

imm cologne trendletter

INTERIOR
TRENDS
FURNITURE

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imm cologne 2007: Focus on furniture and momentum for the sector

imm cologne got the 2007 furniture season off to an excellent start. Over seven days, 1,301 suppliers from 57 countries displayed everything from top-class designer furniture to traditional home interiors. Around 115,000 visitors came to Cologne to find out about the new trends and products.

Trends were at the center of attention at imm cologne 2007, the world's leading furniture fair. On nearly 300,000 square meters of exhibition space, the fair featured the latest furniture, lighting, accessories, home textiles and carpeting. This year, furniture is all about clear-cut design. Sofas and armchairs have curves and soft organic forms for lying back and relaxing in. In terms of cover fabrics, the sector is increasingly introducing woven materials with structured surfaces. Premium leather is also becoming more widespread. Purple is the new trend color for today's upholstered furniture, and dark woods for living room items are also growing more popular. The latest wall units are required to be light and adaptable, with technology playing an important role. Flat-screen TVs can appear and disappear at the touch of a button. Furniture exteriors and interiors are being paid greater attention, and many consumers are putting quality at the top of their priority list.

A glimpse into the future

Meanwhile at [d3] design talents, the creative ideas of young designers formed an exciting contrast to the exhibitors' product ranges on display. The up-and-coming de-

signers served up all kinds of inspiring ideas at three exclusive events in Hall 1. At the heart of the action was the international "inspired by cologne" competition. Alongside that was the NRG (energy) platform for independent designers and studios. And finally, "future point" allowed students from colleges and universities all over the world to showcase their creations.

It's all in the mix

Also devoted to trends was "informed by cologne." The presentations and special exhibition here focused on colors, materials, shapes and patterns. Beforehand, a team of noted designers, material experts and design journalists had met to identify the four key trends for 2007. First, Heirloom Culture, a rediscovery of old treasures. Second, Size Matters, referring to the increasing popularity of large and oversized furniture. Third, New Hybrids, a style combination that concentrates on the essentials. And lastly, Design as Art. The ideal houses cologne, designed by Zaha Hadid and Naoto Fukasawa, sparked lively debates about our homes of tomorrow. And the coveted interior innovation awards were presented in recognition of outstanding achievements by the exhibiting companies.



A place to sit back and relax. Purple is the new trend color for sofas and armchairs.

Young designers presented innovative ideas for the future in Hall 1.



Space lab meets supernormal: Two contrasting home style visions

The visions for the two ideal houses cologne could hardly have been more different. Taking the slogan "The architect and the poet," the star architect Zaha Hadid and the Japanese design poet Naoto Fukasawa each came up with their own ideas about tomorrow's living spaces. The renowned design project was launched at imm cologne, the world's leading furniture fair, in 2003 — and it's been a resounding success ever since.

Already in its fifth year, the ideal houses cologne once again attracted a large number of visitors in 2007, inspiring in-depth, lively debates among exhibitors, visitors and journalists. Having relocated to the northern part of the Boulevard, the two red cubes were an integral part of the heavily frequented north-south axis of the new exhibition center.

Of hollowed-out shapes ...

Zaha Hadid, the first woman ever to be awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize, brought to Cologne her personal vision of how homes could be designed in the future. Her ideal house resembled a huge block of ice that had been hollowed out by a giant worm. The walls and furniture seemed to grow out of the floor, which in some places was completely uneven. The ceiling looked like an arched canopy, with everything blending into one — inside and outside, top and bottom. According to the architect, the basic idea was for inhabitants to be able to move from the chair to the bed or the sofa as though they comprised a single continuous object.

A cavernous red stairway wound its way upwards to a platform with nothing on it but

an oversized asymmetric bed. From up there, the visitor's gaze was drawn to a gigantic chandelier that extended across two floors of the ideal house. It was made of thousands of black Swarovski stones that glistened like swarms of flies. Hadid is applauded for her independent designs in the architectural world, and she provided an insight into her ambitions as a product designer through her contribution to the trade fair. Like all of the other items of furniture — from the Aqua Table for Established & Sons to the Vortexx Chandelier for Zumtobel Lighting and Sawaja & Moroni — the Swarm Chandelier was designed by the architect herself. The items on display in the ideal house had two functions: firstly, to bring a sense of structure into the room, and secondly, to underscore the impression of one object flowing into the next — as was also the case with the many reflections on the shiny surfaces of the house.

... and rooms that flow

Hadid transformed her cube into a delightful series of rooms, with one flowing into the next and all of them also opening out to the exterior. "We experimented with lots of different techniques before we agreed on the final approach we wanted to take with



Left: The walls merged with the furniture in the ideal house that was designed by Zaha Hadid.

Right: Zaha Hadid, Andreij Kupetz and Naoto Fukasawa (left to right) talk to each other before an audience of some 200 journalists from around the world.



the project," she explains. "To begin with, we strongly manipulated the outer form, but in the end we returned to the idea of using a precisely proportioned cube. Two principles were taken into account here: the seamless surface design and the hollowing-out technique." All of the building components for the design project, which was realized exclusively for imm cologne, were produced by milling. As Hadid says, "What we created was not so much an ideal house; it was instead a snapshot of a momentary vision — and of how we believe people's homes could look in the world of tomorrow."

