

STOCKHOLM FURNITURE FAIR 2018 **A REVIEW**

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The Stockholmsmässan exhibition complex

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THE CITY

Stockholm is one of the world's most beautiful cities, but its undoubted attractions are less readily appreciated in February when temperatures plummet and the bitterest of winds sends everyone scurrying for home, or into one of the many cozy bars or restaurants. As with most modern cities set in really cold climes, the authorities manage the effects of the winter weather superbly. Snow disappears from streets and pavements as if by magic and gritting reduces the risk of skidding or slipping to a minimum. The winter streets carry very little traffic with motorists being deterred by the weather and with public transport, especially the various train networks, being comfortably warm, clean, fast and reliable.

THE SHOW

The Stockholm Furniture and Lighting Fair which closed its doors last Friday, is held each year in a purpose built exhibition complex - the Stockholmsmässan - about 10 km from the city centre and easily accessible by a fast, regular commuter train service from the Central Station. The show is beautifully manageable in size, just three interconnecting halls and a very large foyer for special exhibits and services. Although the showground area is smaller - and there are many fewer exhibitors - than at some other major exhibitions, it still takes a long time to cover the show properly because almost all of the exhibitors have beautiful displays of the highest quality products.



Crowds at the show

Although, as expected, almost all the Nordic companies with international business activities are present, there are also hundreds of smaller, local, companies present, with names virtually unknown outside the region. Unlike in other parts of the world where the furniture industry is dominated by hard-headed businessmen, Scandinavian companies tend to be started and run by designer architects with somewhat different sets of values. Perhaps as a consequence, manufacturers in the region tend to design and manufacture to very high standards which local customers appreciate and for which, they are prepared to pay. There are few other markets like this in the world which explains why the vast majority of the exhibitors at this show are local. The Italians such as Magis, Pedrali and Arper were the only real exception and were well represented but otherwise, few other nations put in much of an appearance. By contrast, the visitors came from far afield, including plenty from Japan who were catered for by some smart-minded exhibitors with Japanese speaking representatives on their stands.

Many of the displays were truly stunning with brilliant choices of eye-catching styles, colours and lighting. And these beautiful settings were in no way let down by the many lovely products, sparingly and intelligently displayed with just the right amount of propping.

Visitors were numerous, professional and serious; many designers and architects were walking around looking like children let loose in a sweetshop.

The visitors' more prosaic needs were well looked after with plenty of not inexpensive eating and refreshment opportunities all over the halls, with a wide variety of cuisines. The main theme was Asian street food but there were plenty of other choices available, from Sushi to fish and chips.

THE TRENDS

Unsurprisingly, being Scandinavia, there was considerable emphasis on environmental friendliness and sustainability in all aspects of the show. Many wood species and in all forms were everywhere – always beautifully crafted and treated with great respect. Fabrics were from a wide variety of natural materials - including curly sheeps' wool hides from Australia via treatment plants in China! Colours were generally earthy and muted, with emphasis on shades of mid-grey. Happily, blacks and whites had all but disappeared. There were plenty of high tables, acoustic panels, enclosures and SitStand units but most of the rest was seating-oriented in every shape and size. There was little in the way of workstations, screens and storage products, conventionally the norm for a commercial furniture show.





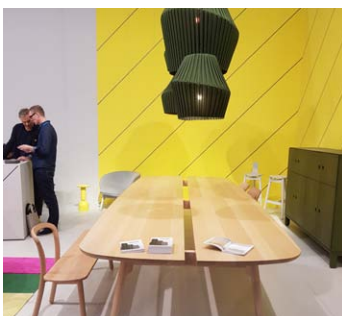
Easy seating from
&tradition, Copenhagen



Bla Station easy chairs and
sofa from Kobe Architects



Lounge chair from Articles



DUM Office



Seating from Jess Design



Resolve from Edsbyn

THE EXHIBITORS AND THE PRODUCTS

&TRADITION from Copenhagen were showing fashionably retro pieces as were locals **BLÅ STATION** from Stockholm.

ARTICLES headquartered in Västerås in Sweden showed a beautifully comfortable adjustable easy chair from Swedish designer Anna von Schewen.

There were several Dutch companies exhibiting with generally very stylish products. One of these was **DUM OFFICE** from Amsterdam showing some interesting meeting tables and co-ordinated seating. Another was **JESS DESIGN** from Oss with some stylish seating products.

The Swedish company **EDSBY** showed the adaptable Resolve Play chair and sofa from designer Dan Ihreborn.



