


WALTER KNOLL

# Characters

The new modernity of living

VOLUME TWO | 2019



People  
Aesthetics  
Mastery  
Progress  
Relevance

- The Bauhaus was not a house: it was an awakening. It was made up of people, personalities and their approaches. It was a laboratory and a school; a place for research, teaching and creativity. A place for the arts, color and culture. The values enshrined by the Bauhaus are as alive as never before. *A tribute* ▶

# Tribute to the Bauhaus

Dear Readers,

In 1926, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe moved from Berlin to Stuttgart, where he had accepted the post of artistic director for a project by the Deutscher Werkbund, the German craftsmen's association. He was to build the prototype of a housing estate on Killesberg hill, located on the northern edge of Stuttgart. "Die Wohnung" ("The Dwelling") was one of the first exhibitions of its kind. It offered a microcosm of modernity: the relationship between interior and exterior, building and living, house and human.

That is how the Weissenhof Estate was created, which marked the arrival of modern living – and the Bauhaus school – in Stuttgart. Mies van der Rohe engaged the most progressive architects of the time to work on the project. Gropius, Le Corbusier, Scharoun, Behrens and the Taut brothers designed buildings for this housing estate which only needed to fulfill two criteria: they had to have flat roofs and white walls.

And, as fate would have it, in the Feuerbach neighborhood right at the foot of Killesberg hill, Walter Knoll had just opened his furniture factory one year earlier. Every day after work, he would drive home to Vollmöller Villa in the southern part of the city. And a mere two-minute drive from his villa was the office that star architect Mies van der Rohe had rented for his project. It is thus highly probable that the two men encountered one another even more often than in their many business meetings. Walter Knoll furnished five prototype apartments for Mies van der Rohe as well as four other ones for other architects. This marked the arrival of modernity at Walter Knoll – first as a friendship, then as an approach.

It is thus with great pleasure that we present to you, on the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Bauhaus school, our new products – with which we also wish to pay homage to modernity and its masters. *The Farns*, a sideboard by EOOS, is a tribute to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and his iconic Farnsworth House. *Living Landscape*, the sofa that can change direction, was also conceived by constructively confronting the open spaces of modernity. Now, we present the redesigned model: *Living Landscape 755*.

The Swiss artist and designer Ginger Zalaba developed two chairs for us, both of which combine the Bauhaus ethos with a modern lifestyle philosophy: *Aisuu Chair* and *Aisuu Side Chair* – a tribute to designs by her grandfather, Otto Kolb, the great architect with whom we worked in the 1960s.

In the coming months, we will engage with Bauhaus and modernity in varied and hopefully inspiring ways. You have our word: we will keep you posted!

Until then, you can visit our website. Or come visit us in Herrenberg: we would be delighted to welcome you any time!

Sincerely yours,



Markus Benz



**MARKUS BENZ**  
CEO, Walter Knoll

PEOPLE

6 Furniture is for people

- 8 Geza Schön – the perfumer
- 10 Katarzyna Kozielska – the choreographer
- 12 Florian Kohler – the paper manufacturer



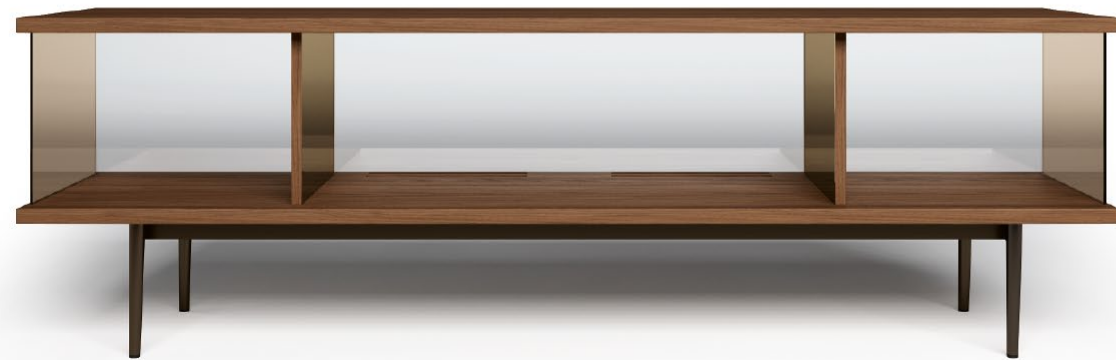
8 As purist as a Bauhaus master: perfumer Geza Schön and his molecule

AESTHETICS

14 True beauty is timeless

2

- 16 Connections – when images find common ground
- 26 The beauty formula – the ancient rules that shape our preferences and desires. Essay



35 Inspired by modern architecture: the minimalist, flexible *The Farns* sideboard

3

MASTERY

28 Craft is the refinement of design

- 30 The impossible house – Mies van der Rohe and his Farnsworth House
- 35 The almost impossible sideboard – how EOOS developed *The Farns*

PROGRESS

36 A product is good when it makes an improvement

4

- 38 An encounter at Weissenhof – Walter Knoll and the start of the modern age
- 44 The future at Weissenhof – the super-energetic B10 house
- 46 From your smartphone to your home – designing furniture digitally



52 Granddaughter of the Bauhaus: Ginger Zalaba has used her own philosophy of modern living to reinterpret her grandfather's bold constructions



46 Augmented reality: how a swipe of the finger can bring Walter Knoll furniture into your home

5

RELEVANCE

50 The more we leave out, the longer we last

- 52 "I am a child of the Bauhaus" – Swiss designer Ginger Zalaba
- 58 Walter Knoll and the effect of modernity: corporate architecture



64 Open spaces: a flexible sideboard and movable sofa layout create new perspectives

NEW PRODUCTS

62 The new modernity of living

- 64 Clear, open, self-assured – geometry of beauty
- 70 *The Farns* – house in house
- 78 *Living Landscape 755* – living with a 360-degree perspective
- 83 *Foster 620 Table* – a small tree in the room
- 86 *Aisuu Side Chair* – sensuously attractive
- 90 *Aisuu Chair* – just right
- 94 *Deen Table* – come together
- 96 *Vostra Wood* – transcending time
- 98 *FK* – icon in the comfort zone



PEOPLE

# Furniture is for people

Meet three people who share a special bond with Walter Knoll, as they also draw their energy from Bauhaus ideals. A perfumer, a choreographer and a paper producer, a talk about their creative work: what simplification, clarity and craftsmanship mean to them

“The ultimate goal of all art is the building.” Thus read the first sentence of the Bauhaus manifesto, written by Walter Gropius one hundred years ago. He believed that buildings should be designed for people, not for the powers that be; that they should be understandable rather than overwhelming. To do so, he said, it would require architects, craftsmen and artists who thought independently: people who designed holistically, as though from the same mind. The Bauhaus school, with its design vocabulary, emerged out of this philosophy: it produced a style that was clear, reduced and so universal that it was understood throughout the world. We at Walter Knoll share this philosophy. We hold the uplifting, even liberating, impact of modernity in high regard. To us, the purpose of a piece of furniture is to create warmth, and a sense of security and trust. Walter Knoll designs furniture and objects that have a purpose. People feel immediately at home in spaces with Walter Knoll furniture – because we use the same universal vocabulary of color and design.

# Geza Schön

Perfumer



The nose is not the most important thing, says Geza Schön. A good perfumer works with a wealth of emotions

## With a touch of less

### REDUCTION + SENSUALITY

Berlin perfumer **Geza Schön** is an industry rule-breaker. Just as the Bauhaus School dispensed with anything superfluous, the fragrance purist has used functional finesse to create a global success story

A modern perfume is not simply a fragrance. It is an intricate composition, unfolding in a choreographed sequence: there is the top note, which defines a perfume's first impression; then the middle note, which shapes its character; and finally the base note, which blends with the skin's own scent and is the reason why every perfume smells subtly different on different people. Even something as fleeting as a fragrance has structure.

"Linearity and complexity – those are the characteristics of any good perfume," says Geza Schön. "But that does not mean that it has to be complicated."

The Berlin perfumer is seen as a rebel in his field – firstly because he no longer works for a label, but produces his fragrances himself. But mostly because he has broken with the rule that a new perfume always has to be a combination of those two thousand tried-and-tested ingredients that all perfumers use when they want to create a fragrance. No one would have dreamed of using only a single fragrance ingredient for a new perfume. No one – except Geza Schön.

"It doesn't take a genius to do this," he says, "you just have to be able to think outside the paradigm."

Here, Geza Schön's philosophy meets that of Walter Knoll. Just as the perfumer

extracts the very essence of a fragrance, Walter Knoll emphasizes the origin of both material and function. A chair is, and remains, a chair. Leather, stone and wood are effective because of their natural qualities. Refined purism was central to the Bauhaus School – drawing a clear line, beyond which lurked the arbitrary.

Until now, in Geza Schön's industry the rule was that the more complex the composition, the more meaningful the fragrance would become. More was more: richness was created through quantity. This is a way of thinking in many industries. In perfumery, this led to a situation where fragrances were becoming increasingly similar – until Geza Schön brought "Molecule 01" onto the market a few years ago. A perfume that takes the opposite path, back to simplicity, clarity, reduction. A perfume that springs from a new way of thinking, as effortlessly elegant as a Bauhaus design.

"Molecule 01" contains just one, single, synthetically produced molecule. It is called "Iso E Super" and has been used as a component in perfumes since the 1970s, but always in limited quantities. Geza Schön was introduced to it while training to become a perfumer at a large German fragrance manufacturer. One evening, he showed it to a friend in

a bar – whereupon, less than ten minutes later, this friend was approached by a woman asking about his fragrance. The perfumer never forgot it. "Iso E Super smells woody, dry and warm, but also has something skin-like, velvety," says Geza Schön. "It is sexy, but it doesn't get on your nerves."

Geza Schön worked for the large German fragrance manufacturer in Singapore, London, New York and Buenos Aires for twelve more years before he turned the idea for his own fragrance into a reality. Now, his clients include stars such as Kate Moss and Lionel Messi. He would not say that he has a better nose than other perfumers. In truth, a good perfumer does not actually work with his nose; he works with the whole wealth of associations, memories and hidden desires that a fragrance brings out in a person.

"Everything we smell is emotion," says Geza Schön. "None of our other senses is triggered so much by our feelings."

Sometimes the path to great emotion seems simple. *Marcus Jauer*

#### About

Geza Schön began to collect samples of men's perfumes at the age of thirteen. After graduating from high school, he spent twelve years working in the global perfume industry. In 2005, he founded the label Escentric Molecules in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Here, he develops fragrances, some of which are based on just one molecule.

# Katarzyna Kozielska

Choreographer

"I end up with a space in which I can develop my choreography," says Katarzyna Kozielska. "This process is very Bauhaus."



## “Creating connections between disciplines”

### FORM + MOVEMENT

**Katarzyna Kozielska**, from Poland, is regarded as the rising star of a new generation of choreographers. Her latest work “Aufbruch” (Departure) is about 1919 – the year in which the Bauhaus was founded

**M**s. Kozielska, can the Bauhaus be translated into dance?

**KK** You can express anything in dance that you have a vision of. At least, that's the case with me. Of course, I went to Weimar and researched the Bauhaus. There is a lot of material this year for the centenary. Ultimately, however, it was about finding something that touched me personally.

What touched you, exactly?

**KK** It was that, in the year of the crisis, when the world war had only just ended, people were saying, “We're going to start something new, and we're going to change the world.” That made an impression on me – their attitude immediately appealed to me.

The Bauhaus states: “The ultimate aim of all creative activity is the building” ...

**KK** ... and in dance, the aim is the movement – the exact opposite of statics. We create sculptures with our bodies. They usually last only for a moment. But that is exactly how we express ourselves. The greatest among us manage to do this in their own unique way. It's at this point that craft intersects with art.

The Bauhaus combined art and craftsmanship. Walter Knoll embodies this tradition: creation, craftsmanship, engineering – everything flows together harmoniously.

**KK** Exactly, I want to blur boundaries too! For me, the creative process is to make connections between disciplines. For “Aufbruch,” first of all I had the set built, then came the tailoring of the costumes, and then the composition of the music. This process is very Bauhaus in itself. We ended up with a space in which I could develop my choreography. I keep listening to the music until it turns into motion in my head.

At Walter Knoll we make endless sketches and build models. How do you capture your ideas?

**KK** I develop everything in my head. As long as I know what I want to say, the movement constructs itself. If I forget something, it doesn't annoy me because it means it probably wouldn't have worked. Otherwise I would have retained it.

You don't write anything down?

**KK** When I write something down, later on I don't understand what I meant.

I have to dance it. Even if I'm not performing any more – it's important to me that I can still dance every figure myself that I ask of my dancers. That's why I often practice alone in the studio first. I can ask my body how to express something.

How did you become a choreographer?

**KK** I became a mother ten years ago and took time to look after the baby. After that, I developed my first choreography. I used to paint and make sculptures, but they never turned out the way I had imagined. With choreography I knew immediately: that's it!

How do you see your future?

**KK** I will always follow my vision. That's also what I take from the Bauhaus. I see what I see and I don't ask why, I just follow it. There is no other way.

*Interview: Marcus Jauer*

#### About

Katarzyna Kozielska completed her ballet training at the John Cranko School, one of the most prestigious academies in the world. She then danced for eighteen years with the Stuttgart Ballet Company. Since 2011, she has been developing her own dance pieces, including solos for the German Dance Award, a tribute to John Cage and commissioned works for the Stuttgart Ballet.

# Florian Kohler

Owner,  
Gmund Papier



"Of course paper speaks to us, even if it's blank," says Florian Kohler.  
"It is not as if wood has nothing to say until you make a chair out of it."

## "We turned the Bauhaus idea into paper"

### MATERIAL + EXCELLENCE

**Florian Kohler** runs an innovative paper factory with a rich heritage in Gmund. He has just developed a new variety of paper with the Bauhaus Dessau. Walter Knoll's Characters magazine is printed on this very paper

**M**r. Kohler, why does the world need Bauhaus paper?

**FK** Besides wood, paper was the most important material in Bauhaus doctrine. Only a few people are aware of this today. We wanted a paper that had the impact of a Bauhaus building. Modern, aesthetical and discreet.

How did you get from the idea to the material?

**FK** Our papers are emotional; we convey the essence of a brand through the quality of the paper. But in order to trigger a feeling, you first have to experience one yourself. So we did a lot of research and went to our company archive – we're the oldest designer paper factory in the world – and we had a look at what we produced ourselves a hundred years ago. And of course we went to the Bauhaus in Dessau to get a sense of the atmosphere of that creative space.

What does the Bauhaus brand mean?

**FK** Design for everyone – that was one of the fundamental ideas of the Bauhaus. We felt bound to express that. The

result is a discreet, completely neutral paper – without effects, without structure – that embodies perfect simplicity. A paper that is excellent in every respect, yet is affordable.

We have made a democratic paper.

It is said that a blank page has no story to tell. You would probably disagree with that.

**FK** If I believed that, I wouldn't like my work as much as I do. Of course paper speaks to us, even if it's blank. It is not as if wood has nothing to say until you make a chair out of it. We coated the winning cards for the Oscars with gold, large car companies order papers from us with a metallic sheen, and we also design wedding invitations when asked by a manager like Marissa Mayer from Silicon Valley. There is no one in the world who covers such a broad spectrum as we do. We don't just make paper, we communicate via paper.

Who writes or prints on the Bauhaus Dessau paper by Gmund?

**FK** Most of our customers are bulk buyers who use it to produce brochures, catalogs and illustrated books. It is a

natural paper, but it is also good to print on. For example, if people open this Walter Knoll magazine and for a moment feel like they can step into the photo in front of them, then we have done a good job.

Why is the paper available in two different shades of white?