The ideal of simplicity

In other countries, less is certainly more. For his ideal house at imm cologne, the Japanese designer Naoto Fukasawa made use of the reduced style he calls the "supernormal". His vision of future living styles could hardly have contrasted more dramatically with the ideal house that was designed by Zaha Hadid. In a spirit of poetic simplicity, Fukasawa created an environment for living that offers direct functional access and a wealth of scope and space for making changes. Fukasawa worked with right-angled plans, high white partition walls and a minimal amount of furniture. Only a few items of furniture and accessories made their way into the white room. The striking simplicity of not only the shelves and the sofa, but also of the bathtub, screen, lamp, CD player, humidifier, toaster and other household appliances made each of these items stand out. Instead of a riot of color and explosive effects, the 50-year-old designer preferred to retain white as the dominant color. The eight-meter walls remained bare, and only

a few splashes of color — gray, black, white and red — defined the space.

A wall is nothing but a wall

The high walls of the room and the deliberately oversized open spaces puzzled the visitors and prompted them to reflect on their significance. According to Fukasawa, the feeling in his ideal house is "supernormal". In his own words, "A wall is nothing but a wall, and walls form a space. But a high wall forms a different space than a low wall. As a result, people can have a familiar experience between these walls, too: They can feel just like they would in a cathedral." That's why this house is normal, or, as Fukasawa puts it, "supernormal".

However, he associates this approach not with a particular style, but with an attitude that has more to do with the function of objects than with their form. Fukasawa lectures at Tama University, and for many years he propagated pure minimalism in his capacity as the creative director of the Japanese department store chain Muji. "Objects will gradually disappear from our homes," he believes. "After all, we already carry MP3 players and telephones around with us — and lighting, air conditioning units and televisions will simply be built into the walls of our homes in the future." Invisible to the inhabitants, these items will vanish into the wall behind inset units and emit dimmed lighting for a cozy feel or soothing music whenever it's needed.



Above and left: White was the dominant color at Naoto Fukasawa's ideal house. The eight-meter walls remained bare, and only a few splashes of color defined the space.



Exhibitors and visitors warmly welcomed the new format of the event and its focus on contract business.

Masthead

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The imm trendletter provides up-to-date news concerning imm cologne — the world's largest furniture fair.

Architecture Code Cologne: A successful premiere

The inaugural Architecture Code Cologne conference was held at imm cologne 2007. Focusing on architecture and culture, the event was a great success. On each of its three days, a leading architect met with a prominent personality from the world of art and culture. During their philosophical exchanges, they searched for — and found — interdisciplinary approaches. The idea was to examine nuances between disciplines, and find out more about what divides, unites and enriches them. The talks were hosted by the author and architecture journalist Dirk Meyhöfer.

Interdisciplinary outlook

Kicking off the round of discussions on the stage on the Tuesday afternoon were Wolf D. Prix, the Austrian architect and cofounder of Coop Himmelb(l)au, and Luc Bondy, director of the Vienna Festival. The thoughts and ideas they shared with the audience centered on the role of space and architecture in the theater. On the following day, the London-based architect Will Alsop took the stage together with the Hamburg-based actor and director Hark Bohm to address the world of architecture and film. In particular, they examined what film can contribute to architecture. Another question was how films utilize architecture, and how they convey its stones, wood and metal to audiences,

for example. The relationship between architecture and music was the focal point of the discussion between Lars Spuybroek from NOX Architects, Rotterdam, and Tateo Nakajima, conductor and partner of Artec Consultants, New York. Spuybroek and Nakajima agreed that both disciplines are a form of mathematics in that they involve precisely calculated forms. Music is performed in architectural surroundings that are created expressly to serve its needs. But how do the worlds of resonating sounds and concrete shapes influence each other? How are they linked, and what makes them different?

Architecture Code Cologne

Through the first-ever Architecture Code Cologne, imm cologne successfully generated new impulses for the worlds of architecture, design and interiors. The unusual event format attracted a great deal of attention from designers, architects and active members of the cultural sector from the very first day onward. Each talk on stage was followed by an informal get-together with lively discussions. What's more, the event served as a bridge to the world of contract business — the increasingly important sales market encompassing furnishings and design for large-scale premises. Exhibitors and visitors welcomed this focus on the area of contract business.

Premium kitchens at imm cologne 2008

All over the world, imm cologne stands for an unparalleled range of international furniture, home accessories and interior design. The trade fair is divided into seven product groups (basic, comfort, prime, smart, sittable/support, sleep and pure) and arranged according to sales channels.

Beginning in 2008, premium kitchens will be a key element every year at "pure" — the area at imm cologne where the focus is on design and architecture. This new

concept at the world's leading furniture fair comes in response to the fact that people are spending more and more time in their kitchens.

Cologne has one of the most attractive trade fair venues in Europe. One major advantage is the exhibition center's location close to the heart of the city, and its ease of access by road, rail and air. Why not come to the next imm cologne from January 14 to 18, 2008, and see it all for yourself?