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Nationalmuseum Design 2015: The First Year of Exhibitions

Nationalmuseum Design@Kulturhuset Stadsteatern, Stockholm
Susanne Eriksson
Project Manager, Nationalmuseum Design
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Nationalmuseum
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Susanne Eriksson
Project Manager, Nationalmuseum Design

Interior from the exhibition Glass is Tomorrow.
Subjectivities: Selected Design
On 6 February, 2015, we opened the very first exhibition, *Subjectivities: Selected Design* at Nationalmuseum Design’s temporary exhibition space in Kulturhuset Stadsteatern (see article on p. 145). Another seven exhibitions in five exhibition periods have been shown since then.

The Torsten and Wanja Söderberg Award
*Subjectivities: Selected Design* was followed by an exhibition in three parts, which largely consisted of a collaboration between Nationalmuseum Design and the Röhsska Museum for Arts, Crafts, Design and Fashion in Gothenburg. This exhibition, *The Torsten and Wanja Söderberg Award,* featured all the award winners for the period 1994–2014, each represented by one or more objects, and with the award committee’s motivation. The award is presented annually to a Nordic designer or craftsperson and consists of the sum of SEK one million, making it Europe’s largest prize in the field of design, and of the opportunity to exhibit at the Röhsska Museum, where the award-winner’s work is shown, with an accompanying catalogue. This is the first time the award and its previous recipients have been presented in Stockholm in this way. An adapted version will later be shown permanently at the Röhsska Museum in Gothenburg.

The 2014 winner of the Torsten and Wanja Söderberg Award was the Swedish fashion designer Ann-Sofie Back, whose entire exhibition was moved from Gothenburg and adapted to Nationalmuseum Design’s exhibition space. A common theme throughout Ann-Sofie Back’s oeuvre is her non-conformity. From the early days of her career, her design was considered highbrow and avant-garde, but her popularity as a designer has grown in recent years, and she is currently regarded as one of the top names on the Swedish fashion scene.

Everything Must Go! Ann-Sofie Back
The conceptual “bargain basement” *Everything Must Go!* articulated a critical approach to consumerism. And a discussion, or perhaps a conflict, about and between the immaterial values of trademarks and our own subjective need to identify ourselves with certain designer labels. The concept store, in the form of an exhibition, raised the value of ordinary products by endorsing and associating them with Ann-Sofie Back’s own label, BACK. And with a totally different — and considerably higher — price tag than expected. In an intriguingly detached and completely intentional way, fashion designer Ann-Sofie Back used herself and her label in the exhibition to exemplify the critique of our contemporary accelerating obsession with the “right” designer labels and how they influence us, and aspects on economic value. *Everything Must Go!* generated a creative discussion and a certain irritation concerning the content and concept. And the Nationalmuseum met an entirely new and young audience.

The Lunning Award
As a commentary on these two exhibitions, works by the winners of the Nordic *Lunning Award* in 1951–1970 in the Nationalmuseum collection were also shown.

Glass is Tomorrow
The main exhibition at Nationalmuseum Design last summer was the comprehensive presentation of the European project *Glass is Tomorrow,* curated by Lise Coirier from Brussels. The project, which was launched in 2011 and partially funded by the European Union’s arts programme, ended in 2015. Its purpose was to organise workshops to bring together different skills and occupational groups in the international glass-making community, to share experiences and knowledge, with the aim of creating the potential for new ways of using glass as a material, with multifaceted and creative results. The exhibition featured unique pieces and art objects made of glass by some 70 designers and teams of glassworkers, who had collaborated on different themes in glass workshops and industries in France, Sweden, Turkey and the UK. The exhibition, which was a joint project between the producer Pro Materia in Brussels and the Nationalmuseum, had previously been shown in France and Italy.

Stockholm Glass
Parallel with the international glass exhibition, the Nationalmuseum compiled a presentation of unique glass objects by ten local glass designers, *Stockholmsglas* (Stockholm Glass). Works by artists with their own studio or glass foundry were shown, artists who are able to realise their ideas more freely than in the commercial glass industry.

Domestic Futures
*Domestic Futures* was the Nationalmuseum’s major autumn exhibition. This comprehensive presentation of some 30 international designers, artists and project teams, featured a large array of innovative objects for three possible scenarios illustrating what everyday life may be like in the future. How do we want to live and work? And do these new proposed lives even appeal to us? These were the two fundamental questions that visitors were asked, both implicitly by the objects and design of the exhibition, and explicitly in a polling procedure. The theme, “Back to Nature”, presented the possibility to be self-sufficient, by knowing how to make a fire, produce food and live a more nomadic life in tune with changes in the surrounding conditions. “Bio-tech Living” asked questions about future everyday existence, where biology meets new technology. The third alternative future scenario, “Space Colonisation”, presented possibilities and challenges that lie ahead if we move to new, extraterrestrial places. The guest curator Lisanne Fransen was responsible for the idea and selection of designers and objects, and the project was initiated by the now defunct Formmuseets Vänner (Friends of the Design Museum).
An additional dimension on the concept of “the future” was presented to visitors as a timeline (1892–2015) with brief descriptions of objects and innovations. A few key dates for specific objects were illustrated with pieces from the Nationalmuseum collection. For instance, visitors were reminded of the rather astonishing fact that the first version of the iPhone was launched in 2007 – less than ten years ago! The exhibition Domestic Futures generated many inquisitive discussions on how and where we want to live in a future that will be here very soon.

