

MARKING MILESTONES

TORONTO'S IIDEX/NEOCON SHOW CELEBRATED ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A BLAZE OF INNOVATIVE, ENERGY-EFFICIENT LIGHTING AND AN EXPANDED RANGE OF ECO-OPTIONS

By Tory Healy

In Toronto this past September, two landmark anniversaries were celebrated: IIDEX/NeoCon, Canada's largest contract design expo, turned 25; and the Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario marked its 75th year. Championing growth, ARIDO handed out 32 awards to interior designers at a glitzy gala. Following the presentation, where Project of the Year went to Cannon Design for its St. Louis office, the crowd was treated to a multi-media retrospective of award-winning projects, including many by global/local design firms such as Yabu Pushelberg and Burdifilek.

While still dominated by contract furniture, IIDEX/NeoCon 09, held at Toronto's Direct Energy Centre, carved out more space on the floor for its Light Canada exhibit. A focal point was American light painter Stephen Knapp's on-site installation, called Castled Void. Two white light sources were reflected off 60 pieces of clear and tinted glass to create a four-by-seven-metre field of ephemeral brush strokes.

But the main event in the lighting section was the evolution of LEDs, with many booths showing advances in colour range and venting to prolong the lamps' longevity. Amid the flash, conventional lighting was shown in exciting new forms. Eureka and Christiaan + Planck, both Canadian companies, showed off new product that exuded simple beauty. A standout street light was Olvio Sistema by manufacturer Se'lux. Made of polyester powder-coated aluminum, Olvio's head resembles a down-turned flower. Also borrowing from nature but on a smaller scale was Feelux's foldable Torretta desk lamp, presented by LightForm, a Canadian reseller of European fixtures. Torretta's CCFL lamp can be set to three natural light temperatures of varying Kelvin degrees, to enhance concentration on different tasks.



In this year's expanded lighting section, Montreal's Eureka Lighting displayed a curated selection of its latest products. Tri, a cable-mounted triangular pendant with rounded edges, is made from slightly translucent ceramic. eurekalinghting.com



Eco-savvy local designers Brothers Dressler introduced Bottle Farm. The vertical planter consists of four upcycled plastic bottles anchored to a solid piece of discarded walnut by their threaded ends. The planter is wall mounted using reclaimed hardware and can be custom ordered. brothersdressler.com



Teknion showcased Powermat both on top of and embedded in its new WorkplaceOne furniture. The thin high-tech mat transmits wireless power simultaneously to multiple electronic devices such as laptops and PDAs. teknion.com powermat.com



Layla Landscape is a new modular seating system co-created by the U.K.'s Boss Design and Toronto's Tayco. The chairs, sofas and benches are fitted with magnets to simplify aligning the units. The system comes with a tubular steel frame or polished aluminum legs and about 100 eco-friendly fabric options. tayco.com

FIVE MINUTES WITH NIELS DIFFRIENT

The veteran industrial designer reveals how he eliminated most of the mechanisms on the new Diffrient World task chair and how to keep on working into your 80s

Tell us about your new task chair for Humanscale.

The objective was to do a chair that achieved all the necessary and desirable ergonomic performance levels but in a much simpler way. It should have a comparable amount of recline but without the usual complicated mechanisms. I eliminated the mechanisms, so the chair simply flexes into the position you want. It automatically compensates for different sizes. A light person could sit on it and have the appropriate amount of recline resistance, as would a heavy person.

How does that work?

The chair feels the weight of the person and transfers a percentage of it to the force resistance on the back.

How did you make the back support intuitive?

The back mesh is a three-part assembly, because you need a convex curve one way and a concave curve the other. The only way you can do that is by tailoring the material, and that is what the seams are for. It has a very important by-product: as well as providing support for your back with the correct contours, its flexibility allows it to adapt to everybody's back contour.

What adjusting mechanisms are there on this chair?

Well, you have one button for the height control and another for seat depth. Besides the adjustable armrests, that's all there is.

You've been working on task chairs with minimal mechanisms ever since the Freedom chair, which Humanscale has sold over a million of since its launch in 2001. Since then you've produced the Liberty chair, and now this chair for Humanscale. How are they different?

Freedom is a highly supportive chair for serious workers, especially those who work all day at computers. Liberty is more of a general purpose office chair. The Diffrient World chair is also a task chair, but not as extreme as Freedom. It's a great deal simpler, uses a lot less material and costs a lot less.

Its simplicity and the fact that the frame is made entirely of plastic would make this chair easier to recycle.

