

# Factsheet Denmark



JANUARY 2008

## FURNITURE AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

Design does not merely exist in itself – design reflects society. This applies to classic Danish design from the 1950s and 1960s as well as to Danish design in the new millennium. As society changes, so does its design.

Today's design concept has been expanded in a way inconceivable to the designers of earlier generations. The development has happened as the world changed, with new technologies, new economies, new demands and new opportunities.

In the past, we exclusively regarded

design as the shaping of products. That is no longer the case. Nonetheless, products are still a cornerstone in design and in the following sections Danish design will be presented on the basis of both products and the designers behind them. Danish graphic design and communication is a separate chapter, which will be presented at a later stage.

### The "heroic" period

Today, Danish design is flourishing. The new generation has gained a perspective on the classic period. The young designers



**Arne Jacobsen's original interior design** from 1960 has been preserved in Room 606 at the Royal Hotel in Copenhagen, also known as the SAS Hotel. Manufacturer: Fritz Hansen.

**Imprint.** Design: Foersom & Hiort-Lorenzen, 2005. Manufacturer: Lammhults. Photo: lammhults.se.

**Public design:** Everything we encounter in the public space as citizens and users is characterised by design. In the last 20-25 years, Denmark has created public design at an international level within several fields – especially the transport sector. But public design is much broader: For instance, how is the urban space furnished? How do we experience street and road lighting? Does the signage at our hospitals

show the way? Is the letter from the local council easy to understand? Copenhagen Port Pools from 2002 with the distinctive lifeguard tower is a good example of what untraditional thinking and good design can do for the city's residents. Photo: Lars Amelang.



regard the pioneers with respect – but are able to stand on their own feet.

A presentation of Danish design has to start with its breakthrough on the international scene after World War II. A fortunate combination of internal and external circumstances led to a Golden Age, in which Danish furniture achieved particular success, but silver, ceramics, glass and textiles also experienced a fertile period.

A breakthrough such as the classic Danish one can only occur if the talent is available. And it was! However, talent is not enough – special growth conditions are required for the talent to thrive and develop.

Three circumstances were particularly crucial to the success of Danish design in the post-war period. The first was the late industrialisation of Denmark. A living craft tradition with high quality standards was allowed to develop slowly and gradu-

**PH Artichoke.** Design: Poul Henningsen, 1958. Manufacturer: Louis Poulsen.

ally into industrial production, closely monitored by the architects and master cabinet makers of the time.

The second was the world's desire to see and experience something new after a war which had left large parts of Europe in ruins. The Danish light wood furniture with references to Nordic nature and a look that was sometimes based on classic furniture types but without the style elements of former periods soon gained a foothold internationally.

Thirdly, Danish design had room for the individualists. This trend began to emerge in the 1930s, when the architect and critic Poul Henningsen scrutinised society and agitated for freedom, respect for the individual and a democratic,



humanist view of life, which was rather unusual in the Nordic countries at the time. These attitudes gradually became widely accepted in Denmark.

The soil had thus been fertilised when the major talents appeared. The talents were so to speak given a free rein and architects and furniture designers found enthusiastic collaborators among master cabinet makers and other small production companies.

The establishment of the Furniture School at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts played a considerable part in the development of furniture design. Here Professor Kaare Klint represented Functionalism with studies of the proportions between people and objects. Klint has had greater influence on Danish furniture design than any other designer. His views of the form and function of furniture have influenced several generations of Danish

**CH 07.** Design: Hans J. Wegner, 1963. Manufacturer: Carl Hansen & Søn. Photo: larsenform.com.



**Urban furniture:** The public space needs many different kinds of furniture: Benches, advertising pillars, rubbish bins, street lighting, parking metres – to mention a few. The individual element has to meet extensive requirements as do maintenance and protection against vandalism and theft. It is a challenge to place each element where it is needed and combine the layout with the technical standards applying to the public

space. The public bench is a popular design object. City Bench, designed by Nanna Ditzel. Photo: The Dzine Partnership.

designers and continue to do so today.

Nonetheless, the Danes remained slightly sceptical about Functionalism, which therefore never had a complete breakthrough. Hans J. Wegner respected the Klint approach, but struck out a path for himself. Like several other furniture designers at the time, Wegner trained as a cabinet maker and combined extraordinary craftsmanship with a unique sense of form, resulting in a series of chairs which many regard as unsurpassable.

