

Wallpaper*

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STEFFEN KEHRLE Industrial designer

STEFAN DIEZ Industrial designer

SASKIA DIEZ Jewellery and accessory designer

EVA PASTER Furniture designer, Neuland

NICKI MARQUARDT Milliner

AXEL MEISE Lighting designer, Axelmeislicht

SANDRA SCHWITTAU Actress and fashion boutique owner

MICHAEL GELDMACHER Furniture designer, Neuland

KONSTANTIN LANDURIS Industrial designer, Hansandfranz

OLIVER HOLY CEO, ClassiCon

HORST WITTMANN Industrial designer, Hansandfranz

SONJA JUNKERS Contemporary art gallerist

SANDRA FORSTER Restaurateur, Roockplatz

JÖRG KÜRSCHNER Designer and interior architect, Formstelle

CLAUDIA KLEINE Designer and interior architect, Formstelle

MITZAN COHEN Designer

THIS WAY UP

Munich's creative community, gathered for our shoot at Museum Brandhorst, is taking the city's design scene to the top

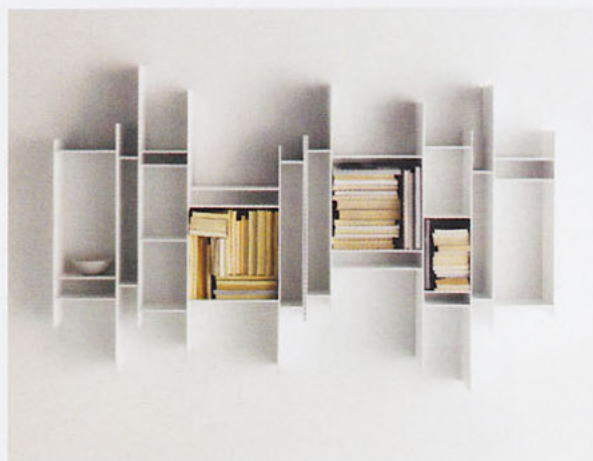
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Munich is a contradictory city when it comes to creativity. The German stereotypes of bierfests, bratwurst and lederhosen all hail from Bavaria and overshadow what is, in fact, a thriving design community, confidently led by the world-renowned studios of Ingo Maurer and Konstantin Grcic. The state capital boasts an enviable infrastructure, with one of the best airports in Europe, and punches way above its weight when it comes to cultural institutions. The latest addition to the city's Kunstareal museum quarter is Museum Brandhorst, distinctive for the multicoloured ceramic rods that appear to oscillate over the metal façade, and which complement the modern art displayed inside. Designed by the German-English architecture duo Sauerbruch Hutton, this is high-end contemporary German architecture at its best – so where better to gather the cream of the Bavarian creative scene for Wallpaper's group photo?

Without doubt, Munich is a beautiful city where the quality of life is supreme. What it lacks, compared to Berlin, in frenetic pace, anarchistic rebelliousness and street-oriented design, it gains in headspace. 'Without so many distractions, you are encouraged to go as far as you can,' enthuses Saskia Diez, an accessory and jewellery designer who shares a studio with her product designer husband, Stefan (W*137). Their workshop is in a leafy area minutes from the city centre and yet just a short walk to the Isar River, where they swim in the summer.

Bavaria is one of the wealthiest states in Germany. A stable political landscape, and the fact that it's home to paragons of German industrial quality such as BMW, Audi and Siemens, explains why it continues to attract many new businesses and hi-tech start-ups. High-earning local employees and successful entrepreneurs provide an eager demand for bespoke design and unique commissions. 'In Munich, there are customers who want to spend money and this makes it easier to push your limits in terms of design,' says milliner Nicki Marquardt of the client-base for her customised hats. Designer Jörg Kürschner of Formstelle has a similar experience: 'I would not have been able to realise my residential interior design projects in my home town of Karlsruhe, since the same levels of income just do not exist there.'

For all its wealth, Munich is by no means a large city. 'Munich is relatively small; people know each other. They are open to exchange,' says Oliver Holy, CEO of local furniture maker ClassiCon, which produces the aptly named 'Munich' furniture collection designed by Sauerbruch Hutton for the Museum Brandhorst. 'This



BEST OF BAYERN

From top, 'Airport' seats and table, by Hansandfranz, for Filser & Gräf; 'C-o-n-c-r-e-t-e' chair, by Steffen Kehrle with Betonwerk Göttinger; 'Randomito' shelf, by Neuland, for MDF Italia

exchange of ideas, and the financial power to realise many of them, gives the city enormous strength,' Holy explains.

A spirit of co-operation exists in the tight-knit creative community, where several of our featured movers and shakers started their careers with local design doyen, Konstantin Grcic. Grcic was once a tutor to both the Diezes, as well as designers Nitzan Cohen and Steffen Kehrle (who then went on to work for Stefan Diez). Cohen, in turn, used Grcic's 'Venus' chairs for ClassiCon in Sandra Forster's Roecklplatz restaurant, which follows a similar apprentice programme to Jamie Oliver's Fifteen. It may all sound rather incestuous, but any sense of sameness is dispelled by a free-ranging quest for quality.

This appreciation of quality reflects Munich's craftsmanship heritage. A walk around the city's courtyards and alleys reveals a multitude of craft workshops in action. Hansandfranz, the studio of industrial designers Konstantin Landuris and Horst Wittmann, has a carpenter plus glass and leather workers as neighbours. 'Face-to-face contact, and the ability to quickly solve problems at the production stage, is still possible here,' explains Landuris. 'Munich has a great network of craftsmen who have a wonderful eye for design and even better hands,' agrees Cohen. This level of craftsmanship is reflected in the clean lines of the 'Reef' cabinet by Eva Paster and Michael Geldmacher of Neuland, a Wallpaper* Design Awards winner 2011 (see W*143).

Beyond quality and craftsmanship, local values also include economic viability. 'Design in Munich is more commercial, driven by the business environment, and less experimental than in other cities,' explains lighting designer Axel Meise, of Axelmeislicht, noted for his 'Occhio' modular lighting system. 'The final judgement is by our customers because the design is good if it sells well,' he concludes pragmatically.

Part of the commercial success of Munich design is due to the application of those involved. Sandra Schwittau, who has just opened the multi-brand fashion store Schwittenberg, sees local designers as 'doers' who are not easily swayed by hype. For her, the positive side to the city's supposed brain drain of creative talent to Berlin means, 'a lot of the latte-drinking, planning-only people move there, too'.

The parochial image of Munich is a constant, and yet it is exactly this reliable security that allows many of its creative community to take risks and adopt a more adventurous spirit. The renaissance in German design has slowly and steadily been coming from the south – they just don't tend to shout about it. ✪