**FK** The first white is completely neutral, without any hint of color. The paper should step back completely behind whatever is printed on it. Brightness, functionality, materiality – that's what Bauhaus is about. In contrast, we have given the other white a bluish tone, which lends it a very modern, groundbreaking quality. This paper says, "something new starts with me." Because that is also what the Bauhaus stood for – the courage to have a vision, to make a departure.

*Interview: Marcus Jauer*

#### About

Florian Kohler is the fourth generation of his family to run Gmund Papier. The origins of the company in the Upper Bavarian Mangfall Valley go back to the year 1829. In 2011, the company became world famous when it produced the envelopes and the winning cards for the Academy Awards. Like Walter Knoll, the paper factory is a member of the "Meisterkreis", a network of companies, institutions, and people committed to creativity and quality. [www.meisterkreis-deutschland.com](http://www.meisterkreis-deutschland.com)



# 2

AESTHETICS

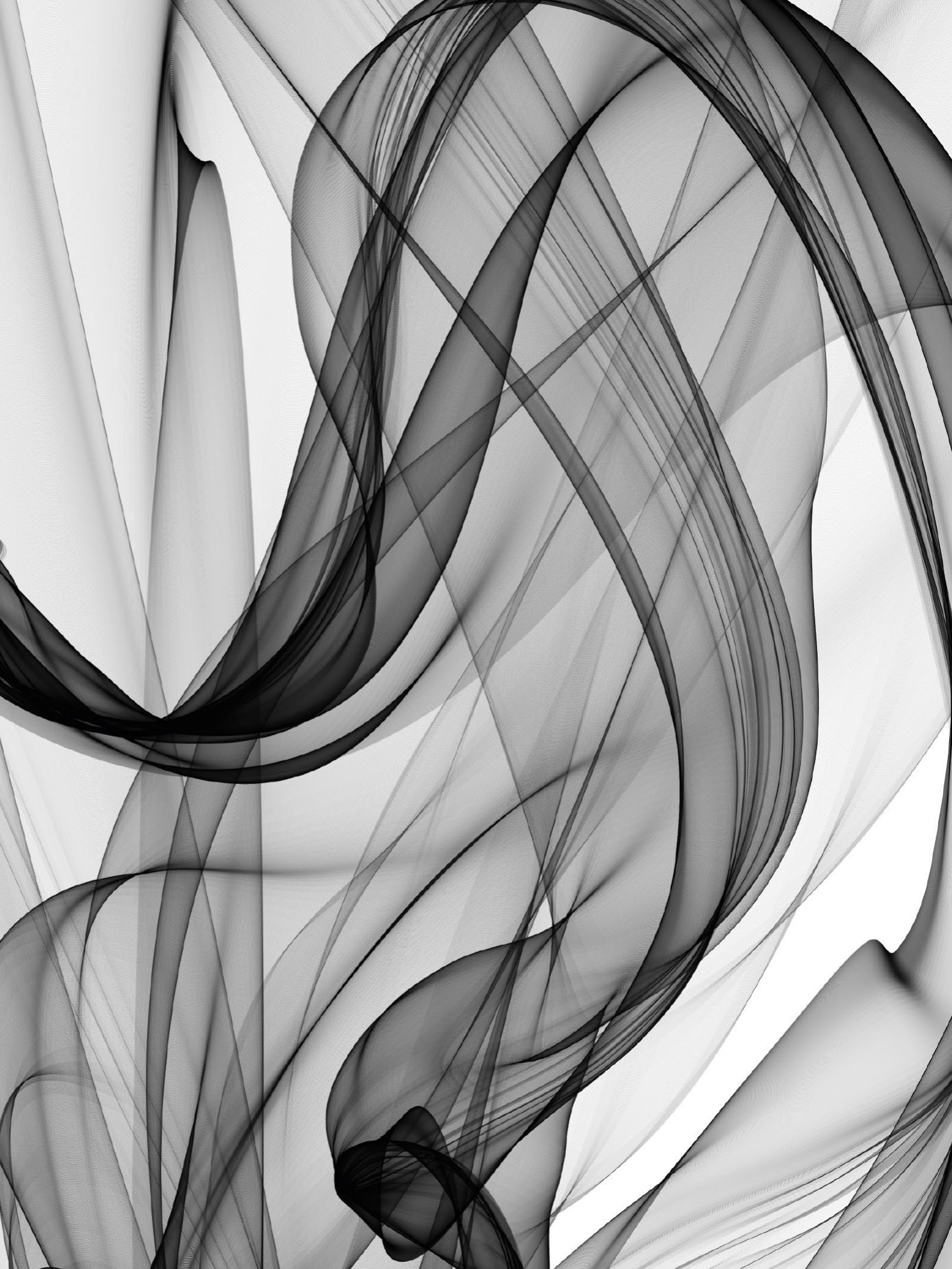
## True beauty is timeless

Want to try an experiment? On the next few pages, through a sumptuous array of images, you will see just how rapidly you respond to beauty. An essay on the geometry of beauty explains why

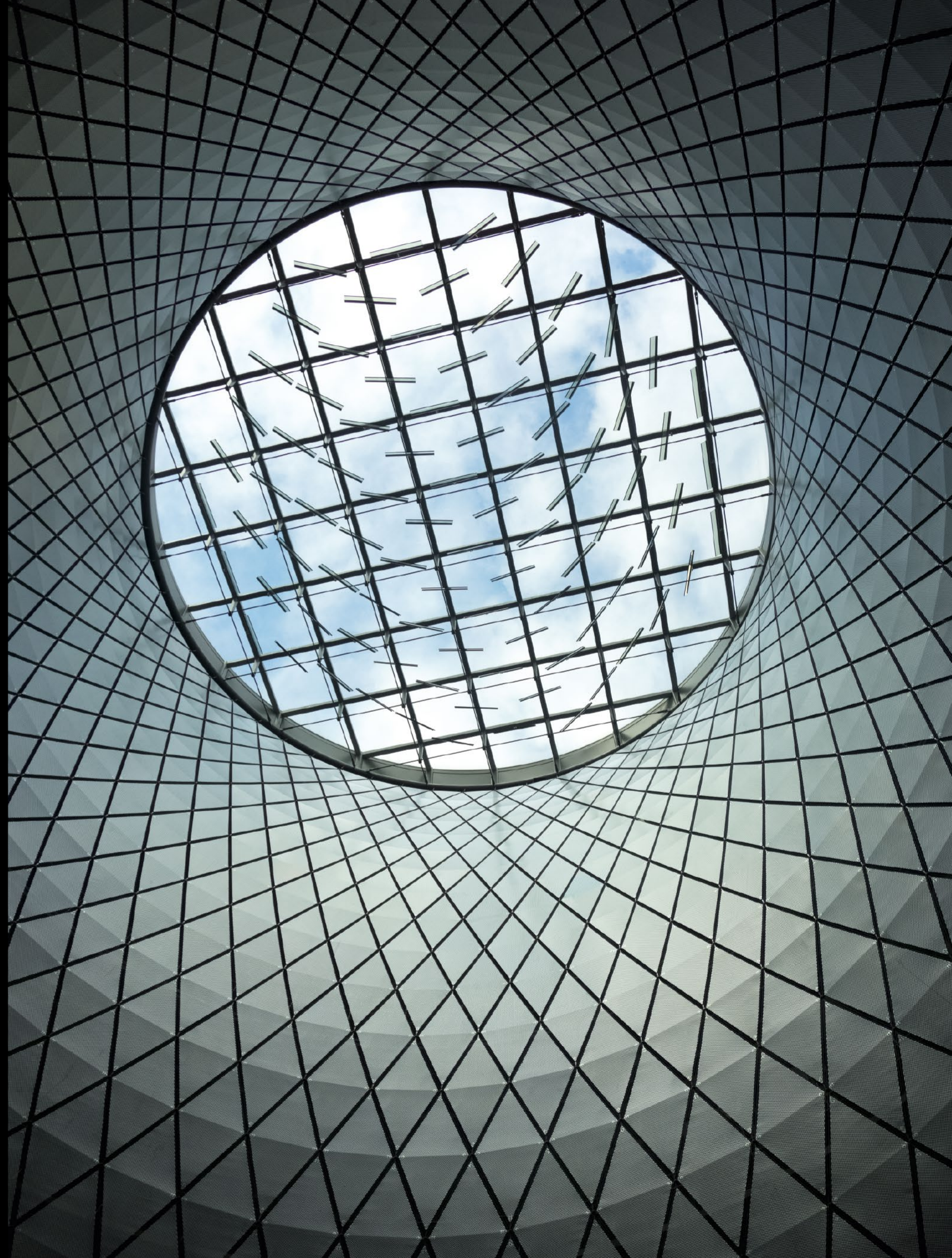
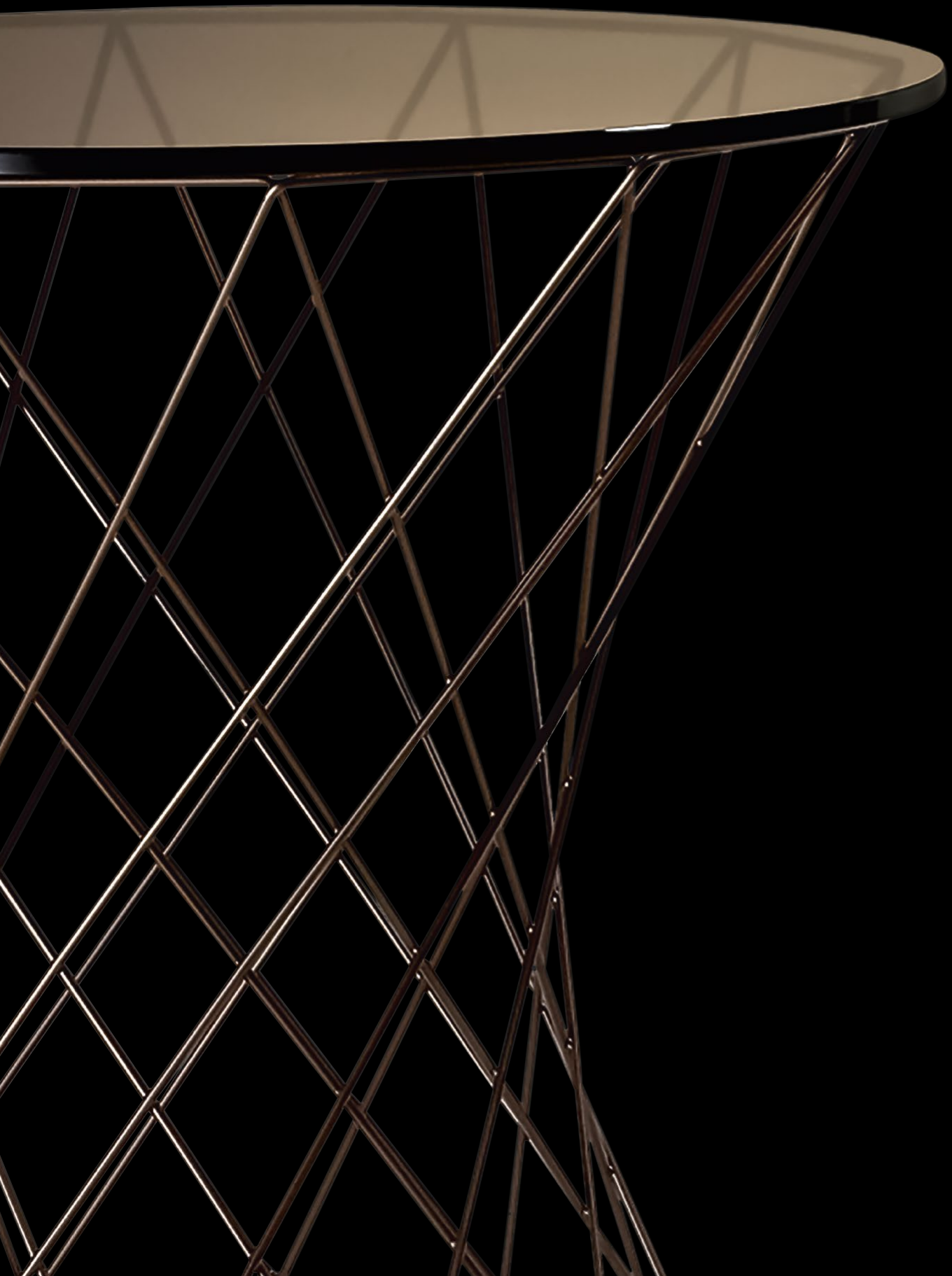
The Bauhaus was more than a revolt against ornamentation and excess. It was, above all, a liberating force that brought design back to its roots. Color, form, scale: the Bauhaus uncovered the age-old geometry of aesthetics. And once the dust of the centuries had been swept away, this new generation of artists and craftsmen came up with its forms of timeless coherence. Pure, reduced, classic. Just as the golden ratio existed before it was discovered, the Bauhaus describes an archaic aesthetic that dates back far more than a century. In that sense, modernity was never a fashion, but a tradition marked by the rediscovery and revision of true values. And upholding these values is a part of Walter Knoll's identity.











# The beauty formula

by Hiltrud Bontrup

It moves us, delights us – draws us, spellbound, towards it: since antiquity, humans have been searching for the secret of beauty. It comes down to mathematics – and fractions

Beauty fades? No. Beauty endures! Fashions may come and go. Sometimes skirts are short, sometimes beards are long. Sometimes cars crouch like predators; sometimes they look like fortresses on wheels. However, the basic shapes behind them, the faces and patterns which appeal to us, remain the same, as they follow an age-old constant which is so ancient that it could effectively be seen as a universal standard.

Five to eight, that is the formula – a simple measure of proportion, which is also called the golden ratio. If you divide a length using these proportions, the split lies within the golden ratio. Anything that conforms to these proportions, in form and composition, has an immediate attraction for us humans. If you show someone a group of rectangles, they will prefer the one whose sides have a length ratio of five to eight; photographers always position the main elements of their pictures away from the center; paintings by old masters, Greek temples, the pyramids of Gizeh and the Apple logo are all constructed in this way.

Since antiquity, humans have been tracing the power of proportion. First came the mathematicians: Euclid documented it for the first time 300 years before Christ. Then came artists and designers, who worked and experimented with it. Plants, animals, human bodies: they all harbor this five-to-eight ratio within them. In horses, the foreleg marks the golden ratio, in bees it is the narrow place between thorax and abdomen, in humans it is the navel. Leonardo da Vinci drew the golden ratio on the Vitruvian Man, whose proportions still count as the universal beauty ideal. Today, we know that it was this physique

that, long ago, enabled us to walk. Long legs give us energy-saving leverage and allow us to travel long distances at high speed. Walking upright makes us human.

And yet – there is a formula that lies even deeper than the golden ratio. In the year 1202, Italian mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci noted a sequence of numbers that follow a particular logic. The sum of the two previous numbers always gives the next one: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34 and so on. If you divide a number by the next lowest, the result comes closer to a rounded 1.6180, the higher you go – just like when you divide eight by five.

Just a gimmick? Absolutely not. Walk through a garden sometime. You will see buttercups with five petals, larkspurs with eight, marigolds with 13, asters with 21. The leaves are always arranged at the golden angle of 137.5 degrees, a growth pattern that follows the golden ratio. This arrangement ensures that no leaf obscures another and each one receives as much light as possible.

The scales of pineapple fruit, romanesco and pine cones are arranged in a spiral pattern, as are the kernels of sunflowers. The number of left and right curving spirals in a fruit corresponds to two consecutive Fibonacci numbers – and of course, they also curve at the golden angle. Just like nautilus shells, snail shells, cyclones and spiral galaxies.