As the head of the cooperative FDB furniture design studio, Børge Mogensen designed a furniture series aimed at the average Danish family. It was simple and robust, and could be combined according to the family's needs. In addition, Mogensen designed several characteristic chairs which are still in production, including the Spanish Chair.

Another individualist was Finn Juhl,

who represented the artistic freedom with a personal idiom and chairs which were at once harmonious sculptures and traditional seating furniture.

Concurrently, industrialised furniture manufacturing developed in the USA, where the best-known products were Charles Eames's chairs of moulded wood and steel pipes. Eames's chairs inspired Arne Jacobsen to design the now world-famous Ant chair of bent, laminated wood from 1952 – Denmark's first example of an industrially manufactured chair in the true sense of the word and fully in line with what the international furniture trend was producing. Arne Jacobsen was already recognised as an architect, especially abroad, but now he became equally famous as a furniture designer.

Danish design aroused an immediate response in the international press – among other things due to the large

Scandinavian design exhibitions which toured the world.

Poul Kjærholm, Verner Panton and Nanna Ditzel were other designers – slightly younger than the post-war masters – who made a strong impression in the following years.

Unlike other Danish designers, Poul Kjærholm chose to work mainly in steel and leather. Kjærholm was inspired by the international style and worked with an uncompromising perfectionism, which has made him one of the leading Danish furniture designers in recent time.

However, no other designer has been more imaginative or different than Verner Panton – today a role model for many young designers. Panton found little understanding of his ideas in the Danish design environment of his time. He therefore left Denmark and became an influential designer in 1960s Europe.



**Chieftain Chair.** Design: Finn Juhl, 1949. Manufacturer: Hansen & Sørensen. Photo: onecollection.com.

**PK 22.** Design: Poul Kjærholm, 1956. Manufacturer: Fritz Hansen.

**Spanish Chair.** Design: Børge Mogensen, 1958. Manufacturer: Fredericia Furniture.

**Ant Chair.** Design: Arne Jacobsen, 1952. Manufacturer: Fritz Hansen. Photo: arne-jacobsen.com.

**Panton Chair.** Design: Verner Panton, 1967. Manufacturer: Vitra. Photo: paustian.com.

**Urban open spaces:** Marketplaces, squares and parks – the urban open spaces – play an important part in all cities. In the old days, the marketplace was the town's trading centre, where people met to buy, sell and hear the latest news. Today, almost all trading has moved indoors, but the marketplace and square remain just as important. The open spaces serve as much needed breathing spaces for the citizens – used

either as an oasis or as a setting for community events. The furniture can be magnificent or modest, but two elements are essential: Somewhere to sit – in the shadow of a tree. An open space can also be established in a park. Photo: Tine Harden.



## Who is who in Danish furniture and industrial design?



Photo: 3part.dk

**3PART** (established 1998) is one of the younger generation's leading design companies. Works strategically with user-driven industrial design.



Photo: bengtsson-design.com

**Mathias Bengtsson** (born 1971), designer, has broken with the Danish design tradition. Experiments with new technologies and materials with originality and exceptional talent.



Photo: berntmaa.dk

**Bernt** (born 1937), furniture designer, takes the Danish Functionalist tradition as his starting point with an analytic approach. Has created a number of distinctive design exhibitions as well as furniture.



Photo: christianbjorn.dk

**Christian Bjørn** (born 1944), industrial designer, is a pioneer within Danish industrial design. His work includes large systems and projects within transport design, but also smaller, consumer-oriented products.



Photo: Anders Sune Berg

**Louise Campbell** (born 1970), industrial designer, is one of the finest innovators of Danish furniture design. Blazes her own trail and experiments with free, unconstrained forms and innovative material choices.



Photo: cbd.dk

**CBD** (established 1974) is a multi-disciplinary industrial design company with international focus. Was one of the first to look towards Asia and has offices in China and Vietnam.



Photo: designit.com

**Designit** (established 1991) is currently the largest design company in Denmark. Works with focus on overall solutions and is frequently involved in the Danish design debate.



