



Interwoven

Kvadrat textile and design

Interwoven

With contributions by

Tord Boontje

Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec

Thomas Demand

Olafur Eliasson

Denise Hagströmer

Hettie Judah

Sevil Peach

Matt Price

Zoë Ryan

Peter Saville

Joël Tettamanti

Jane Withers

Contents

7	118	236
Foreword	Tord Boontje: ornamentation and a new aesthetic	Portfolio: Neue Nationalgalerie
Peter Saville	Hettie Judah	Thomas Demand and Caruso St John
10	144	244
Portfolio: Your glacial expectations	Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec's quiet design revolution	Grey sheep
Olafur Eliasson and Günther Vogt	Zoë Ryan	Olafur Eliasson
18	166	260
Introduction: Kvadrat, collaboration and continuity	Portfolio: Gledhill, Wooltex and Mitlödi	Peter and the sheep: the cover story
Denise Hagströmer	Joël Tettamanti	Peter Saville and Graphic Thought Facility
52	186	262
Portfolio: Kvadrat fabrics	The resurrection of fabric in architecture	Acknowledgements
	Sevil Peach with Hettie Judah	
80	204	263
Between artifice and nature: colour since the 1960s	Portfolio: Kvadrat design projects	Photographic credits
Jane Withers	Raw-Edges Design Studio, Doshi Levien, Patricia Urquiola, Giulio Ridolfo, Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec	
106	220	
Portfolio: Hallingdal 65	Kvadrat, art and artists	
Jean-Baptiste Fastrez, Raw-Edges Design Studio, Front, Hjortefar, Ionna Vautrin, Fredrikson Stallard, BLESS, Mermeladaestudio	Matt Price	



In 2004, two Danish gentlemen appeared at my studio with a copy of the catalogue from my retrospective exhibition at the Design Museum. One was Anders Byriel, the CEO of Kvadrat; the other was his then head of communications. I didn't know them, but they knew me – and they seemed well informed.

They had decided that the evolution of their company's new identity was something that they would like me to contribute to. Anders had given great thought to working with me. He knew what I did, and that I was not somebody who had spent the last 20 years turning out brand identities. In a way, it was less of a business-to-business relationship and more akin to that of artist and patron; there was no brief, there were no tactical objectives; but Anders wanted to work with someone whose approach he found interesting.

I think that my experience with them over the last 10 years is probably quite representative of their relationship with many of their collaborators and associates, be they designers, architects or artists. Kvadrat's choices are not random; they don't pick up on transient trends; they give a lot of consideration to a possible engagement or partnership before approaching someone, and once they show that gesture of commitment to you, they stick with it.

Anders's father Poul Byriel founded Kvadrat with Erling Rasmussen in 1968; Kvadrat initiated those early fabrics in the amazing colours that we now associate with the new wave of Scandinavian furniture design. The big stories in design history all seem quite familiar now, and I'm much more interested in some of the parallel, more niche stories; this is one of those. A lot of the holistic interior ideas that Kvadrat was working on in the 1960s and 70s seem very pertinent now, particularly in the relationship of fabric and form.