Proportions that create strength, angles that unleash momentum, regulating principles that ensure nourishment is available to all; the universe bears life according to a pattern. As we have always existed within this universe, we recognize it

intuitively, feel safe and secure within it. Every encounter with this pattern is a primeval moment, bringing joy. Regardless of background and experience, all humans light up when they see, hear or feel something beautiful. Neurologists have located the area of the brain that perceives beauty: it is in the frontal lobe of the cerebrum, just behind the eyes, and is one of the areas that are always active when we are making decisions.

This means: beauty is never merely beautiful. Beauty helps our perception. It helps us to master life, to reduce complexity. Beauty makes sense. Something beautiful creates trust, it signals truth, goodness and kindness: even as babies, we look at beautiful faces for longer.

And so, in human creations – in paintings, design, houses and fashion – we also celebrate the eternal aesthetic formula. Le Corbusier used the golden ratio and the dimensions of the human body for his modulator, a system of proportions for furniture and buildings on a human scale. Then there is Max Bill, Bauhaus scholar, architect and designer: his minimalist clock designs are still effective today. His graphic prints, which play with loops, spirals and patterns, also have a timeless beauty. An aesthetic based on mathematical principles – this was Max Bill's great theme.

## We caress small scars and flaws

And yet – however secure we feel in the mathematics of beauty – we need small aberrations. All life also shows itself to be continually chaotic, wild, full of anomalies. Perfectly symmetrical faces are irritating, appear inauthentic and inspire mistrust. Small flaws need to be there, to lend personality – only then do we see someone as truly beautiful. Madonna's tooth gap, Marilyn Monroe's beauty spot, inclusions in a gemstone – the highest ideal is found in the balance between regularity and coincidence. Nature always perfects the relationship between these two forces.

Perfect imperfection – this also applies to Walter Knoll. For example, each marble slab of *Oki Table* and *Joco Stone* tells its own petrified version of the history of Earth. The brass-surfaced tables are also unique pieces, as the metal shows the finest traces of the polishers who gave it its last finish. This is what gives Walter Knoll products their allure – the allure of their beauty.

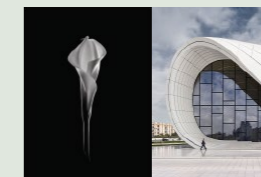
Playing with alluring forms like this begins early in the design phase. Walter Knoll creates products with lines that are, in fact, rational. And yet, to these rational lines Walter Knoll adds a creative twist, as in *Oota Table*. Its delicate wickerwork plays with graphic rhythms that draw an emotional response.

We love perfection, if it lives and breathes. As our materials – wood, fabrics, leather – are natural, they embrace change. They mature. Just think of the patina that our saddle leather

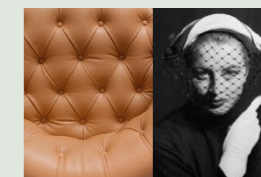
gains over time. We stroke our fingers over well-used surfaces, over small flaws and scars. Over the grain of a piece of wood, in order to feel the history of its growth.

Beauty is what is revealed when we master the creative process. Its matrix is what allows the energy of life to flow. And so, beauty gives us humans fresh nourishment every day. It explains the present, gives us a future – promises eternity.

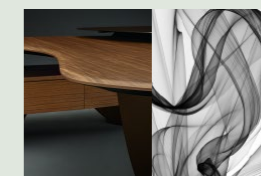
## Connections



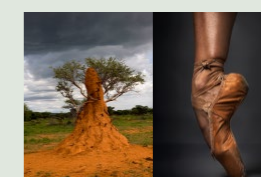
Organic curves: as the light plays, the shape begins to dance. This is true of both the calla lily and the Heydar Aliyev Center, a building designed by architect Zaha Hadid in Baku, Azerbaijan



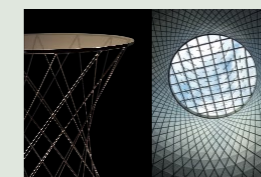
The allure of regularity: patterns create depth and catch the eye. The *Haussmann 310* chair by Walter Knoll, and the actress Capucine wearing a Barthelemy hat in 1952



The poetry of momentum: the natural-looking lines of the Walter Knoll *Tama Desk* and the cloud of silk on the right were formed with a flick of the wrist



Balancing act: lightness grows from firm foundations, the greatest art from the most delicate work. Termite mounds in the north of Namibia, and the foot of a ballerina dancing en pointe



Bold composition: meshwork meets smooth surfaces, straight meets diagonal. The tension here is created by the rotation of the lines. *Oota Table* by Walter Knoll, and the Fulton Center in New York City

## The author

Hiltrud Bontrup is an editor at Grauel Publishing in Berlin, where she manages magazines and books for clients that include bulthaup, Wempe, the Staatstheater in Stuttgart and Walter Knoll. Before this, she wrote for *Financial Times Deutschland*, *Spiegel Online* and the fashion magazine *Harper's Bazaar*.

# 3

MASTERY

# Craft is the refinement of design

Discover how Ludwig Mies van der Rohe built a fantastic bungalow, which unfortunately did not conform to the occupant's wishes. Nevertheless, this house inspired our designers to develop a sideboard whose refined technical and craftsmanlike details inspire total delight

“We must all return to craftsmanship!” Walter Gropius wrote in his manifesto, calling for the creation of a new guild without “a prideful barrier between craftsmen and artists.” It was in this “purposeful and cooperative endeavor of all artisans” – in the interaction between poetry and know-how, intuition and technology – that the Bauhaus movement was born. It is also the point from which Walter Knoll begins its work every day. Art is the refinement of craft, Gropius said. But we also know the reverse to be true. In the same way that art and craft were united in the Bauhaus school, design and craft are intertwined at Walter Knoll. As are construction and imagination, perfection and craftsmanship, attention to detail and a passion for materials and technology. By balancing all these aspects, the ideas of architects and designers become true interior masterpieces.



# The impossible house

by Carsten Jasner

A crystal. A poem. A sound. Also, a temple. The house that Ludwig Mies van der Rohe built in a patch of woodland in Illinois in 1950/51 has elicited enthusiastic descriptions from fans. But there's another side to the story



Farnsworth House is a floating masterpiece. Huge panes, eight girders, one room. The architect's motto: "Less is more"



The customer: Edith Farnsworth was initially thrilled – by both the design and by its creator



The architect: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe realized his artistic vision of transparency – almost ruthlessly

The Farnsworth House is considered an icon of architectural modernism. It has influenced practically all subsequent steel and glass buildings – from villas to skyscrapers, and smaller-scale architectures as well, such as furniture by Walter Knoll. The unique building was the inspiration behind the development of *The Farns* – a house within a house, a revolutionary side-board (more on page 35).

But the building on the banks of the Fox River, 75 kilometers west of Chicago, tells yet another story which sounds as contradictory as it is instructive. For the cuboidal glass house is not only a world-famous, ingenious masterpiece of modernity; it was also a misunderstanding. The commissioner Edith Farnsworth, after whom the house is named, considered the house uninhabitable. She refused to pay the architect his fee.

What happened? It is a story that reveals a lot about the eccentricity of an artist. And about a customer's disappointments.

At first, the pair get along famously. Edith Farnsworth meets Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in 1945 at a dinner given by a friend. She is a respected nephrologist with a practice in Chicago and is on the look-out for an architect to build her a weekend home. Mies accepts the proposal right away. She shows him the plot of land – an area semi-covered with woodland, overlooking a river which swells over its banks with every melt of the snow. Two months later, Mies delivers a draft, which is unusually swift for him as he is generally considered to be a very methodical planner.

His drawing shows a rectangular bungalow with fully glazed walls, seemingly floating about 1.5 meters above the ground, supported by eight steel girders. It consists of a single room around a small core containing bathrooms, a heating system

and supply pipes. Edith Farnsworth is thrilled. She confirms the order. The two drive to the plot and picnic there almost every Sunday. Friends and relatives suspect an affair.

Construction will cost around \$ 40,000, which is equivalent to about € 350,000 today. Farnsworth is awaiting an inheritance and work is finally able to begin in 1949. But their harmonious relationship begins to disintegrate before the first sod is turned. Mies wants to build on the gentle elevation of a grassy hill, about 150 meters from the river, under a magnificent 200-year-old maple tree. However, Edith Farnsworth imagines the house further away from the shore and higher up. The contractor commissioned by Mies, a carpenter from Germany, also proposes a higher location to avoid the expected flooding. Mies insists on the meadow. "It's an adventure," he says. "But that belongs to life."

At the commencement of construction, costs increase by fifty percent, which Farnsworth accepts. For Mies, only the best craftsmen and the best materials will do. For the floors and for the freestanding terrace, which lies in front of the house like a giant step, he chooses Roman travertine, a bright, porous limestone. Fine primavera wood clads the plumbing and engineering core. Mies has the steel girders sandblasted until their surface is silky smooth. In 1951, the house is ready for Edith Farnsworth to move in. A lawsuit begins the following year, ending in 1955 with an arbitral award.

It's mainly about the money. Farnsworth not only refuses to pay the architect's fees and the additional construction costs, but also demands reimbursement of a considerable amount of the money already paid. Her statements show that she feels exploited by the architect. Apparently, Mies had ignored most of her wishes regarding comfort and coziness, and fulfilled others only later and reluctantly.



Mies van der Rohe selected only the finest materials: Roman travertine slabs, primavera wood and sandblasted steel

"The house is transparent, like an X-ray," she says. "I can't even put a clothes hanger in my house without considering how it affects everything from the outside." When she asks Mies for more closet space because she doesn't know where her clothes are supposed to go, he suggests she hang them "on the hook on the back of the bathroom door." Finally, he concedes and has a closet with a wardrobe installed, likewise clad in primavera wood.

Sleeping, cooking, eating, living – everything takes place in the open space, visible from the outside. Sometimes the occupant has to hide in the shower from curious neighbors, tourists and architecture fans – the curtains made of natural silk apparently provide little protection. She is also vulnerable to the mosquito infestation ubiquitous in the river valley: for a long time, Mies van der Rohe refuses to hang mosquito

nets for aesthetic reasons. Climatically, the house is a disaster. In the summer it's an oven – only the front door and two small windows in the back can be opened and no air conditioning was installed. In winter, ice forms on the steamed-up windows because the underfloor heating is too weak. What's more, the site really does turn out to be too low: the first high water floods the hill even during construction. Three years later, the bungalow is 1.2 meters deep in water.

The dispute between the two parties becomes personal. Mies van der Rohe is an inflexible, narrow-minded, unapproachable primitive, fumes the lady of the house. He, in turn, implies that her romantic feelings had been frustrated: "The lady expected the architect to go along with the house." Particularly revealing is the addition: "The good lady doctor knew very well that the house was meant to be the pure expression of an idea." ▶



Reductive Romanticism in the corpus delicti. Once a bone of contention, today an architectural icon and museum

Mies van der Rohe clearly understood the assignment as an opportunity to realize himself as a freelance artist. Whether someone would feel at home in his “pure expression of an idea” was of lesser importance. The house, he said, is “a prototype for all glass buildings.” A prototype, sure, but not a finished product, not something ready for the market. Rather, it was an ingenious, avant-garde experiment. Today, the house belongs to two monument protection organizations and is open to visitors as a museum.

Edith Farnsworth deserves our gratitude. By giving the architect creative freedom, she made architectural history. She enabled the realization of an idea that continues to inspire people to this day. And she can’t have disliked the house as much as all that. After all, she spent her weekends there for twenty years.

## The almost impossible sideboard

Mies van der Rohe inspired the designers of *The Farns*. However, EOOS go a decisive step further



The basic version of *The Farns* is reminiscent of the Farnsworth House. Completed by doors, it creates an interplay between transparent and opaque zones

EOOS are seeking to rectify an injustice. The architecture of a house can often be impressive, say the three designers, because different perspectives open themselves up to you as you walk through it. It’s more difficult for a cabinet or a sofa – you don’t walk through them. This is why many pieces of furniture simply can’t keep up with their environment. The designers want to change that. They create designs based on strong ideas that are not only on a par with structural architecture, but enhance the experience of it.

*The Farns* is the result. A sideboard that is revolutionary because its focal point is continuously revolving. It can be facing one person on a sofa while at the same time serving a group at a dining table. It conceals some things while revealing others. It provides different functions at the same time; its appearance is always changing.

How did EOOS come up with it? At the beginning of the development process, the designers were still under the impression that the idea had arrived by itself. But when they took a top and bottom surface and suspended them between

mirrored side panels, they realized that there was actually a forerunner: Mies van der Rohe and his Farnsworth House. Six years before, the three had spent a day on the grounds of Farnsworth House to the west of Chicago. The way the glass bungalow is embedded in the forest, says Martin Bergmann, “is so beautiful that you can hardly stand it.” Their experience unconsciously affected and influenced EOOS. Now, as the new piece of furniture takes shape, those impressions begin to reveal themselves.

“The top and the bottom seem to be floating,” says Gernot Bohmann. “At the Farnsworth House, the natural surroundings shine through; with our sideboard, it’s the living space that shines through.” This is made possible by an interplay between glass and wooden doors. The central wooden doors can be swiveled 180 degrees and can be merged with the outer glass doors via a magnet, creating a new front. And if the connected doors are pushed in the opposite direction, a glass corner is opened up.

On a technical level, the free pivoting of the heavy glass doors on tiny, hidden hinges is a very demanding feat. When the developers at Walter Knoll heard about EOOS’s plans, they said that a hinge like that doesn’t exist yet. So what do they do? They invent one themselves. Bohmann: “This hinge is what makes *The Farns* possible.” It also marks an important difference to the Farnsworth House. Much to the occupier’s chagrin, the architect designed everything to be transparent. “But there are some things you don’t want to reveal straight away,” says Bergmann. A bar, a cigar box, a TV remote. That’s what the opaque areas are for, and they can be converted into an airy shelf at will. *The Farns* is an item of furniture for looking and reaching through; the Viennese designers call it “living through” – a neologism they find very poetic.

Carsten Jasner



Fans of American modernity: EOOS designers Harald Gründl, Martin Bergmann and Gernot Bohmann (from left to right)



PROGRESS

# A product is good when it makes an improvement

Over the course of the next few pages, we will transport you to the Weissenhof Estate in the year 1927, where entrepreneur Walter Knoll worked with architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe to set standards for modern living. This is still our mission, now using a super-dynamic living laboratory. You will also learn how a revolutionary tool allows you to position any Walter Knoll furniture very easily in any chosen room – digitally and using augmented reality

The Bauhaus school was an awakening. It married art and craft – and connected both disciplines with the technology of the time. It was characterized by an unbridled curiosity for processes, industry, working techniques and manufacturing. In this way, nearly every creation that came out of the Bauhaus pushed the boundaries of the feasible. That is also our approach at Walter Knoll. We only consider a product finished when it has made an improvement. When it has added a new vital element to its category. When it has done more with less. When it has set aesthetic standards as well as standards in manufacturing, workmanship and sustainability. We cannot live up to these standards on our own. Our headquarters is located in the heartland of modern technology. Some of our partners have their roots in the Bauhaus school. But what they all share is a passion for innovation. And for making good things even better.

# An encounter at Weissenhof

by Carsten Jasner

Stuttgart, 1927: as the architecture of the modernity era emerges, on a hill above the city the paths of two unusual men intersect: Walter Knoll and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Together, they begin their careers. And a friendship

In the 1920s, the Weissenhof Estate was where young architects showcased their visions for modern building. The area, dominated by a block of four connected apartment buildings, is world famous. Architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was in charge of planning and overseeing the project



Overnight, a white blanket has covered Swabia. Mies van der Rohe looks out of the window – he likes the glittering snow. Indoors, in his office, there is less cause for joy: waiting for him are the countless jobs that a construction manager must deal with. The Taut brothers, Max and Bruno, want to know when they will finally be able to build their houses. He has just found out that the town planning council suddenly wants to build streets through the Estate. To make matters worse, the secretary from the “propaganda office” is piling on the pressure: when will Mies finally get around to writing the foreword to that exhibition catalog, which, after all, need only be very short? “Mercy me,” he might have muttered. “That will take some time.”