Photo: nanna-ditzel-design.dk

**Nanna Ditzel** (1923-2005), designer, experimented with new technologies and innovative room installations at an early stage. Has created a range of furniture in an organic idiom as well as jewellery and textiles.

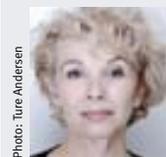


Photo: Ture Andersen

**Susse Fischer** (born 1949), architect, works on the borderline between design and architecture with products and major projects reflecting an unerring balance between aesthetics and functionality.



Photo: flindtdesign.dk

**Christian Flindt** (born 1972), furniture designer, belongs to the avantgarde in today's young Danish furniture design. Challenges the traditional idiom and creates furniture with a dramatic and original look.



Photo: foersom-hiortlorenzen.dk

**Foersom & Hiort-Lorenzen** (established 1977) is a 30-year old collaboration, which has resulted in a series of cogent furniture, worked out to the smallest detail. Focuses on sustainability and prioritises experiments and new materials.



Photo: louisipoulsen.dk

**Poul Henningsen** (1894-1967), architect, made his mark with his first mass-produced lamp, PH 5/5, in 1926. Designed a number of special lighting systems for large buildings, all based on his innovative theories about perception and lighting.



Photo: knudholscher.dk

**Knud Holscher** (born 1930), architect, produces design solutions characterised by functionality and simplification of often complex products. Has many international companies among his customers.



Photo: louisipoulsen.dk

**Arne Jacobsen** (1902-1971), architect, represented Modernism and imbued his buildings and other works with great originality and an idiom which soon placed him in the international design elite.



Photo: georgjensen.com

**Georg Jensen** (1866-1935), silversmith, established a modest silversmith's workshop in Copenhagen in 1904, which soon became a focus for the most important artists of the time. Was described as the finest silver artist in the world for three centuries when he died.



Photo: jacob-jensen-design.dk

**Jacob Jensen** (born 1926), industrial designer, created a series of innovative products for Bang & Olufsen, which launched a new era within international hi-fi production and today are found in museums all over the world.



Photo: royalkopenhagen.com

**Ole Jensen** (born 1958), designer, experiments with new materials in a personal idiom. Has created many innovative articles for everyday use.



Photo: onecollection.com

**Finn Juhl** (1912-1989), furniture architect, is one of the most highly regarded Danish furniture architects in an international perspective. His furniture is characterised by its sculptural and curved forms, very different from Danish Functionalism.



**Visual identity:** Visual identity is a means of highlighting and controlling the values governing a company. For what does the company want to be known? Which signals does it want to send to its surroundings? The business world has a long tradition of using graphic design to communicate and profile itself. The public sector has learned from the private sector. Most public institutions today have a visual identity and a

design programme as part of their communication with the citizens and the rest of the world. Photo: The visual identity of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, designed by Kontrapunkt.

Photo: fritzhansen.com



**Poul Kjærholm** (1929-1980), furniture architect, was inspired by the Bauhaus school, but went beyond it. Has left behind pieces of furniture that are landmarks in the history of Danish furniture design, made of steel, marble, glass, leather and, in his later years, wood.

Photo: komplot.dk



**Komplot** (established 1987) is a design company with an international outlook, which especially in recent years has experimented with a new idiom and new materials in its furniture design.

Photo: georgjensen.com



**Henning Koppel** (1918-1981), sculptor, began working for Georg Jensen in 1945 and with his both simple and bold forms launched a new epoch within Danish silver. Has also designed porcelain for Bing & Grøndahl.

Photo: bang-olufsen.com



**David Lewis** (born 1939), industrial designer, in his capacity of chief designer for Bang & Olufsen and in his collaborations with other international companies, has created a union of function and aesthetics, which has resulted in many prestigious design awards.

Photo: selton.com



**Erik Magnussen** (born 1940), industrial designer, is one of Denmark's most important designers, whose products are always based on an original idea and characterised by a strict, minimalist idiom combined with functionality and user-friendliness.

Photo: lightyears.dk



**Cecilie Manz** (born 1972), industrial designer, is one of the leading figures in contemporary Danish designs. Extends the understanding of the function and aesthetics of design and challenges established concepts of what design can and should do.

Photo: royalkopenhagen.dk



**Grethe Meyer** (born 1918), architect, has created some of the best-known classics of Danish design on the basis of scientific analyses and with an infallible sense of form, for companies such as Royal Copenhagen and Georg Jensen.