The New Map
The last two parallel exhibitions in our first year – The New Map and Women Pioneers: Swedish Design in Between the Wars – opened in early December 2015. The New Map, produced by Form/Design Center in Malmö according to a concept by the industrial designer Jenny Nordberg, takes as its starting point a practical exploration of a new model for designers and producers to collaborate on small-scale design production. 24 designers and as many producers in the Skåne region were matched and paired off in unexpected constellations, with the aim of challenging their occupational identities and traditional production models, and to find a fairer economic distribution between designers and manufacturers. The idea was also to offer consumers more high-quality products on a local, collaborative and ethically viable design market.

Women Pioneers: Swedish Design in Between the Wars
The exhibition Women Pioneers: Swedish Design in Between the Wars was the Nationalmuseum’s presentation of an explicit collecting strategy since 2012, focusing on art objects by women designers active from 1920 and a few decades onwards. It highlights the difficulties and challenges that faced women designers during that period, and how many of them were forgotten when a new generation entered the Swedish design scene after the Second World War. The exhibition presented a broad range of objects by 22 women designers and was also shown in the summer of 2015 at Läckö Castle (see article on p. 163).

Nationalmuseum Design Project Team:
Curator: Anders Bengtsson and Micael Ernstell
Exhibition designer and exhibition technology coordinator: Joakim Werning
Conservator: Maria Franzon
Exhibition coordinator: Anneli Carlsson
Project manager: Susanne Eriksson and
Curator: Maria Perers (from autumn 2015)
Exhibition technician: Tomas Emtemo (autumn 2015)
Design educator: Sara Borgegård Ålgå (autumn 2015)
Events coordination, media, press, web communications and graphic design:
Anna Jansson, Hanna Tottmar, Åsa Melin Brisling, Agneta Bervokk

The Project Container Year 1
Thórunn Arnadóttir, Reykjavik
Sipp og Høj, installation

Contemporary Swedish Silver
Thirty-two silversmiths present objects and art jewellery

Finn Ahlgren
Nattljuren (Night Creatures), installation

The Glass Factory; Ten Artefacts from Boda Åsa Jungnelius, guest curator

DesigNU 2014
Five nominees for the DesigNU 2014 award

The Bengt Julin Fund
Nine silver and glass objects from the Nationalmuseum collection of applied art and design

Subjectivities: Selected Design
6 February–22 March 2015
(See article on p. 145)

The Torsten and Wanja Söderberg Award
17 April–31 May 2015
Curators: Andreas Kittel, Happy FB (guest curators), Anders Bengtsson, Susanne Eriksson and Micael Ernstell (in-house curators)
Exhibition design: Joakim Werning in association with Andreas Kittel, Happy FB
Lighting design: Jan Gouiedo, Gouiedo AB

Exhibition technology: Tomas Emtemo, Pär Lindblom, Thomas Lundgren and Carl Rehnström
AV technician: Thomas Junegard
Graphic design: Andreas Kittel, Happy FB
Conservator: Maria Franzon
Exhibition coordinator: Anneli Carlsson
In association with the Röhsska Museum for Arts, Crafts, Design and Fashion, Gothenburg

Everything Must Go! Ann-Sofie Back
17 April–31 May 2015
Curator: Andreas Kittel, Happy FB (guest curator)
Exhibition design: Ann-Sofie Back, concept and idea; Implementation: Joakim Werning
Lighting design: Jan Gouiedo, Gouiedo AB
Exhibition technology: Tomas Emtemo, Pär Lindblom, Thomas Lundgren and Carl Rehnström
AV technician: Thomas Junegard
Graphic design: Happy FB through Andreas Kittel
Conservator: Maria Franzon
Exhibition coordinator: Anneli Carlsson
Project manager: Susanne Eriksson
In association with the Röhsska Museum for Arts, Crafts, Design and Fashion, Gothenburg

Glass is Tomorrow
17 June–23 August 2015
Curators: Lise Coirier, Pro Materia (guest curator), Wing Lam Kwok (assistant curator) and Micael Ernstell (in-house curator)
Exhibition design: Joakim Werning
Lighting design: Jan Gouiedo, Gouiedo AB
Exhibition technology: Tomas Emtemo, Pär Lindblom, Thomas Lundgren and Carl Rehnström
AV technician: Thomas Junegard
Graphic design: Agneta Bervokk
Conservator: Maria Franzon
Exhibition coordinator: Anneli Carlsson
In association with Pro Material, Brussels

