

MONOCLE

A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

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The Great Global Rethink Issue: From nation to shop to home

Our editors and correspondents on face-lifts and overhauls across retail, transport, hospitality and more. A Monocle **SPECIAL REPORT**



FUTURE FORCE

Why it's time to give your business a good scrub-down

UK:

A coffee chain tries to get cosy with the locals



SWITZERLAND:
A bike maker redesigns the urban ride



ITALY:
A furniture company reinvents itself



USA:
A small bookshop takes on the internet giants



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Perfect isolation

Amsterdam [RESIDENCE]

Located in east Amsterdam, IJburg's seven islands form one of the city's newest residential districts. This three-storey home by local firm Knevel Architecten sits on Rieteiland Oost, a small island dedicated to detached houses. The surface of the roof is pierced with outdoor areas and covered in solar panels. Little of the residential neighbourhood can be seen from the house. Instead, the architects have taken advantage of the natural beauty surrounding it with a loggia connecting the living area to the outdoors and a large first-floor balcony. — AEN
knevelarchitecten.nl



Curated and serrated

Italy [KITCHENWARE]

Since 1907 Italian food brand King's has specialised in curing meats. But it really got our attention with a line of knives and accessories from the Venetian designer Luca Nichetto. A salumiere's dream. — IC
kingsprosciutti.it



Terrace talk

Stockholm [RETAIL]

Svenskt Tenn, Estrid Ericson's Stockholm design store, has closed its Strandvägen doors for a redesign and expansion and has temporarily relocated to the former Astoria cinema, where the furniture, lighting and fabrics are displayed on the staggered terraces – a surprising and charming backdrop. — HM
svensktenn.se

Wheelie good

UK [BOOK]

Introducing 100 bikes grouped by type – racing, touring, folding and the more whimsical "curiosities" category all get a look in – this is the ultimate guide to the best of bicycle design. Michael Embacher's detailed *Cyclopedica* provides us with the history of each bike and its vital statistics including brake, tyre and even gear type. — AK
thamesandhudson.com



Top of the table

Stockholm [HOMEWARE]

At the Stockholm Furniture Fair, it was hard to move without bumping into a design by local trio Claesson Koivisto Rune. Though we lament the "same name" syndrome rife in the industry, we do welcome their Shelf tables for Offectt. Available in three sizes and shapes with a beech or white laminate finish, its simple, elegant form wheeled its way into our hearts. — HM
offectt.se



Show us something new

Trade shows must regain the excitement lost amid a culture of 'versions' rather than new products

By Hugo Macdonald

I've attended six design trade fairs in northern Europe so far this year. On returning home and attempting to make order out of the growing paper mountain I've accumulated, I'm shocked to see that the printed matter from the combined fairs can be reduced into one box file of "important" things.

It's not that I'm ruthless it's more that there's a culture in the design industry for introducing versions instead of new products. And my filing system doesn't need to be updated with a whole new catalogue just to remind me of a new colourway.

This development speaks of many things: principally the lack of money to invest in R&D, the production costs and the risk of developing and launching a new product in a wobbly financial market. But good common sense in business is matched with a curious bravado among design manufacturers who feel withdrawing their presence from a trade fair because they have nothing new to present to the market is a loss of face. Hence, they extend the legs on an existing chair, or design a children's version, or paint a bookcase blue. And suddenly there's a reason to occupy a large stand at the fair, print a new catalogue and present everything all over again.

This small saving of face surely means losing something greater in the long run. These tweaks can't possibly merit the logistics and expense of showing at a fair. Nor can they feasibly be called improvements. They're more like aberrant species: chairs and tables that look like that beautiful design from a few years ago but a little bit wrong. In the worst cases, like a slightly wonky knock-off.

The money and energy spent would be better saved for one year of no-shows and spent instead on introducing an original product the following year. Everyone would benefit: young designers would have a stab at getting a prototype into production and the industry would move forward. Trade fairs would become the exciting showcases they once were – smaller, tighter and more about the original developments of our time, not the tweakings of creations by former generations. — (M)

