

WHEN BOLON FLOORING COMES TO LIFE

2016

Projects we love



DOSHI LEVIEON

The nature
of beauty

GERT WINGÅRDH REDISCOVERS

SWEDISH
MODERNISM

THE BOLON BY YOU COLLECTION

A design for
every vision

Heart & home

THERE WAS A TIME when business trips with Bolon presented the perfect opportunity to explore the world. Adding two extra days in Tokyo; a week in Sydney; a day in New York. I have seen so many places and met so many different people over the last 15 years, and it has been such an exciting and rewarding journey. But, after more than a decade of global expansion and with an increasingly busy schedule, one place that I have come to appreciate a lot more is home.

Home has become essential to Bolon's thinking. In the last 10 years, we have brought all our manufacturing back to Ulricehamn, so that everything sits under one roof. It means that we can ensure all our products are of the highest quality and are produced responsibly, both for the environment and our staff. And to repay the many wonderful journeys the Bolon team have experienced, we are welcoming international guests to enjoy a quintessentially Swedish experience at Björkudden, a beautiful lakefront house 15 minutes from our HQ.

But our home wouldn't be as comforting without the variation we get from travel.

This play of opposites is what makes my work with Bolon so rewarding. Variation is a key theme for us in 2016, particularly given the launch of our Bolon By You collection, which makes personalised Bolon flooring available to a wider audience than ever before. And who better to play on this idea of variation than London-based designers Doshi Levien?

Led by Jonathan Levien from Scotland and Nipa Doshi from India, Doshi Levien is a studio that thrives on creative opposites. Jonathan and Nipa art directed the presentation of our new collection, and despite the exotic appearance of the resultant images, they were actually shot here in Ulricehamn.

This, and so much more, is part of Projects We Love. From commissions in Hong Kong, Oslo and Adelaide, to a special dinner hosted at the Björkudden lake house, Projects We Love will take you on a journey: the very same one that Bolon has been on over the last year.

ANNICA EKLUND, CEO BOLON



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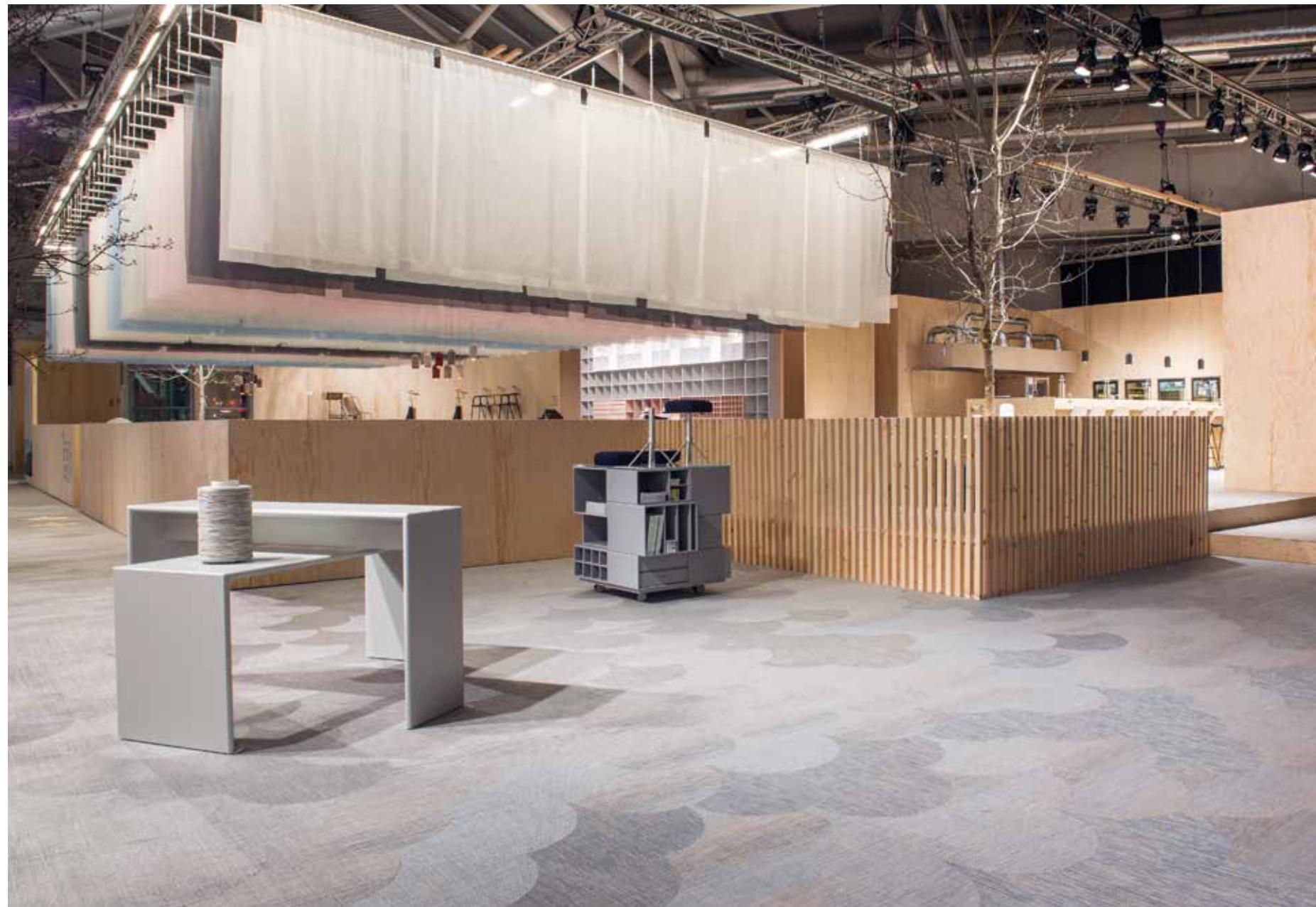
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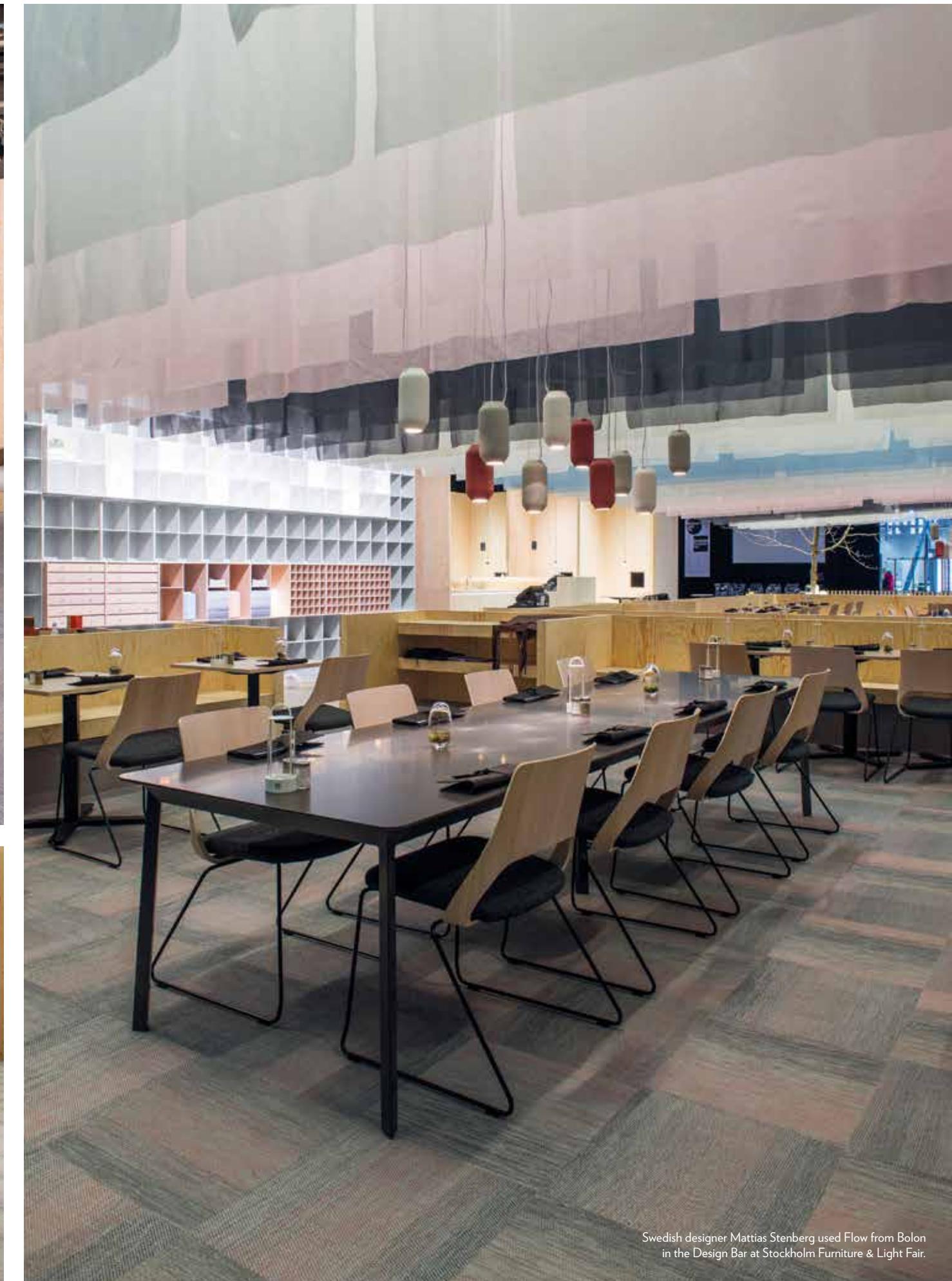
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NOTICE BOARD



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NORTHERN LIGHTS

The Stockholm Furniture & Light Fair is the world's foremost forum for Scandinavian design. Every year, the fair invites a renowned designer to curate its Design Bar and to decorate the space with work by Nordic colleagues. With a temporary café, exhibition space and an area for relaxation, the bar is the social centre of the week-long fair. In 2015, Swedish designer Mattias Stenberg took the helm. Inspired by his grandfather's boathouse, Stenberg created an installation that evoked his childhood in Norrland, a region in northern Sweden. The bar's soft palette – blues, greens, pinks, greys – and pinewood fittings captured a sense of luminosity, nature and nostalgia. Tranquil and restful, it provided a place to relax after the bustle of the fair. Stenberg's vision even extended to the menu, which was designed to fit his theme and used the produce of Norrland.

At Stenberg's invitation, Bolon installed pieces from its Flow collection in the 700 square metre area. It was the perfect match. With its pastel shades, organic beauty and lustrous play with light, Flow chimed with Stenberg's vision. "The feeling was that of 'painting' the floor," says Stenberg. "The colour gradients and different shapes of Flow made it possible to achieve a richly textured yet subtle environment." Flow's versatility allowed different pieces to be displayed, including Bolon Studio's new scale tiles. As with Stenberg's designs, it fused the timeless and local with innovation: Flow's backing layer is made from recycled material from the Bolon factory and the finished product is up to 33 per cent reused. Where better to contemplate the riches of the fair?



Swedish designer Mattias Stenberg used Flow from Bolon in the Design Bar at Stockholm Furniture & Light Fair.

NOTICE BOARD



SETTING SAIL

Pohjantähti is a 5.5 Metre-class racing boat, the only racing class that still features wooden boats. Pohjantähti was carved from mahogany in 1952, and it became the most decorated boat of the late 1950s and 1960s, when it was owned by Artek co-founder Maire Gullichsen's two sons. Now helmed by Topi Lintukangas, Pohjantähti still sails successfully (it won the 2014 Helsinki Regatta) and counts Bolon's sales manager for Finland, Johanna Rostedt, among its crew. For the 2015 World Championships in Nynäshamn, the Pohjantähti's crew approached Bolon to provide a new spinnaker sail. Sensing the boat's shared values of craftsmanship, as well as respecting its historical ties to Nordic design, Bolon accepted the task, creating an elegant white sail emblazoned with the Bolon logo.



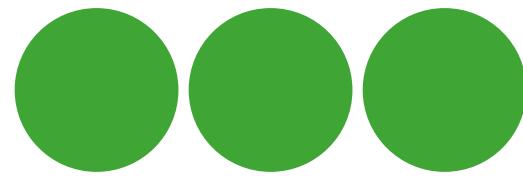
Daring Haring

With its high taxation and a state-owned monopoly on retail, Sweden has a curious relationship with alcohol. Where better, then, to open a museum exploring the history of liquor? Since 2013, Stockholm's Spritmuseum has held annual contemporary art exhibitions, in collaboration with the Absolut Art Collection. One of these exhibitions, Powerful Babies, traced the influence of Keith Haring, 25 years after his death. Among the most innovative of the US's post-war artists, Haring was known for his bold graphic style that explored the pleasures and trials of modern life. Bolon supplied 160 square metres of flooring from the Artisan collection for the exhibition, and playfully arranged it in a chequerboard of ivory and coal tiles. Its monochrome boldness provided a striking counterpoint to Haring's brightly hued art.



IL PELLICANO TURNS 50

Nestled atop a bay outside Porto Ercole in Tuscany, Il Pellicano hotel has been a magnet for Europe's jet-set since 1965. Made iconic by the society photographer Slim Aarons, it has hosted the likes of Sophia Loren and Jackie Kennedy. To mark its 50th anniversary, owners Roberto and Marie-Louise Scio threw a party, inviting guests such as Angela Missoni, Bruno Ragazzi and Jürgen Teller. Bolon supplied colourful striped flooring for the garden, from the Bolon for Missoni Home collection.



BOLON AND SUSTAINABILITY

PRODUCTION: Bolon's production is centralised in Ulricehamn, Sweden. This gives the company greater control over its product, as well as reducing the amount of shipping required in its production.

ENERGY: Bolon's factory, warehouse and offices are all powered by green electricity.

MATERIAL: The majority of Bolon's suppliers fall within a 250km radius of Ulricehamn, and the company produces its raw vinyl thread in-house.

RECYCLING: Bolon opened a dedicated recycling facility in 2014, which handles Bolon's waste, as well as waste from other industries.

PHOTO: ANNICA EKLUND, PER MYRHED, JASON STRONG, TOPILINTUKANGAS, ROBERTA KRASNY



Friends, Family and Food

When Annica Eklund picked up her camera again in 2014, after years of not using it, she didn't realise quite what an addiction it would become. Nowadays, it's rare to see Annica without her beloved Canon 5D Mark III. Capturing people and places, both at home and while travelling, she has built up an evocative and personal portfolio of work. Now, Annica is publishing her first book: a collection of images that captures life at Björkudden. Pictures of guests such as Ilse Crawford, Dror Benshetrit, Nipa Doshi and Jonathan Levien are interspersed with interior shots and an extensive set of recipes featuring some of the exquisite food that has been served in the Lake House. It's a beautiful document of a time and place.



A New Era of Entertainment with the Bolon team

Since being acquired by Bolon in 2013, Lake House (also known as Björkudden) outside Ulricehamn has become an essential venue for hosting clients, collaborators and friends. It is also a relaxed and intimate setting for showcasing Bolon's collections. Following the successful debut of Lake House, Bolon is now expanding with two further sites in and around Ulricehamn. Opening in the coming year are Urban House, situated in a former industrial warehouse, and Country House, which is built on local farmland. These stylish and homely settings are perfect for experiencing the Bolon lifestyle, as well as providing guests with the opportunity to enjoy some quintessential Swedish entertainment.

paris

JEAN NOUVEL DESIGNS BOLON'S SHOWROOM

From his Institut du Monde Arabe to the new Philharmonic concert hall, Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel has defined the cityscape of contemporary Paris. Nouvel's experimental and exuberant buildings often shatter architecture's conventions, and he is an abiding devotee of Bolon, having turned to Bolon flooring for his landmark Musée du quai Branly. At the Stockholm Furniture Fair 2012, Nouvel returned the favour and designed a gravity-defying installation for the Bolon stand. With this in mind, he was the perfect choice to design Bolon's new Paris showroom, opening in 2016. It will enable French buyers to explore Bolon's flooring in a dedicated environment. Whatever Nouvel comes up with, it's sure to be as distinctive and imaginative as the collections it will display.

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The number of people working at Bolon HQ.

The shape of things to come

As Bolon gets ready to reveal its factory expansion, Marie and Annica Eklund take a tour of the industrial estate that the company calls home.

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ANNICA AND MARIE EKLUND ARE WALKING along a rough gravel path at the back of the Bolon factory. Nearby, a new building is taking shape. It is another factory, one that will add 1,440 square metres of production space to the Bolon complex, but so far only its shell is in place. It is a vast hangar of a space; a facility that is empty for the moment, but which is clearly full of potential.

As is their custom, Annica and Marie are dressed in a manner more appropriate for a lunch at a Mayfair restaurant than a hard-hat tour of a building site in rural Sweden. The sisters, the directors of Bolon and the third generation of Eklunds to lead the brand, are always immaculately presented. Yet they nonetheless look at home on the building site; Annica and Marie are at ease in the industrial estate that Bolon calls home, a facility 15 minutes from the small town of Ulricehamn in Sweden.