Yes, it's unconscionable to design a chair that isn't friendly to the environment. This chair is about one-half to one-third the weight of other chairs, about 11.5 kilograms, so there's a lot less to begin with.

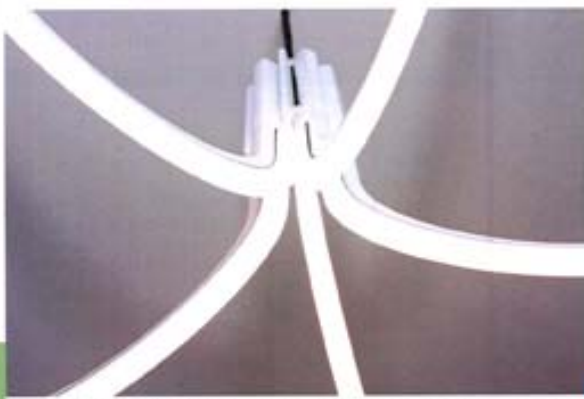
At 81 years old, you're still designing and in great shape mentally and physically. How do you do it?

It's a compulsion. I can't really stop. But I work in postures that don't overstress me, and I refuse to work at a computer. I have younger people do my computer work. And there's one thing that's perfectly obvious that most people ignore: diet.

Are you on a special diet?

No, I have a very simple diet. I stay away from sugar, fat and salt. Those are the things that will kill you.

Calgary design firm Massieoffice launched its new lighting brand, Christiaan + Planck, with the Sentry pendant system. Made from partly recycled and recyclable spun aluminum, the fixture's nine component options have a low-VOC powder-coated finish, available in glossy white or matte black. christiaanandplanck.com



LED Linear commissioned Toronto's Group-Two Design to illustrate the malleability of its adhesive-backed VarioLED Venus strip lighting. Group-Two's ethereal chandelier looks as if it's made from light alone, a feat achieved by affixing the LED strips to a translucent laser-cut resin frame. led-linear.com




Public seating specialist Arconas presented Bernú Ice, a collaboration with Vancouver's Joel Berman Glass Studio. Ice shares its aerodynamic shape with other Bernú models, in use at New York's JFK and Hong Kong International airports. But instead of padded upholstery, wood or perforated steel, the surprisingly comfortable seat and backrest are made from surface-embossed resin. arconas.com




Niels Diffrient and the Diffrient World chair at IDEX/NeoCon

For another change in program, IDEX/NeoCon 09 expanded its sustainable offerings by bringing the Green Building Festival onto the floor. The formerly off-site event hosted seminars and presented a grouping of booths showing local initiatives, like green roof projects by Toronto's Gardens in the Sky, as well as eco-efficient offerings from North American firms such as Toto USA. Sustainability was big in the health care section as well, with various hygienic flooring options on view, and in another new exhibit, Think:Material. This curated showcase, displaying a range of innovative finishing solutions (many made from recycled materials), brought IDEX/NeoCon full circle, from green building block to final product. **AZ**




Tandus captured a silver innovation award for its Landscape Patterns carpet line. Designed by Suzanne Tick, the organic patterns (like Squiggle Ray, shown) add flair to corporate settings. Made up of three tiles in six patterns and 12 coloured grounds, Landscape is available in modular and Powerbond moisture-resistant formats. tandus.com



Debuting at the show was New Wall, a Toronto importer of high-end wall coverings, including Marimekko and Jannelli & Volpi. Mirror (shown) is part of Jannelli & Volpi's new 701 City collection. The images that result when windowpanes bounce reflections off one another are etched in reflective ultraviolet inks. newwall.ca



Think:Material, a curated exhibit of innovative materials, premiered at IDEX/NeoCon 09. Cell + LED, by Dutch design firm Lama Concept, is an LED-integrated carpet made from machine-cut strips of felt randomly pressed together. Used as flooring in Airbuses, it was most recently installed at Meubelux's furniture showroom in Belgium. lamaconcept.nl



Missouri-based Yemm & Hart's cork tiles consist of whole and granulated cork and a polyurethane binder, which is then pressed and machine cut. Each tile features profiles of post-consumer champagne and wine corks and is applicable for flooring, walls and furniture veneer. yemmhart.com

2010 SHOWS

HEIMTEXTIL, FRANKFURT

January 13 to 16 The world's biggest fair for home and contract textiles features trends in fibres, fabrics and technology, plus an extensive collection dedicated to kitchen, bed and bath. heimtextil.messefrankfurt.com

