



Staffan Tollgård Design Store

A World Of Designs In One Spectacular Setting

Step into Staffan Tollgård's eponymous Design Store and you would be forgiven for missing the fact that this designer was born and bred in Sweden. Spend a little time in the store, though, and the many subtle references to a modern take on Scandinavian design rise to the surface. The weathered grey barn-wood that clads the mezzanine and architectural columns is a nod to Staffan's Swedish heritage; the laid-back, easy-going atmosphere testimony to his belief that great design should be appreciated and shared in an immersive, welcoming environment.

The fact that the company's design practice is housed on the mezzanine, tucked just out of site, but at the heart of the Store's concept, also has a Swedish functionalism to it. Staffan's vision for this multi-tasking space was the creation of "a truly immersive design experience where each and every element is for sale and specification. Through our hybrid nature of interior design practice and design store we have tried to embed the products in a residential environment that tells a strong and interesting story about us, who we are and where we come from. The idea of home is paramount to every project that we work on. And it is paramount to the stories behind the furniture and pieces that we sell. Where was the designer inspired? What experience does this particular manufacturer have that is unique?

Our designers know the stories behind each design decision we have made, and behind the products and design that we are selling. These stories will appeal to certain clients, so we must know how to tell them, and we must have the space and the setting to do it in, calmly and completely. We've tried to design the Store to be a very different shopping experience. It shouldn't feel like a shop – more like a beautiful home that you can recreate in your own."

The collection of brands in the Store spans 19 countries. The designers span another 13. The international blend has captured the attention of the interior designers, architects and clients that have visited the Store since it has opened. Staffan's success in choosing exclusive high-quality brands and working with long-standing (and often family-run businesses) that tell a distinct design narrative is exemplified in a few of the international brands that the Store sells. Many of the brands are engaged in a dialogue with their cultural heritage; all are inspired by their homelands and determined to create new design typologies that move design forward.



Seyhan Ozdemir from Turkish design dynamo Autoban recently visited the Store to see how their work is being showcased. Autoban's furniture range was born out of the architectural design firm's own interior projects so there is a lot of common ground shared between the two practices. As Seyhan explained to Staffan during her visit, their furniture collection tells a number of different stories, unique to each of their design projects. Early on, Autoban struggled to find products to properly tell the story of their hotel and commercial projects. So they designed their own. Inspired by the diversity of daily life in Istanbul and their increasingly international work-scape they have won numerous design awards for projects and pieces. Stand out pieces at the Store include the iconic Box sofa, the Nest Chair, the Deer chair and the Tulip lamp.

Neri&Hu are another husband-and-wife architect team whose work is proudly displayed at the Design Store. Lyndon Neri and Rossana Hu's pieces are rooted in an aesthetic of cultural provocation. Their designs speak of their Chinese heritage, their irrepressible energy and their commitment to quality above all else. Neri&Hu passionately want to convey to the world stage that great design can come from China. Their commitment to quality has seen them join Autoban under the manufacturing umbrella of De La Espada, whose expertise in solid wood out of their base in Northern Portugal is the perfect fit for their designs that modernise, refine and update historical references from their Chinese design heritage. Iconic pieces include the Solo and Duet chairs.

Stellarworks is also based in Shanghai and boasts an eclectic fusion of French, Japanese and Scandinavian heritage, manufacturing and design influences. Their Lunar pieces, by Danish design duo of Signe Bindlev Henriksen and Peter Bundgaard Rützou that together make up Space Copenhagen, sit beautifully in the store, together with other Stellarworks stand-out items including the Laval Crown chair and armchairs that clearly illustrate the cross-cultural sampling at the core of their design philosophy.

Another designer innovating in the Far East is British design icon Michael Young. Rooted in a spirit of enquiry and industrial adventure, his Hong Kong based brand, EOQ, is pushing the boundaries of furniture design using industrial technologies to design future modern classics. Several of his pieces are shown at the Design Store including the Joseph and Bramah lighting collection that use his signature extrusion process. Staffan picks out the Bayer shelves as a personal favourite. The shelves combine forged links with shelving of smoked oak, walnut or even driftwood, set in dramatic opposition to them. An endlessly-configurable unit that is equally at home in a luxurious residential setting or as a room divider in a high-end restaurant, and that illustrate EOQ's growth into a brand of real distinction.



The international fusion at work in the Design Store has resulted in a bold design language that speaks to an international design savvy audience. The careful curating of the brands offers a sampling of the best that the world of design has to offer under a beautifully designed roof. Was it the Swedes that invented the smorgasbord?

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