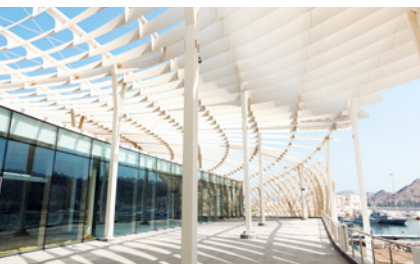


D Architecture Briefing



Muttrah fish market

OMAN

While other Gulf cities try to entice visitors with mile-long shopping malls, Muscat in Oman has opted for something simpler. A new fish market was designed by Norwegian firm Snøhetta as a place where fishermen can wheelbarrow their morning catch to market and tourists still feel welcome.

“The fishermen are a big part of civic society there; they were vocal about what they wanted it to be,” says Robert Greenwood, Snøhetta’s managing director for the UK, Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific. “It was an interesting process because it’s not one client you’re talking to, it’s a bunch of fishermen.”

The building, which developed over nine years, is curved to follow the natural bay while aluminium fins create a dynamic play of light and shadow. The sinewy fins reference Arabic calligraphy, also echoed in the ventilation holes cut into the building’s walls. — CL



Carl Hansen

STOCKHOLM

Danish furniture-manufacturer Carl Hansen & Son, renowned for its collection of classics by Arne Jacobsen, Hans J Wegner and others, is continuing its expansion with a flagship store in Stockholm. In connection with the opening, the company also launched designs from its archives, including a desk designed by Jacobsen and Poul Kjørholm’s PK1 chair in wicker (pictured).

Located in the Östermalm district alongside most of the city’s design shops and showrooms, the space was converted from a bank into a shop by Stockholm-based Trigueiros Architecture. Materials such as blonde wood, concrete and limestone create a harmonious space.

“Our main objective has been to showcase the exclusive quality and craft in Carl Hansen & Son’s furniture,” says architect Vasco Trigueiros. “The space should have a sense of times past but still point towards the future and the expansive power of the brand.” — ENA



Civil union

BY Nolan Giles



It’s a common story in the design industry: a creative company or niche manufacturer has financial woes but gets snapped up (or “rescued”) by an enterprising new face. With a bit of cash and some marketing pizzazz the brand is reignited and the design legend continues (or, in the best cases, grows). When it’s not pure spin these stories are commendable, particularly if fading skill sets and jobs are being saved and great design is being done. Yet, in an industry where “independent” carries as much cachet as “hand-crafted”, a large company buying a smaller brand is not an easy sell.

With this in mind, at the end of last year US-based furniture giant Knoll quietly bought smart young Danish design brand Muuto. The firm was accelerating at a fast rate, particularly

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in the US, growing 50 per cent year on year. The acquisition received little press but the move was smart. Muuto can capitalise on Knoll’s knowledge of the US market, while Knoll gains knowhow in the “affordable luxury” arena where Muuto is triumphing.

Muuto CEO Anders Cleeman says consolidation is a natural consequence of tough competition. But will Muuto’s cool Scandi reputation take a knock? “Honestly, I don’t think so,” says Cleeman. “We have seen acquisitions in cars and fashion. When design companies get together we can learn from each other and find the right fit to be more successful.”

Selling design today too often involves the product becoming a story and, in some cases, the story ends up with more appeal than the product. “Synergy” might not have as nice a ring to it as “artisanal” but it could be the more useful word to use in a conversation about putting more good design into the world. — (M)

Studio profile

APPARATU — BARCELONA

“Now that I look back, perhaps my mother and father had a secret plan to lure me home,” says Xavier Mañosa, who heads up Spanish ceramic studio Apparatu. A decade ago, while struggling to make ends meet in Berlin, a plea to save the family’s stagnating ceramic workshop prompted a return to Barcelona. His self-described recipe of good fortune and fearlessness paid off; the “extended family” now includes 11 additional artisans and Apparatu creates pottery for well-known design companies Cosentino and Marset.

Located in the satellite town of Rubí, on the outskirts of Barcelona, Apparatu’s kilns rarely cool, turning out a range of earth-toned tableware, light fittings and furniture. Shapes and textures illustrate a resolve to eschew the conventional or mundane. “Being able to produce what we design, feeds a perpetual cycle of experimentation,” says Mañosa.



Notable projects:

- Terrasse**
A vase with a self-recycling water cycle; the sequence embellishes the vessel with ever-changing watermarks.
- Dektonclay**
This kitchenware collection for Barcelona interior bigwig Cosentino, includes pots, crockery and even stovetops.
- Pleat Box**
Co-designed by Mañosa for Marset, these lampshades come in different hues and cast a different light according to the colour of the enamel inside.

The rejuvenated firm’s early fortune began with an invitation to participate in a friend’s small pottery exhibition in London. It led to similar showings in Stockholm, Tokyo and New York, where a chance encounter with Javier Marset culminated in the Pleat Box series. These hanging lamps were made for Marset and blend digital design with hand-crafting techniques, creating a fossilised fabric effect.

“My parents bring their traditional techniques and experience to the floor but they have never been stubbornly anchored to the past,” says their son, who lauds their open attitude as a conduit to success. “They are just as fearless, which keeps the creative spirit flowing.” — LA apparatu.com



PHOTOGRAPHER: Sabina Lopez

Q&A

GIOVANNI DEL VECCHIO

Managing director
Giorgetti
Italy

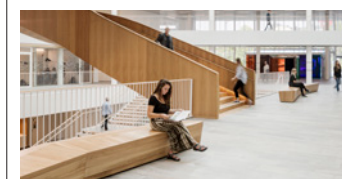
For 2018 Italian furniture-maker Giorgetti has got its eyes set on bridging different design disciplines: after launching a collection of kitchen and outdoor pieces last year, a new collaboration with fashion brand Agnona has seen Giorgetti adopt some of the Piedmontese label’s methods and rethink some of its classics. — CHR

How was the idea for this collaboration born?

The idea came from the willingness to work with a brand that shares many of the values in our DNA, from the use of artisanal materials to the attention to detail. Also, we wanted to gather new stimuli from a company that works within many of the same markets as we do but from a different perspective.

How did the collaboration with Agnona work?

We used materials that Agnona employs in its fashion projects and applied them to our collection. We even developed some new materials altogether. For example, we have worked with cashmere shearling, fur and leather: materials that are completely different from each other. giorgettimeda.com



Segerstedthuset

SWEDEN

Students at Uppsala University returned this year to an updated campus courtesy of Danish architecture firm 3XN. A stone’s throw from the city’s 16th-century castle, the Segerstedthuset extension is strikingly modern. The indoor spatial plan encourages social interaction: there’s a sun-lit atrium and a timber staircase that connects floors and makes a fine architectural talking point. — HU