

1

On view at Scandinavia House beginning in October 2010, the exhibition *Nordic Models + Common Ground: Art and Design Unfolded* presented an in-depth look at contemporary Nordic design and art, through a collection of 41 objects from 35 Nordic designers. The first in a series of events celebrating American-Scandinavian Foundation's centennial year, the exhibition was organized by ASF and Norsk Form—The Foundation for Design and Architecture in Norway, and was curated by the internationally renowned architecture firm Snøhetta.

2

The decades leading up to the exhibition had seen a flourishing of Nordic design projects that were not only focused on the social good, but demonstrating a high level of craftsmanship and functionality, as well as humor, cultural commentary, and a versatile application of new technologies.

3

Works on view in the exhibition spanned the fields of architecture, product design, fine art, graphic design, fashion, and photography, highlighting shared practices and ideas in the five Nordic countries, as well as their global impact.

4

These works were presented within a site-specific installation by the Brooklyn-based Situ Studio, in which the objects, models, and photographs were displayed on freestanding plywood shapes within a single gallery lined with large-scale photographs. In keeping with the environmental sensitivity theme of the exhibition, this installation was produced without creating any physical waste.

5

The projects in *Nordic Models + Common Ground* highlighted a number of themes, including many relating to the crossing of boundaries—between individual and social identities, tradition and innovation, new materials and long-established forms, fine art and commercial culture.

6

Designers in the exhibition included leading firms such as Denmark's Bjarke Ingels Group, BIG, and Swedish design studio Form Us With Love, and Norwegian architecture firm Jensen & Skodvin Architects.

7

Other works by individual artists and designers explored innovations throughout different mediums, such as a violin designed by Iceland's Hans Johansson, which revealed the role of advanced digital technology in the fabrication of a traditional musical instrument.

8

Several works demonstrated the innovative use of manmade materials, such as Danish designer Mathias Bengtsson's The Spun Chair, which used spun carbon fiber to create a furniture piece weighing just two pounds, designed with natural geometric shapes.

9

Kirnu, a pavilion designed by Finnish architecture firm JKMM, combined time-honored building techniques and new materials through a facade made of a wood-plastic composite, which was constructed with a shingle technique.

10

Other works similarly highlighted the use of materials found in nature, such as a limited-edition artwork titled Lava Flower, by Iceland's Studiobility founder, Guðrún Lilja Gunnlaugsdóttir, made from water-cut volcanic lava.

11

Norwegian designer Liv Blåvarp's necklace Butterfly Disguise II was built with reindeer horn as well as ebony, stained maple, and wenge hardwood.

12

Many of the artists and designers included brought a focus on physical and geological phenomena in the Nordic countries to their works.

13

An emphasis on light was featured in works such as Norwegian designer Daniel Rybakken's Daylight Entrance and Atelier Oslo's Lantern House.

14

A historic reliance on the sea and its bounty was evoked by the Uggi Lights, surrealistic lamps made of codfish skins, created by Icelandic designers Fanney Antonsdóttir and Dögg Gudmundsdóttir.

15

The exhibition was accompanied by a special two-day symposium, titled "Nordic Design Now," which was organized in conjunction with *Nordic Models + Common Ground* and the concurrent exhibition *National Triennial 2010: Why Design Now*, at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum.

16

Nordic Models + Common Ground exemplified ASF's ongoing commitment to exploring contemporary developments in Scandinavia's rich design tradition, a large part of what the organization celebrated in its centennial year.

17

We were grateful to Norsk Form and Snøhetta for creating an informative, engaging exhibition that enabled us to celebrate ASF's long legacy of cultural exchange from a contemporary vantage point.

Nordic Models + Common Ground has been made possible by support from William B. and Inger Gundersen Ginsberg; The Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation; the ASF Centennial Fund; the Royal Norwegian Consulate General in New York; the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and the Consulate General of Finland in New York.

## Snøhetta

Founded in 1989, Snøhetta is an international architecture, landscape architecture, and interior-design company with offices in Oslo and New York City. Among the most acclaimed design firms in the world, Snøhetta is known for its creativity and its socially and environmentally responsible design. Notable projects include the revival of the ancient library of Alexandria, in Egypt; the new National Opera and Ballet, in Oslo; the National September 11 Memorial Museum at the World Trade Center site, in New York City; the King

Abdulaziz Centre for World Culture, in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia; the Lillehammer Art

Museum for the Winter Olympics, in Norway; and the Norwegian Embassy in Berlin, among others. The firm was recently selected to design the expansion of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the reconstruction of the public space of New York City's Times Square. Snøhetta is the only firm to have won two World Architecture Awards for Best Cultural Building,

given in 2002 and 2008. In 2009, the firm received the Mies van der Rohe Award, and in 2004 was honored with the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. For additional information: [www.snohetta.com](http://www.snohetta.com).

#### Norsk Form—The Foundation for Design and Architecture in Norway

Norsk Form is devoted to improving lives through architecture and design, with projects that include international exhibitions, teaching, design competitions, and more. It promotes participatory processes that enable a diversity of voices to be heard in design, architecture, and urban- and local development projects, and works with design solutions that help ensure that public spaces are inclusive. Norsk Form—The Foundation for Design and Architecture in Norway is a private foundation, established in 1992 as an initiative of the Norwegian Ministry of Culture. For additional information: [www.norskform.no](http://www.norskform.no).

Nordic Models + Common Ground

Individuals and Firms Represented in the Exhibition

#### DENMARK

BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group)—architecture (firm)

Bureau Detour—design/art/urban design (firm/collective) Jeppe Hein—sculpture and installation (individual) Mathias Bengtsson—furniture design (individual)

Studio Louise Campbell—industrial design (individual)

#### FINLAND

Anne Kyrrö Quinn—industrial design (individual) Anttinen Oiva Architects—architecture (firm)

David Salmela—architecture (individual)

Elina Brotherus—photography (individual) Hollmén Reuter Sandman—architecture (firm) JKMM Architects—architecture (firm)

NOW for Architecture & Urbanism Oy—architecture & urban design (firm)

#### ICELAND

bara Design/Bjargey Ingólfssdóttir—design (individual)

Fanney Antonsdóttir & Dögg Guðmundsdóttir—industrial design (individuals)

Hans Johansson—luthier (individual)

Katrin Ólína—graphic art and design (individual)

Landslag—landscape architecture (firm)

Studiobility/Guðrún Lilja Gunnlaugsdóttir—product- and industrial design (firm)

## NORWAY

Atelier Oslo—architecture (firm)

BC Arkitektur Barlindhaug Consult A.S.—architecture (firm)

Daniel Rybakken—industrial design (individual)

Fantastic Norway AS—architecture (firm) Helen and Hard—architecture (firm) Jarmund-Vignæs AS—architecture (firm)

Jensen & Skodvin Arkitektkontor AS—architecture (firm)

Jorunn Sannes—artist (individual)

Liv Blåvarp—jewelry design (individual)

Marit Helen Akslen—fashion/textile design (individual)

May Bente Aronsen—artist (individual)

## SWEDEN

FORM US WITH LOVE—industrial design (firm)

Front—industrial design (firm)

Lars Tunbjörk—photography (individual) Monica Förster—industrial design (individual) Sandra Backlund—fashion design (individual) Wingårdhs Design—architecture (firm)