Stockholm Glass
17 June–23 August 2015
Curator: Micael Ernstell
Exhibition design: Joakim Werning
Lighting design: Jan Gouiedo, Gouiedo AB
Exhibition technology: Tomas Emtemo, Pär Lindblom, Thomas Lundgren and Carl Rehnström
AV technician: Thomas Junegard
Graphic design: Agneta Bervokk
Conservator: Maria Franzon
Exhibition coordinator: Anneli Carlsson
Interior from the exhibition *Stockholm Glass.*

Interior from the exhibition *Domestic Futures.*

Interior from the exhibition *Domestic Futures.*

Interior from the exhibition *Domestic Futures.*
Domestic Futures
18 September–15 November 2015
Curator: Lisanne Fransen, Studio Lisanne Fransen (guest curator)
Exhibition design: Harm Rensink, Studio Harm Rensink, Amsterdam
Lighting design: Jan Gouiedo, Gouiedo AB
Exhibition technology: Tomas Entemo, Pär Lindblom, Thomas Lundgren and Carl Rehnström
AV technician: Thomas Junegard
Graphic design: Agneta Bervokk
Conservator: Maria Franzon
Exhibition coordinator: Anneli Carlsson
Project manager: Susanne Eriksson

The New Map
4 December 2015–14 February 2016
Curator: Jenny Nordberg, Malmö (guest curator)
Exhibition design: Jenny Nordberg, Malmö
Lighting design: Jan Gouiedo, Jan Gouiedo AB
Exhibition technology: Tomas Entemo, Pär Lindblom, Thomas Lundgren and Carl Rehnström
AV technician: Thomas Junegard
Graphic design: Agneta Bervokk
Conservator: Maria Franzon
Exhibition coordinator: Anneli Carlsson
Project manager: Susanne Eriksson
In association with Form/Design Center Malmö

Women Pioneers: Swedish Design in Between the Wars
4 December 2015–14 February 2016
(See article on p. 163)

Notes:
1. The award committee for the Torsten and Wanja Söderberg Award included the museum directors of design museums in the five Nordic countries and the chairman of the Torsten Söderberg Foundation, Tomas Söderberg. The Röhsska Museum for Arts, Crafts, Design and Fashion is the headquarters of this award, and the award committee is chaired by the director of the museum. The jury process involves visiting some 15 designers and applied arts practitioners in their studios, before selecting the year’s award winner.

Every six years, the award may be divided into five equally large prizes – one for each Nordic country – to acknowledge outstanding critics in the field. The award for industrial design can also be shared by several people who have collaborated on a project.

The Torsten and Wanja Söderberg Award was initiated in 1992 by the Torsten and Ragnar Söderberg Foundations in commemoration of the 100th birthday of Torsten Söderberg. The Foundations are two of the main sources of funding for R&D in Sweden. Since 2014, the Torsten Söderberg Foundation has been sole funder of the design award and is responsible for its continuity.


In 1999, the award was shared by five Nordic design critics: Ádalsteinn Ingólfssson (IS), Kaj Kalin (FI), John Vedel-Rieper (DK), Jorunn Veiteberg (N), Kerstin Wickman (SE).

3. The award committee’s comment: “Ann-Sofie Back’s oeuvre is characterised by intuition and paradox. In her perpetual battle with the fashion system of which she herself is a part, and with uncompromising integrity, she has explored everyday existence and social stereotypes. With continuity and unflinching detachment, she has, over the years, manifested that it is possible, with confidence in the aesthetics of resistance, to create commercially viable yet original fashion. Ann-Sofi Back (b. 1971) is currently the creative director of the H&M-owned label Cheap Monday, alongside designing for her own main label BACK. She lives and works in Stockholm.


The participants from Sweden were the artists Matti Klenell, Matilda Kästel and Fredrik Nielsen, and the Glass Factory Team in Boda.


7. Theme Back to Nature: Ma’yan Pesach (Israel), Lauren Davies (GB), Francesco Faccin (IT), chmara.rosinke (AT), Thomas Thwaites (GB), Willems van Doorn (NL), Martina Muzi (IT), Jorge Penadés (ES).

Theme Bio-tech Living: Officina Corpuscoli/Maurizio Montalti (IT), Thought Collider/Mike Thompson (GB), Johanna Schmeer (GE), James King (GB), Naomi Kizhner (IL), Ela Celary (GE), Veronica Ramner (GE), Susana Soares (PT), Agi Haines (GB), Marcia Nolte (NL), Livin Studio (AT)/University of Utrecht (NL), Stefan Schwabe (GE).

Theme Space Colonisation: Lucy McRae (AU), Nelly Ben Hayoun (FR), NASA/JPL (USA), Studio Soöne (JP/FR), Neri Oxman (IL)/Stratasys Ltd., Ai Hasegawa (JP), Mars One (NL), Aloïs Yang (FR), Grietje Schepers (NL).