This is what a day in the life of architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe might have looked like in Stuttgart in February 1927. In five months’ time, the Deutscher Werkbund’s exhibition “Die Wohnung” (“The Dwelling”) is supposed to open on the Killesberg – a hill to the north of the city. Mies van der Rohe has roped in the brightest and best architectural talent from across Europe, including Walter Gropius, Hans Scharoun, the Taut brothers and Le Corbusier. The roughly 30 apartments of the Weissenhof Estate will be the symbol, in brick and mortar, of the “Neues Bauen” movement. But no brick has yet been laid. Instead, Mies is having to wrangle with local politicians, officials and architects.



Methodical and visionary: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, star architect and exhibition manager, is considered as much of a genius as he was a bon vivant

As he leaves his office in the south-western district of Heselach at noon, he takes a deep breath. The air is crystal clear and the sun is shining. He is looking forward to the half-hour walk alongside the snowy forest up to the Hasenbergsteige. This is where he intends to meet a furniture maker, a proponent of modern living. He’s an energetic man with a good sense of humor to boot. Meeting Walter Knoll will be good for him.

Unfortunately, little is known about the meetings between Mies van der Rohe and Walter Knoll. But they must have gotten along well. Both loved geometric forms. They were both forward-thinking men. And both saw the Werkbund’s exhibition as a great opportunity. Walter Knoll furnished five apartments in Mies van der Rohe’s exhibition building – more than any other manufacturer. But what happened during their encounters? The two shared a naturally happy and carefree disposition. Even their trajectories in life are similar.

Both men come from devout families of craftsmen, one from the staunchly Catholic Rhineland, the other from Pietistic Swabia. Mies van der Rohe is born Ludwig Mies. He grows up in a workshop in Aachen run by his father, a stonecutter, whose own father had worked marble before him. Walter Knoll’s grandfather was a shoemaker, and his father learned the tanning trade before opening a leather store in the center of Stuttgart. School life ends early for both Walter Knoll and Mies van der Rohe. As young men, they take to their heels. This is how they discover their talents and interest in art and philosophy, and how they meet their wives.

### Flexible walls, versatile furniture

When Mies van der Rohe moves from Berlin to Stuttgart in 1926, he is forty years old. Walter Knoll is fifty. The architect works in a humble office belonging to friends in south-west Stuttgart. In the front house there is a grocery store and on the first floor is a chicken coop. Walter Knoll lives a stone’s throw away in the imposing Villa Vollmöller. It belonged to Robert Vollmöller, one of the most important knitwear manufacturers in the world. Walter Knoll married his daughter, Maria. He probably invited Mies van der Rohe to the villa, who no doubt accepted with great pleasure.

The men almost certainly fell into conversation – about architecture, design, crafts, art and the new modernity movement. “The modern interior will break away from the traditional paradigm. We will now focus on making versatile furniture, without considering the broader décor.” This is how Walter Knoll puts it in the founding program of his company. They mingle, perhaps, with Walter Knoll’s friend and brother-in-law, Karl Gustav Vollmöller,



In work coat and evening collar: Walter Knoll, here as a 32-year-old man, has many talents – furniture manufacturer and brand visionary, entertainer, singer and dancer

a celebrated poet who is currently writing the script for “The Blue Angel” with Marlene Dietrich. And perhaps Walter’s sister-in-law Mathilde comes to visit – she is a modern painter who was taught by Henri Matisse and who later married the painter Hans Purmann, an Expressionist and also one of Matisse’s students. Mies van der Rohe may have sat on one of the curved upholstered chairs.

He likes what Walter Knoll is saying. He is also looking for versatility and variability. He wants the apartments on the Killesberg to be open-plan; using movable room partitions, the tenants are to decide for themselves whether they want to use a space for sleeping or as a living room, or both. “For pity’s sake, make sure the place is big enough,” he says to one of his colleagues. “So you can walk around freely, and not just in a rigidly defined movement. We don’t yet know whether people will use it as we intend.” Walter Knoll talks of his “psychology of sitting” – about individual pieces of furniture that can be easily rearranged. They allow the user to shape the space themselves.

It was not an easy road to this concept, or to his own company. Originally, Walter Knoll was supposed to take over his father’s leather shop. But in his

father’s eyes, he was a failure. He did badly in school, liked to go out, he was a bit dandyish, he danced and sang, and was always joking around. A charming scalawag. He was completely unlike his younger, ambitious brother Willy, who left school with a glittering track record and who presented himself as the perfect successor. For a while, both brothers try to run the business together but they are like chalk and cheese.

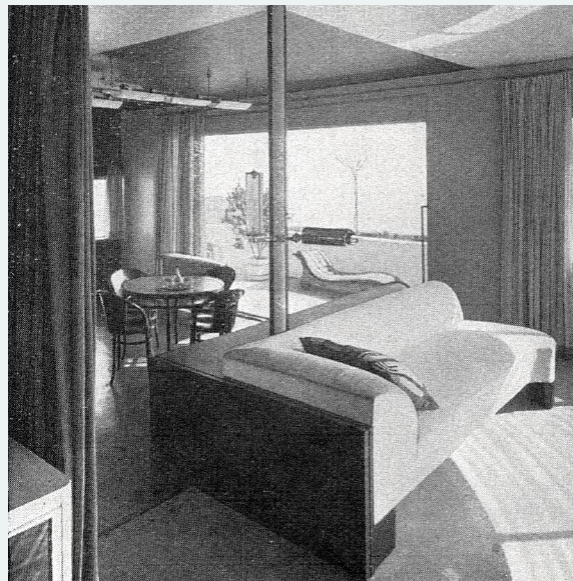
### In the company of artists and intellectuals

Walter tries his luck in the USA. He lives there for several years from around 1900 and tries his hand at various things. He works in imports and exports, runs his own business, learns English, boxing, and even opera singing. He then returns to Germany and falls in love with Maria Vollmöller. He had already crossed her path as a 19-year-old. Thanks to Maria and her family, a world free of dogma unfolds before Walter Knoll – a social, liberal, modern world. The father is friends with Robert Bosch and with artists, adherents of the “Lebensreform” movement and bankers from all over Europe. Maria’s siblings paint and pen poetry, cite Ancient Greek classics in the original language, take part in car races, tinker with aircraft and shoot movies.

Mies van der Rohe has a similar experience, if less colorful. As a child, he helps in his father’s stonecutter’s workshop; as a 15-year-old apprentice, he hauls bricks onto building sites; subsequently, he works for a plasterer. An architect discovers his talent for drawing and recommends him to an artist in Berlin. There, Mies designs his very first furniture and soon he will be allowed to build his first house. The contractor, a philosophy professor, takes a shine to the confident man with the striking facial features. He arouses Mies’s interest in art and philosophy, and invites him to evening gatherings in the newly completed house. It is here that Mies comes into contact with artists, collectors, the literati – and, soon enough, his wife as well.

And so, both men step into new worlds – one in Stuttgart, the other in Berlin. They meet artists, intellectuals, businessmen and patrons. And, while on their separate paths, they find their purpose in life: as catalysts for international modernity.

Just like Russian Avant-Gardists and Dutch Constructivists, Mies van der Rohe calls for the abolition of mere decoration: “We reject all aesthetic speculation and all formalism.” He shows us what he meant by this from 1924 onward. Inflation is over, the Roaring Twenties have begun, and cities are investing in the construction of housing estates. Architects are seeking out new, light-filled homes and modern, lightweight furniture. ▶



No frills: récamière with a geometric design by Walter Knoll in the Weissenhof House by Hans Scharoun

The launch of Walter Knoll's company in 1925 goes without a hitch. He has a simple factory building constructed in Stuttgart-Feuerbach. Barely one year later, in 1926, dealers in thirty German cities are already selling his furniture, as well as three stores in Switzerland. Turnover doubles in the space of two years, reaching just under half a million marks. Coincidentally, the factory stands at the foot of the Killesberg – the hill on which the municipality is to build the Weissenhof Estate.

Mies van der Rohe probably has the odd prototype or two presented to him in the burgeoning factory. It would be reasonable for us to surmise that they then both ascend the Killesberg to inspect the building work. Spring 1927: the snow has long since melted and wild flowers, grass and fruit trees are in bloom on the hillsides. The beautiful view stretches southwards, down into the basin of the city center, and eastwards into the curve of the Neckar Valley. The two men stand there in the middle of it all, in the mud.

Finally, in March, the first sods are turned – the groundbreaking ceremony has been postponed. Mies van der Rohe, the “Rhenish Hardhead,” as some people call him, was unfazed. As far as he's concerned, he's the artistic director. The site manager is the one responsible for the deadlines, he says. It's his job to direct the masons, roofers and foremen, who cope remarkably well with the new materials – reinforced concrete, hollow blocks, reinforced bricks, plasterboards and plywood.

The Estate is an experiment. Architects from Germany, Holland, France, Belgium and Switzerland are drawn to it, not only to play around with different

shapes, but also different building materials and statics. Foremost among them is a gangly man with horn-rimmed glasses. Approaching Mies, he gesticulates wildly with his pipe. Le Corbusier comes up with probably the most daring design.

The apartments are meant to be affordable, the roofs flat and the facades snow-white – such is Mies van der Rohe's demand. But Le Corbusier insists on bright red, blue and lime-green rectangles. Inside, he breaks through the ceiling to create a maisonette with a continuous window and gallery. He counters Mies's objections by declaring that he is an artist. It is no coincidence that he has adopted an artist's name; he used to be called Charles-Édouard Jeanneret. Ludwig Mies has done the same: he has borrowed the “Rohe” from his mother's maiden name and invented the connecting “van der”.

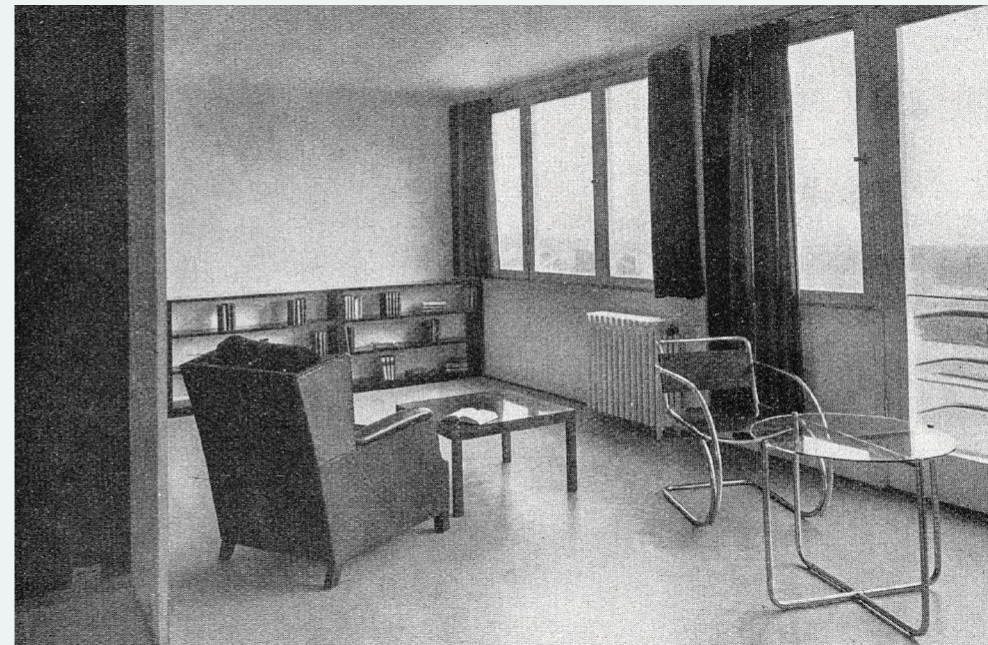
## Forays into the night

Slowly but surely, Walter Knoll gets to know the architects on the Killesberg and discusses geometric reduction and new, elastic steel structures with them. Could these perhaps be extrapolated onto the architecture of a piece of furniture? Four more architects will go on to commission Walter Knoll to furnish their apartments: Ludwig Hilberseimer, Adolf Rading, Adolf Schneck and Hans Scharoun.

Stuttgart is booming. The streets are filled with the sounds of more and more car horns and the ringing of electric trams. Department stores open their doors, dozens of newspapers hang on the



Extravagant exhibit: a chaise longue by Walter Knoll, organically rounded with unusually strong quilting, in the Adolf Rading exhibition house



A modern relationship: an angular upholstered armchair by Walter Knoll next to a cantilever chair by Mies van der Rohe in one of his apartments

kiosks, and at night variety shows pull in the crowds. It's a bit like Berlin, but smaller.

Walter Knoll probably takes some architects out on the town. It's possible he takes Mies van der Rohe to the Excelsior, where high-spirited people dance the foxtrot and the Charleston and where Joachim Ringelnatz recites lewd poems in his sailor suit. Nearby, in the Friedrichsbau, the dancer Josephine Baker will appear on stage in her banana skirt.

During their forays, the men pass the building sites of a new era. The Schocken department store by Erich Mendelsohn is emerging on Eberhardstrasse – the rounded glass facade becomes a showcase for “Neues Bauen.” Opposite, the 18-storey tower of the daily newspaper “Tagblatt” is springing up, the first reinforced concrete high-rise in Germany. Walter Knoll talks of the impression made on him by the skyscrapers in Manhattan. Mies van der Rohe mentions his lofty 20-storey ambition for Berlin's Friedrichstrasse, with a continuous glass curtain.

However, just a few blocks away a bone of contention rears its ugly head: the central station by Paul Bonatz. Bonatz and his conservative colleagues railed against the Weissenhof project. They decried it as “inappropriate,” “formalistic” and “amateurish.”

Mies van der Rohe almost certainly takes this criticism personally, as he himself is not sure he is on the right track. In articles, he presents himself as a rebel, sets out his case against “meaningless

jumbles of shapes” and welcomes the “mechanistic age.” But, in reality, he keeps his options open. Of the fourteen projects he has already realized, he built most for wealthy contractors in the traditional style with gabled roofs and window shutters.