MACEF, MILAN

January 15 to 18 The spring edition of this biannual show (the next is September 3 to 6) delivers the newest in classic furnishings and decor, alongside kitchenware, giftware and fashion accessories from Alessi, Reidel, Villeroy & Boch and more. macef.it

IMM COLOGNE

January 19 to 24 Cologne's international furniture fair presents Pure Village – an exciting new exhibit focused on the hottest textiles, lighting and bathroom furnishings and accessories – along with the [D3] Design Talents exhibit and the Interior Innovation awards. imm-cologne.com

INTERIOR DESIGN SHOW, TORONTO

January 21 to 24 Toronto's annual residential design show offers a super-abundance of exhibits and events (see page 42 for the full preview). The show runs concurrently with the first edition of the Toronto International Design Festival. interiordesignshow.com

MAISON & OBJET, PARIS

January 22 to 26 This huge expo is devoted to spring and summer collections of home decor, giftware and tableware. Alongside Maison & Objet, the 10th edition of Now! Design à Vivre continues to celebrate young and innovative design. The second show takes place September 3 to 7. maison-objet.com

AMBIENTE, FRANKFURT

February 12 to 16 With more than 4,500 international exhibitors, Ambiente is the world's largest consumer goods fair, showcasing the latest products and trends in kitchen/home furnishings/decor and gifts. ambiente.messefrankfurt.com

LIGHT + BUILDING, FRANKFURT

April 11 to 16 Visitors can expect innovations in lighting, electrical engineering and building automation from Philips and other exhibitors, including Artemide, Flos and Zumtobel. light-building.messefrankfurt.com

I SALONI, MILAN

April 14 to 19 This year, the biennial Eurocucina kitchen expo coincides with the Milan furniture fair, which also presents the hottest young talent at Salone Satellite and is accompanied by a slew of offsite events. cosmit.it

K/BIS, CHICAGO

April 16 to 18 North America's largest kitchen and bath expo includes seminars, guest speakers and networking opportunities. The Best of K/Bis awards recognize the hottest new products. kbis.com

COVERINGS, ORLANDO

April 27 to 30 Tile and stone enthusiasts are treated to exclusive information about new tiling programs and innovative installation techniques, and given the opportunity to source international offerings. coverings.com

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE FAIR, NEW YORK

May 15 to 18 The biggest contemporary design fair this side of the Atlantic, ICFF showcases furniture, lighting and more from some of the North America's best young designers. icff.com

SIDIM, MONTREAL

May 27 to 29 Quebec's Salon International du Design d'Intérieur focuses on residential, commercial and contract environments. sidim.com

NEOCON, CHICAGO

June 14 to 16 This colossal contract trade fair boasts 700 exhibitors offering the latest in office furniture, contract textiles and floor coverings, task seating and lighting. neocon.com

ABITARE IL TEMPO, VERONA

September 16 to 20 Verona's interior design fair showcases furniture, kitchens, lighting systems, home accessories and more. Each of the 11 halls will host an exhibition, and the Abitare Il Tempo prize will round out the show. abitareiltempo.com

IDEX/NEOCON CANADA, TORONTO

September 22 to 25 Canada's largest trade fair for the built environment celebrates design and architecture with features such as the Green Building Festival and Light Canada. idexneocon.com

100% DESIGN, LONDON

September 23 to 26 London's contemporary design show features interiors, exhibits, innovative retailers and vibrant events throughout the city. 100percentdesign.co.uk

CERSAIE, BOLOGNA

September 28 to October 2 The international ceramic tile and bathroom furnishings exhibition in Bologna attracts over 1,000 exhibitors, primarily from Italy. cersaie.it

INTERIOR DESIGN SHOW WEST, VANCOUVER

October 14 to 17 This residential show presents the newest products and services to the West Coast crowd and continues to promote emerging talents at the Designers on the Block exhibit. idswest.com

INTERIEUR, KORTRIJK

October 15 to 24 In a newly renovated venue by Brussels-based architecture firm Office, the 22nd edition of Belgium's international biennale explores the contemporary environment with 10 days of exhibits, lectures and satellite events. interieur.be

ORGATEC, COLOGNE

October 26 to 30 Europe's premier contract design show presents seating, shelving, desks and more by over 600 exhibitors from 39 countries. orgatec.com

GREENBUILD, CHICAGO

November 16 to 19 The show dedicated to green building moves back north this year. Over 1,000 exhibitors will present new and innovative products and services for sustainable building. greenbuildexpo.org