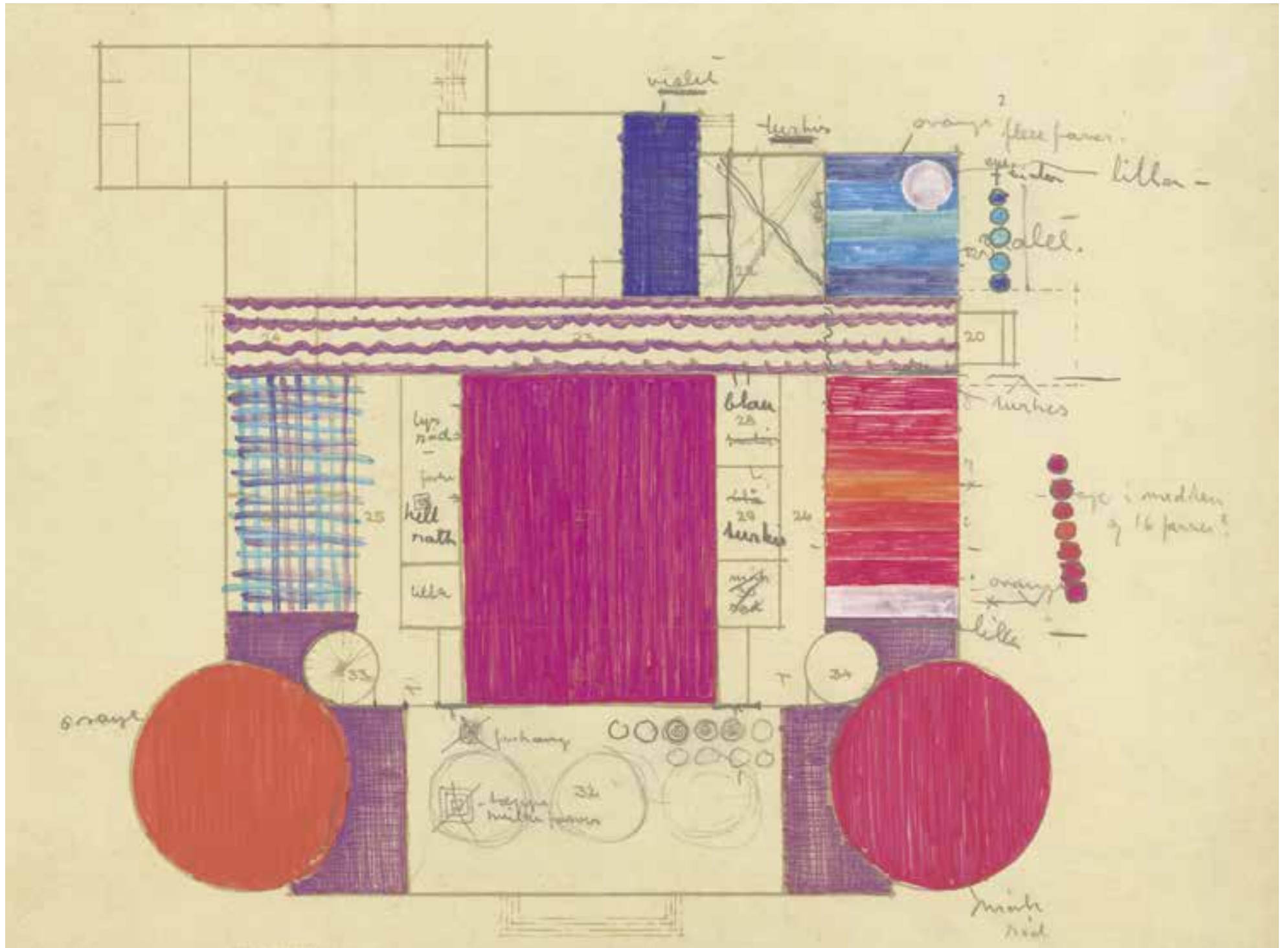
Anders's visit to my studio came in the transition period during which he and Rasmussen's daughter, Mette Bendix, were taking over the company from their fathers. My feeling was that although Kvadrat had probably been quite groovy in the 1960s and 70s, the sector changed dramatically; particularly in the 1990s, when there was an increased awareness of design that really gathered momentum. Anders wanted to reset the company in his generational image.

As I began to learn more about the organisation, I immediately wanted people to start to have some idea of who Kvadrat were and where they came from; for a majority of their audience they had an impenetrable name and a blank identity. It's not just a matter of their being Danish; they also have a rural base. Their headquarters are in Ebeltøft, which is quiet and sleepy and

charming and looks out to the sea. It's a holiday area. And 90 per cent of the company lives there. Kvadrat's headquarters are still the embodiment of its founding ideas and spirit; there's a communal atmosphere to the place, with a great big dining area and kitchen where everybody gathers for lunch together; there's very much a family feeling.