Photo: fredericia.com



**Børge Mogensen** (1914-1972), furniture architect, headed the cooperative FDB in 1942-1950. Belonged to the Golden Age of Danish design and further developed a number of well-known international furniture types with great success.

Photo: royalkopenhagen.com



**Ursula Munch-Petersen** (born 1937), designer, works with one-off objects and sculptural ceramics. Has developed functional articles for everyday use, with new techniques and materials, most recently the popular Ursula service for Royal Copenhagen.

Photo: Tonsten Graae



**Ole Palsby** (born 1935), designer, transfers user-friendliness from the professional kitchen to the home through studies of form and function. Has designed products of international format.

Photo: louispuulsen.dk



**Verner Panton** (1926-1998), architect, is the leading showman of Danish design. Internationally famous and recognised for his original and experimental furniture, lighting and revolutionary interior decoration.

Photo: pelikan.dk



**Pelikan Design** (established 1978) had an international outlook at an early stage and is today a leading industrial design company, focusing especially on furniture design.

Photo: Christian Petersen



**Søren Ulrik Petersen** (born 1961), furniture designer, takes the classic Danish furniture tradition as his starting point and combines humour and originality with a practical and functional approach.

Photo: fritzhansen.com



**Kasper Salto** (born 1967), furniture designer, belongs to the new generation of Danish furniture designers. Builds on Danish furniture design heritage with works set to become Danish classics of the future.

Photo: anders-smith.com



**Anders Smith** (born 1962), industrial designer, was internationally oriented at an early stage with several years' residence abroad as design manager for Philips. Now works in Copenhagen, focusing on strategic consultancy and user-focused design.

Photo: strand+hvass.com



**Strand+Hvass** (established 1998) prioritise experiments with forms and materials, resulting in solutions and products that surprise and renew the Danish furniture tradition.

Photo: Unknown



**Jan Trägårdh** (1931-2006), industrial designer, has been very important to the development of industrial design in Denmark. Has designed many pioneering industrial products, using Functionalism as his starting point.

Photo: fritzhansen.com



**Hans J. Wegner** (1914-2007), furniture architect, is probably the best known of all Danish furniture architects. He was especially important as the chair designer par excellence and designed many of the most beautiful and original chairs in the world.

**Urban floor:** The floor is an element of the urban space which is often overlooked. Chance and short-term financial considerations have often been allowed to determine the nature of the surface. However, the urban floor should have a function and help clarify traffic flows to both pedestrians and drivers besides having an architectural effect. The ideal surface is based on variation of materials, textures, patterns and

colours. The urban floor can be a work of art, like Amager Torv in Copenhagen created by the artist Bjørn Nørsgaard. However, less will do, as long as attention is paid to the context and the connection with the surrounding buildings and open spaces. Photo: Troels Heien.



**Trinidad.** Design: Nanna Ditzel, 1993. Manufacturer: Fredericia Furniture. Photo: nanna-ditzel-design.dk.

**Polyether chair.** Design: Gunnar Aagaard Andersen, 1964. Photo: Pernille Klemp.

**X-line.** Design: Niels Jørgen Haugesen, 1977. Manufacturer: Bent Krogh. – This award-winning chair is the closest Danish design gets to High Tech. Photo: bent-krogh.dk.

Inspired by among others Verner Panton, Nanna Ditzel started her long career in the 1950s with bold and colourful complete environments and new ways of living. After several years in England, Nanna Ditzel returned to Denmark in 1986 and in the following years created furniture with a strong personal look, which have helped renew Danish furniture design.

Among the designers of the time, Gunnar Aagaard Andersen had a special position. He was the artist and Renaissance man, who as a designer was primarily known for his polyether chair from 1964, whose extreme look has inspired today's young Danish designers.

**Danish furniture design 1970-1980**  
Danish furniture design struggled to



maintain its leading position in the 1970s and 1980s. The world had changed. Industrialisation had taken hold and was expanding rapidly. Light Danish and Scandinavian design had many followers, but many others called for something that was more in keeping with the times and with the suddenly exploding youth culture.