EFG's space dividing system



Lift Up from Fantoni



Globe Concept from Form2



The Pot chair

EFG, European Furniture Group, is one of Europe's largest manufacturing companies. With its headquarters in Sweden, it's a Swedish owned conglomerate which can trace its roots back to 1885 and which has grown by acquisition since the 1970s. Its large stand displayed a wide range of products from group factories including the space dividing open storage system below.

One of the stylish Italian manufacturers that didn't look out of place in this exalted company was **FANTONI** that showed high tables, glass enclosures and this attractive Lift Up SitStand desk.

Swedish company **FORM2** showed the Globe Concept chair system from Peter Opsvik which attracted lots of attention.

Another large stand presented the **FRITZ HANSEN** collection including the newly relaunched Pot chair from Arne Jacobsen.



Sofa Bleck from Garsnas

GARSNAS were another local company with some stylish seating on their TAF Architectural Office designed stand, including the Sofa Bleck from the same design house.



Getama easy chair and stool

GETAMA, a 19th century company from Gedsted in Denmark presented this original design easy chair and stool.



Gotessons Peak Design Booth seen here with Office Ballz seating.

The Peak Design Booth by Swedish company **GOTESSONS** has zip-connected screens which allows infinite expansion.



SitStand desk from Horred

HORREDS' wood clad SitStand tables were displayed by this oddly named Swedish company from the town of the same name.



Hangaround from Isku

One of the relatively few Finnish companies was **INNO**. They were showing their LAB table designed by Harri Korhonen. **ISKU**, from Helsinki, which along with **MARTELA** is one of Finland's larger manufacturers, showed a selection of their ranges including *Hangaround* designed by Kaisa Jäntti not only as a fun way to sit, but also an ergonomic alternative for traditional, static seating.



Enclosures from Martela

MARTELA themselves had a compact stand with a variety of products, including this attractively designed variation on the enclosures theme. Interestingly, for a furniture company, it's tricky finding any furniture on their website which is much more focused on office and interiors' lifestyles and blogs.



Meeting table from James Burleigh

The eponymous **JAMES BURLEIGH**, one of the very few companies from the UK, showed some of his custom built meeting tables.



BaBa chairs

Lithuania was represented by **JOTJOT** with their *BaBa* seating designed by Iskos, Berlin.



Fields from Kinnarps



Standing table from Lammhults



Materia mobile workstation



Campfire from Mitab

KINNARPS are the largest European office furniture group and headquartered in Kinnarp, Sweden. They presented Next Office, a concept of designing offices around the needs and personality of each organization. They showed a new range of attractive task seating and a variety of fields.

One of the larger and best known companies in the region is **LAMMHULTS**, named, as is common in Scandinavia, from the town where they derived. They were another company showing higher level meeting tables.

MATERIA, based in Tranås in southern Sweden was established in 1992 by two architects/industrial designers, Kersti Sandin and Lars Bülow. Their stand and products were imaginative and creative, including this mobile workstation. Another company from the same town was **MITAB** whose Campfire range of tables, seating and screens were beautifully simple.



Reindeer moss wall paneling from Nordgrona

One of the most intriguing companies at the show was **NORDGRONA** from Arlöv in Sweden. Their product was beautifully tactile, natural, reindeer moss collected from Swedish forests, before being dyed a wide range of colours and treated to meet fire resistance standards. It's apparently acoustically very effective, dries out and rehydrates as the surrounding humidity changes and makes beautiful wall cladding and panels.



Skandilock's curly wool sheepskins

Another company working with unusual materials was **SKANDILOCK**. Working exclusively with curly wool sheepskins, the business started in the 1930s when this wool was easily available from the Swedish hillsides. It's now sourced from Australia and New Zealand, via China where its treated, before arriving in Sweden for manufacturing as upholstery, floorcovering and wall cladding.



August Workbay

Estonia was represented by **SOFTREND** from Tallinn. Their August Workbay was designed by Pent Talvet of Iseasi.



SitStand table from String

The Swedish company **STRING** started with a shelving system from architect designer Nisse Strinning. This heritage was very apparent from its imaginative and very attractive exhibition stand and products, including one of the many well designed SitStand tables at the show.



High meeting table from Thors-Design

THORS-DESIGN were the epitome of the Scandinavian passion for recycling. They source their materials exclusively from the massive timber planks used to create Danish ferry harbours now made redundant by newly constructed bridges. From this, they create beautiful furniture with character and style.



Attentive and well-behaved visitors on the Wendelbo stand

And finally, another Danish company, **WENDELBO** Interiors, decided that with all the competition about, they needed a couple of younger guests on their stand to catch the attention of the passing visitors.



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