Kvadrat is still a family business, but one that is surrounded by an extended family of creative partnerships, and it is these relationships that form the heart of this book. Collaborations with designers such as Tord Boontje and the Bouroullecs have taken the company in new directions; as with Kvadrat's projects with artists such as Thomas Demand or Olafur Eliasson, they happen because there is a common sensibility, because Anders wants to facilitate their work and because he feels passionate about it. That's why I'm always evangelical about Kvadrat, because they work according to the kind of template that one idealised in the past; relationships between artist, designer and manufacturer that are driven by belief and commitment, in the way the canon of great design has always been forged.





Verner Panton, colour plan for Restaurant Varna, 1971 (Aarhus, Denmark)



Verner Panton, Restaurant Varna, 1971 (Aarhus, Denmark)





Nanna Ditzel, *Stairscape*, 1966 (created for Unika Væv showroom)
Facing page: Nanna Ditzel, *Hallingdal*, 1965

associated from the start with such revolutionary designs as Arne Jacobsen's *Egg* and *Swan* chairs. Within a few years the marketing was taken over by Kvadrat, and the textile has been the company's bestseller ever since. From the beginning *Hallingdal* was available in 42 colours, and it is revealing that the colour range is not based on an industrial colour system but on Ditzel's own highly refined and idiosyncratic colour sense. While still using bright colours, she moved from pop's primaries to a more harmonious palette that has been described as bright pastels. The range eventually grew from 42 to 105 colours and was updated by Ditzel every five to ten years until her death in 2005. In the 2012 update, part of her original harmonic colour scheme was restored. Among the constants have been Ditzel's favourite colours – a hot pink and a vivid turquoise. Photos of Ditzel's house in 1966 show platform seating in soft lipstick pink and reds set off against a mauve blue. Ditzel's striking sense of colour infiltrated the Kvadrat universe in other ways: she coloured the interior of their second office, the schoolhouse, painting the balustrade in a luminous palette of blues and pinks.

Hallingdal and the collaboration with Ditzel established a working pattern that Kvadrat has followed ever since, by inviting artists or designers to develop colour ranges for a specific fabric – ranges that are deliberately

large enough to provide architects and designers with a diverse palette but that are also governed by a strong individual aesthetic. In the early 1980s Kvadrat began a long collaboration with poetic colourist Finn Sködt, best known for the textile *Divina*. Sködt first worked for the company as a graphic designer, but his influence soon extended to textile colour and also to the way fabrics were presented in sample books and in the company's showrooms. Sködt sees textiles as a means of bringing softness and colour into the interior, and works from an instinctive understanding of colour and its effect on material that's informed by memory, recognition and the emotional effects of colour rather than fashion or scientifically formulated systems. According to Sködt, 'Colours have an autonomy about them, an ability to elude any system. They should be perceived in the pigment and in the fabric and not in any system.'