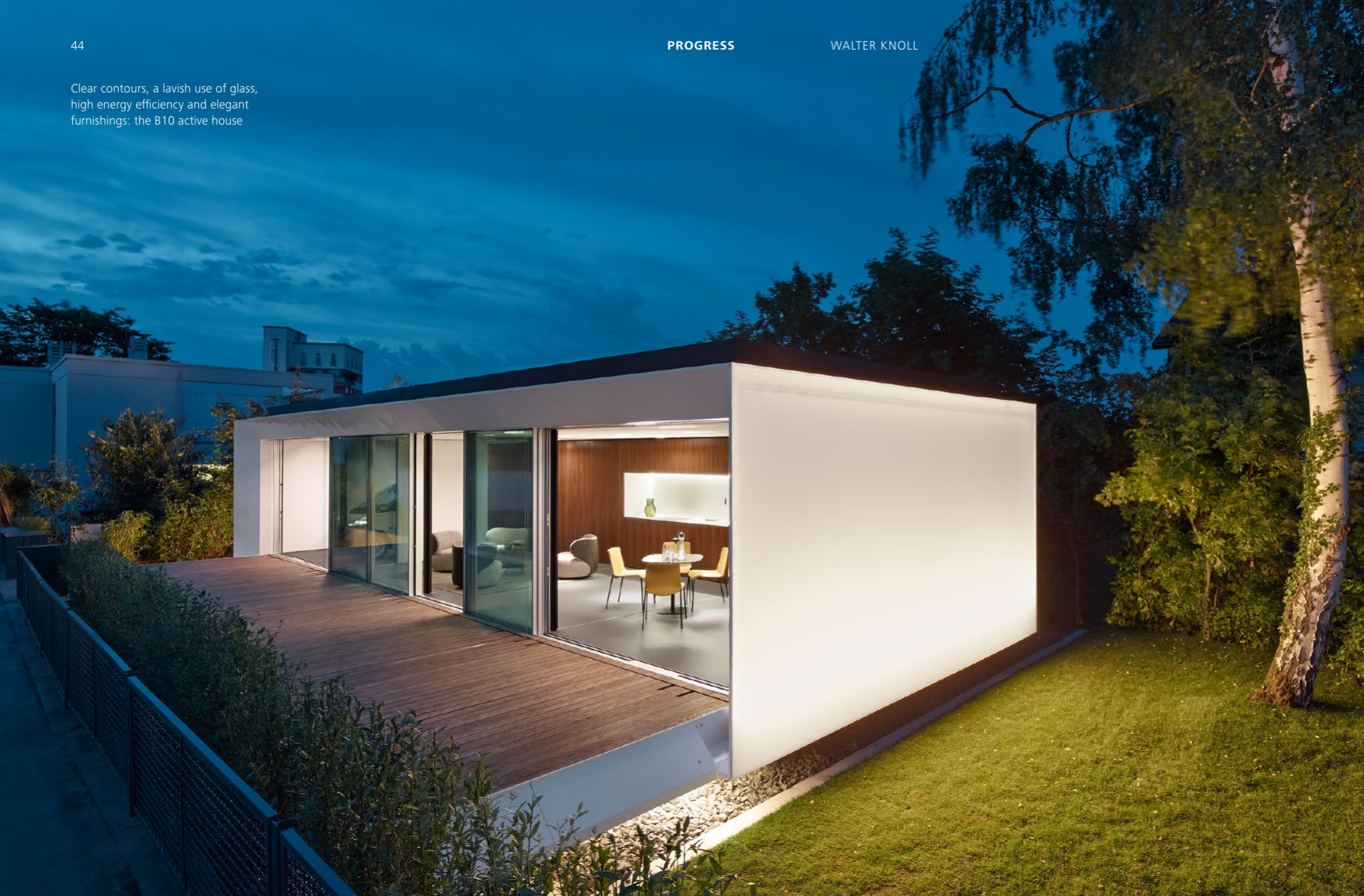
The exhibition opens on July 23, 1927 and is a resounding success. Within the space of just two-and-a-half months, 500,000 people from all across Europe come to have a look. The Estate gives both men's careers a tremendous boost. Walter Knoll then goes on to develop the *Prodomo* armchair, which uses springy steel bands to streamline the upholstery. He gets this idea patented: the innovative chairs are the first pieces of upholstered furniture to be made in the modern way. In 1929, he kits out the “Do X” with these chairs – the largest airplane in the world at the time with twelve engines – as well as the “Bremen” – the most advanced passenger liner of the time. In the same year, Mies van der Rohe celebrates success at the World Exhibition in Barcelona – the cubic glass pavilion with slender leather seats becomes an icon of modernity.

Today, over ninety years after they worked together in Stuttgart, the men cross each other's paths once more. Just not in person this time. However, the Walter Knoll company is making sure that Mies van der Rohe's concept of flowing space lives on in its furniture, such as *The Farns* and *Living Landscape 755*. What a friendship!

## The author

Carsten Jasner, a historian and journalist from Berlin, himself lives and works in a well-known modern estate dating from 1929. He loves the brightness of the rooms, the proportions and the brilliant floor plan.

Clear contours, a lavish use of glass, high energy efficiency and elegant furnishings: the B10 active house



# The future at Weissenhof

For more than ninety years, the art of living has been studied above the rooftops of Stuttgart. With furniture by Walter Knoll

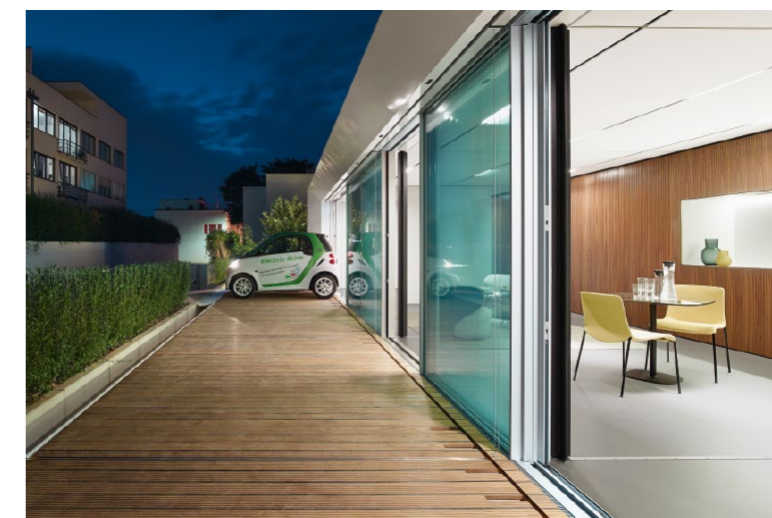
Stuttgart, Bruckmannweg 10: the world's first active house, known as B10, now stands across the way from the Mies van der Rohe building. It produces almost twice as much energy as it consumes. Its interior design proves that revolutionary, forward-thinking architecture can also be comfortable – thanks to furniture by Walter Knoll. Fitting out the B10 active house marks a return to Weissenhof for the company. In 1927, Walter Knoll furnished nine prototype apartments; today it is once again the

first choice among leading architects. The modular bungalows by Stuttgart-based architect Werner Sobek are prime examples of his building style: geometrically pleasing, light-flooded, inexpensive and eco-friendly. The B10 was industrially prefabricated and erected by crane in two days. The front face is glazed in three vacuum-insulating layers. Walter Knoll furniture ensures that the 85m<sup>2</sup> area can serve equally well as either a comfortable office or a modern apartment: the *Bao* armchair,

the *Bahari* carpet from the *Legends of Carpets* collection, the *Oota Table* and *Liz* chairs. Technology is behind the rest of the conveniences. A photovoltaic system supplies energy for heating, showering and lighting; it powers an electric Smart car, two e-bikes and the Weissenhof Museum in the Le Corbusier House next door. A computer, accessible via tablet and smartphone, controls electricity and ventilation. B10 is transportable. And recyclable: wood, glass, aluminum, the textile facade covering – in the end, everything can be sorted by material. *Carsten Jasner*



A comfortable future: the *Bao* armchair, *Bahari* carpet and *Oota Table*. The electric Smart car awaits in the background



Bungalow, garage, office and living space – multifunctionality with *Liz* chairs and a *Lox Table*



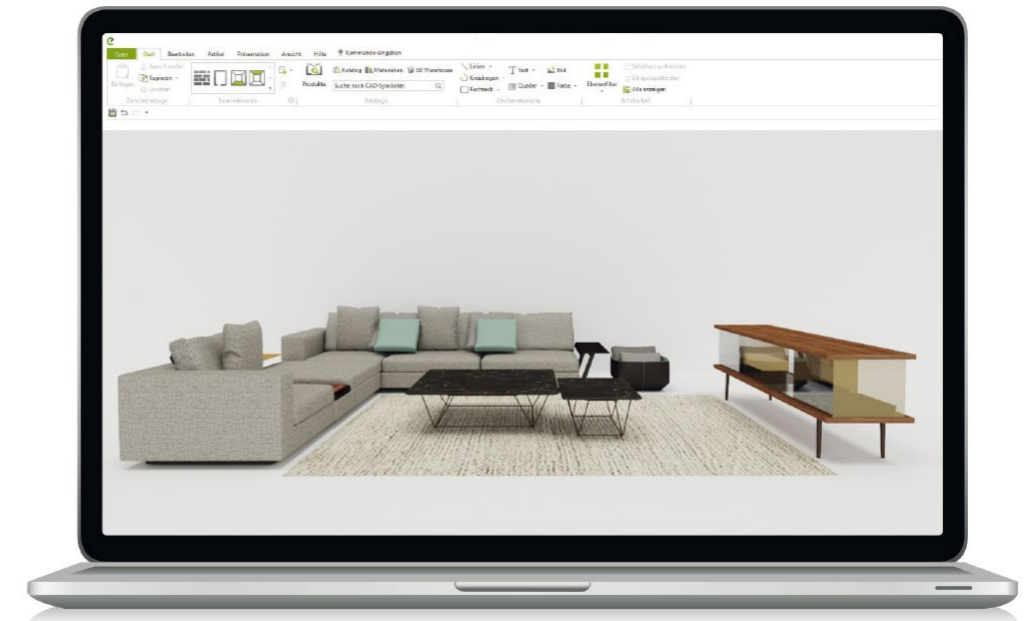
# From your smart- phone to your home

Now you can configure furniture from Walter Knoll yourself using a laptop, tablet or smartphone. Easily create detailed interior designs. And position your furnishing ideas within your own home using augmented reality. For dealers, interior designers and architects – and now also for anyone interested in furniture.

## The planning office in your pocket

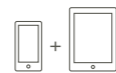
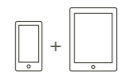
Imagine a furniture catalog that fits in your pocket because it's on your smartphone. In it, you will find furniture by Walter Knoll in every size, color and variant – all in high resolution. With a simple swipe, you can make modifications to the furniture and examine your creations from every conceivable viewpoint. Better yet, you can even try out various furniture configurations for your chairs, sofas and tables at home with an augmented reality

function – and see your furniture as if it were right there in the room. Want to make a change? No problem: all variants are stored in the app and you can easily configure them with a few taps of the finger. Digital furniture planning doesn't get any more convenient for customers than this. And even planners, architects and dealers can reap the benefits – using Walter Knoll's digital planning office.



## The digital planning toolkit

Three tools for professional furniture planning



### The mobile furniture configuration tool

**The app for furniture enthusiasts**

The smartphone and tablet app for visualizing interiors. Furniture is customized in 3D and placed in the customer's home. The app designs entire rooms in real time. All products and configurations are already integrated. The views can be exported and shared as a PDF or image file via download, email, WhatsApp or text.

### The digital furniture catalog

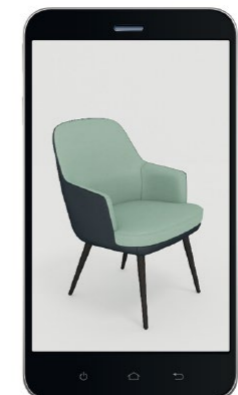
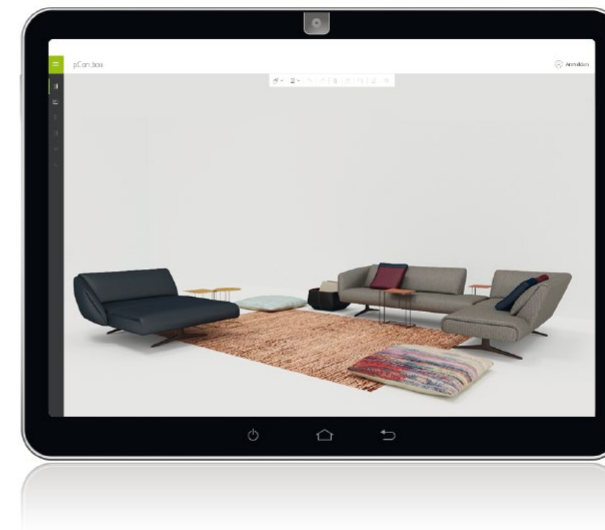
**The app for professional users**

The pCon.box add-on for professionals. Dealers, planners and architects can look up prices and find additional information such as assembly instructions, certificates, brochures and high-quality photos. This app also has an augmented reality function.

### The room planning tool

**For architects, interior designer and planners**

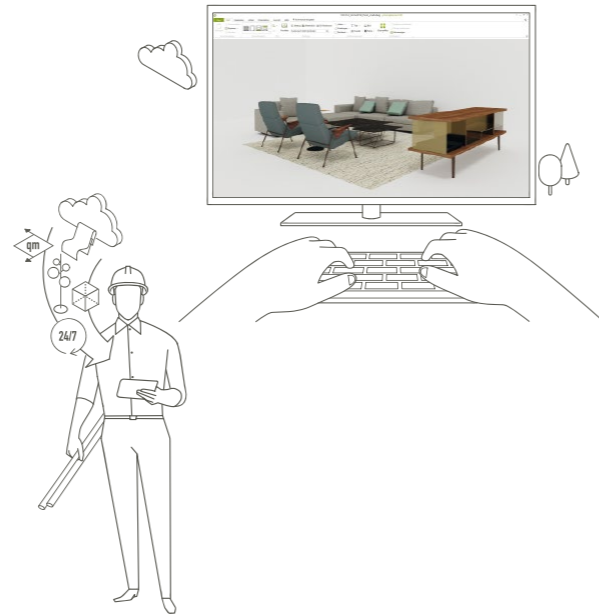
By far the most widely used platform for room and interior planning. Intuitive and easy to use. Any product can be displayed in 3D on floor plans and in rooms. Simple exports in all standard CAD formats (dwg, dxt, dxf, sat, sab, 3ds, skp, etc.) and as images, videos or panoramic views for presentations.



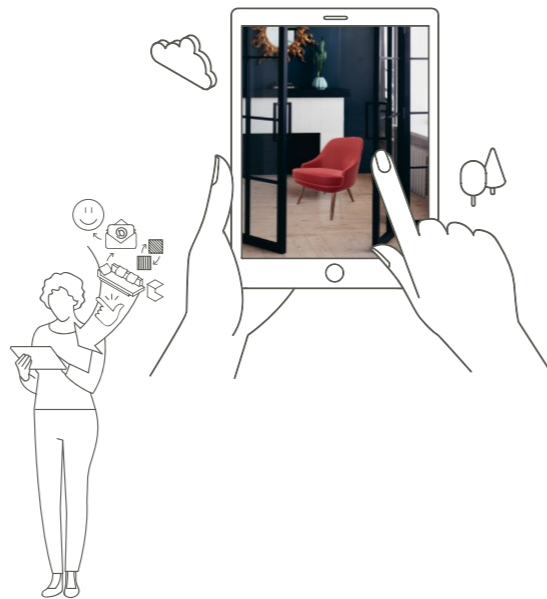
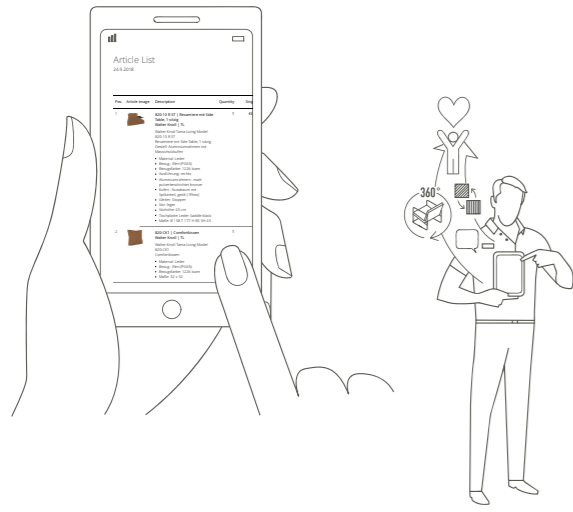
The pCon planner (above) is the ultimate room planning software for interior professionals. It was the basis for the development of the new tablet and smartphone app (below). This makes it possible for everyone to be creative with just a few clicks and configure their own interior visions – with armchairs, sofas, carpets, tables, even pillows from Walter Knoll

# Interior design – now digital and crazy simple

**ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS:** you can now customize all furniture with all surfaces easily and intuitively. From anywhere in the world, you can get high-quality graphics data 24/7, to enhance your 3D planning with product representations that are as realistic and true-to-scale as it gets. These can be exported and incorporated into your CAD planning. Product data, certificates and material information are also included, so you can execute tenders as accurately as possible.