The international design scene was characterised by fierce competition and activity – especially within furniture design. In the 1980s, Post-Modernism was introduced and, in parallel, the Memphis movement in Milan. Slightly later, the High Tech style and other trends followed. Danish restraint and focus on function therefore struggled in the international competition. A few Danish designers hesitantly attempted the new trends, but most found it difficult to either develop their heritage or liberate themselves from it.

Danish furniture design therefore experienced little renewal in these years and manufacturers and producers likewise showed little response to or interest in experimentation. The talents of the time were relatively isolated compared with the fertile climate surrounding the pioneers in the 1950s.



**Industrial design**

Danish furniture design may have had a relatively quiet time in the 1970s and 1980s but industrial design, by contrast, was very active.

Concurrently with the international industrialisation, the first industrial design trends appeared in Europe and the USA. In Germany, the Bauhaus school was established in 1919, combining art and technology with functionality and a simple idiom. In the early 1940s, a kind of streamlined Modernism emerged in the USA. Here design had to be spectacular –“styling” had to seduce and tempt people to buy.



**Margrethe Bowl.** Design: Bernadotte & Bjørn Industridesign, 1950. Manufacturer: Rosti. Photo: rosti-housewares.dk



**Urban lighting:** Urban lighting forms a significant part of the urban stage design. The lighting must not steal from buildings and open spaces, but has to stage manage and dramatise the city, create atmosphere and experience. At the same time, the lighting must help make the city safe for those who use it after dark. However, there must be a plan for the use of lighting – for there are many interested parties. It is an art to light

the urban space and to combine facade lighting and atmospheric lighting. Aggressive commercial lighting frightens the customers away. Used correctly, lighting helps give the city a special identity. Photo: tivoli.dk.



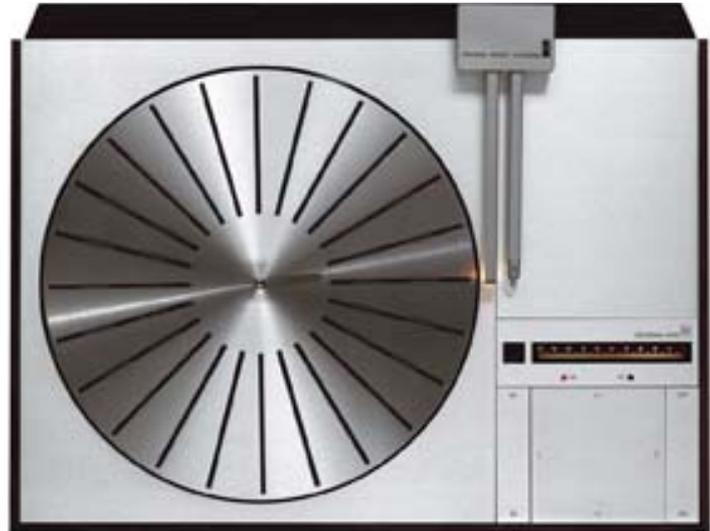
**Thermo.** Design: Erik Magnussen, 1976.  
Manufacturer: Stelton.