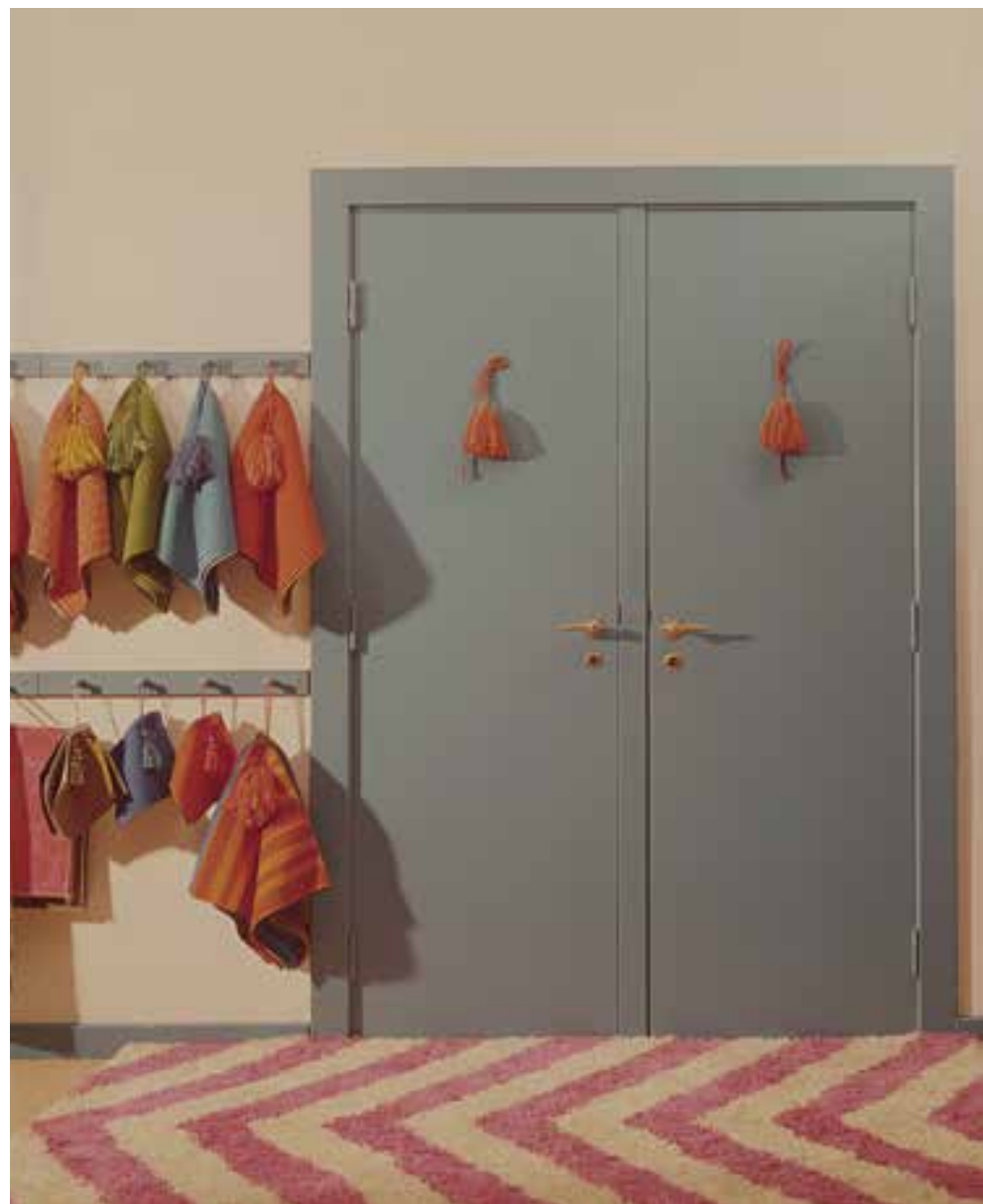
Divina's success – like *Hallingdal*'s – can be attributed largely to its extraordinary colour range, which is periodically refreshed by Sködt. One of the boldest recent uses of *Divina* is artist Liam Gillick's seating installation *Prototype Conference Room* for the auditorium at the Whitechapel Gallery, London, where contrasting colours hum and zing, sweetie-wrapper pink riffing against canary yellow, Belisha orange against Yves

Klein blue. The effect is a strange, even slightly uneasy, hybrid of institutional and groovy; a bit Bauhaus, a bit Donald Judd; a bit psychedelic; strikingly unfamiliar.