**DEALERS:** you have access to all data. You can answer customer queries immediately, digitally, proficiently and vividly. Do they want a 360-degree view of furniture in 3D? To zoom in on details? To browse through all sizes, shapes and finishes right there? Questions are transformed into customer experiences. Every product, every configuration can be ordered from Walter Knoll in Herrenberg directly from the app. Convenient, efficient and your configuration guaranteed.



**CUSTOMERS:** you can design things on your own. With augmented reality, you can place the furniture you've configured in your own home digitally and to scale. The apps are free and highly intuitive. Images and designs can be shared with family and friends, so you can discuss them together and change them as many times as you like. The new digital tools turn furniture planning into a sensory experience. For more information, please send your desired configuration to your dealer.



Every single item of furniture can be placed, moved and swapped within your own four walls, playfully and in real time, using augmented reality

## 5

RELEVANCE

# The more we leave out, the longer we last

Experience our latest example of the beauty and power of reduction. Swiss designer Ginger Zalaba has taken her grandfather's Bauhaus-inspired designs, and reinterpreted and honed them to perfection. We also invite you to discover the spirit of Walter Gropius in the permeability of our corporate architecture

The Bauhaus is alive. As a school of the classics. As a standard and an approach. Its timelessness stems from an intense reduction process. From designs, philosophies and forms that are so clearly and rigorously distilled that they are able to withstand the test of time. We do the same at Walter Knoll: in our designs, it is only the essence that remains. Relevance emerges out of the opposite of indifference. Concealed in every design are hundreds of ideas we have discarded. We keep on refining as long as we need to. Then we ask ourselves: is it truly good? Is there anything else we can leave out? It is this ambition that creates values that last. And it is this process of refinement that enables us to create furniture with relevance – with designs so fully developed in terms of form, workmanship and materials that they transcend generations.

Inspired since childhood: Ginger Zalaba grew up surrounded by her grandfather's artistic creativity. Windows, textiles, furniture, sculptures – all designed by him



# “I am a child of the Bauhaus”

by Marcus Jauer

Swiss-born Ginger Zalaba has rediscovered and reinterpreted her grandfather's furniture. The story of an inspired fusion of Bauhaus, modern lifestyle and Walter Knoll

In the mid-1950s, the American edition of Playboy published a photo of a chair that was celebrated by the magazine as an invitation to seduction. It had been created by the Swiss designer Otto Kolb, who called it the bat chair after its wing-like, protruding armrests. Following its publication in Playboy, however, it carried the name that the editors had bestowed upon it: “Love Chair”.

More than sixty years later, in 2015, at the most important furniture trade fair in the world – the Salone del Mobile in Milan – a design appeared that referenced that legendary chair. It was part of an exhibit by a young and still-unknown Swiss artist and designer, who was presenting her own collection for the first time – chairs that, from a distance, were reminiscent of Otto Kolb and the Bauhaus, and yet also had their own unique quality.

What happened next is like a family reunion in recent design history, instigated by Markus Benz, CEO of Walter Knoll. In 1961, the company had already worked with grandfather Otto Kolb to develop an upholstered version of the avant-garde chair, which caused a great sensation. Now, Markus Benz discovered the granddaughter's reinterpretation – and decided on a new collaboration. ▶

*“It was time  
to bring the chair  
up to date.”*

Ginger Zalaba

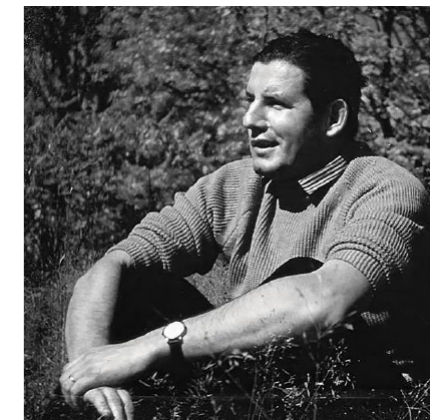
As children, we learn from our parents what is good and what is not so good, and how we should approach life’s challenges – and in pretty much the same way that they learned from their parents. However, few people realize that children also receive an aesthetic education from what they see in everyday life and their surroundings. This may be down to the fact that a special sense of form, color, material and composition is not part of every family’s philosophy. In Ginger Zalaba’s family, it is part of the ancestral consciousness.

“We grew up with Otto Kolb’s designs,” says Ginger Zalaba. “What my grandfather created seemed normal to us.”

Otto Kolb, born in Zurich almost a hundred years ago, was a Swiss architect and an all-round creative genius. In his youth, he belonged to the circle around artists such as James Joyce, Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee, and architects such as Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier, before going to America at the end of the 1940s to teach at the famous Institute of Design in Chicago, and befriending Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. He built houses that are now listed as American cultural monuments and developed furniture that was purchased by museums in New York and Paris. He was one of the first to build in a resource-conscious way, using solar panels and working with spectacular cable bracing.

Returning to Switzerland at the start of the 1960s, he became wealthy thanks to the invention of a steel spiral staircase and built a house in Wermatswil, a small village in the Zürich highlands – a house with no equal in the world, that mixes Bauhaus principles with American influences and is immortalized in international architecture guides. So it is absolutely not normal to grow up surrounded by Otto Kolb’s designs – unless he is your grandfather. “He just had a talent for making beautiful things,” says Ginger Zalaba. “They were always important to our family. I am a child of the Bauhaus.”

All-round creative genius: Otto Kolb, Bauhaus-inspired architect and designer, taught at the famous Institute of Design in Chicago in the 1940s and 1950s



Entirely unique: the villa in the Swiss village of Wermatswil is Kolb’s life’s work. Along with its furnishings, it graces the pages of international architecture guides

She is sitting inside the artistic legacy that her grandfather left to his family and the world – in the legendary roundhouse that is shaped like a glass cylinder set into the mountainside, and inside which everything, truly everything – from the floor plan to the furniture and fittings right through to the Christmas tree stand – can be traced back to his ideas.

There is the spiral staircase that forms the spine of the building and on which the different levels are suspended like free-floating islands on a mobile. There is the indoor pond, in which plants grow and koi swim, that finds its echo in the pools of water that surround the house, connecting the inside with the outside. It seems as though Otto Kolb has opened up all the areas that are usually closed off in a house – rooms, floors, levels – so that a restless eye can move freely within it.

“As children, we lay on the master bed in the evenings and watched the squirrels in the trees,” says Ginger Zalaba. Anyone growing up with this kind of heritage only really has two options. One option is to reject it and set out in a new direction because you do not want the continual comparisons – and this is exactly what Ginger Zalaba originally planned to do: in fact, she wanted to run a gallery. Having studied at art college in Zürich, she traveled to Los Angeles for her first internship. However, at that point her father died at home in Switzerland, and at the age of twenty-six she became the head of the family business. ▶

Inspiration takes flight:  
the original 1951 bat chair  
in the family library

The second option is to take on the legacy and reshape it in your own way – and that is exactly what Ginger Zalaba is doing now.

“I knew that it would take courage to do this,” she says. “But I also knew that I could do it. If anything, being Otto Kolb’s granddaughter made me stronger.”

Within a very short time, her grandmother trained her in the family business, which mainly focused on construction for trade fairs. When Ginger Zalaba later offered to refurbish her grandmother’s chairs to say thank you, it was probably the first time that the young woman truly appreciated her grandfather’s work, in her capacity as an artist and designer. She studied the individual elements, the material, the lines and the way that things were made. Just like any gifted student, at some point she began to develop and consolidate her own ideas. When she travelled to the Milan furniture fair with her first collection of chairs based on her grandfather’s designs, she used up her life savings.

“For me, being able to show my work was a huge achievement,” says Ginger Zalaba. “Especially when it ultimately led to contact with Walter Knoll.”

Markus Benz, CEO of Walter Knoll, was primarily interested in the reinterpretation of the bat chair, but was undecided whether such a unique piece would fit into the rest of the collection. Ginger Zalaba began to rework the concept, drew a hundred new designs, changed proportions, frames and armrests. She simplified the design further and further, until it turned into a dining chair. Then, she expanded it again into a side chair.

It is not true that Ginger Zalaba does not respect her grandfather’s work – rather, she is unafraid. The original is distinctive in its delicate opulence; her design is distinctive in its compact clarity, which cuts out the superfluous and yet avoids the austere. She has reincorporated the original elements: steel tubing and saddle leather. The construction and statics are completely new – and more original:



The steel spiral staircase forms the main core of the building. It is one of Otto Kolb’s most important inventions



A feeling for materials: for her Walter Knoll designs, Zalaba chooses from a range of different samples. For her *Aisuu Side Chair* and *Aisuu Chair*, she uses leather and steel

“Design was always important to our family.”

Ginger Zalaba

elegant, simplified and strong. Now the *Aisuu* exists as a side chair, but also as a dining chair that suits both homes and restaurants.

“The Bauhaus gave us an aesthetic which has remained relevant for a hundred years,” says Markus Benz. “Ginger Zalaba manages to take on this aesthetic and develop it further in her own way: unusually different, yet sensuous and beautiful.”

“It was time to bring the bat chair up to date,” says Ginger Zalaba. “The fact that the new interpretation is being presented by Walter Knoll would certainly have pleased my grandfather.”

She still often visits her grandfather’s roundhouse, where she has photographed all of her collections to date – which makes perfect sense, given the breathtaking architecture. She even lived there for a while, during a phase of her youth when she craved freedom and therefore preferred to live with her grandmother. Jane Kolb, Otto Kolb’s last wife, is now 91 years old and still wakes up every morning inside the livable sculpture that her husband designed.

She met and fell in love with him in America in the late 1950s, before moving to Switzerland with him. She always felt that he built the most beautiful houses that she had ever seen. “This house keeps me above ground and stops me from going downhill,” says Jane Kolb.

In the world outside the house, the afternoon has set in. Sunlight falls through the windows and meanders through the space. Deer from the neighboring woodland amble onto the property. The cellar still contains many of Otto Kolb’s designs for furniture and houses that he never built because they were ahead of their time. One could imagine turning this place into a museum, in memory of its creator. But then you realize that a museum only displays things that no one needs any more, things with no life left in them – and as long as Ginger Zalaba visits this house, to gather memories and to work, that will not be the case. For now, the past remains a part of her inspiration.

#### About

Marcus Jauer, 44, used to write for the culture section of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. For a number of years he has worked as a freelance contributor for publications including *Die Zeit*. In his free time, he enjoys building shelves and closets for his family, or kennels for his children’s pets.

# Walter Knoll and the effect of modernity

Does architecture influence the motivation of the people who work within it? Yes. Can good architecture embody the philosophy of a business? Again, yes

Deep insights: the headquarters in Herrenberg shows the efficient linkage of manufacturing, administration and exhibition



We've known what can be achieved with light-filled architecture since Walter Gropius built the Fagus Factory in Alfeld over a hundred years ago, and later the Bauhaus workshops in Dessau. The cuboid buildings with generous glass facades brighten both the rooms and the spirits of the employees, and appear open and inviting to the outside world.



Clear corner: the distinctive corner in the glass facade showcases some of the company's core values – depth, diligence and openness



Corporate architecture: the factories in Mötzingen are built around the idea of a brace surrounding a transparent cube

If you notice similarities between the Walter Knoll headquarters in Herrenberg and the Gropius buildings, you'd be right. Walter Knoll lives and breathes modernity.

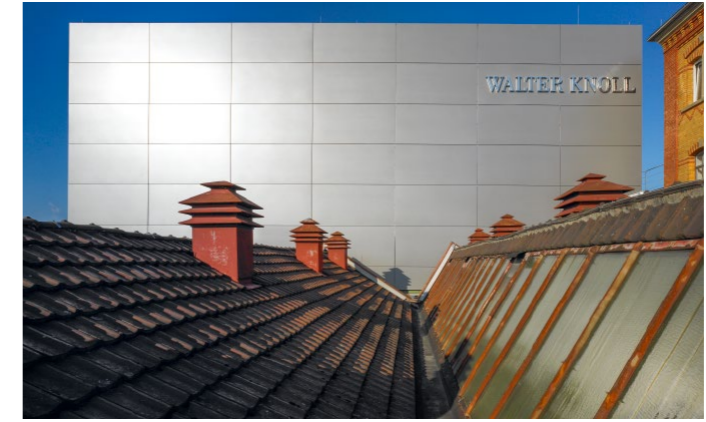
This is underscored by a striking detail: the glass corner flanking the entrance area over four floors. In passing, visitors are struck by a sense of lightness and transparency, and they are able to glean something of an insight into the internal goings-on. Huge panes of glass measuring 4 by 1.88 meters have been brought right up to the corner. Behind them are rows of slim concrete pillars that are quite visible in their supporting roles, but allow the glass to enjoy the limelight.

Walter Gropius made the idea of the glass corner world-famous. With the Bauhaus building, Gropius was the first to join transparent corners, creating a continuous glass facade. Mies van der Rohe perfected the technique and called it the Curtain Wall – a glass curtain. That's also the effect produced by the facade in Herrenberg, as though it were hung on a slim concrete frame.

The architect Hansulrich Benz built the company headquarters and two factory buildings in nearby Mötzingen between 2001 and 2012. The factories are also built around the theme of a cube. However, these are clad in titanium-zinc sheeting and include semitransparent sections in which doors, windows and loading ramps are embedded.

Hansulrich Benz has created a corporate architecture that is self-referential and complementary. The fact that the buildings are influenced by the style of modernity is firstly down to the company tradition. Founder Walter Knoll worked with Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe personally.

But more important is the fact that even today, modernity embodies Walter Knoll's self-image:



A dialog between eras: aluminum panels on the new building accentuate historic features on the Walter Knoll brandland



Sleek: the concrete in the stairway glows in the light from the ribbon windows with such silky-smoothness that you almost want to stroke it

minimalism, clarity, transparency and aesthetic longevity. These are the principles which underpin the design process for furniture here. This applies at all levels, which the building's transparency reveals: upholstery work goes on over the ground floor; above that is the sewing area; the administration works on the third floor; and on the top floor, customers reach the showroom. Everywhere are bright spaces made up of only three materials: glass, steel and light exposed concrete. Mies van der Rohe's motto is still valid: less is more.

The minimalist clarity showcases the expertise that put the company at the forefront of its highly complex business – international furniture design. It also shows the intensity of what goes on here: thinking. Hansulrich Benz was tasked with linking the new building with several other historic buildings on the grounds of the Walter Knoll brandland. To that end, he effected a complete spatial restructuring of the various departments – from manufacturing, to distribution, warehousing, administration and exhibition.

This architectural intelligence can also be found in the energy system. The new heating installation requires 40 percent less energy for the whole brandland in Herrenberg than previously consumed by the old building alone. Photovoltaic technology and the heating system in the concrete cores, that stabilizes room temperature, make a contribution to that reduction. In summer, the cores can also be cooled with water from the sprinkler tank. The technology is elegantly concealed in the ceilings and floors.

Wherever you go, look or touch, the corporate architecture at Walter Knoll tangibly conveys how the company works: careful planning, intelligent development, a clear language of form, high-quality materials and perfection in technical detail. And a lot of love for corners and edges.



NEW PRODUCTS

# The new modernity of living

Ready for the future? Let us welcome you to the Bauhaus, to the poetry of awakening, the freedom of living that is Walter Knoll. Discover our new products!