**Beogram 4000.** Design: Jacob Jensen, 1974.  
Manufacturer: Bang & Olufsen. Photo: Ib Sørensen.

**Beosystem 2500.** Design: David Lewis, 1991.  
Manufacturer: Bang & Olufsen. Photo: Ib Sørensen.

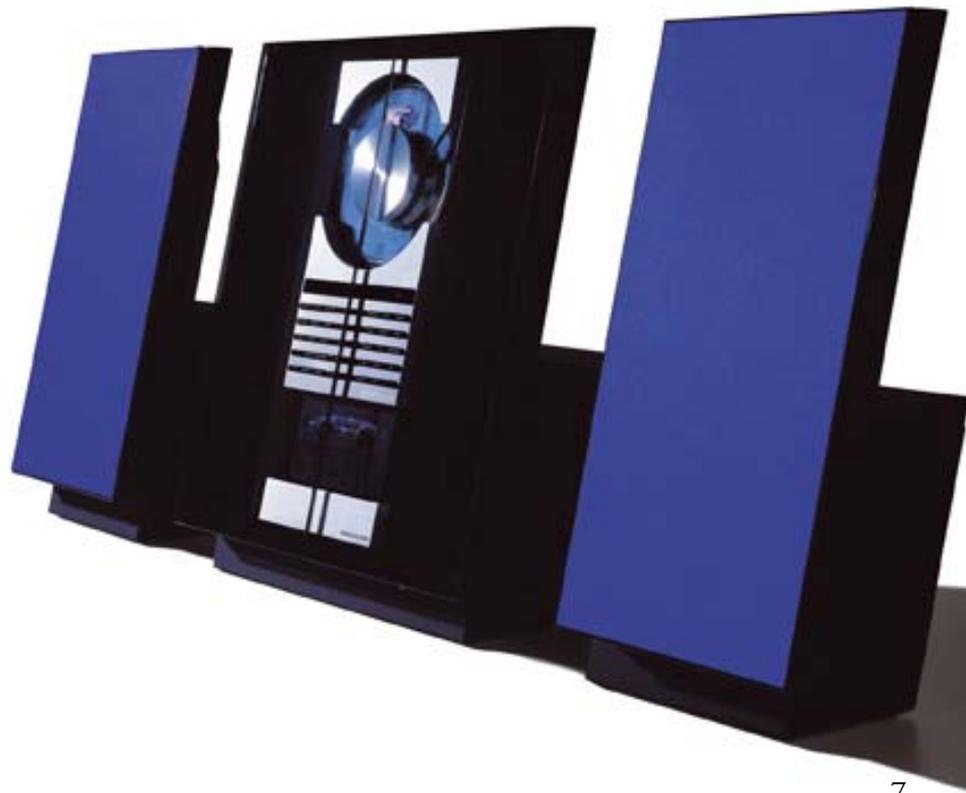
In Denmark, the values which had characterised the Danish post-war furniture – focus on the user, respect for materials and attention to details – also became prevalent within industrial design. It was natural for the industrial designers to find inspiration in especially Functionalism and Bauhaus. However, as already mentioned, Danish Functionalism was “organic”, which was very different from the often strict and dogmatic idiom of Bauhaus.

Bernadotte & Bjørn was the first design studio in Denmark and Scandinavia to specialise in industrial design. The design studio was established already in 1950 and employed several of the later most successful Danish designers. Among other things, Bernadotte & Bjørn designed office machines, domestic appliances, furniture and other functional articles for everyday use, with the Margrethe Bowl as one of the most successful and long-lived.



The number of design studios grew in parallel with the industrial development and the emergence of new manufacturing methods and materials. The success of Danish furniture design inspired a number of companies to enter into collabora-

tion with industrial designers, including Bang & Olufsen. In collaboration with first Bernadotte & Bjørn and later Jacob Jensen and David Lewis, B&O translated technological development into superlative design and entertainment electronics.



**Signage:** Signage is one of the most important elements of a building's or city's furniture. Signage has many functions, which users take for granted. Signage must inform, advise, direct, highlight and at times prohibit. The messages must be visible, easy to read, and understandable – complicated messages can constitute a safety risk. The art is to limit the number of signs and to place them exactly where they are

needed. This is particularly true in airports, where the travellers are especially dependent on fast and accurate information. The signage in Copenhagen Airport, designed by Mollerup Designlab. Photo: cph.dk.



**Copenhagen.** Design: Grethe Meyer, 1991. Manufacturer: Georg Jensen.

**Opus carafe.** Design: Ole Palsby, 2006. Manufacturer: Rosendahl.

**Lemon squeezer.** Design: Ole Jensen, 1997. Manufacturer: Royal Copenhagen.

**Mussel Mega.** Design: Karen Kjældgård-Larsen, 2002. Manufacturer: Royal Copenhagen. – A young designer's bold enlargement of the blue fluted service from 1775 has led to international success.

**Ursula.** Design: Ursula Munch-Petersen, 1992. Manufacturer: Royal Copenhagen.

**Corsinel underwear for stoma patients.** Design: Astrid Krogh and Annette Meyer, 2004. Manufacturer: Coloplast.

**NovoLet insulin pen.** Design: Steve McGugan, 1989. Manufacturer: Novo Nordisk.

**Ultrasound scanner.** Design: Anders Smith, 2004. Manufacturer: Philips.

**Microsound Pilot hearing aid.** Design: Designit, 2003. Manufacturer: Microsound.





**Transport:** In the battle for the train passengers of the future, comfort and travel time will be important features. Something extra is required for public transport to replace private cars as the preferred means of travel. In the 1990s, the Danish State Railways launched the IC3 train, which operates the length and breadth of Denmark over bridges and through tunnels. IC3 is a success and will be supplemented with the

new IC4 train in the near future. In 2002, the Metro introduced a new train type to Copenhagen – the driver-less METRO train. Photo: A Metro station in Copenhagen, designed by KHR Architects.