And Kvadrat's colour evolution is ongoing. An important current collaboration is with the Italian fashion textile and colour adviser Giulio Ridolfo. Ridolfo brings a fashion sensibility to furnishing textiles, and what he describes as an 'Italian eye' to balance the cooler aesthetic associated with the watery Scandinavian light and landscape and Modernist terrain from which Kvadrat sprang. Ridolfo's first collaborations in the furniture industry were with Italian manufacturer Moroso and designer Patricia Urquiola. Here he was instrumental in shaping a material patchwork of pattern and colour characterised by 'off' colours and a delicacy and vivaciousness – even femininity – that are very different from the graphic boldness and saturated colours generally associated with Modernist design. Ridolfo describes fabric as the 'robe' that dresses furniture; 'the surface that has to appeal both visually and tactilely as well as looking good under any lighting conditions'. He experiments with materials, patterns and colours until the product is 'dressed' correctly and he has given it an identity. For Urquiola's urbane *Fjord chair*, for example, the



Nanna Ditzel, Kvadrat showroom, 1970 (Ebeltoft)







Below: Finn Sködt, Divina colour palette from 1989

Facing page: Liam Gillick, *Prototype Conference Room*, 2009 (Zilkha Auditorium of the Whitechapel Gallery, London)





Tord Boontje, *Happy Ever After*, 2004 (installation for Moroso, Milan)

'Broadly speaking, one may say that the use of this subordinate, but by no means unimportant art is to enliven with beauty and incident what would otherwise be a blank space, wheresoever or whatsoever it may be.'

–William Morris, *The History of Pattern Designing*, 1879

Tord Boontje is a great enlivener of blank space. He makes light dance, ducking and twisting through shadows of tangled wire flora and silhouettes of forest creatures, springing refracted off crystals and sidling through cut cloth. Mythical beasts trip off his tableware and squirrels peep out from his shoe patterns. In his hands, the everyday and overlooked develop potent life; cherry pips become jewels, shattered glass the basis for a textile pattern, and wildflowers a print-making tool for ceramics.

In April 2004, he created a magical, all-enveloping installation for the Italian manufacturers Moroso. *Happy Ever After* was designed at the invitation of Patrizia Moroso, and acted as the brand's showpiece for that year's Milan furniture fair. Flickering, colourful, jangly and kinetic, the installation was, even by Boontje's own admission, over the top, but it was joyously so, and in its use of decorative handmade elements such as embroidery, it brought a human

edge to the too often bland and featureless world of the Milan fair.

A longtime collaborator with that master showman of the fashion world, Alexander McQueen, Boontje created chair 'characters' to people his installation for Moroso, dressing them as though for a fairytale catwalk – a witch chair in black leather, a pirate swagged with cord and embroidery and, like the bride at the end of the show, a princess chair in tulle skirts. Using woollen textiles supplied by the sponsor Kvadrat, heavy laser-cut garlands hung from fabric vines and fine floral-printed voile shivered in the breeze between painted walls and crystal-iced branches.

'Tord's show at that fair was a total new world,' recalls Anne Jørgensen, Kvadrat's design director. 'It was very inspiring for all of us.' Once the Milan fair was over, Anne and CEO Anders Byriel went to visit Tord at his studio in London to discuss the possibility of a new working relationship that would bring his tangled, romantic vision into the then more aesthetically reserved world of Kvadrat.

'Now if you should think I have got on to matters over serious for our small subject of pattern-designing, I will say, first, that even these lesser arts, being produced by man's intelligence, cannot really

be separated from the greater, the more purely intellectual ones, or from the life which creates both.'