"When we took over Bolon from our dad, he presented this plan for the Bolon production plant," says Annica. "We thought it was great that he had this ambition to expand, but we questioned whether Bolon should really grow to that extent." Back then, Bolon's manufacturing facilities covered just more than 5,000 square metres, yet the company has now grown to encompass around 15,000 square metres. It has been a remarkable expansion project. "It's quite incredible thinking of that original plan and seeing where we're at today," says Annica.

Ironically, given their reservations about the expansion, it was Annica and Marie's vision to develop Bolon into a brand synonymous with design, rather than just flooring, that has been one of the biggest causes for the company's growth. Another was their decision to bring all of Bolon's production in-house. Nowadays, the Ulricehamn site runs the entire process: the initial production of the plastic threads, weaving the textiles, and finally applying a durable backing to the weave in order to produce the flooring. "It is really important for us to control the entire process," says Marie. "We have invested 150 million Swedish kronor [€16 million] over the last five years in order to bring most production processes in-house and stay at the forefront of innovative and sustainable manufacturing." Bolon even recycles its own waste at a dedicated facility at the factory. The resultant material is incorporated into the product again.

But the present expansion is largely down to the purchase of four new Jacquard looms. These machines have become the focus of Bolon's 2016 initiative, Bolon By You, a highly personalised

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Marie Eklund (left) and Annica Eklund outside the new Bolon factory in Ulricehamn.



This page: the back of one of the Jacquard looms that have revolutionised Bolon's production processes. Opposite: a moodboard used in the development of Bolon By You; Marie Eklund in the studio, which is fitted with Bolon By Missoni; Zigzag Cyan flooring.

“We have invested 150 million Swedish kronor [€16 million] over the last five years in order to bring most production processes in-house and stay at the forefront of innovative and sustainable manufacturing.”

PHOTO ANDERS JUNGERMARK

flooring collection. “Ever since we invested in the first Jacquard four years ago,” says Marie, “we felt that there were so many possibilities. We wanted to explore the technique’s full potential.”

As its name suggests, Bolon By You offers architects, interior designers and specifiers the chance to create bespoke flooring to suit any project. The collection features six patterns, four warp colours and 12 weft colours. Using a combination of these three different elements, a vast number of personalised flooring designs can be created. “It’s really important for us to be able to offer more diversity and to accommodate people’s personal taste,” says Annica. “With Bolon By You, people are basically a part of the creative process.”

Annica and Marie’s idea is to make personalised flooring available to more of Bolon’s clients. Up until now, this option had only been possible for major projects – those larger than 800 square metres. Bolon By You can be made in smaller quantities than this and turned around just as quickly as standardised collections. “What’s really nice about this addition to the Bolon offer is that even if it’s more exclusive, when you order certain quantities the price difference is negligible,” says Marie.

It is still a month until the inauguration of the new facility. Yet despite owing its existence to the Jacquard looms, the factory will actually remain loomless for its opening. Instead, the space will be designed to look like a grand auditorium, a concert hall ready to welcome Bolon’s sales teams and global partners for the Bolon By You kick-off.

The space will feature a huge chandelier made out of Bolon’s flooring material, and each visitor will be invited to design their own flooring pattern. “Within 24 hours we will be able to show them their designs as a flooring sample,” says Annica. It promises to be a vivid demonstration of the potential of this new addition to the Bolon family. “But as soon as the guests leave, our engineers will be knocking on the door, eager to start the installation of the Jacquard looms,” says Annica. “The looms have to be warmed up, so to speak, ahead of next year’s orders.”

As we walk back towards Bolon’s offices, escaping the autumn chill, Marie begins to reflect. “We are armed now, and ready,” she says. In the Bolon design studio, samples for the 2017 collection are already taking shape. Small squares of flooring are pinned all over the walls, offering a clear insight into the company’s ongoing experimentation with pattern and form. ♦

BOLON GALLERY



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LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION OVER AT SF'S NEW OFFICES

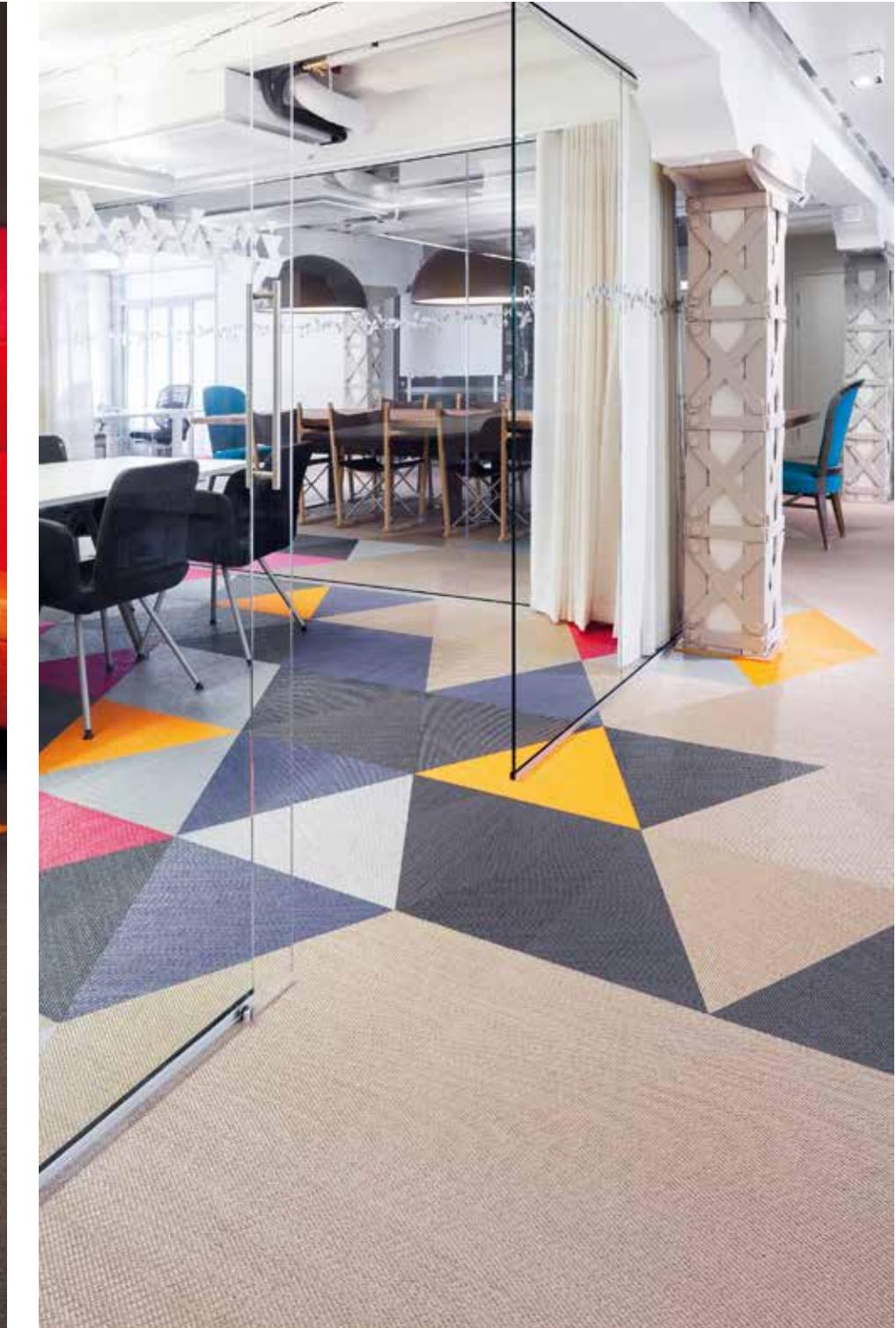
WHEN FILM PRODUCTION and distribution company Svensk Filmindustri (SF) decided to move to new offices in the centre of Stockholm, the company was keen to make a statement to the industry and its staff. "We wanted to send out the message that we are digital, innovative and forward-looking," explains Elsa Berg, head of corporate communication. "It was a cultural journey for the company."

SF is a major studio in Nordic and Scandinavian film, with titles by directors such as Ingmar Bergman and Lasse Hallström in its catalogue. Established for nearly a century, SF helped kickstart film production in the capital when it built Stockholm's equivalent of Hollywood – "Filmstaden" (The Movie Town) – in 1920. The state-of-the-art film studio complex was the world's most modern movie factory at the time and two of Swedish cinema's true legends made their debuts here: Ingrid Bergman and Greta Garbo.

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“We were impressed with Bolon’s green intention to make pollutant-free flooring that can be cleaned with eco-friendly products.”

ELSA BERG, HEAD OF COMMUNICATION,
SVENSK FILMINDUSTRI

PHOTO: MATTIAS HANRÉN

Now with more than 100 staff in its head office, SF could easily have opted for a very corporate workspace. Instead, it set the architects an intriguing brief. “We wanted it to feel like home but better,” says Berg. To help in this task, the firm appointed Bitte Granlund of Geco Architects. “SF was looking for something different,” she says.

Geco’s concept started with the flooring. “It’s a large, open space so the floor is prominent,” says Granlund. “It was significant for SF to move offices as the company moves into the future, so the design of the flooring resembles the coloured digital pixels that make up a movie screen.”

The reception area has a vivid impact as a sophisticated spectrum of colours in tones of

blue, red, orange and grey in Bolon Studio™ Triangles covers the floor and coordinates with the seating, contrasting with the dark and moody walls. The colourful triangular shapes flow seamlessly along the corridor, into the meeting rooms and out again to pour down the walkways into workspaces and recreational areas.

The visually engaging floor design works perfectly with furniture from Moroso and large feature-lighting from Flos, creating dedicated spaces for private work, meetings and relaxation.

“The use of Bolon in our offices makes the statement that although we are an established, leading studio, we are also edgy and bold,” says Berg, enthusiastically. “Our

working environment has attitude and we’re all proud to work here.”

The visual impact was a prime reason for using flooring from Bolon, but there was also a practical motivation. “We wanted to use our existing furniture in the new space for environmental reasons and we were impressed with Bolon’s green intention to make pollutant-free flooring that can be cleaned with eco-friendly products. Altogether, it’s just what we wanted – a mix of the past and future.”

However, Berg explains that there is also a purposeful visual message to the boundary-free layout of the new space. “We are a transparent company and this layout has created new dialogues and ways of working,” says Berg. ♦

PROJECT INFORMATION

COLLECTION NAMES:
Bolon Now: Tangerine,
Silver, Anthracite,
Carnation, Cerulean,
Champagne in rolls
and Bolon Studio™
Triangles

AREA: 1,500m²
LOCATION: Stockholm,
Sweden
CLIENT: Svensk
Filmindustri

ARCHITECT:
Geco Architects
FROM THE
ARCHITECT: “The
variety of colour
and shape options
allowed me to
play around with
the design, react
and get the character
of the film company
through the flooring.”



A PERFECT BACKDROP

"It is the perfect backdrop to show off our products," says Henric Gulled, CEO of the family-owned furniture showroom Gulled. He is referring to the new flooring in Gulled's Gothenburg branch. The neutral-coloured floor is from Bolon's Silence collection. It adds a warmth to the light-filled space and perfectly complements the furniture pieces from contemporary design brands HAY, Wrong for HAY, Tom Dixon and Magis, all of which Gulled represents.

The natural light from large street-facing windows highlights the subtle pattern of the floor and creates a quintessentially Scandinavian atmosphere for Gulled's products.

Being an agent for international design companies in Scandinavia, Gulled prizes innovation and forward-thinking. "My job gives me the opportunity to meet interesting people and work with beautiful things," says Gulled. "I'm always eager to work with vibrant designers and brands and Bolon has this feeling. It's a company interested in fun design that it believes in."

PROJECT INFORMATION

COLLECTION NAME:
Bolon Silence: Visual
AREA: 120m²
LOCATION:
Gothenburg, Sweden
CLIENT: Gulled
DESIGN STUDIO:
In-house

FROM THE CLIENT:
"Working with
Bolon was easy.
I want to collaborate
with designers who
produce great products
that I admire, and
Bolon does."

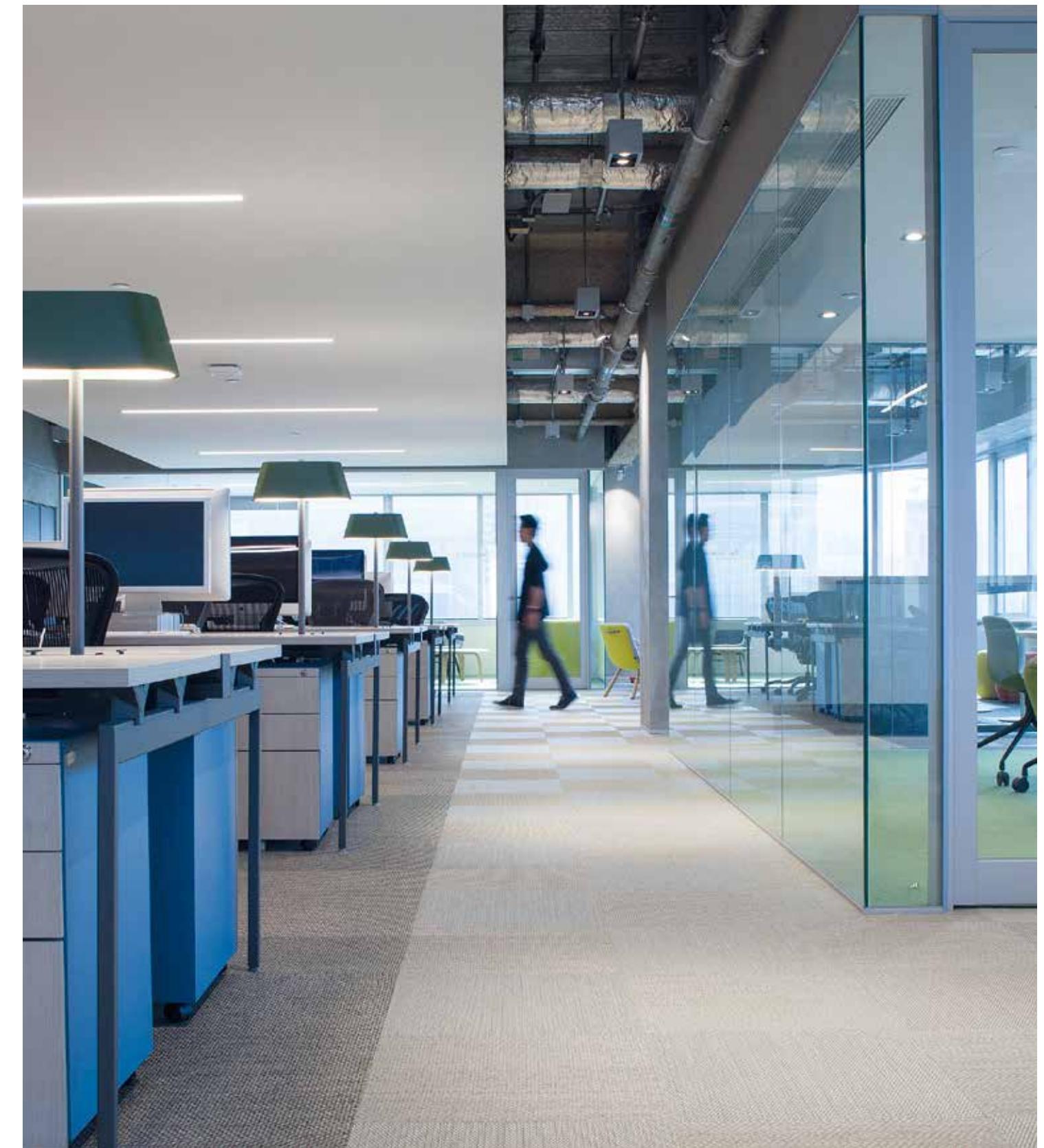
PHOTO: SUPERSTUDIO, CL3

ROOM WITH A VIEW

To celebrate its 50th anniversary, international language and cultural events company EF Education First in Hong Kong commissioned local architects cl3 to transform the layout of its office. "It is now an openplan space with communal areas and this means we work in a more democratic way with greater collaboration," says Ming Chen, EF's executive vice president.

One hundred and fifty people work here and each desk has a view across the 1,500 square metre office and out to the harbour. This continuity of space is underlined by the choice of flooring – Bolon's Bkb collection in Sisal Plain Sand and Sisal Plain Brown for the office, and the Botanic range in a mix of greens, yellows and greys for the designated meeting areas.