*The Farns* – house in house

*Living Landscape 755* – living with a 360-degree perspective

*Foster 620 Table* – a small tree in the room

*Aisuu Side Chair* – sensuously attractive

*Aisuu Chair* – just right

*Deen Table* – come together

*Vostra Wood* – transcending time

*FK* – icon in the comfort zone

# Open, clear, confident

The new modernity of living opens up the space; it loves beauty. Its geometry of aesthetics negotiates between indoors and out, yesterday and tomorrow



*Living Landscape 755 sofa, The Farns sideboard, Oki and Oki Table occasional tables, Kivara pillow from the Badawi Pillows range, Suma carpet, Tadeo dining table, Saddle Chair chairs*



Benchmark and attitude.  
 The design language of modernity  
 outlives all fashions. Clear, reduced,  
 universal. *The Farns* sideboard,  
*Living Landscape 755* sofa,  
*Foster 620 Table* occasional tables,  
*Isanka* basket, *Usiku* carpet



Between creation and imagination. With a love of material and a passion for innovation – this is how furniture is created at Walter Knoll. *Tama Living* sofa, *The Farns* sideboard, *Ishino Table* occasional tables, *Mwamba* pillow from the *Badawi Pillows* range, *Kiwara* carpet

# House in house

**The Farns.** Design: EOOS.

It is a striking, small building in a living space. More architecture than furniture. More statement than server. *The Farns* is as clear and innovative as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's "Farnsworth House" was at the time – the prototype of all glass buildings. A landmark in every living landscape. Like the timelessly valid architecture of modernity, *The Farns* also plays with light and shade, with shape and geometry, wood and glass. A modern spacious bungalow, fascinating by day and night, open on all sides, transparent and accessible – always the center of attention



Form follows the love of material:  
tinted glass, masterly finished veneer  
and mirrored walls



Innovative and reticent: the doors can be opened 180 degrees thanks to a concealed hinge mechanism. The sideboard becomes freely accessible, from the back and from the front, from both the living and the dining room. A piece of furniture that allows you to look and feel through – the charm of "open plan"

- Classic linear shape
- Fascinating mirror effects
- With light if desired
- Innovative use of glass
- Up to eight doors
- Accessories in leather, from inlays through to pads and trays
- Drawers with magnetic divider elements

## The design story

"Great sketches, but it can't be put into practice." Enthusiasm about the look, but the developers and construction engineers otherwise shook their heads. How on earth could you work out the statics? Without a rear panel? With that much glass? With doors that open 180°? And how should the undersized hinges carry the large glass doors? This sideboard draft by design trio EOOS seemed to be a flight of fancy. "Attractive, admittedly, but it will never work!" But it did. The development team from Walter Knoll set about looking for the very best in the region of inventors to make the impossible possible. New door fittings and an adhesive that balances the temperature differences of aluminum and glass without losing strength were specially created for *The Farns*. A new lighting technology to perfectly showcase what is inside. And the glass itself became the carrying static element. The result is more than a sideboard: dresser or credenza, highboard or lowboard, display cabinet or bar unit, floating shelving or luminaire – a structuring architectural element for every living area.

## Facts and details

- **Individual configurations**
- **Virtually invisible hinges**
- **180 degree opening angle** for the door elements
- **Light package** optionally available
- **Cable ducts** allow unproblematic media installation
- **Veneers** in oak burned, white pigmented or nutwood, all oiled – to make them look and feel like solid wood

## Design: EOOS.

The Austrian designers Martin Bergmann, Gernot Bohmann and Harald Gründl run their atelier in Vienna and work in projects from Milan to Toronto, London to New York, Berlin to Herrenberg. EOOS draws on the archaic and creates visionary pieces. The designers observe human rituals, sense desires and instincts, and develop furniture to suit life.



pCon.box

Find out more in  
the configurator



Geometrical games: *The Farnis* sideboard, *Tadeo* table, *Saddle Chair* chairs, *Votteler Chair* armchair, *Vladi* occasional table, *Safara* carpet

*The Farns* is a grown-up version of the sideboard. It can be used as a luminaire, make a statement within a particular space – like a bungalow in a park. The doors of *The Farns* can be opened 180 degrees creating a spatial item with a range of faces for innumerable lighting effects. *The Farns* furnishes every living landscape with a secret. The mirrored panels make the inside seem endless. Construction and statics? Remain a mystery. And even when *The Farns* stands against a wall, the mirrored panels magic it into a light board – transparent, resolute and straightforward. A sideboard that is like a gallery, a true tribute to the Bauhaus.

*“The statics of the sideboard were a particular challenge. And we are really proud to have found a solution.”*

Clemens Schmidt Technology and Development at Walter Knoll



The language of *The Farns*: clear, comprehensible, transparent, straightforward, with no frills. Like a bungalow



All variants of *The Farns* can be equipped with a range of accessories



If required, LED strips can be integrated in the “roof” of *The Farns*. They can be switched on and dimmed using a concealed button. A light installation with fascinating effects, supported by the mirrored wall sections

# The all-rounder

*The Farns* was developed as a modular system. Accessible from both sides and as a sideboard against the wall. From 60 centimeters high to a highboard measuring 1.50 meters. With or without light installation. With or without wooden doors. This way or that – a sculpture of clarity, pure and versatile.



## Sideboard without doors

*The Farns* is 240 centimeters wide. The corpus is either 45 or 75 centimeters high and can be combined with a framework of 15 or 30 centimeters. The rear panels are made of glass. If desired, the sideboard is illuminated on the inside with LED strip lighting



## Sideboard with 4 or 8 doors

The free-standing variant has a total of eight doors – four at the front, four at the back. The other variant has four at the front. The outer doors are made of glass, the central ones feature veneer in nutwood or oak. The sideboard with four doors is also available with a cable duct. The interior can be equipped with lighting if so desired



## Sideboard with 2 doors

As a highboard, *The Farns* has a corpus 120 centimeters in height, plus the framework at a height of 15 or 30 centimeters. One door is made of glass, the other of veneer. The interior can be equipped with lighting if so desired



Striking format: the corpus of the two-door highboard *The Farns* makes a cubic statement. *Deen Table* standing height table, *375* barstools, *Chimbuka* carpet



# Living with a 360-degree perspective

**Living Landscape 755.** Design: EOOS.

A sofa landscape with which our perspective of life can change direction. *Living Landscape 755* modifies a space – it not only opens up the area in front of but also behind the sofa, thus widening our views. To the lake, the fireplace, the people at our side



Spending the evening with friends? Or enjoying some me time with a view of the outside world? The corner elements of *Living Landscape 755* can be simply turned 90 degrees by hand – to suit every requirement. *Oki* and *Oki Table* occasional tables, *Kiwara* pillow from the *Badawi Pillows* range, *Suma* carpet. The leather bolster supports both cushion and head

*Living Landscape 755* is the comfort zone for everyone and everything. One person might be reading, another gazing at the landscape outside, while a third person works. Independently from one another, but close enough to be together. Just right.

*Living Landscape 755* flexibly fits into a room without taking over – living room, loft, open space. With a clear shape, solid and stable. Expertly created in perfect craftsmanship from the upholstery to the seams.



*Living Landscape 755* exudes a sense of calm and guarantees long-term pleasure in comfortable sitting. The bolsters provide additional support. The tray made of saddle leather and solid wood provides practical storage space; it perfectly matches the side table which is made of the same, warm materials. The upholstered element on the right can be turned 90 degrees – to face the fireplace. *Foster 620 Table* occasional tables, *Usiku* carpet, *Isanka* basket

- Living with a 360-degree perspective
- Agile versatility
- Calm, elegant aura

### The design story

The houses of the great masters create relationships. They link inside and out, between surrounding landscape and the people in the room, between areas for eating, living and sleeping and a view into the distance. The designers from EOOS studied the plans of great architects such as Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright as well as Shigeru Ban and asked the question which pieces of furniture can best establish a relationship between furniture and room? The answer: the ideal sofa has to reflect the diversity of open architecture by opening up, or “activating” as the designers from EOOS call it, the various perspectives of the room. This was how *Living Landscape 750* came into being a good ten years ago. A success. A living landscape which gives its occupiers a new spatial experience thanks to gently swiveling corner elements. Cubist, communicative with a range of possible uses. A patented mechanism, concealed in the attractive corpus, is the secret behind these changing perspectives.

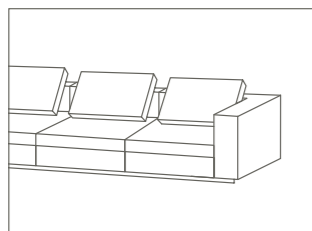
This idea, the interaction of form and function, makes *Living Landscape* a timeless, modern living object in the very best sense of Bauhaus. The redesign of 2019 entailed a sensitive revision of shape for a softer touch and feel. And the soft upholstery now offers even more comfort and depth in the seating experience. Supplemented with the new tray and the side table, *Living Landscape* satisfies the desire for a modern lifestyle.

### Facts and details

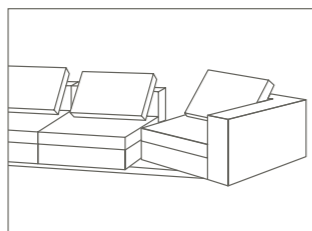
- **Smooth-running mechanism**
- **Countless possible variations**
- **Patented technology**
- **Maximum seating comfort** thanks to the soft upholstery
- **Tray and side table** made of solid wood and saddle leather



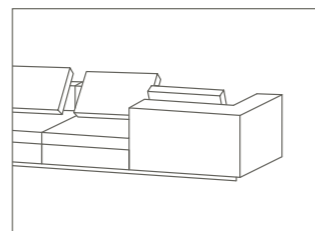
Find out more in the configurator



1



2



3

Flexible living landscape:  
(1) The sofa looks in one direction.  
(2) The corner element can be turned in a flash. (3) To enjoy the view in the other direction

*“Every sofa opens up a space in front of it. Living Landscape 755 uses the space in all directions.”*

EOOS Designers

## A small tree in a room

**Foster 620 Table.** Design: Norman Foster.



The *Foster 620 Table* looks like it's grown out of the floor, naturally belonging to the room. The harmony of the shape inspired by nature, the elegant top and unique grain make this occasional table a sculpture

- Very best of craftsmanship
- High-grade, solid timber leg
- Slimline table top



Find out more in the configurator

### The design story

Developing the *Foster 620 Table* also meant coming to terms with nature. Not just in terms of design – the table looks as if it is rooted to the spot. But also in terms of manufacture. The leg is made of solid timber with an evenly velvety surface. The challenge: how can you get a chunk of a tree to withstand heat and cold in all kinds of climatic regions without cracking? The construction engineers spent months thinking round the problem until they had a brainwave.

### Facts and details

- **The sculptural design** is attractive and calming
- **The solid timber leg** seems to have taken root
- **The circular table top**, matt powder-coated black or bronze, or lacquered in copper, accentuates the room

### Design: Norman Foster.

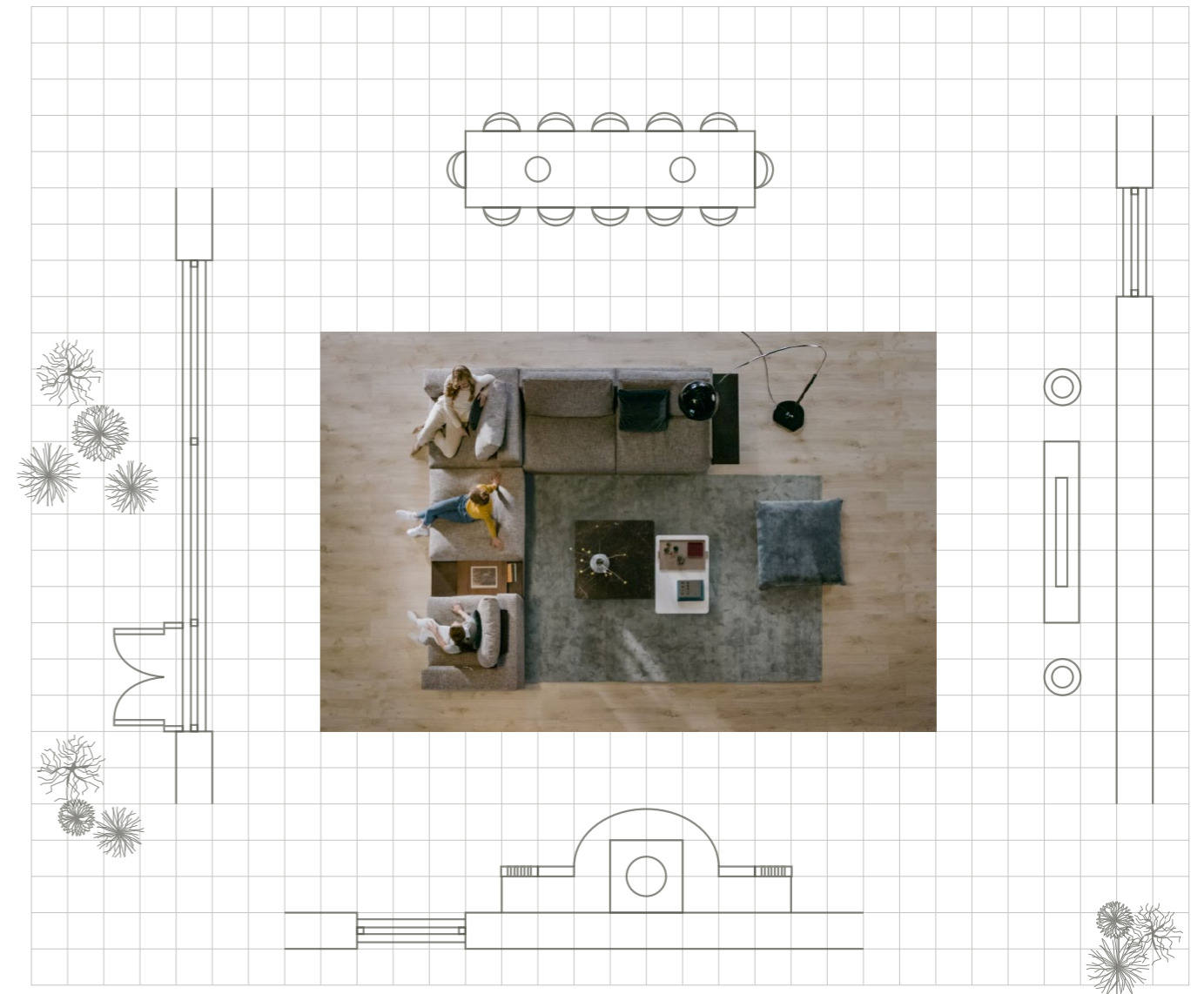
British architect Norman Foster is perhaps the most well-known architect of our time. With his studio Foster + Partners, he has constructed a number of buildings all over the world, including public buildings such as airport terminals, subway stations and museums. Notable icons are the Millennium Bridge and 30 St Mary Axe in London, the Apple Park in California and the Reichstag Building in Berlin. It was the furnishing of the latter that saw the start of the collaboration between Norman Foster and Walter Knoll. Since then, they have created several programs together illustrating the synthesis of architecture and furnishings.

# Living life with a sofa

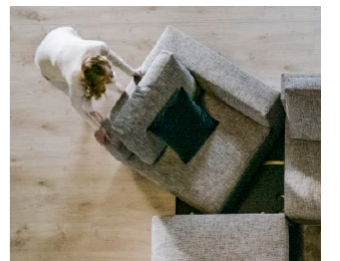
Just as the wandering sunlight divides up the day, *Living Landscape 755* shapes lifestyle. A sofa landscape which can be converted whatever the time of day – to suit your particular purpose



Coming together:  
*Living Landscape 755*  
encourages family life from  
morning till night – here  
watching a movie together



Sitting side by side looking out into the garden, on your own gazing into the fire, or turning to face others at the dining table. The sofa opens up the room on all sides as well as new perspectives



The corner elements can be turned 90 degrees in a flash. Take a look at the different living scenarios in the movie “Living life with a sofa” – at [www.walterknoll.de](http://www.walterknoll.de)

Reduced and roomy at the same time: *Aisuu Side Chair* in black. *Foster 620 Table* and *Joco Stone* occasional tables, *Ilanga* carpet

# Sensuously attractive

*Aisuu Side Chair*. Design: Ginger Zalaba.