The company Stelton followed suit by establishing collaborations with first Arne Jacobsen and later Erik Magnussen, whose vacuum jug broke with all accepted ideas about the look and function of vacuum jugs. Today, both Bang & Olufsen's products and Erik Magnussen's vacuum jug have iconic status internationally.

Danish design's focus on organic Functionalism is also evident in tableware, where Grethe Meyer, Ole Palsby, Ursula Munch-Petersen, Ole Jensen and many others have renewed the product field.

A special design field is medical technology, where Danish designers in keeping with tradition focus on the dialogue with the user. Here young design companies such as 3PART, Designit and CBD can be mentioned, as well as individual designers such as Steve McGugan and Anders Smith.

Overall, industrial design has played a

significant role in Danish industry for the past fifty years. Many companies which initially mainly associated design with homeware soon changed their opinion and today Danish industrial design covers the entire spectrum of industrially designed products – from tea spoons via sophisticated measuring instruments to ships and train sets.

The recently launched "Index: Award", which is awarded biannually for products and ideas that improve our lives, can be regarded as a further development of the user focus of Danish design.

#### Danish furniture design today

During the 1990s, something new began to happen in Danish furniture design. Groups of young designers were established, presenting a new, expressive, internationally inspired idiom. Many regarded these initiatives as ephemeral and found it



**The Harbour Stage.** Design: Susse Fischer and Christian Bjørn, 2005. – One of the world's first floating mobile open air stages is found in Copenhagen Harbour. Photo: Mikkel Stenbæk.

**d line.** Design: Knud Holscher, 1972. Manufacturer: d line international.

**Cheetah wheelchair for children.** Design: 3PART, 2004. Manufacturer: R82.

**Flamingo T1.** Design: Halskov & Dalsgaard, 2005. Manufacturer: Lightyears. – A combination of informality and functionalism is characteristic of much contemporary Danish design.

**Bus stop:** The bus stop must help making public transport attractive. It must have a distinctive identity so that the traveller can easily spot it from a distance. It must provide shelter, it must have a bench – long waits may occur – and easily accessible information with understandable messages. Information must be limited to essentials and not drown in “noise”. Basic requirements, which many bus stops do not meet.

Some do. Photo: Movia’s bus stop in Copenhagen, designed by Knud Holscher Design.



**Veryround.** Design: Louise Campbell, 2006.

**Spun Chaise Lounge.** Design: Mathias Bengtsson, 2003.

**Parts of a Rainbow.** Design: Christian Flindt, 2005.

**Miss Tilde.** Design: Gopingpong, 2005. – Somewhere to keep private memories by a young radical design studio.

**Waves.** Design: Anne-Mette Jensen and Morten Ernst, 1994. Manufacturer: Erik Jørgensen. – Danish designers’ play with organic forms.

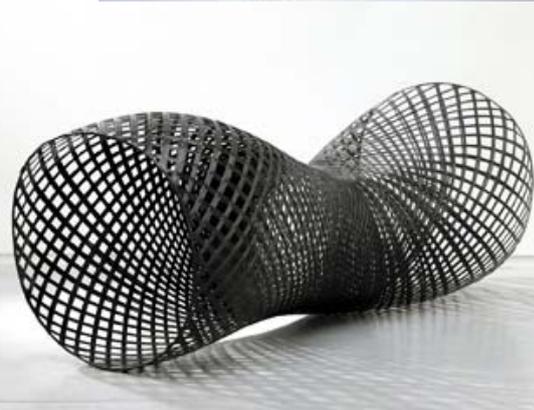
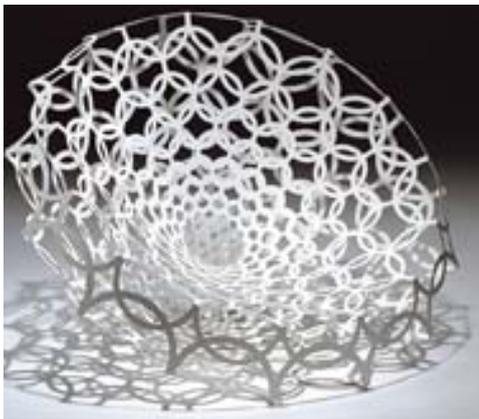
**Plasma.** Design: Erik Magnussen, 2005. Manufacturer: Engelbrechts. – Plasma proves that vision and innovation are not restricted to the new generation of Danish designers.