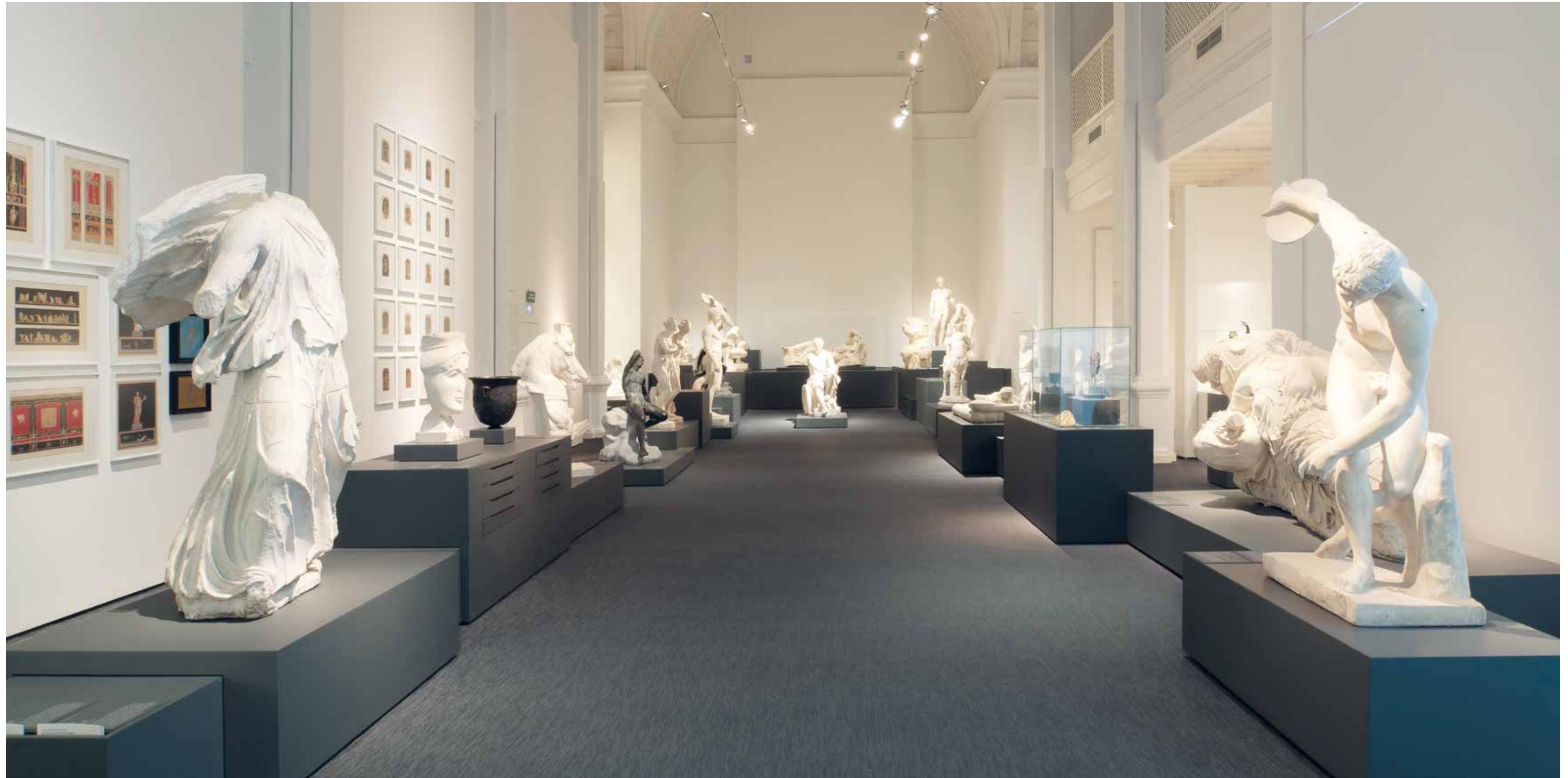
But the refurbishment is not just about looks. In Hong Kong, typhoons can mean that staff sometimes arrive in muddy, wet boots. "Our priority was the practical elements," says Chen. "We've only been in the space since February, yet we've already discovered how easy it is to get stains out."



PROJECT INFORMATION

COLLECTION NAMES:
Bolon Bkb: Sisal Plain
Sand, Sisal Plain
Brown, Sisal Plain
Hazel; Bolon Botanic:
Osier, Viva, Ivy, Cilia,
Tilia in Bolon Studio™
Triangles
AREA: 1,500m²
LOCATION: Hong Kong,
China

CLIENT: EF
Education First
ARCHITECT:
cl3 Architects
FROM THE CLIENT:
"Coming to work in our
new offices, has made
us feel more creative
and inspired. Bolon has
helped transform the
way we work."



A SACRED SPACE

When The National Museum of Sculpture in Valladolid, Spain, inherited a 3,000-piece collection dedicated to artistic reproductions from the closed-down National Museum of Reproductions, it decided to give the array of work its very own shrine.

The 16th-century church San Benito el Viejo is without doubt a worthy home for an extraordinary collection, but naturally the historic site presented some practical problems.

"The space had to have clean lines and neutral tones to show off the mostly white casts," says Juan Alberto García de Cubas, the project architect from El Taller de GC. The architects achieved this by whitewashing the walls and ceilings, and adding a contrasting dark floor.

"We covered the floor and pedestals in Bolon's Botanic Iris to create simple drama," says García de Cubas. "The material is flexible, so it can be adapted to every exhibition design and it's ideal for a public space, such as this museum, because it's durable and looks good for years."

PHOTO: JAVIER MUÑOZ

"The material is flexible, so it can be adapted to every design and it's ideal for a public space because it's durable and looks good for years."

JUAN ALBERTO GARCÍA DE CUBAS,
ARCHITECT AND CEO, EL TALLER DE GC

PROJECT INFORMATION

COLLECTION NAMES:
Bolon Botanic: Iris
AREA: 400m²
LOCATION: Valladolid, Spain
CLIENT: El Museo Nacional de Escultura
ARCHITECT: El Taller de GC

FROM THE ARCHITECT:
"The flooring has a neutral yet friendly presence. It manages to blend two extremes – the cool of the charcoal grey and the warmth of the texture. I love that about it."



MATERIAL EXPERIMENTS

When the Swiss hearing-aid specialists Sonova decided to create a new type of workspace called The Lab, they approached the Zürich-based architecture studio Büronauten. "They wanted 30 workstations and a collaborative space for different teams to work in," says Felix Kühne, lead architect on the project.

The 300 square metre fit-out is a study in material experimentation. Untreated and coarse OSB board panelling and integrated shelving sit next to colourful flooring, and contrast nicely with the luxurious shine of Tom Dixon's Mirror lights and metal stools from Tolix.

The flooring is from Bolon's Artisan range, and provides a graphic pattern of hexagons in Petroleum, Slate and Malachite. It complements the roughness of some of the materials, while creating a comfortable atmosphere for the experimental office. "It was a big step for the clients to use these materials," says Kühne. "However when they saw the finished product, they loved it."

PHOTO: MISCHA SCHERRER

"It was a big step for the clients to use these materials. However when they saw the finished product, they loved it."

FELIX KÜHNE, ARCHITECT, BÜRONAUTEN

PROJECT INFORMATION

COLLECTION NAMES:
Bolon Artisan:
Petroleum, Slate,
Malachite
AREA: 300m²
LOCATION: Stäfa,
Switzerland

CLIENT: Sonova
ARCHITECT:
Büronauten Architects
FROM THE ARCHITECT:
"I like the way the
weave adds a sense
of textural drama."



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UPDATING TRADITION

Hye Sook Kim is head of hotel management at Stay B Hotels. Its latest venture opened in the bustling centre of Seoul in spring 2015.

What is your role?

I manage the hotels and part of this role involves overseeing the design of the Stay B Hotels.

Tell us about the new hotel in Seoul.

Stay B Hotel Myeongdong is the fourth in the group. It's set in a new building with 100 rooms, which is not very big, so we had to consider every detail of the hotel very carefully.

What elements are you most pleased with?

The impact of the flooring. We wanted to use the five traditional ObangGan colours – blue, red, yellow, black and white – but in a modern way. With floors by Bolon, we achieved this easily. The flexibility of the product was a great inspiration for the designers.

PROJECT INFORMATION

COLLECTION NAMES:
Bolon Botanic: Viva,
Ivy; Bolon Artisan:
Motley, Petroleum
AREA 1,800m²
LOCATION: Seoul,
South Korea
ARCHITECT: SeoInn
Design

CLIENT: Stay B Hotel
FROM THE CLIENT:
“We chose Bolon
Botanic also for the
lobby area. Everyone
who walks in says:
‘Wow, this is fantastic!’
The flexibility was
a great inspiration.”

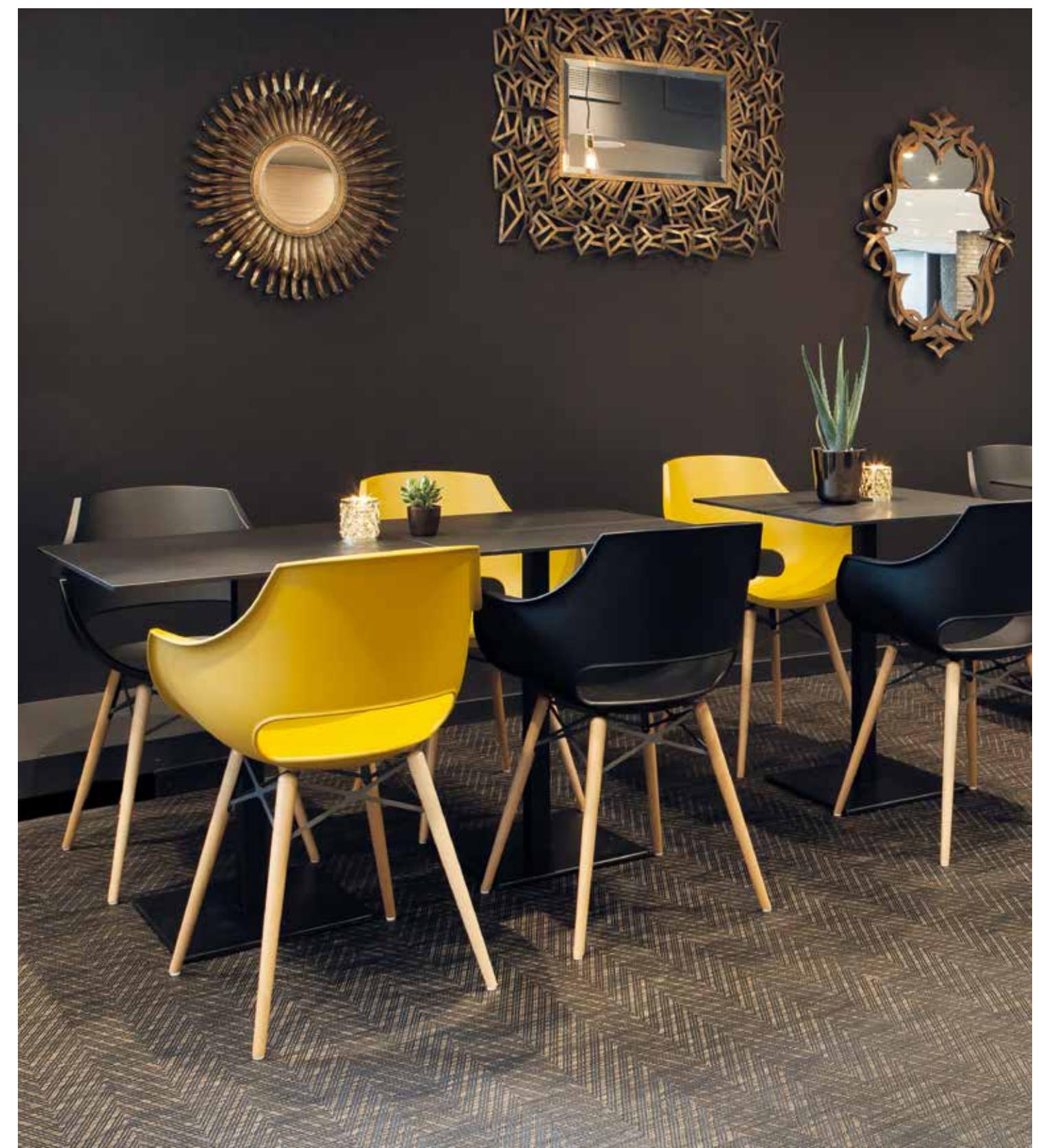
PHOTO: MR KIM, TORD-ERIK ANDRESEN

ALL ABOUT THE DETAIL

Sometimes it is the small touches that make the biggest difference. Such as the subtle brass accents in the recently completed restaurant, bar and conference centre at the Radisson Blu Nydalen hotel in Oslo, Norway.

Designed by the interior consultancy Milla Boutique, the business hotel has been transformed with the help of a muted colour palette. The brass is set off by the sombre walls and a dark floor. “The designers at Milla Boutique have used Bolon in many of their projects and suggested we use it too,” says Kristine Tonning, hotel director at Radisson Blu Nydalen.

They decided on the subtle herringbone pattern of Bolon Graphic, adding a sense of sophistication and warmth to the space. “Our requirements weren’t just practical, it was also important that it looked sophisticated to reflect the relaxed luxury of our brand – and it really does,” says Tonning.

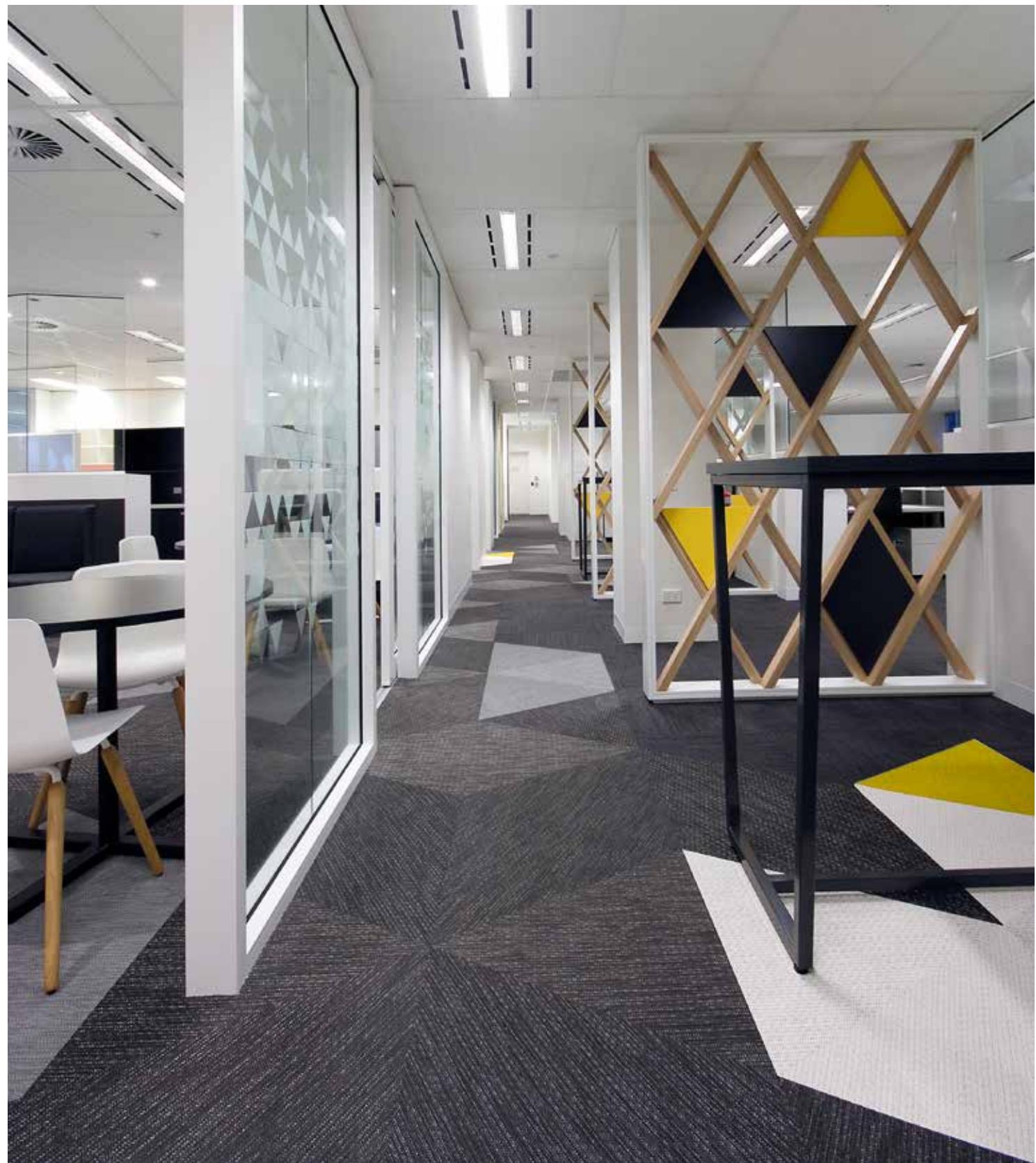


PROJECT INFORMATION

COLLECTION NAMES:
Bolon Graphic:
Herringbone Black;
Bolon Bkb: Sisal Natur
Black, Sisal Plain Black,
Metallic Alpha
AREA: 860m²
LOCATION: Oslo,
Norway
CLIENT: Radisson Blu
Nydalen
DESIGN STUDIO:

Milla Boutique
FROM THE CLIENT:
“One of our main
requirements for the
redesign was to deal
with the acoustic
issues we have when
conferences are
on. The flooring is
helpful for this – it is
quieter to walk on and
absorbs sound.”