–William Morris, *The History of Pattern Designing*, 1879

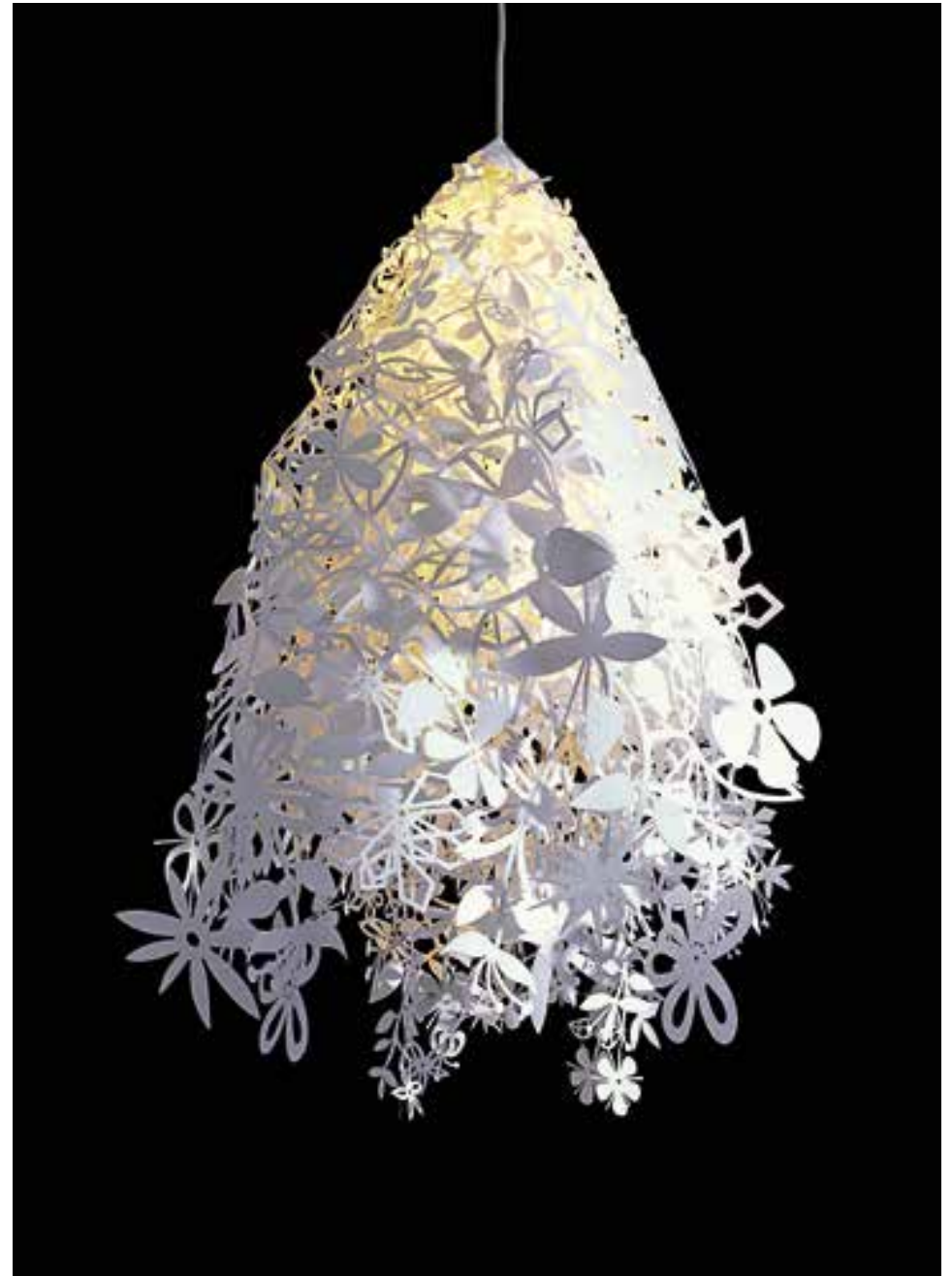
Born in the Netherlands in 1968 to a Swedish mother and Dutch father, Boontje had a creative, outdoorsy upbringing, and was interested in design from an early age. His studies at the famously challenging and iconoclastic Design Academy Eindhoven were followed by a postgraduate course at the Royal College of Art in London, where he is now head of the Design Products department.

