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Food and other things...

Andrea Branzi /
Michael Anastassiades /
Carsten Höller /
Marc Held /
Adrian Ghenie /
R. Buckminster Fuller /
Nucleo /
Anton Alvarez /
Emilie Baltz /
Kobe Desramaults /

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4

Low tech, high engagement

Contemporary kitchen tools and tableware are all about strengthening an emotional bond between consumer and product through interactive user experience or crafted textures. Emotions have a strong influence on our perception: the story the product tells arouses us, enabling a long-lasting relationship between these tools and ourselves. During the past decades, the slow, low-tech method of preparing food was abandoned, as everything had to perform to the highest standard and at speed. This attitude has now been replaced by the utilisation of products that we willingly choose to expose on shelves rather than store in cupboards.



CECILIE MANZ

Designer for Iittala

Iittala is moving into small furniture and clever accessories, which has been met with enthusiasm by the design world, reviving a passion for the Scandinavian style. This Finnish brand has dominated the world of design-conscious table-top products for well over a century, so this addition to the existing collection is a highly anticipated launch.

Danish designer Cecilie Manz is much admired in the foodware milieu, and for Iittala she has produced a collection of small, playful, wall-mounted storage solutions. Aitio (meaning *theatre box* in Finnish) units can be used individually to meet small, targeted storage needs – such as holding your keys in a place next to the door, or indeed, can be used variously here and there to display small mementos that have a place in one's heart but no obvious place on the furniture in the room.

"Also, the user can create his or her own larger system of units in the kitchen, for example, incorporating any combination of shelves, hooks, and high-rise or low-rise enclosed shelves. Actually, Aitio is a follow-up to Iittala's earlier storage solutions: the glass Vitriini box, the plywood Vakka box, and the felt Meno bag. This versatile collection includes designs that help simplify modern living. My focus with Aitio was functionality, simplicity, and aesthetics. A diverse product that can be used all around the home to store important things within easy reach."

Aitio's components are powder-coated steel, birch wood, and plastic hooks. The pieces are available in a variety of colours and are designed to be demountable for cleaning.

iittala.com

AITIO



BJARKE INGELS GROUP (BIG) AND KILO DESIGN

Designers for Rosenthal

Bjarke Ingels is the eponymous founder of Bjarke Ingels Group (or BIG, for short), with architectural offices in Copenhagen, New York, and Beijing. In collaboration with Danish industrial designer Lars Larsen and his studio Kilo, BIG has developed a project that, in beguilingly simple form, makes architecture itself the guiding theme of a new decorative concept.

"Tradition and evolution merge in the TAC Big Cities project. We have adorned the tableware set designed by Walter Gropius in 1969 in accordance to the stylistic principles of the Bauhaus, with the silhouette of various world cities including Berlin, Moscow, Paris, and New York. Throughout time, people have decorated porcelain with landscapes and motifs from nature. Architects have planned and designed our cities for centuries, and are well known for creating elegant and functional products. Walter Gropius mastered this span of scale. In this collaboration with Kilo and Rosenthal, we merge the large-scale city skyline with the intimate scale of a heritage blue line on porcelain. The design might initially appear abstract, but on closer inspection, famous architectural landmarks such as the Brandenburg Gate, Eiffel Tower, and Big Ben can be clearly discerned, taking you on a short trip around the world."

rosenthal.de

TAC BIG CITIES



MARTINO GAMPER

Designer for J. HILL's Standard

J. HILL's Standard is a new, hand-blown, hand-cut crystal-maker from Ireland that launched its first two collections at the world-renowned Spazio Rossana Orlandi during the Salone del Mobile this year. Working with master craftsmen and an international stable of designers, this new company seeks to introduce crystal design that is relevant, desirable, and useful to the modern consumer. One of these two collections is Cuttings, designed by Italian-born, London-based designer Martino Gamper. The ultimate contemporary craftsman, Gamper has brought a great deal of skill to the forms; being a natural interventionist, he has made distinctive cuts in the material.

"I worked directly with the crystal, removing the material in a manner that felt instinctive, free, and pleasing. The result is a series of three cuts that appear across a family of functional tableware. This series features strong, intuitive marks confidently hewn out of the surface of lead crystal." In this instance, the process of making cuts is less about applied decoration and closer to sculpting, hence the name of the series. "The tactile crystal forms feel rugged and primitive in the hand; the fingers naturally seek-out the smooth hollows and crisp ridges of the cuts. My approach to the technique for this collection is about revealing the potential of the cutting process. The glasses feature deep and expressive cuts far beyond the usual superficial and decorative surface."

All of J. HILL's Standard glass products are hand-cut in Ireland by two master craftsmen, Walter Walsh and Frankie Power. The brand takes its inspiration from John Hill, a pioneer of crystal making who joined the House of Waterford Crystal in 1783. Before his sudden departure just three years later, he noted down his formula – his 'standard' – for compounding glass, and passed it onto a trusted friend who then continued his legacy. J. HILL's Standard was born from a desire to revive the near-extinct craft of crystal making in Ireland through the establishment of a sustainable handcrafted glass business and glass-blowing school.

jhillsstandard.com

CUTTINGS