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AN OPEN PLAN

Jacob Adams is an interior designer for IA Group in Adelaide, Australia. His team refurbished the offices of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) in the same city.

What was your brief?

An openplan model for the offices. They wanted the design to improve interaction with the public.

What factors were important to you?

We were conscious of the possible disconnect in the floor plan if we didn't get the flow right. Here, flooring from Bolon helped lead the eye away from physical boundaries and open up the space. We used two different collections to achieve a high-impact design that incorporated DIBP's branding.

How has the space changed?

The biggest change was the ability for large numbers of staff to gather. This has allowed different departments to connect for the first time.

PROJECT INFORMATION

COLLECTION NAMES: Bolon Artisan: Coal and Ivory; Bolon Botanic: Viva and Osier
AREA: 732m²
LOCATION: Adelaide, Australia
CLIENT: Department of Immigration
and Border Protection office
ARCHITECT: IA Group
FROM THE ARCHITECT: "The unique design aesthetic is undeniable and a look can be achieved with Bolon flooring that no other product can achieve."

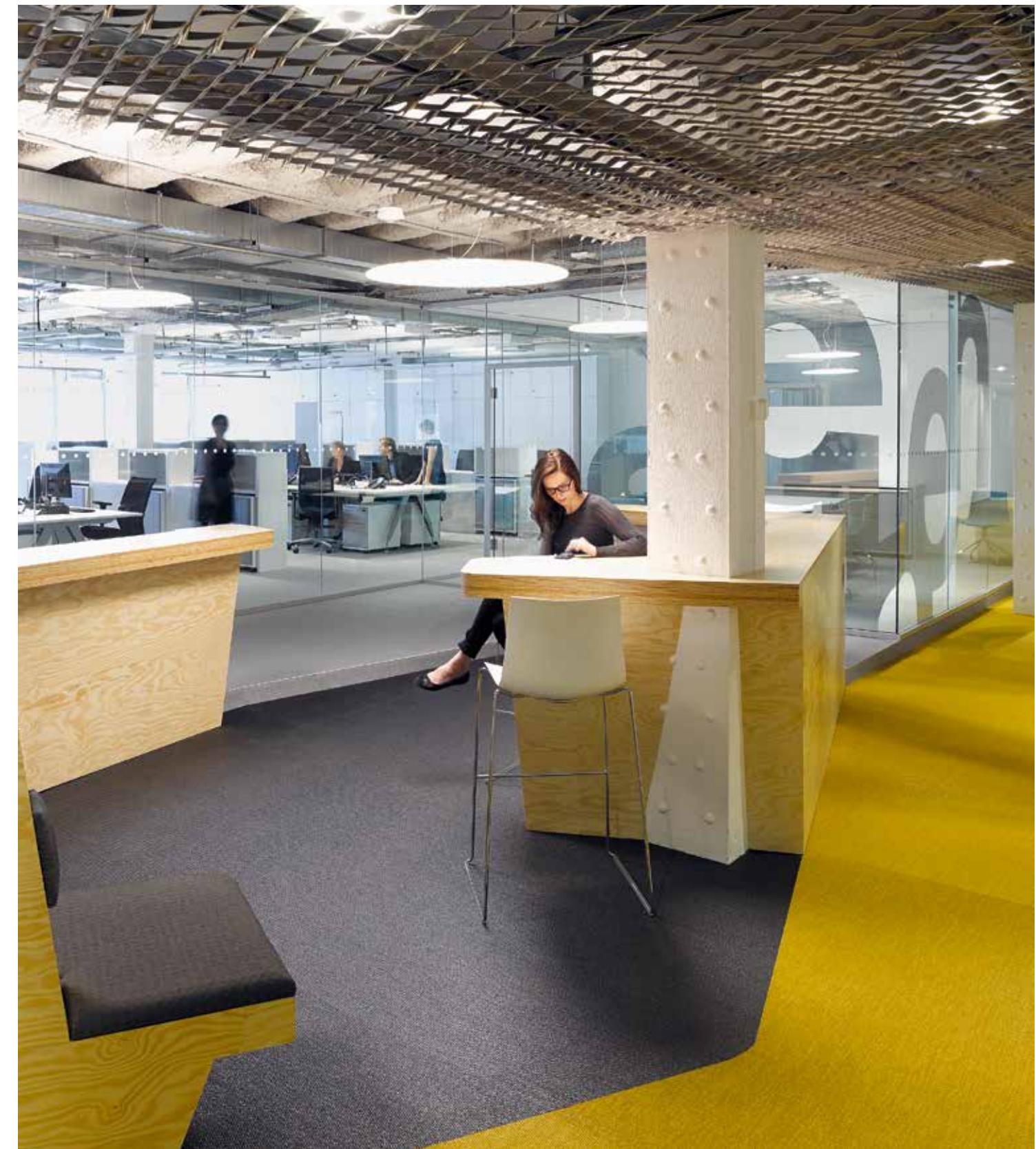
PHOTO DAVID MATTHESSEN, ROSS WILLIAMS

MAKING SPACE

"It took a long time to find the right flooring for Breuninger's," says Stefan Rappold, a partner at Behnisch Architekten in Stuttgart. "But when we found Bolon, it ticked all the boxes."

The German department store, Breuninger, tasked the architects with creating an openplan office for its 300 staff at its Stuttgart headquarters, measuring over 6,000 square metres. The design had to connect the large areas, solve acoustic issues and be easy to clean. "What I love about my job is the practical fascination – it is not just theoretical. Creating a space for people to work in is a very real project, so finding the right material is satisfying," says Rappold.

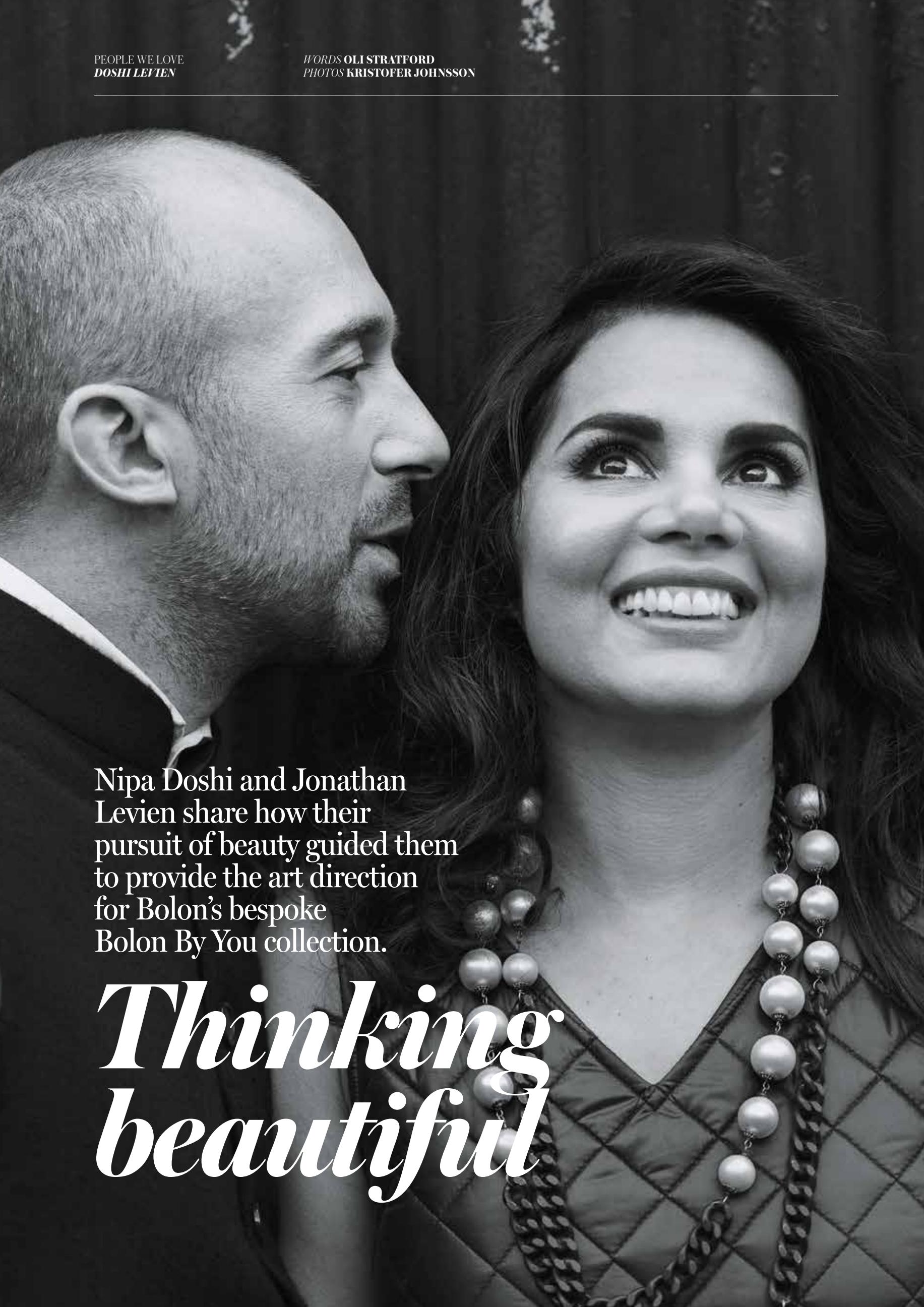
To give a peaceful and neutral backdrop for the office areas the architects selected Bolon's Now collection in Anthracite and Silver, while the walkways are paved in the vivid yellow Botanic Viva. "The reflection of the flooring in the polished aluminium ceiling gives it a certain glow – a lovely feature to have in a work place," says Rappold.



PROJECT INFORMATION

COLLECTION NAMES: Bolon Botanic: Viva; Bolon Now: Anthracite, Silver
ARCHITECT: Behnisch Architekten
FROM THE ARCHITECT: "Bolon flooring ticks both the beautiful and practical boxes."

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Nipa Doshi and Jonathan Levien share how their pursuit of beauty guided them to provide the art direction for Bolon's bespoke Bolon By You collection.

Thinking beautiful



Doshi Levien's studio above Columbia Road Flower Market in London.



A display of vernacular objects atop the studio's Manzai dining table, which was produced for the 2012 Das Haus installation at the imm Cologne trade fair.



Nipa Doshi and Jonathan Levien discuss the Bolon By You collection with Bolon's in-house designer Petra Lundblad.

Nipa Doshi is clear about her role as a designer. "For me, beauty is very important," she says. "The feeling that a person has towards a material can go beyond the rational. But even if it's sometimes easier not to talk about beauty, because it's not something concrete and quantifiable, I think it's something that we as designers unashamedly pursue."

Doshi and her partner Jonathan Levien are the founders of Doshi Levien, an east London-based design practice. Doshi and Levien have created furniture, furnishings, installations and accessories for design brands and institutions such as Moroso, Kvadrat, Cappellini and Galerie kreo. Now, they have collaborated with Bolon, providing art direction for Bolon By You, a new flooring collection that can be tailored to suit different architectural projects. "How can we get people to love Bolon's material?" asks Doshi. "That's the most important thing for us."

It is an area in which Doshi Levien has enviable form; the practice's work is preoccupied with the way that people connect with objects. Scottish-born Levien has a gift for form-making and materiality, sculpting designs such as the enveloping Almora lounge chair for B&B Italia. The Almora's structure is built up from three separate elements that delicately wrap around one another to cocoon

the user. Meanwhile, Doshi, who was raised in India, imbues projects with both a narrative flair and a keen understanding of the ways in which colour, decoration and ornamentation enrich objects. The studio's Principessa daybed for Moroso stacks multiple mattresses on top of one another, each mattress upholstered in jacquard weaves that bear floral or geometric patterns, or else iconography of hairdryers, sunglasses, shoes and cocktail glasses – rich and sumptuous, but also a witty veneration of the everyday. It is difficult not to like.

Doshi Levien's studio, a sunlit space above Columbia Road Flower Market, is crammed with prototypes. There is a chair with a curved back that gently encompasses the sitter, and a vast Chandigarh-inspired textile that hangs from the wall. The studio's surfaces are cluttered with art materials, as well as a display of vernacular Indian objects. Newly arrived in the studio is a curling metal lamp diffuser, created in concert with a vintage car restorer. Such ephemera suggests the practice's diverse portfolio, but everything that Doshi Levien creates is united by an overarching sensibility. "It boils down to trying to create beauty," says Levien. "That's what drives us."

It is certainly what drove Doshi Levien to provide the art direction for Bolon By You, a bespoke flooring collection that offers six patterns, with further customisation possible through four different warp colours and 12 weft colours. It is a sprawling project, and >



This page: Nipa Doshi in the studio. Behind her hangs a model of Doshi Levien's Impossible Wood chair for Moroso.
Opposite: Jonathan Levien standing next to the tagine from Doshi Levien's Mosaic range of cookware for Tefal.

one that represents a new direction for Doshi Levien, taking the studio beyond its traditional heartlands of furniture and objects. "We have never art directed a campaign before and the most obvious thing would've been for Bolon to ask us to design a floor instead," says Doshi. Yet both she and Levien relished the challenge. "I believe that as a designer you are using your mind," adds Doshi. "You can apply design thinking to anything. Being a designer is about understanding what the needs of a project are."

The Bolon project has been a major undertaking. Doshi Levien has designed the company's concept art, as well as display pieces for Bolon's showrooms, sample books for the company to send to clients, and online tools to help architects specify flooring for buildings. What links these strands is a theme of presentation. "We were looking for a more intuitive, direct way of engaging with the products," says Levien. "We wanted people to be excited about getting this material in their hands."

Levien's mention of material is vital. Central to Doshi Levien's work for Bolon is a desire to emphasise the physical traits of the company's vinyl flooring. By placing the vinyl in dialogue with other architectural materials, the studio hopes to accentuate its tactile and aesthetic qualities. "What is important is that people appreciate this material," says Doshi. "These floors are essentially textiles; they're jacquard floors."

When I went to see them being woven at Bolon, I fell in love with them."

"It was a case of what the material wanted when we had it in our hands," adds Levien. "This flooring wants to be with other materials. That guided us during the design process and Bolon totally trusts the process of design."

Materiality is front and centre in the images that Doshi Levien developed for Bolon. The studio designed a series of interior settings, and built them in a warehouse using standardised screens and blocks. Each image takes a different Bolon flooring as a basis, surrounding it with glimpses of wood and brass, terrazzo and concrete. The settings are dusky and tantalising, replete with nods to the architecture of Le Corbusier, John Pawson and Peter Zumthor, as well as glimpses of furniture pieces designed by Doshi Levien: a Paper Planes chair peeping from behind a screen; a Chandlo dressing table emerging from a darkened aperture.

Doshi Levien's settings straddle the border between real-world spaces and abstract set designs. They are substantial enough to create a sense of place, yet nebulous enough to let the viewer's imagination fill in the detail, an important quality for architects considering how Bolon's flooring might fit in a space. "It's a balance between suggesting abstract space, but not something too abstract," says Levien. "We want these spaces to feel real, so we've put furniture in to give them a sense of scale."

That's a matter of design sensibility: how abstract can you go without losing meaning?"

Finding meaning is a recurrent theme within Doshi Levien's work. The practice's designs are essentially celebratory; Doshi Levien creates objects that luxuriate in their materiality and form, embracing the beauty of the world that surrounds them. One of the practice's most impressive projects to date was Living Objects, an exhibition of vernacular Indian items that the studio displayed at Belgium's Grand-Hornu institute in 2013. Here, Doshi Levien elevated everyday things – steel tiffin boxes, plastic bottles for calcium pills, low stools for bathing – into museum artefacts. Behind this exhibition, as with all of Doshi Levien's work, was an understanding that objects are not merely consumables: they can be things to treasure, things to which we form attachments. It is this same ethos that is visible in the studio's work with Bolon.

"We prize love and materiality, but also plurality," says Doshi. "It is possible to love all types of objects and materials; you can love something handmade and rough, and you can also love something very industrial."