The projects that first brought Boontje to the attention of the design world in the 1990s were far from the lush decorative aesthetic for which he is best known today. The *tranSglass* (1997–present) and *Rough and Ready* (1998) collections both worked with humble materials and a visual language that emerged from a ruthless honesty about their origins and manufacture. A set of containers made from used glass bottles, *tranSglass* was a project conceived in collaboration with Boontje's wife, the glass artist Emma Woffenden, and eventually became part of his portfolio of ethical manufacturing projects produced under Artecnic's Design w/Conscience label. *Rough and Ready* was a range of ultra-simple make-it-yourself furniture designs





Above: Tord Boontje, *Garland light*, 2002 (produced by Habitat and Artecnic)
Facing page: Tord Boontje, *Midsummer light*, 2005 (produced for Carousel installation,
Alexander McQueen store, Milan)



Tord Boontje, *Midsummer light*, 2004 (produced by Artecnic)





Sevil Peach, rolls of Divina fabric from Kvadrat awaiting use at the Vitra Design Museum Summer Workshops, Boisbuchet, France, 2008



In 2002 Oscar Tusquets Blanca curated an exhibition about staircases at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona. Entitled *Rèquiem per l'escala* (Requiem for the staircase), it was about the history of staircases and how they have steadily lost their importance; escalators and elevators have now supplanted the staircase's celebratory, central role as a unifying element of buildings.

This idea of requiem made me think about the current role of textiles within architecture and interiors. In recent years taste has moved away from the use of textiles as a space-enhancing element in favour of a more pared-back look; at most, architects use textile elements only as a final, accessorising touch, a mere soft furnishing component, rather than an integral part of architecture. I believe that despite the shift in tastes, the tactility of textiles, the use of colour, texture and fluidity, can significantly enhance and transform the way we feel and use spaces.

It is worth acknowledging that discussion surrounding the use of textiles is also a gendered one, bedevilled by a fear of perceived feminine connotations that has perhaps left this a subject too little studied. As Marianne Eggler notes in her study of Mies Van der Rohe and Lilly Reich's interiors in the *Tugendhat Villa*, 'Under close analysis, their hanging

curtain partitions (which have until now avoided critical scrutiny, perhaps due to their inferior status as 'soft furnishings) conceal considerably more ideology than their elegant velvets and silks normally communicate.'

Fabrics have a complex relationship with architecture. For nomadic peoples, they provide shelter that is flexible, lightweight and portable; in ancient buildings they offer insulation and privacy; they can give softness to a space; they can be a defining feature to create spaces and they can help control the flow and quality of light and sound. I feel that there is a need to resurrect and rethink the use of fabric within architecture.

In 2008 and 2009, I ran a series of workshops for the Vitra Design Museum's Summer School in Boisbuchet, France, to examine the potential role of fabric in design, using over 1,000m of different textiles, in a variety of colours, donated by Kvadrat. The aims were to encourage participants to explore, understand, and feel the nature of textiles and colour and to open their minds to its potential applications. The experiments conducted in the workshops were as much an educational process for me as they were for the participants involved. I was dealing with fabric in a completely different way, on a completely different scale and in a very different place to that which I was used to. This opened up new channels of thought for me, some of

which have already been explored in our studio. One way or the other, these free-spirited experiments find their way into our projects. They have also prompted me to think more about the wider architectural use of textiles and what other seeds of resurrection there are out there.

The workshops

The focus of the workshops was to experiment with how we could use fabric as an architectural tool, and how it could manipulate, influence and change our perception of space and place.

In 2008 we experimented with the fluidity of the fabrics, and the complexity of colour, using all 56 different tones of Kvadrat's Divina range of fabrics. In 2009 we had a tighter colour palette and focused on fabric as planes and surfaces within archetypal forms used as the basic building block for installations, enclosures, sculptures and social events.