difficult to take them seriously, calling for more direct successors to the classic Danish design.

However, the experiments and the new design were there to stay. The groups paved the way for today’s Danish designers, who have successfully either developed or broken with the traditional Danish design idiom.

Simply put, there are today two trends within the new generation of Danish furniture designers and industrial designers. One is “wild” with pioneering design and an informal idiom using spectacular and sculptural forms. It is represented by designers such as Louise Campbell, Mathias Bengtsson, Christian Flindt, Sebastian Holmbäck and the Gopingpong group.

The other is “disciplined”, with a clear basis in the Danish design tradition in its respect for classic craft, yet sufficiently





**Bridges:** Denmark is characterised by many waterways, which require a special infrastructure. Formerly the ferries connected the country. Today – with the current requirements for fast traffic flow – bridges have often taken over this function, among others across the Great Belt, where the beautiful and distinctive East Bridge, opened in 1998 and designed by Dissing+Weitling, has virtually achieved the

status of a national monument.  
Photo: Dissing+Weitling.



**Mosquito.** Design: Rud Thygesen, 2000.  
Manufacturer: N. Roth Andersen. – A contemporary idiom by one of the veterans of Danish design.

**Gallery.** Design: Hans Sandgren Jakobsen, 1998.  
Manufacturer: Fredericia Furniture.

**Gubi Chair.** Design: Komplot, 2004.  
Manufacturer: Gubi.

**Slow Chair.** Design: Søren Ulrik Petersen, 2000.  
Manufacturer: PP Møbler.



bold to experiment with new technology and new materials. It is represented by designers such as Søren Ulrik Petersen, Cecilie Manz, Kasper Salto, Hans Sandgren Jakobsen, Christina Strand and Niels Hvass.

Both trends have given Danish design and especially Danish furniture design the talent and energy in short supply for several generations.

Danish designers are increasingly inter-

ested in sustainable solutions. An example is the chair Imprint designed by Johannes Foersom and Peter Hiort-Lorenzen in an environmentally friendly wood fibre material, which has set new standards for sustainability within Danish furniture design.

Danish design is not a uniform and unambiguous concept to the same extent as in the past, but has developed into a far broader idiom than the famous style icons from the 1940s and 1950s. The new gen-

eration has added humour and irony to the traditional values. The influence of Functionalism is still seen, but the young designers are characterised by a great degree of internationalisation, which contributes to developing and varying the special nature of Danish design. In addition, the borderlines between design, architecture and craft are increasingly fluid, which will contribute to the development in the coming years.

## Furniture and industrial design

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### New times – new concepts

In keeping with the international trends, there is greater focus on design in Denmark than ever before. Industry is increasingly thinking strategically and understanding the importance of design to the companies' business development. A contributory factor is the Danish government's commitment to design. In the late 1990s, the Danish government was one of the first in the world to define an actual design policy – an initiative which in 2007 was followed up by the launch of DesignDenmark as part of the general Danish trade and industry policy.

At the same time, the design concept has developed. Service design, interaction design and concept design are among the concepts which are placing new demands on the designers and their ability to collaborate and form networks with other professions. As in other industrialised countries, the Danish design profession is engaged in adapting to and taking part in this new reality.

*Birgitta Capetillo  
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Denmark's Official Web Site  
[www.denmark.dk](http://www.denmark.dk)

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**4-cast.** Design: Strand+Hvass, 2006.  
Manufacturer: Four Design.

**Caravaggio.** Design: Cecilie Manz, 2005.  
Manufacturer: Lightyears.

**Ice.** Design: Kasper Salto, 2002.  
Manufacturer: Fritz Hansen.