"We have to love whatever we create," adds Levien. "The nature of beauty is unquantifiable and yet such a durable quality. The criteria for us is that we have to be able to return to something. We have to enjoy it and we have to love it." ♦

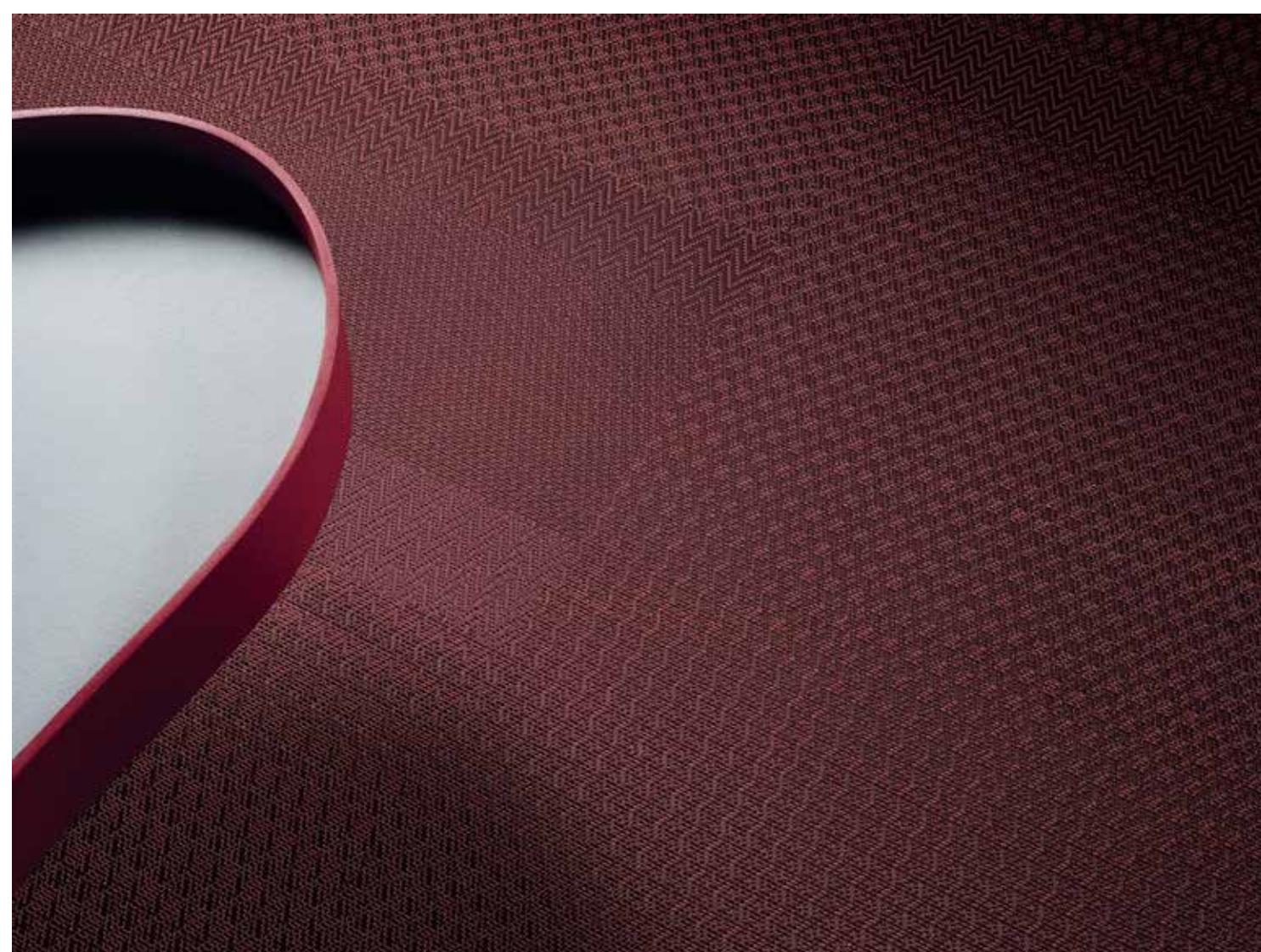


"It really boils down to trying to create beauty. That's what drives us to do what we do."

YOUR FLOOR, YOUR WAY

Bolon By You is a revolutionary interactive flooring concept that personalises Bolon's product on a large scale. Using a variety of patterns, and warp and weft colours, Bolon By You lets you create whatever flooring suits your project.

NEWS Bolon By You; Weave, Brown, Raspberry Red.



NEWS Bolon By You; Stripe, Black, Steel Grey.



NEWS Bolon By You: Geometric, Beige, Liquorice Black

BOLON BY YOU is an adaptable system that lets you create unique flooring to meet the aesthetic demands of any project. The collection features six patterns, four warp colours and twelve weft colours. By mixing these elements in different combinations, a vast selection of potential designs becomes available.

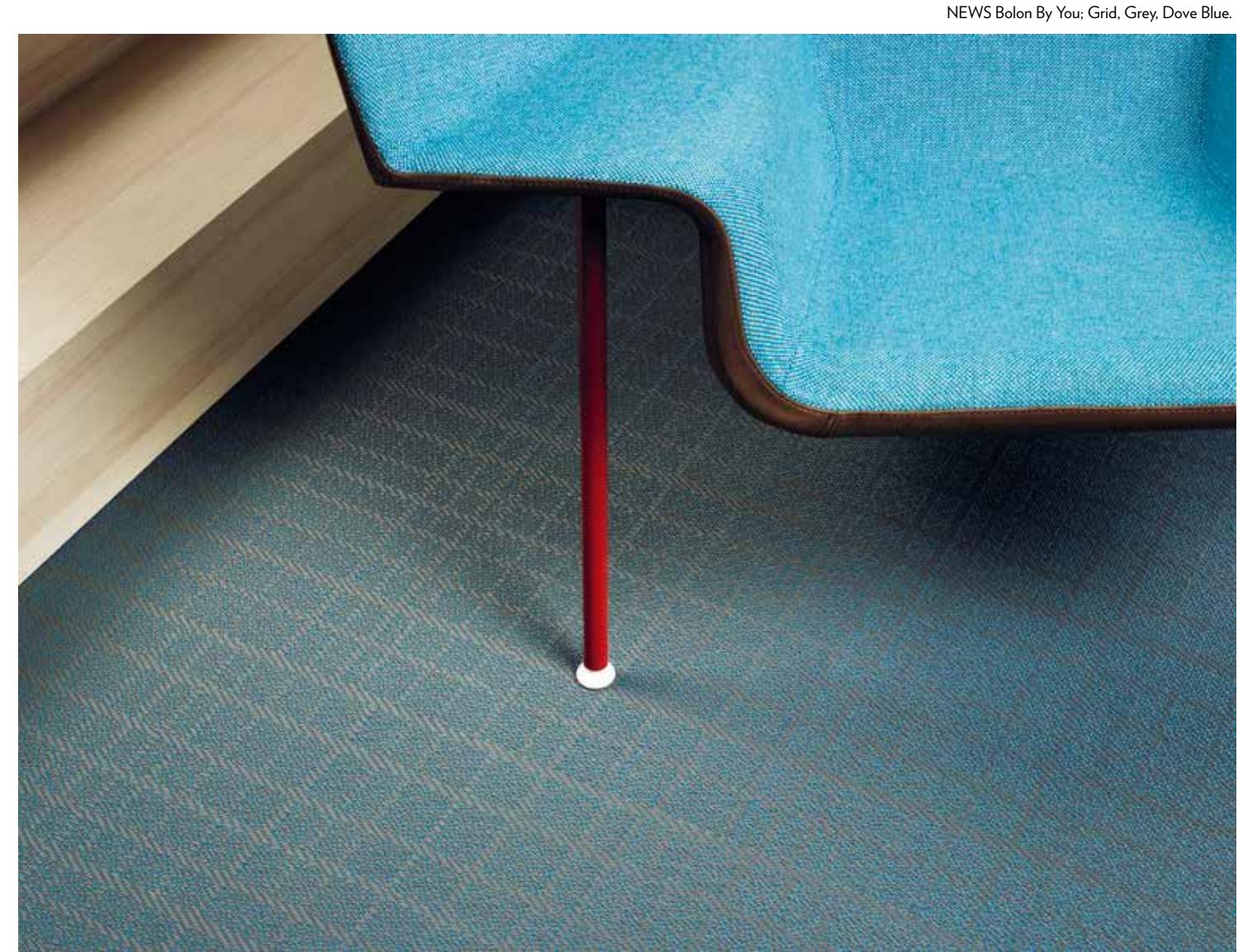
To demonstrate the possibilities of Bolon By You, London-based design studio Doshi Levien was commissioned to create imagery to communicate the new collection. Over the following pages, we are taken on a journey through a series of dusky and tantalising interior settings. Here, materiality is front and centre, letting the viewer's imagination fill in the detail. This is Bolon by You. ♦

Thanks to Moroso, B&B Italia and BD Barcelona Design for supplying furniture by Doshi Levien for the shoot.



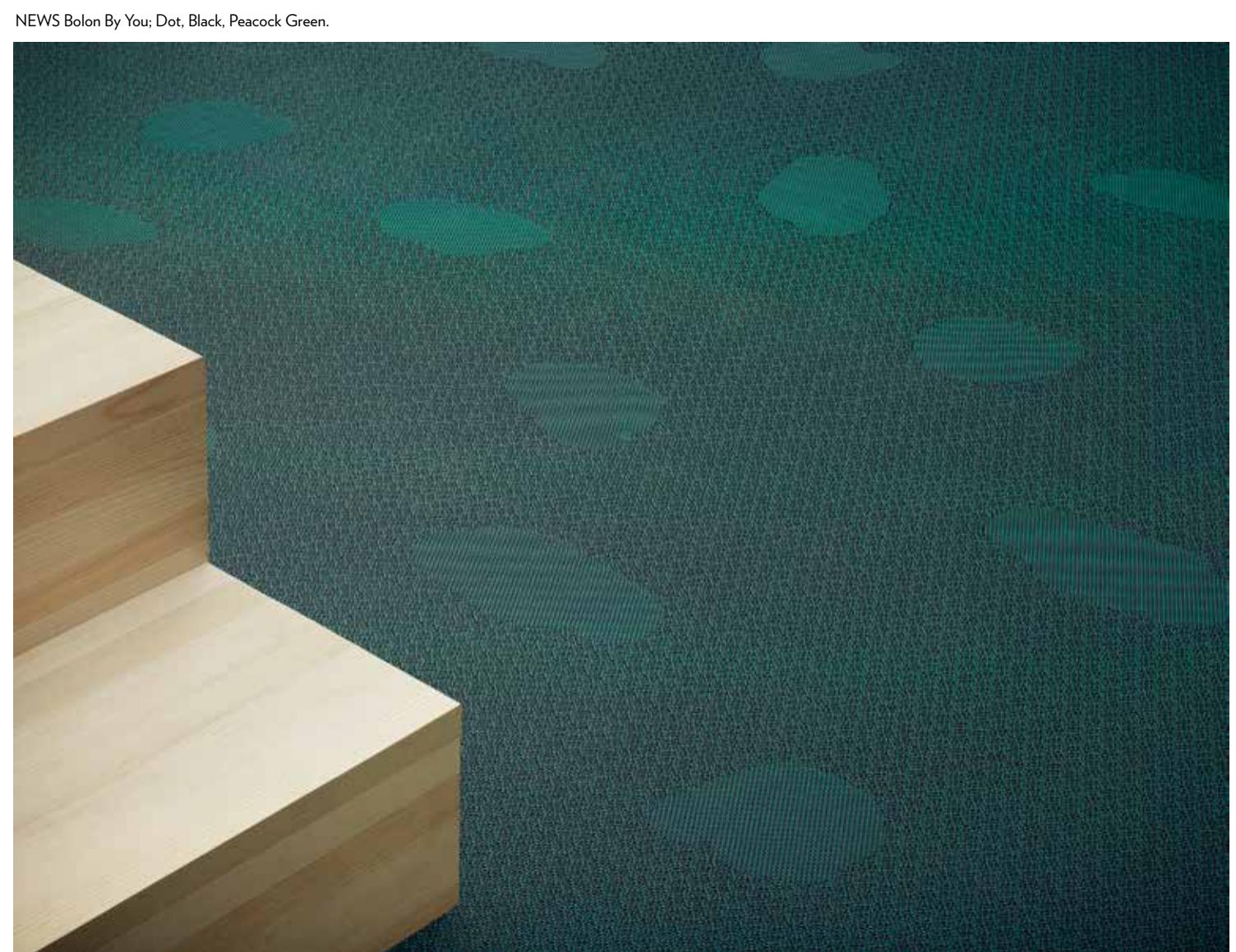
NEWS Bolon By You; Lace, Black, Dove Blue.

**Bolon By You is
an adaptable system
that lets you create
unique flooring to meet
the aesthetic demands
of any project.**



NEWS Bolon By You; Grid, Grey, Dove Blue.

By mixing elements in different combinations, a vast selection of potential designs becomes available.



NEWS Bolon By You; Dot, Black, Peacock Green.

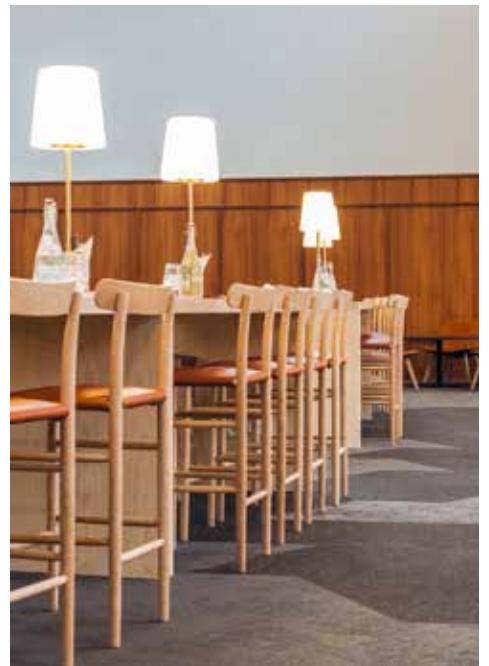


NEWS Bolon By You; Geometric, Black, Blueberry Blue.

POST PRESENT FUTURE

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As a former post office in the city of Luleå is transformed into a scientific meeting place for the 21st century, we take a look at the history and future of this very public building.



WHEN SWEDEN'S POSTAL SERVICE lost its monopoly in the early 1990s, the future looked bleak for its network of sorting offices and public buildings. What to do with a collection of buildings which, on the face of it, had suddenly become obsolete?

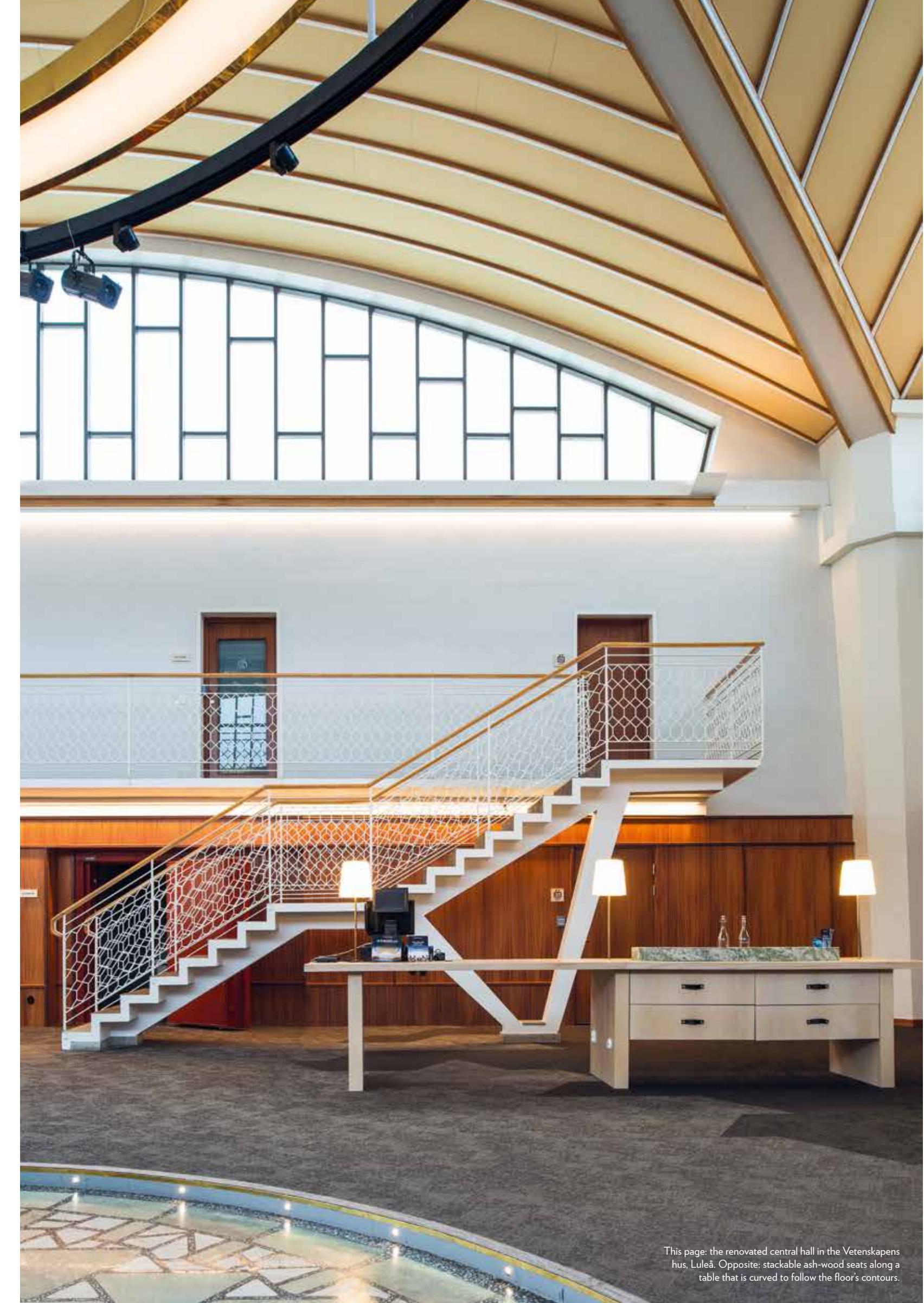
It is the same question being faced by many sectors worldwide. Just as libraries are being distilled into depots and service points, so too are banking services now offered through mobile applications. Meanwhile, urban transport networks have done away with ticket cashiers and conductors almost altogether. The reassuring reliability of the postal service – and its centrality to city life – no longer requires the spaces it once did.