Our investigations with textiles fell roughly into four areas. Firstly, examining the role and impact of colour. Secondly, looking at how textiles might be used to create an architectural form. Thirdly, exploring the masking and technical impact of textiles and how they influenced light, appearance and acoustics; and finally



Facing page: Sevil Peach, students in coloured cloaks, Vitra Design Museum Summer Workshops, Boisbuchet, France, 2008
Below: Sevil Peach, fabrics as planes, Vitra Design Museum Summer Workshops, Boisbuchet, France, 2008





Sevil Peach, curtain-walled project room, 2011 (Vitra office, Weil am Rhein)



Petra Blaisse, Re-set, 2012 (Dutch pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale)

an investigation into the way textiles can influence our experience of places, spaces and people, and the capacity they have to create spectacle – the ‘Wow!’ factor.

Colour

Prejudice surrounding colour is complex. In part people have a learned response – they will have been taught not to wear certain combinations of colour, or that certain colours are ugly or vulgar. In part there is sensitivity to the ‘appropriate’ use of colour. A business environment traditionally dictated sombre and conservative tones of black, grey and navy; bright colours, by contrast, might be read as frivolous, feminine or even emotional.

During the 2008 workshops we made up 56 cloaks in different colours for the participants to wear in an attempt to overcome their prejudices. We worked to create groups of colour to show how the impact and connotations can change in context. The colours selected as unattractive are often the ones that make up the most beautiful views in nature, as became apparent when we created a group that attempted to reproduce the colours of the Boisbuchet landscape and saw that it overwhelmingly contained colours that had previously been identified as ugly by participants earlier on. There is no such thing as an ugly colour.

Colour in a woven textile is very different to flat colour on a painted wall. It has a depth of field and texture that really draws you in; it’s seductive. A solid wall reflects and can push you away; textile on the other hand tends to pull you in. Use of fabric and colour can also change the mood of a space quite strongly, creating soft retreat spaces or areas that feel very energised, peaceful or intense.

The flip side of prejudice is that people tend to have a very personal relationship with colours, which they feel can communicate something very particular about them, their company or their brand. We have used a strong and varied palette of coloured textiles in our design of co-working offices for Spaces in the historic *Red Elephant* building in The Hague. The intention is to provide the members with a variety of places to meet or work in, allowing them to choose those which they feel best reflect their mood and needs. We have achieved this not only through a variety of design installations but also through the selection of fabric, colour and furniture.

Of course, in the end the choice of colour is a question of what is appropriate; strong colours are not always right for the space – a really large fabric volume might call for something more neutral that allows it to harmonise easily with its surroundings.

Form

For the 2009 workshops, we focused on primary colours and selected six colours to work with. We limited the exercise to one archetypal form: a square. At the beginning of the workshop all the participants rolled out the textiles by hand and familiarised themselves with their differing natures. They then had to stretch the fabrics across two dozen 2.2m square frames. These frames were much like the stretchers used by artists, but the textiles that we were using were more pliable and giving than canvas; understanding the particular behaviour of textiles when used as a construction material became an important part of this exercise.

The light, flexible nature of textile lends itself to the creation of temporary forms within a space. In the 1960s, the French designer Pierre Paulin created a new interior at the Elysée Palace for President Georges Pompidou that used modern stretch fabrics over a metal frame. This lightweight structure-within-a-structure left Joseph-Eugène Lacroix’s original nineteenth-century décor untouched, while providing Pompidou with a modern living space more in keep-ing with his tastes.

In the office environments we design, we often use stretched fabric on the walls and the ceilings, like



Sevil Peach, interior of Spaces, The Red Elephant, 2013 (The Hague, Netherlands)



Sevil Peach, fabric-lined study rooms, 2011 (Vitra office, Weil am Rhein)



Sevil Peach, fabric-lined study boxes, 2011 (Vitra office, Weil am Rhein)



Shigeru Ban, Naked House, 2000 (Kawagoe, Japan)