Clear, almost austere in its geometry – casual in its effect. Swiss designer Ginger Zalaba has made *Aisuu Side Chair* something of a tribute. A tribute to Otto Kolb, her grandfather and a master of the New Bauhaus, who designed avant-garde furniture in the Chicago of the 1950s



With its wing-like armrests, it was ahead of its time. The American Playboy editors were certainly enthusiastic. They called it the “Love Chair”. Walter Knoll found it good from the outset. In 1961, we created an upholstered version of it. And today we are more than pleased that his granddaughter, herself an artist, has reinterpreted the original design. Ginger Zalaba grew up among the furniture of Otto Kolb. She has been fascinated by her grandfather’s work and the Bauhaus from an early age. She asked herself how she could translate his most important piece of furniture into the present day. She gave it her own language, her own sense of lifestyle: a love of lines, material, reduction. *Aisuu Side Chair* is a soloist. Exceptional, cool, irresistible.

*“We conceal the leather seams in a fine channel – for a wonderfully smooth surface.”*

Oliver Siegelin Team Lead Development at Walter Knoll



Bauhaus look for today's lifestyle: with *Aisuu Side Chair*, designer Ginger Zalaba has brought her grandfather's “bat chair” into the present

- Tribute to an avant-garde soloist from the 1950s (Chicago Bauhaus School)
- Unique esthetics, casual comfort
- Sustainable resources: tubular steel and leather
- Elegant material, filigree structure



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Find out more in the configurator

## The design story

Otto Kolb, a Swiss architect and designer, lived and worked together with Le Corbusier, Johannes Itten, Max Bill and Hans Arp. On the recommendation of the pioneers of modernity, he went to Chicago, to the New Bauhaus, where he designed the “bat chair” in 1951. Playboy rechristened it the “Love Chair”. Shortly afterwards, Walter Knoll created an eye-catching upholstered version of the chair. But, at the time, it seemed too avant-garde. Otto Kolb’s granddaughter, the designer Ginger Zalaba, found her grandfather’s sketches a few years ago and was particularly fascinated with the bat chair. She presented a draft of her grandfather’s inspired prototype in Herrenberg. The Walter Knoll team was immediately taken by the reduction of the elegant material, the unusual supporting construction and outstanding finishing. With their extensive experience, the developers tweaked a few things here and there, optimized the ergonomics and the inclination of seat and backrest, as well as the tube wall thickness and the finishing of the leather. The result: recognition of a master of the New Bauhaus, modernized with true designer grit, refined with premium craftsmanship.

## Facts and details

- Striking, **three millimeter thick**, saddle leather
- **Leather edges** rounded off, polished and dyed to suit the cover **by hand**
- **Framework matt** powder coated in black or bronze

## Design: Ginger Zalaba.

Ginger Zalaba grew up among artists and designers. Originally she dreamt of owning a gallery. She graduated from Zurich University of the Arts with a master’s in exhibition design. After her father’s death, she took over her parents’ company in her mid-twenties and, with great determination, transformed it into the design studio she has managed since 2012. In the meantime she has studied interior design at the IED Institute of Design in Italy and made her début at the world’s leading furnishings show, the Salone del Mobile in Milan, with her own furniture collection in 2015. She draws on the designs of her grandfather Otto Kolb, the famous Swiss architect and designer, who designed buildings in America in the 1950s which adhered to the principles of the Bauhaus – buildings which today feature in the National Register of Historic Places. *Aisuu Chair* and *Aisuu Side Chair* are the artist’s tribute to her grandfather – and the first joint project of Zalaba and Walter Knoll.

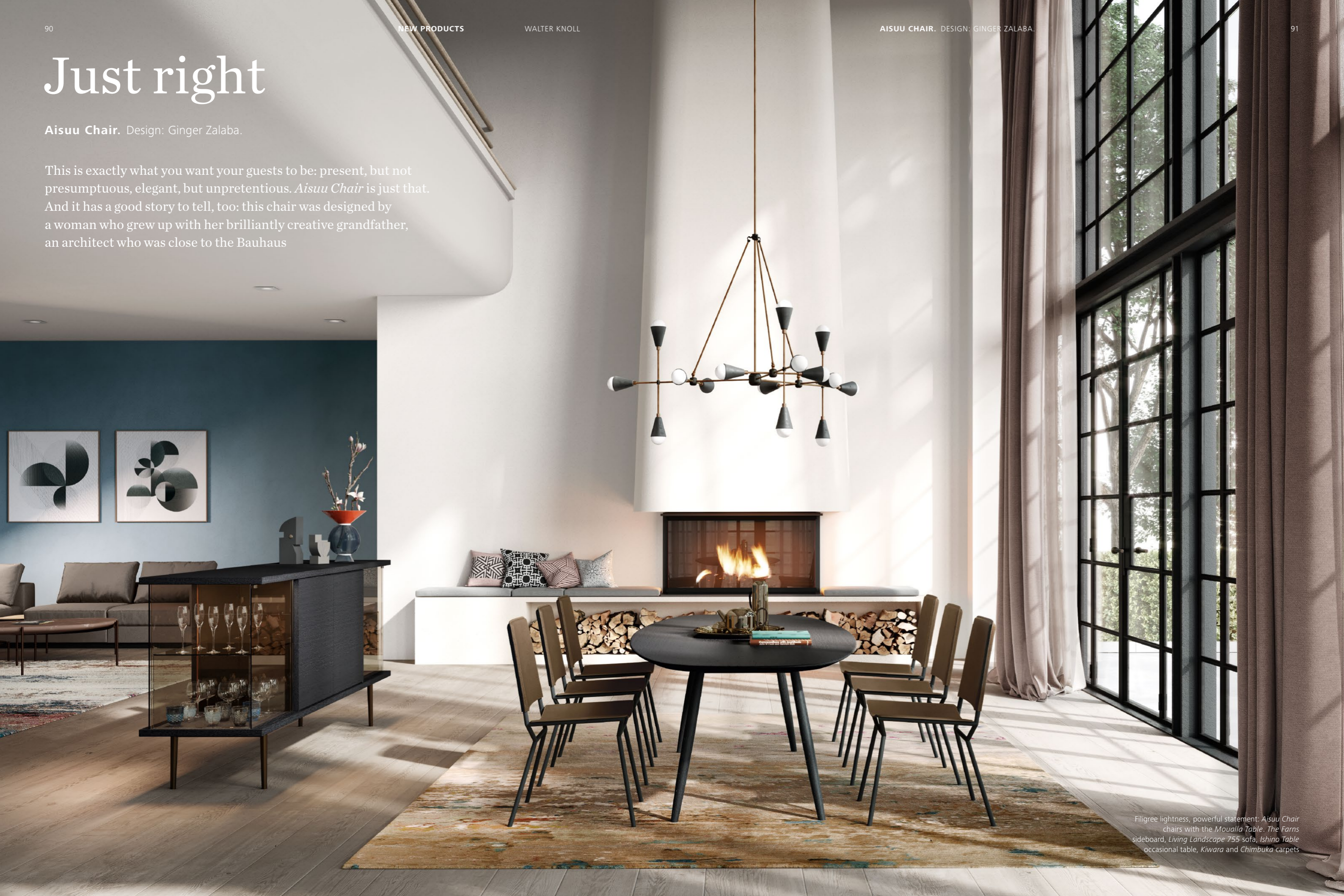


A confident character, a powerful design. *Aisuu Side Chair* comes with a black or bronze framework; the elegant saddle leather is available in a wide range of colors

# Just right

**Aisuu Chair.** Design: Ginger Zalaba.

This is exactly what you want your guests to be: present, but not presumptuous, elegant, but unpretentious. *Aisuu Chair* is just that. And it has a good story to tell, too: this chair was designed by a woman who grew up with her brilliantly creative grandfather, an architect who was close to the Bauhaus



Filigree lightness, powerful statement: *Aisuu Chair* chairs with the *Moualla Table*. The *Farns* sideboard, *Living Landscape 755* sofa, *Ishino Table* occasional table, *Kiwara* and *Chimbuka* carpets

As a child, designer Ginger Zalaba was surrounded by the irrepressibly creative work of her grandfather, Otto Kolb. She lived and breathed the design language of modernity. *Aisuu Chair* is made up of its vocabulary, put together to create its very own, new esthetics. As lightweight and delicate as verse, as powerful as a statement. Its construction alone – a masterpiece of statics and craftsmanship. Three tubes each meet up at six points. Although they are welded, they seem to be of a piece. The high-grade saddle leather – left natural, warm on your body, finished by hand at the edges. Over the course of its lifetime, the leather will develop a patina, which in turn will tell another, very personal story.



Reduced design, top-quality material, compelling structure: *Aisuu Chair* has everything that characterizes modernity

- Furniture with Bauhaus DNA
- Sustainable use of resources: tubular steel and leather
- Filigree, lightweight and extremely stable
- Structure that seems all of a piece

### The design story

Ginger Zalaba, now a designer, has studied hundreds of sketches and designs by her grandfather Otto Kolb as well as finished examples of his work. Kolb, a representative of classic modernity, worked together with Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Johannes Itten and Wassily Kandinsky. His granddaughter has transferred his furniture into the here and now. By giving the Bauhaus values their own, new significance. Ginger Zalaba is now presenting two products which carry the family DNA of modernity: *Aisuu Chair* and *Aisuu Side Chair*. The Walter Knoll team immediately took a shine to them. And decided to enrich the original designs with their knowledge and expertise, unique in the industry. Structure and tubular steel, leather and seams: with high-grade, elegant finishing. Both minimalistic and sustainable with the homogeneous use of just two materials. *Aisuu Chair* and *Aisuu Side Chair* pay tribute to her creative grandfather. A contemporary interpretation of the Bauhaus with new, optimized means.

### Facts and details

- Striking, **three millimeter thick**, saddle leather
- **Leather edges** rounded off, polished and dyed to suit the cover **by hand**
- **Framework matt** powder coated in black or bronze

  
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Find out more in the configurator



Matt powder coated framework in black and in bronze. A chair for multiple occasions – at home, in a restaurant or hotel bar

*“The fused joints feature such excellent finishing that the carrying elements look to be all of a piece.”*

Jürgen Röhm Head of Research and Development at Walter Knoll



# Come together

**DEEN TABLE.** Design: EOOS.

Family life: coming and going, sitting and standing. Obligations and pleasures. And *Deen Table* is pure pleasure. Unconventional, communicative, dynamic: life at a standing height table is life on a level playing field. Whoever is there first extends the invitation. The minute you arrive, you are immediately on board. The warmth of the solid wood top and the round edge immediately engender closeness and trust

- Masterpiece made of solid wood
- Sophistication and delicate elegance
- Invitation to talk
- Multiple hand-crafted details

## The design story

A standing height table promotes open, dynamic exchange. This is where you can keep track of what's going on. The narrow table top ensures proximity. That was something the designers from EOOS knew, and they also knew: height and slimline dimensions alone are not enough. The design should have a positive effect on those standing round the table. The table should feel pleasant. Class was the core message, decided EOOS and Walter Knoll. They chose elegant solid wood for the top, mount and legs. The velvety oiled surface exudes a sense of calm. The radius of the boat-shaped top looks harmonious. The minimal width facilitates communication. The perfectly shaped soft edge sweet-talks your hand. The elegant legs look natural. The product is top-class, vital and relaxed through and through. Which is why this standing height table fits in fantastically to a lively household. The ideal meeting point.

## Facts and details

- **Sculptural table top** and legs made of solid wood
- **The soft edge** feels ultra pleasant

  
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Find out more in the configurator



*Deen Table*, the snug meeting point. The perfect place for a conversation, a coffee or a book. At this standing height table, everyone will find the space they need. 375 bar stools, *The Farns* highboard and sideboard, *Grand Suite* sofa, *Oki Table* occasional tables, *Chimbuka* and *Safara* carpets, *Atelier Chair* armchair



Rich in variety: *Deen Table* comes in two heights. The difference between them is ten centimeters – for different markets, preferences and situations. The table top is available in several sizes

# Transcending time

**Vostra Wood.** Design: Walter Knoll Team.

Successful design knows no expiry date. On the contrary: what is already good becomes valuable over time. The function proves its worth. The comfort is compelling, the shape pleasing, the classic is strong enough to adapt – so that it stays

Clean lines with fine curves:  
Vostra Wood has been synonymous  
with modern living since the 1950s.  
375 occasional tables, Usiku carpet



- Legs in four solid wood variants
- Comfortably upholstered
- The armchair of the 1950s

## The design story

The history of *Vostra* dates back to a draft by the Danish/American designer Jens Risom from 1943 – a small armchair made of beech wood and belted. Five years earlier, Hans Knoll, son of Walter Knoll, emigrated to the US, set up business on his own, included the chair in his successful collection and, in 1947, sent it to his father. That is how the precursor of *Vostra* came to Germany. Walter Knoll then developed a new, proprietary form of the armchair with tubular steel legs and elaborate upholstery. This classic piece was first produced in 1949, exactly 70 years ago. And right in time for its 70th birthday, the chair is now once again available with solid wood legs: *Vostra Wood*, based on the 1956 version.

## Facts and details

- **The three character buttons** prove the upholstery experience of Walter Knoll

Design: Walter Knoll Team.

Walter Knoll has always seen itself – in Bauhaus tradition – as being equally committed to design and craftsmanship. The creative minds in the team at Walter Knoll develop exceptional top-quality furniture. And *Vostra* is an example of this. The Walter Knoll team designed the small armchair in 1949 for the post-war German market. Its modern, timeless lines have made it a classic.



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Find out more in  
the configurator



Three tufted buttons reveal the masterly signature of the upholsterers at Walter Knoll

*“Vostra is a prime example of the style of modernity. Best craftsmanship, timeless design.”*

Jürgen Röhm Head of Research and Development at Walter Knoll

# Icon in the comfort zone

FK. Design: Preben Fabricius & Jørgen Kastholm.

The *FK* bucket seat is international design history, a beacon of modernity. The fine lines and clear contours are as compelling today as they ever were. The new soft upholstery is as reticent as it is effective, underscoring both the lines and the coziness. The perfect sketch, supplemented with long-lasting comfort

- Unique pieces, minimalistic form
- Understated, additional upholstery



Pioneer of minimalism: the three-star base of *FK* is made of polished aluminum

## The design story

Nobody needs to worry about the success of the *FK* family. Since the 1960s, members of the *FK* family have been welcomed all over in top-quality, stylish interiors – as a soloist, in compositions or as a complement for sofa and lounge groups. The developers rose to the challenge. Would it be possible to model softer upholstery into the seating area?

## Facts and details

- **The bucket** is completely covered with soft leather
- **The seat** swivels

## Design: Preben Fabricius & Jørgen Kastholm.

Inspired by functionalism and the resoluteness of Scandinavian design, interior designers Preben Fabricius and Jørgen Kastholm founded their atelier in 1961 – an atelier that was to produce icons of furniture history. Their main concern was to state the function of an aesthetic form. The *FK* bucket seat, designed by Fabricius and Kastholm, symbolizes classical design, and is as timeless as it is modern. It won the very first German prize for “Good Shape” (“Gute Form”) in 1969.



Minimalism meets coziness:  
FK armchair in black with *Tobu* table.  
*Andalusiti* carpet



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Find out more in the configurator

*“Every piece of upholstery requires precision. And it was a very special challenge to model soft upholstery for the seating area on the classic FK.”*

Elmar Böing Development upholsterer at Walter Knoll

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