Nevertheless, the buildings that once housed these services often remain. In the city of Luleå, Sweden, a monument to the postal service of old has recently found a new lease of life. The city's former central post office,

designed by architect Lars-Erik Lallerstedt in the 1950s, has been transformed into the Vetenskapens hus (literally, "the House of Science"), a contemporary meeting place dedicated to the public understanding of science. The interior was designed with the help of Wingårdhs, the practice of Swedish architect Gert Wingårdh, and the project's success is testament to the quality of the original structure. The Vetenskapens hus showcases a true Swedish modernist at his best.

Lars-Erik Lallerstedt spent the majority of his career as the senior architect of the Swedish Postal Service, for which he designed public buildings. The mid-20th century was a period of intense investment in public projects in Sweden, and between 1942 and 1962 Lallerstedt designed and realised a total of 15 sorting offices across the country. Lallerstedt approached the dominant design language of Nordic Functionalism with a modest confidence, treating the modernist dogma of "form follows function" less doctrinally than many of his contemporaries. The results of this attitude to design are particularly clear in the sub-arctic city of Luleå in Norrbotten, Sweden's northernmost län.

Throughout the 1950s, Luleå benefited from a booming local steel industry. Off the back of this, the city built the world's first indoor shopping centre (designed by Ralph Erskine) and an ostentatious set of public baths. The city hall, a building typology often seen as a benchmark of a conurbation's prosperity, was designed by architect Bo Cederlöf and, in its extravagance, became >



This page: the renovated central hall in the Vetenskapens hus, Luleå. Opposite: stackable ash-wood seats along a table that is curved to follow the floors contours.

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PROJECT INFORMATION

COLLECTION NAMES: Bolon Create: Parlo in Bolon Studio™ Triangles

AREA: 450m²

LOCATION: Luleå, Sweden

CLIENT: Vetenskapens hus

INTERIOR ARCHITECT:

Wingårdhs

CONTEXT: The former post office's arched ceiling was put on Luleå municipality's conservation list in 2002. The stone floor in white, green and black, the balcony and staircase banisters, the line-patterned plaster exterior and the trapezoid windows are also listed.

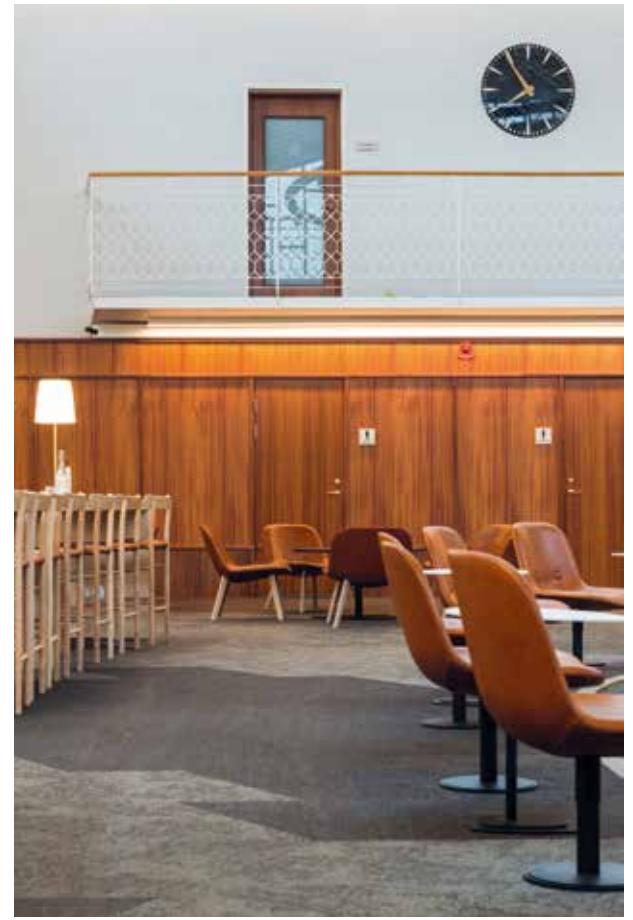
Windows allow more natural light into the former post office's vaulted hall.

known locally as The Marble Palace. Amid this intensity of post-war public building, Lallerstedt drew up plans for a post office in the heart of the city. He envisioned a light, bright collection of rooms surrounding a central hall, spanned by a single vaulted ceiling. Within this tall room, which was lit from above, the daily activity of the post office occurred at desks arranged around a central horseshoe-shaped space, providing an inventive means for preventing queues from intersecting during busy periods.

Following the building's completion in 1953, Erik Swartling, director general of the Swedish Postal Service, declared Luleå's new post office to be "one of Sweden's most beautiful". This was no exaggeration. Although simple, lean and modest, Lallerstedt's building had warmth. The whitewashed walls were complemented by wood panelling; the rigidity of the plan was offset by its sinuously curved ceiling; and the lace-like staircase and balcony banister suggested ornamental playfulness without compromising overall clarity.

When the post office left Lallerstedt's building at the turn of the 21st century, the space's design and central location didn't go unnoticed. In 2011, Luleå University of Technology, alongside The Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences and the Kiruna-based mining company LKAB, began searching for a venue that could house its plans for the Vetenskapens hus. The former post office was quickly identified as an ideal space. Soon afterwards, Wingårdhs was commissioned to transform the building's interior, making it fit for its new purpose.

"The architectural qualities of the existing building were obvious to us, and it was in very good condition," says project architect Helena Toresson. The architects were clear that "the interior of the main hall would be tampered with as little as possible" and their first move was to study the building's original material >



This page: the multifunctional space.
Opposite: Bolon flooring complementing the central hall's original mosaic floor.

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“IN LULEÅ, WHERE IT SNOWS A GREAT DEAL, YOU HAVE TO EXPECT CONSIDERABLE WEAR AND TEAR. SO WE LOOKED TO BOLON.”

HELENA TORESSON, ARCHITECT, WINGÅRDHS

palette in order to tease out an appropriate contemporary response. Aside from bringing more natural light into the central hall, their work centred on non-structural interventions. New elements have been limited to a reduced vocabulary of details and patterns, all inspired by the existing building. It was decided, for instance, that the latticed ironwork on the staircase and balcony would be etched on the mirror wall of the first-floor restaurant and the radiator grates in the dining room.

The central hall's horseshoe shape – now without its radial enclosure – has been abstracted into a simple circular chandelier that is suspended from the vault. For an installation that appears almost weightless, the chandelier tips the scales at a little over one-and-a-half tonnes. For Toresson, this

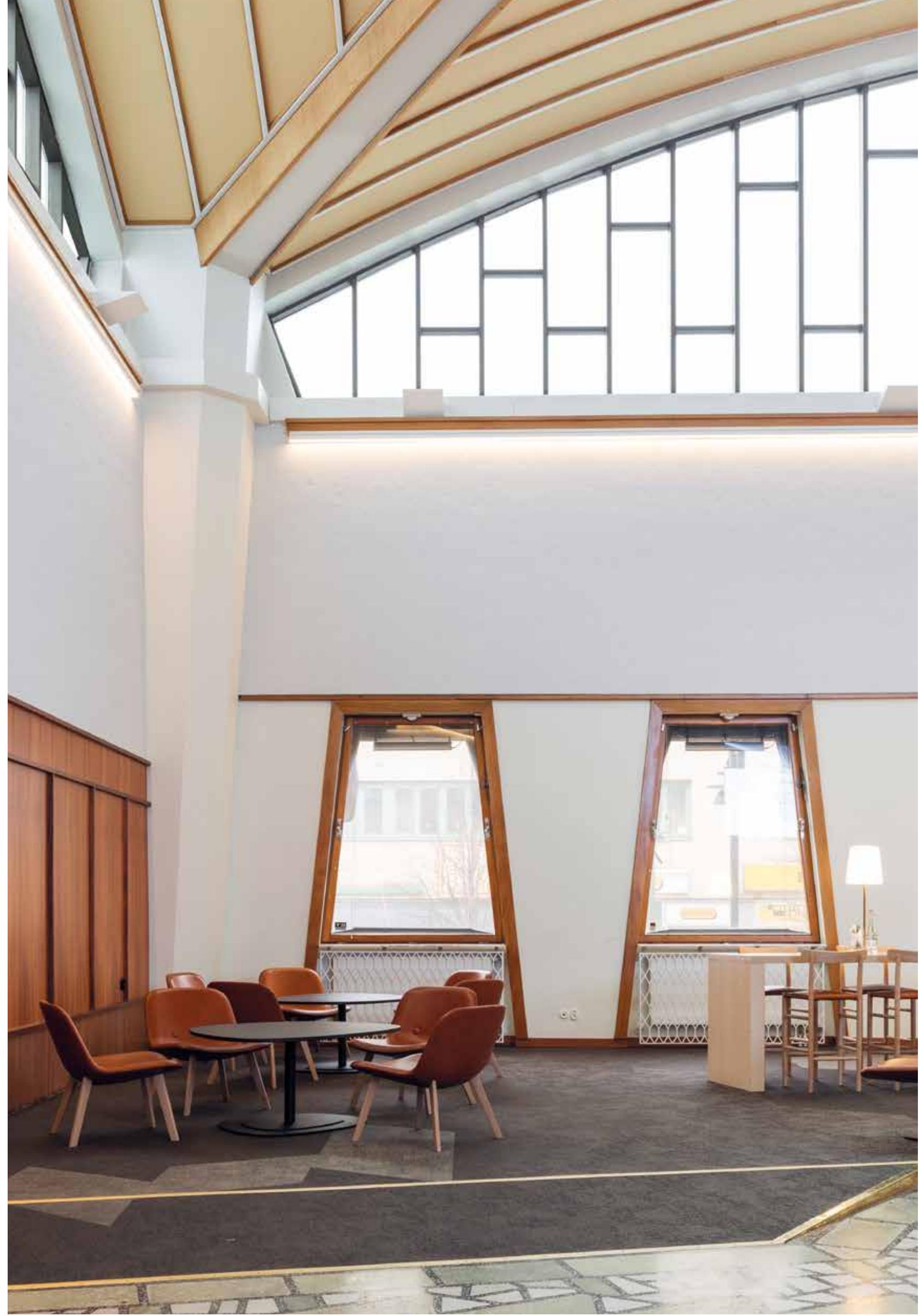
“halo of light” was an important design move because it allowed for a level of flexibility in the lighting and integrated sound system that caters to the space’s new functional variety – it houses everything from lectures and debates, to intimate musical performances and film screenings. Rather than dotting cables and little plastic boxes around the walls and ceiling, the entire PA system is housed in this single bespoke appliance. “It was an early conceptual idea that embodied our intentions to realise the renovation in a way that was both bold and careful at the same time,” says Toresson.

The floor, often overlooked in projects of this kind, was given equally careful consideration. The horseshoe’s original mosaic floor of Swedish green marble and black terrazzo, flecked with white and arranged in

a scale-like pattern of geometrical triangles, was preserved. A solution for the remaining floor area came from Bolon. “In a city such as Luleå, where it snows a great deal, you have to expect considerable wear and tear,” says Toresson. “So we looked to Bolon.” The architects needed a material tough enough to absorb heavy use that, at the same time, complemented the existing marble and its geometric theme. Wingårdhs selected a Bolon triangle tile with a rough grain – the deep-grey colour of which fluctuates dependent on light conditions – to complete the new surface. These triangles, which form a decorative pattern to fill any gaps, gave the architects complete freedom to decide how, and where, it would be laid.

High-quality furnishings form part of the interior’s updated material palette of leather, ash wood, and marble. Seats are stackable and easy to store, while the tables are slightly curved to follow the contour of the floor. Storage cabinets have been integrated into the wall space and the rich, Swedish green marble has been cleverly deployed to create accents of colour on wall surfaces, in the bathrooms, and on furniture.

The architects have engaged in what they describe as a “liberating dialogue” between Lars-Erik Lallerstedt and the demands of a 21st-century university space. The interventions that they have grafted into the existing spaces pay homage to the building’s original playfulness, as well as its purity. Importantly, they have recognised Lallerstedt’s subtle departure from the typical mode of Functionalism, sensitively transforming its use from a place of commerce to a city-central, contemporary meeting space. Above all, Luleå’s new Vetenskapens hus intelligently demonstrates how successful the adaptive reuse of disused spaces can really be. “We recognised that in the case of this building there would be no need for a stylistic restoration,” says Toresson. “The goal was to preserve its heart and soul.” ♦



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A strange kind of dance

Swedish designer and artist Martin Bergström finds inspiration in materials that are not normally used for garments.
In the midst of working on a project for Milan fashion week, he talks about his strikingly dynamic creations and a special project commissioned by Bolon.

The seasonal fashion shows are in full swing, but you mostly work on a project basis. Do you prefer it this way?

I'm a bit against that seasonal system. I think it's a pity that it's so often about trends and not about fashion, because those are two different things for me. Fashion and style are amazing and it's interesting to see the cycle of trends but when you see the new is not really new... I have no problem with showing clothes twice a year, but to say, "next spring this is what we are going to wear" is a bit too authoritative. We have to focus on more important things.

How did the collaboration with Bolon come about?

It all happened really nicely. I met Annica Eklund [owner and CEO of Bolon] through a friend at a Christmas party last year. We saw each other again afterwards, it clicked and we decided to do something together. Annica came up with the idea of creating something for the magazine. I visited the factory in Ulricehamn and it opened my eyes to all the possibilities. I didn't know much about Bolon before - I only knew they created flooring.

I like the way that they produce everything in Sweden, how they care for the environment.

That is really very rare today.

What other elements about Bolon made this collaboration a good fit?

I have worked with big couture houses in Paris and I've been developing a lot of designs for different fashion projects, but to collaborate with a company that does something completely different is very interesting. The team is very open. I liked the challenge. Bolon opened up a lot of possibilities for what you can do with weaving too, which was great for me. I did a lot of weaving during my studies at Konstfack in Stockholm and it was fun going back to that.

What was your starting point, conceptually?

Firstly, I wanted to keep the colour scheme monochrome. I used only black, white and greys, because that's something I like. I had this idea to do living sculptures and show them on a dancer in order to have some movement and play with the tension of gravity versus the

heavy flooring and the dancer's motions. Since we were going to be working with flooring, which is stiff and hard, the challenge was to make something soft and flowing. My starting point was Oskar Schlemmer, a choreographer from the Bauhaus era. In 1922 he made Das Triadische Ballet, in which he used a lot of Cubist forms, and I wanted to offer a homage to that. I also looked to native African art. This collaboration was the perfect arena for these ideas, which had been in my mind for quite some time.

What was the biggest challenge in trying to manipulate these flooring materials?

The material is really heavy, so we had to come up with ideas of how to work with it so that the dancer could actually move. We had to think of how we could put the material together. We had an industrial sewing machine for leather, which was very strong. So, we could sew the panels of the headpiece, for example, rather than glue them. That made it look much better and not as though we had just cut something out and stuck it on.

How important is the idea of wearability for you?

It depends on the project. When I make dance costumes that have to be worn during performances, and washed 150 times, they have to be practical. The quality and the sewing has to be 10 times better because the stitches can't break mid-show! When I make art - when I build dresses out of strawberries, grapes or flooring, or whatever - then it doesn't matter if it's wearable or will break. For me, in a way, function is boring, but the function of an object can also be its beauty. And that's very nice. Still, sometimes you have to wash and wear garments.

Is that why you are attracted to non-traditional materials? To show that nonconformist things can also be beautiful?

"Beautiful" can of course mean different things for everyone. For me something is beautiful when it makes you wonder what it is. I often find beauty in dark places; when you make something you can't really put your finger on, that's much more interesting. ♦

FACTS MARTIN BERGSTRÖM

AGE: 37

PROFESSION: Fashion designer and artist

HOMETOWN: Stockholm, Sweden

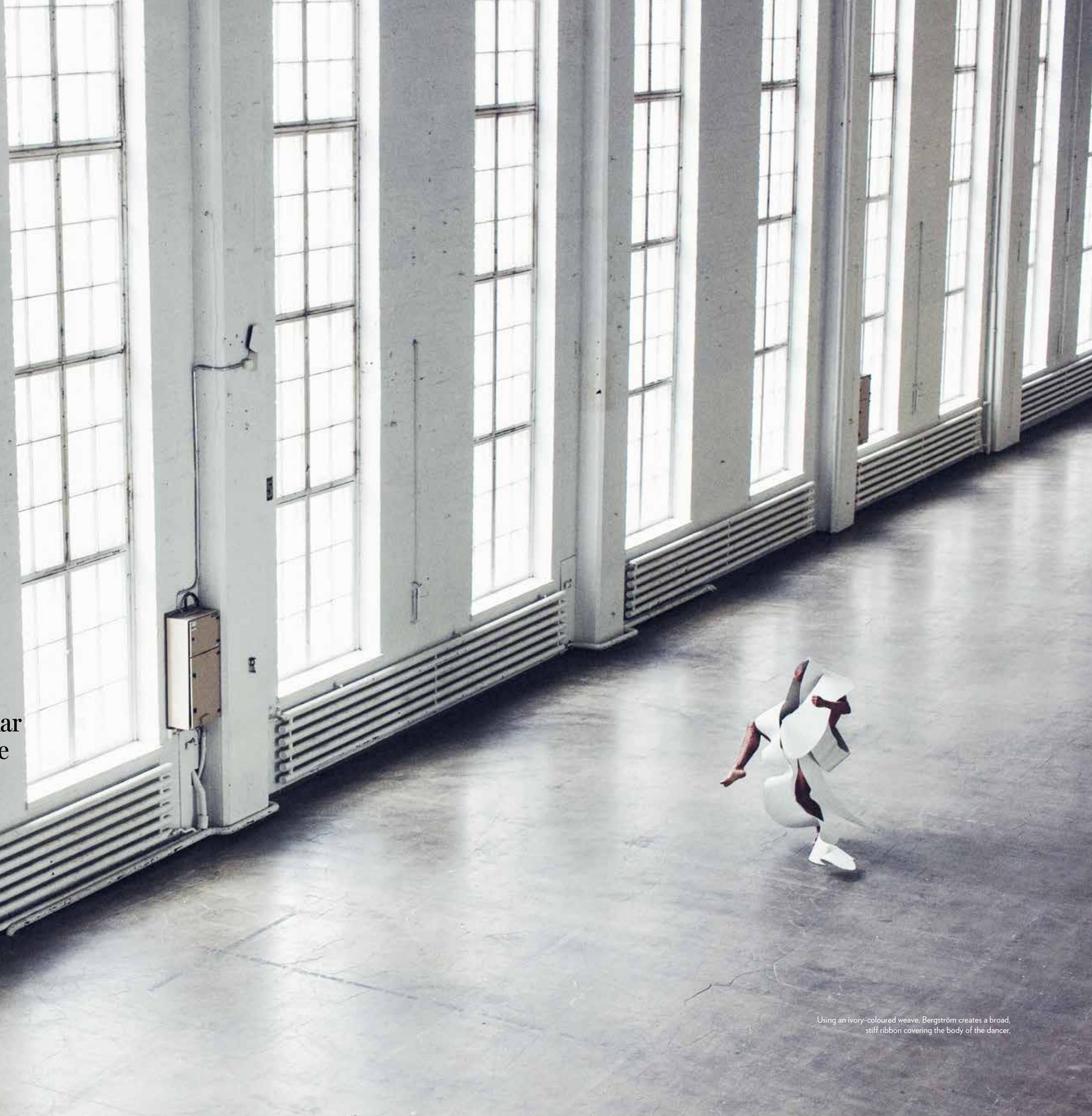
NOTABLE PROJECTS: Bergström recently designed a collection of textiles and objects for IKEA called Svartan. He works regularly with the artist Nathalia Edenmont and the choreographer Kenneth Kvarnström. He also designs collections in his own name.



Martin with his dog Conny at the Bolon Interpretations shoot in Helsinki.

FADE TO GREY

Merikaapelihalli, a former cable plant in Helsinki, was the setting for designer Martin Bergström's interpretation of Bolon's flooring material. Working with dancer Ima Iduozee, he created garments inspired by choreographer Oskar Schlemmer and African art, exploring the unique textures of three collections.



Using an ivory-coloured weave, Bergström creates a broad, stiff ribbon covering the body of the dancer.



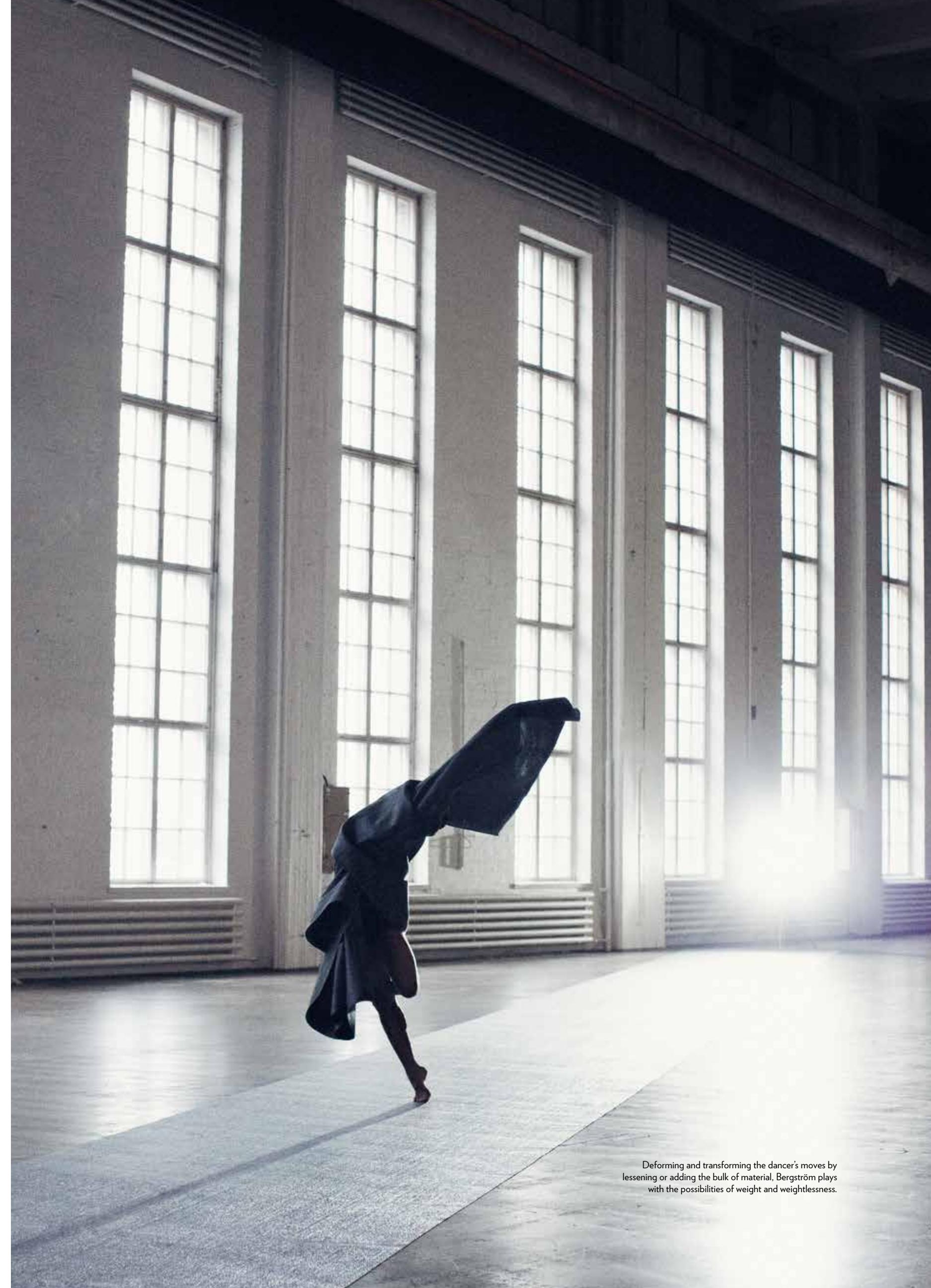
Bergström showcases the voluminous and sculptural qualities of the raw material by crafting garments that play with volume and shape.



PROJECT
INFORMATION

DANCER: Ima Idouze
LOCATION: Merikaapelihalli
in the Cable Factory, Helsinki
MATERIALS USED: Bolon
Artistan: Ivory; Bolon Bkb:
Sisal Plain Black; Bolon
Now: Anthracite

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Deforming and transforming the dancer's moves by lessening or adding the bulk of material, Bergström plays with the possibilities of weight and weightlessness.

A DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIP

When Norwegian clothing retail giant Varner approached Bolon to provide the flooring for its new headquarters, the collaboration yielded results tailored to fit and enhance the firm's successful working practices.



PROJECT INFORMATION

COLLECTION NAME:
Bolon Ethnic Kaise, Bolon Now Silver
AREA: 8,100m²
LOCATION: Asker, Norway
CLIENT: Varner
ARCHITECT: LINK Arkitekter + LPO Arkitekter
CONTEXT: Since its first store opened on Oslo's Thorvald Meyersgate in 1962, Varner has grown rapidly. As of 2014, the company owns close to 1,500 shops and employs more than 10,000 staff. It is now represented in nine countries.



Varner's headquarters in Asker, Norway, for which Bolon provided 8,100m² of flooring.

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When the Norwegian retailer Frank Varner launched his first menswear shop in 1962, in the suburbs of Oslo, he could

have had little inkling that it would birth an empire. Yet by 1965, Varner had expanded from the city's outskirts to new shops in the centre, as well as in Trondheim. Then, in 1967, Varner launched his brand Dressmann, with new stores rapidly springing up around Norway's towns. Through a careful series of acquisitions, Varner came to be the leading light of Norway's clothing retail industry.

Now owned and managed by Frank's three sons, Marius, Petter and Joakim Varner, the clothing company runs 10 brands, as well as franchise partnerships with the likes of Levi's and Ralph Lauren Denim & Supply. As of the end of 2014, Varner had 1,436 shops across northern and central Europe, and the business is still growing. "We are opening 200 new shops this year," says Joakim Varner, Frank's youngest son and a designer and board member at Varner. The goal? "To make Dressmann the number one menswear brand in Europe."

To symbolise and facilitate this expansion, Varner recently moved to a new headquarters. Four years ago, the company bought an extensive office complex in Asker, a rural community about 23 kilometres west of central Oslo. It is this site that Joakim has

spent the last two years redesigning, with assistance from local architecture practice Strøm Gundersen AS.

"We wanted to show our values," says Joakim, who championed a hands-on approach to the project. Despite the headquarters' vast size – around 17,000 square metres, including external areas such as the car park – the new hub prioritises unity and transparency. "It's an open landscape, with no single offices," says Joakim. "It looks awesome as an open space."

With this in mind, Joakim wanted to find a covering for the headquarters' workspaces that could match the concrete flooring used in its communal and social areas. This is where Bolon came in. "I think Bolon has the most innovative flooring product there is," says Joakim. Although Varner had already used Bolon flooring for its previous office, this project marked the start of a new level of collaboration. "We started working with them about eight years ago, and we've been working closely with them for the last couple of years. They're an amazing team to work with."

As part of the project, Annica and Marie Eklund invited the Varners to Björkudden in Ulricehamn. "We got a good feeling right away and we really felt included in the family," says Joakim. "We felt a strong passion in Annica and Marie, which was very inspiring."

Together with Joakim, Bolon's team went

found a configuration that would suit the new company headquarter and its function exactly. "We needed something very quiet, sound-absorbent and durable, but also something that looks very cool," says Joakim.

After meticulous deliberation, Joakim decided upon Bolon's Ethnic series, which was inspired by the geography and light of northern Scandinavia. The team picked the soft, grey-flecked Kaise texture for Varner's working areas, complementing the shared space's concrete floors. For the 220-seat auditorium, they selected a metallic silver shade for the floors and rear wall, subtly differentiating it from the offices. In total, 8,100 square metres of Bolon's flooring were laid down. The entire space was covered using rolls of the flooring, rather than tiling.

The result? A hit, both functionally and aesthetically. "The texture and weave really corresponds to what we're doing," says Joakim, who also praises the luminosity of the Ethnic collection, as well as its sound-absorbing qualities. "The colour changes, as it captures light in different ways. And when you walk on it, you can't hear anything."

The flooring has been such a success that Varner's three regional headquarters, based in Helsinki, Stockholm and Vienna, have now adopted the same design. As the company proliferates, it is all but certain that its links with Bolon will continue to grow. "Our relationship has become stronger already," says Joakim. "We have a lot in common." ♦



"THE TEXTURE AND WEAVE REALLY CORRESPONDS TO WHAT WE'RE DOING."

JOAKIM VARNER, VARNER

MATERIAL THINGS

Björkudden, a lake house just outside of Ulricehamn, was the picturesque setting for a roundtable conversation investigating processes and materiality.

JUST AS THE LEAVES on the trees around lake Åsunden turned yellow, Annica and Marie Eklund invited architect Magnus Larsson, designer Anna Holmquist, and writer and curator Gareth Williams to discuss the materiality of things. Editor and writer Johanna Agerman Ross kept a record of the resultant conversation, which took place over glasses of champagne, caviar blinis, elk stew, and deep red Barolo wine.

Johanna Agerman Ross: In the 19th century, the German architect and art critic Gottfried Semper argued that the basis of architecture was the act of weaving. His theory reminded me of a conversation I had with Marie and Annica about their idea of using Bolon's woven material as the facade for the house we're sitting in. It's an experimental idea and everyone at this table investigates materials as part of their practice. So it seems apt for us to delve deeper into the significance of material experimentation in architecture and design.

Magnus Larsson: So why didn't you cover this house with Bolon flooring?

Marie Eklund: Well, we haven't given up on the idea yet. We wanted to create a Bolon house

by covering everything in materials from Bolon. We had the idea of using overlapping flooring tiles for the facade, creating a similar effect to the shingle houses that you find in the Hamptons outside New York; the tiles would shift in size and shade to create an overall pattern. As you can see, the exterior panelling of this house is very flat, so it can accommodate this experimentation. As we have our own production here in Ulricehamn, we have the ability to experiment with materials, even on a small scale like this.

Magnus Larsson: I'm interested in this type of experimentation because my work with Ordinary is about looking at alternative ways of making buildings. Concrete is, for example, the second-most-used material on the planet today after water. I find that mind-blowing. So materials help us in our creative process. We tend to look at it, see what is interesting about it, and then let that grow into a project.

Anna Holmquist: What fascinated me about materials are the narratives embedded within their manufacture. There are so many stories within manufacturing that I think are missing

from our lives, because we are often so far removed from it. From my point of view,

being close to manufacturing processes and understanding them is the ultimate luxury. How can we re-educate people to have a better understanding of how things are made? Through my work with Folkform we are trying to re-value the raw materials that go into our projects. Understanding the manufacturing processes of these materials is one way of doing that.

Gareth Williams: A lot of the students who I worked with at the Royal College of Art came from an industrial design background, but materials were the thing that really fascinated them. They all had a keen interest in wanting to invent or own a material or an industrial process: miniaturising an industrial process so that they could possess a small corner of the industry that they were about to enter. Consider, for example, the Dutch designer Marjan van Aubel, who invented a foam porcelain that has great potential for architectural and design applications. Or Mauricio Affonso, who created a range of applications for the natural material luffa in his Luffa Lab.

I see the material focus of my students as a reaction to their feeling overwhelmed by >



Dinner guests enjoying an apéritif on The Bolon Lake House terrace.



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This page: dinner being served by Patrick the chef (left) to Marie Eklund, Gareth Williams, Annica Eklund, Anna Holmquist, Magnus Larsson and Johanna Agerman Ross. Opposite, clockwise from top left: Guests helping to prepare dinner in the beautiful setting of Björkudden; the kitchen with floors by Bolon; a reflection of the dinner in the mirrors of the dining room, which overlooks the lake.

the sheer scale of international trade. They're trying to find their own place in industry.

Another aspect of this is that they want to disrupt existing processes; they want to disrupt the perfection of industrial production and the uniformity of industrially made objects and materials. This passion for new materials also comes from a consciousness of ecology and sustainability. Young designers are determined to make a difference by husbanding the natural world, rather than harvesting it.

ML: Do you think it could also be a reaction to previous generations of designers and architects, in which new computer programs gave rise to images of immaculate structures that were almost devoid of materiality?

GW: It could be, but I don't think that appearance matters anymore. It's a bit like the students have taken their cue from fine art. In the 1990s, it didn't matter if art wasn't very well made, because that wasn't the point. It's the same with young designers.

JAR: But these material experiments still only take place on a small scale. What is the next step for making some of these processes a reality on a bigger scale, where they actually make a difference to how we look at manufacturing or how a material is used?

AH: Risk-taking within production is key. As a designer, you have to find people within

manufacturing who are willing to take risks in order to develop your idea. The interaction between companies and designers, and also teachers at design schools, is crucial for this.

The other factor behind achieving some sort of result is for designers to be creative and find micro-solutions. In our case, we found that we got commissions by producing custom-made materials such as our Masonite series, which was made from a custom-produced masonite board infused with flowers and insects. In order to fulfil orders, we were allowed to "borrow" the factory that produced the masonite for anything from 15 minutes to up to one hour, depending on how much material we had to produce.

So I think industry needs to look at new ways of looking at manufacturing. Could people borrow factories for a short time or is there another way of doing it? We need ideas about how to develop these structures. But for me it's not so much about new materials; it's about putting old materials in new contexts.

GW: Sometimes it's about mistreating a material or a process to get a new outcome. **Annica Eklund:** All of the machines that we purchase for our factory have this element of customisation or "mistreatment" in their intended use. We only use 60 per cent of a machine's original function, the rest is

customised by our in-house team or people we have commissioned to make the machine suit our needs.

ME: When we first tried our new Jacquard loom, it didn't work very well. We then invented a yarn that let us create a completely new structure. All of a sudden, we were able to create a weave with a beautiful and intricate pattern. Before that we had been stuck in the traditional patterns of weaving, but when we realised that this experimentation worked, we had the guts to invest in new machinery. So this new loom opened up a completely new world. The next step is to experiment with new materials together with our existing vinyl materials in search of something new. We have to find fresh ways of producing Bolon flooring because that's the future.

ML: It's already in the name of the company, [**"Bolon"** is a combination of the Swedish words "**bomull**" (cotton) and "**nylon**" (vinyl)] which contains that idea of combining vinyl with something else. The fundamental idea of weaving is this process of combining two materials; you combine them in order to get something that is better, stronger or more fit to the purpose that you want to achieve.

Having a factory in place, and being able to experiment with these processes and really investigate what you can get out of them, is >



Intriguing discussions about materials.; one of the bedrooms at Björkudden featuring Bolon flooring.



a very strong starting point. Opening up the factory to experimentation for short periods of time, like Anna mentioned, would create great energy and give rise to new ideas about what you are able to do.

GW: The Jacquard loom itself can give you this impression of disruption and it's a great tool to work with. Look at what Hella Jongerius did for Maharam with her Repeat textile: it has this long repeat that she invented so that it seems as if the pattern is continuously evolving over the textile.

The last decade has been a very fertile period, in which the boundaries between different industries, and also different materials, have broken down. The natural seeks to look industrial and the industrial seeks to look handmade. Weaving with a plastic extrusion, like Bolon does, is only the start of a plastic product. It can be formed into anything, especially when it's made into a weave.

AE: It's funny that when people see a Bolon floor for the first time they always go down on their knees to touch it because they can't determine what it is.

AH: These experiential values are becoming more and more important within academic research, which is now looking at how materials create meaning and how the experiential quality of a material is formed.

Traditionally, material development has been research-driven and found a basis in science, but it's now much more established to look at material as a language or a narrative, which is something that is ready to be explored within design practice. How do all these materials communicate and what's the value in that?

GW: But the real challenge is to keep innovating in order to keep a material current. For example, you mentioned masonite before, Anna; in many ways that's a material that fell out of fashion.

AH: But that's when a material has the possibility of being reborn again: when it's on the cusp of falling off the radar. To renew what we already have is a big question. How do you keep renewing something again and again?

GW: That's certainly the most pressing challenge for anybody who is associated with a technique or material like Bolon. How do you refresh?

ME: It's about finding the possibilities embedded in the material. There are so many potential applications inherent in the material that we produce; we just need to keep passionate and open about this experimentation. Like with this house: we haven't given up on the idea of covering it in Bolon flooring just yet. ♦

SPEAKERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

JOHANNA AGERMAN ROSS is the founder of biannual design magazine Disegno. She put together the theme for this roundtable conversation and chaired the discussion.

MARIE EKLUND is Bolon's chief creative officer. She leads the team that works across all the brand's new collections. She also leads creative collaborations with brands like Missoni, and architects and designers like Jean Nouvel and Jaime Hayón.

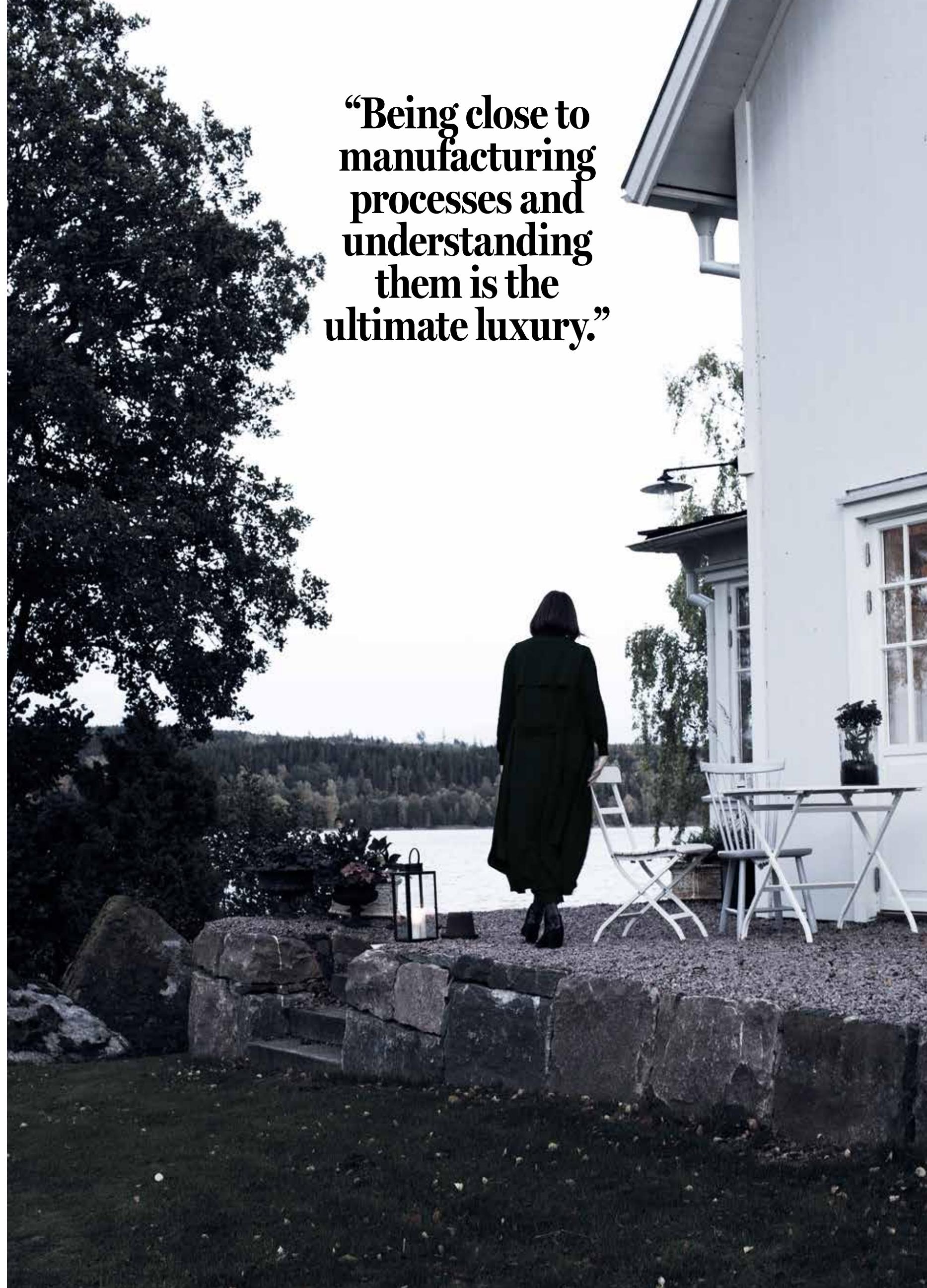
MAGNUS LARSSON founded London architecture studio Ordinary. It is built on material experimentation and Magnus's award-winning diploma project, Dune architecture, which proposed infusing sand with bacteria to make a 6,000km-long wall.

ANNA HOLMQUIST co-founded the art and design duo Folkform in 2005. She also works on interdisciplinary design research at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm.

GARETH WILLIAMS is a London-based design curator, writer and lecturer. He was a senior tutor on the Design Products MA programme at the Royal College of Art and just released a book, *Design: An Essential Introduction*, published by Goodman Fiell with the Design Museum.

ANNICA EKLUND is CEO and creative vice president of Bolon, and has made the firm synonymous with design. She is passionate about photography and captured the dinner at Björkudden with her Canon 5D Mark III. She recently released her first photography book: *Friends, Family, Food*.

“Being close to manufacturing processes and understanding them is the ultimate luxury.”



Weaving magic in Japan

Family-run import company Advan is Bolon's exclusive partner in Japan. Here, Advan's CEO Masanosuke Yamagata, talks about the two companies' unique collaboration, which began 15 years ago.

What originally attracted you to working with Bolon?

Bolon flooring is similar to traditional Japanese tatami, a type of mat with a woven rush covering. So we always thought that Bolon would be a success in the Japanese market. But Bolon flooring is better designed than tatami and it has more patterning options. There's also the matter of durability: Bolon's material can be used in many different kinds of projects, but tatami is fragile, so can only be used as a flooring for bare feet.

Considering this similarity to tatami, were there any challenges when it came to introducing Bolon to the Japanese market?

When we started selling Bolon flooring, our customers felt that it was too hard. But Bolon developed the product further, so this is not a problem anymore. Now, the flooring is very popular in Japan and is used in a wide variety of spaces, from private houses to commercial areas, as well as public spaces like hotels and universities. We expect our sales volume will double or treble in the future.

What are the most important projects that you have worked on with Bolon to date?

Hankyu Yurakucho is a luxury department store in the Ginza area and Bolon flooring is used on every floor, alongside a lot of other materials, such as stone and ceramics. We also supplied flooring to the Japan Post Bank shops and NTT Docomo mobile phone shops. All of these have large numbers of people entering from the street, so it's very important to have flooring that's easier to maintain than carpet.

The new LaLaport shopping mall in Tokyo Bay used Bolon in a very innovative way.

That installation just finished in September. When we showed the Bolon catalogue to the architect, he was very interested in the different varieties of flooring that were

available. So, we supplied 1,500 square metres of flooring for the food court and the architect used it to create national flags that were made using 20 different designs.

In the next few years, a number of projects with Tokyu Stay hotels are on the way. How is Bolon involved with those?

Tokyu Stay hotels are part of the Tokyu Land Corporation (TLC). They have 16 hotels in Tokyo and we've supplied Bolon flooring to seven of those. They have installed Bolon flooring in both the hotel lounges and all the bedrooms. The president of TLC and the designer are both fond of Bolon; they visited the factory in Ulricehamn to see the collections and the flooring being manufactured. With the Tokyo Olympics coming up, Tokyu Stay will be opening one or two new hotels per year until 2020, so it's a big project.

Hotels seem to be increasingly important specifiers of Bolon floors. Hotel Monterey on Okinawa Island recently opened and Bolon was involved in quite a unique way there.

Hotel Monterey is on Tiger Beach, which is one of the most beautiful beaches on Okinawa Island. Okinawa is a southern island and so they need moisture-proof flooring: something easy to clean and easy to remove sand and salt water from. We worked with Bolon and the designer on a custom-made design; we've supplied 13,000 square metres of flooring for every room and corridor of that hotel.

So what's next for Advan and Bolon?

Now that Bolon is building its image in Japan, thanks to a collection of high-profile projects, awareness of the brand is growing. We've begun inviting clients to the Bolon factory; it's a chance for Bolon to show off the designs and the quality of the flooring. It's made in Sweden, which is very attractive to Japanese buyers. We're starting to secure a lot of new clients. ♦



FACTS
MASANOSUKE YAMAGATA

PROFESSION: CEO of Advan
HOMETOWN: Tokyo, Japan
NOTABLE PROJECTS: Yamagata oversaw Advan's work on the Hankyu Yurakucho department store in the Ginza district of Tokyo, which uses Bolon flooring throughout. He has also installed Bolon flooring in Tokyu Stay hotels, Japan Post Bank buildings and the LaLaport Tokyo Bay shopping mall.



JACQUARD LOOM

The machine that has enabled Bolon to take its pioneering flooring designs and production to the next level.

THERE IS AN OLD ADAGE that a tool is only as good as the person using it. Yet while this may be true, it is undoubtedly too one-directional. A good tool can elevate any production process, as is the case with the Jacquard looms installed in Bolon's Ulricehamn headquarters.

Bolon purchased its first Jacquard loom four years ago, having previously only worked with dobby looms, a simpler form of machine. Yet thanks to the Jacquard loom, Bolon's weaving capabilities have expanded rapidly

since then. Today, the company has installed seven of the machines in Ulricehamn.

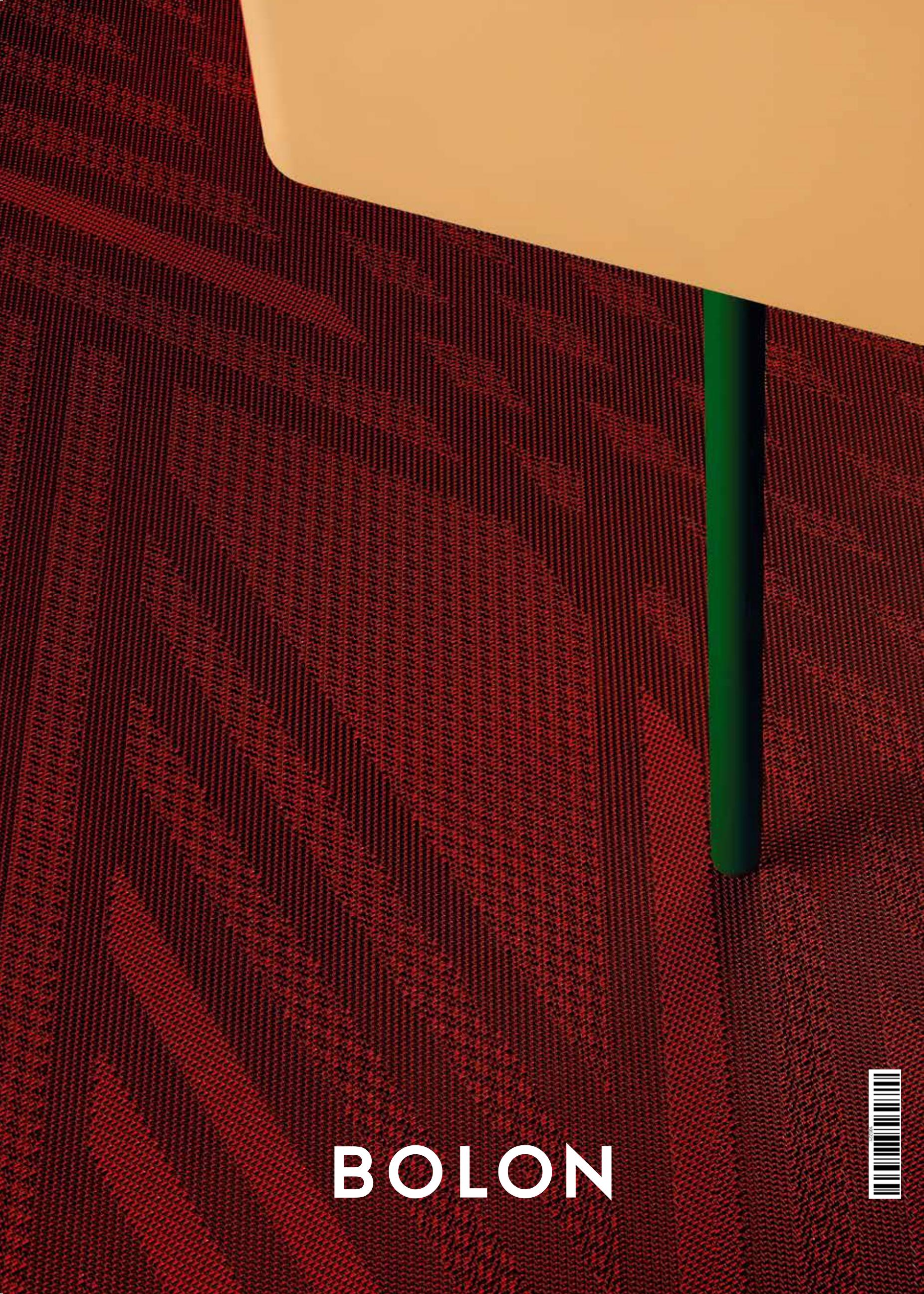
The impact is obvious. Jacquard looms can create floorings that seem three-dimensional; that shift trippingly between shades of light and dark; and which experiment with depth, structure and reflection. Bolon has always been driven by creativity, but the Jacquard looms have given this creativity freer reign than ever before. Since it began this transition from dobby looms, its designs have grown exponentially in complexity and sophistication.

Working at full speed, Bolon's Jacquard looms can produce millions of square metres of flooring every year, weaving the warp and weft threads together into intricate, beautiful patterns. They have doubled Bolon's production capacity from the days in which it worked exclusively using dobby looms.

A tool may only be as good as the person who uses it, but this saying does Bolon's loom a disservice. Operated skilfully, Jacquard looms have allowed Bolon to take its flooring to new heights. ♦

“These floors are essentially textiles; they’re jacquard floors. When I went to see them being woven at Bolon, I fell in love with them.”

Nipa Doshi



BOLON

